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

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SUBJECT

SOURCE: John Bigando

COMMENTS:

The following interview is with John Bigando of ^{Allouez,} ~~Alloy,~~ Michigan, on 20 July, 1973 and the interviewer is Walley Anderson.

I: Well, John, you know, we spent a lot of time talking about where you were working and everything in the last interview.

R: Tain't working now though.

I: And I don't think we covered the music part because you've been so involved in music all of your life. I don't think we covered that enough. I think we should talk a little bit about that maybe; and I think we already said that the two best directors that you've ever run into and I think this includes Chicago and Detroit and everywhere else, doesn't it?

R: ^{MARTI NISSUNEN} ~~Marty Nissunen~~ and here for Art Kinney (???)

I: Is it, Marty Nissunen or Matty?

R: Marty.

I: What was Nissunen's name?

R: Marty...we used to call him Arty.

I: He was from Soumi College, right?

R: Yeah, he was. Him and I get along like two kids. Everytime we went on a trip playing and oh he was always so happy about it he wants to talk about European countries, you know, and all that stuff like that.

I: Did you first get in contact with him when you came back up to the Copper Country in about 1930 or so? Or did you know him beforehand?

R: Well, when I...I was playing with the C & H...Calumet Hecla band then see, and he needed help, see, giving these concerts and he was giving some very beautiful concerts; so he called on me and he asked me, sometime he asked me, "You got any violin player that you know of...or clarinet players or anything on this line?" And I always had a half a dozen for him to help him out, you know. Used to help him out.

I: Well, what concerts...did he have a symphony orchestra?

R: No, he used to handle regular college.

I: Oh, it was right with the college.

R: College...they was all from college, all mixed in there. Yeah, and once in awhile he'd have to have one from outside, you see, to fill in a certain place where they didn't have the instrumentation there, see. They were short certain instruments like oboe, flute and things like that, they didn't have 'em. They hadda borrow them from the C & H band, see.

And where all did you play in these different things?

R: Well, we were all over. Sometime quite a few comerts at the college and few...some of the afternoon and then was in Ishpeming and Negaunee where they had a big hall whether it was Ishpeming or Negaunee, I forget, one of them places...he used to give all these ...practically every season could count on one or two concerts they used to play there all the time. And he used to go even as far as Duluth. I never went as far as Duluth with him.

I: He was quite a director

R: Oh yes he was really a good director. And another thing about it, When I went to Detroit, most of the people...I'd get talking with them and "Where did you come from kid?" You know they hadda have a inkling. "Well, I come from the Copper Country." "Do you know that professor that came here and directed the symphony orchestra?" "Sure, I know Marty Nissunen." Right away I said that I know Marty Nissunen, you see, and then they started and they talked the word. I betcha about about fifty I run across they asked me where I come from, if I come from that. He went there as a guest director that directed the Detroit Symphony, see, and he must have made a hit then because they got to know him and all these fellows that asked me that, they were people that'd been playing with the Philadelphia Symphony or Detroit Symphony or Chicago Symphony, but they leave from one to the other, see, they all been symphony players from New York and all places like that. All old timers, you know. I don't know if there's anymore living of them right now; but I could give the name of some...but it goes too far back to think of them all.

I: Well, what were his strong points, you know, what made him such a good director?

R: Well, the way I liked about him because he was slick...awful slick about a little thing that nobody...if a fellow weren't a good musician he wouldn't even take notice of that see. He was so particular about it, just hadda be just so and how to sustain a certain tones like, you know, lots of them didn't have no experience they cheat on a lot of notes, you know, place where it was a quarter note they give it maybe only a eighth of a value of a note or something like that, you see. If it was a half a note, they only give it a quarter note. They don't hold out to the end, see, and that's

what leaves the other section empty, that holding. You gotta be strict in that. When you take a breath, you know, you take that little short breath and not wait too long or the music goes by.

I: It leaves a gap

R: Yeah, there's a gap between that then.

I: And he'd catch it, huh?

R: Oh yeah, he would...real slick at that. And Kinney was the same way so I have an idea that Kinney worked under him, see. He never told me he did, but I know that he studied under Nissunen while he was up off and on, you see. Maybe before he was with...maybe before he was with that Chicago Symphony or after that. I don't know exactly when it was; but I know he studied with him because he didn't know that before in his younger kid days.

I: Well, did Professor Nissunen do any composing of his own?

R: Well, I don't know about him later on, but I know he done a lot of arranging for the symphonies, and that's like composing, you know, when you write the parts for different fellows for different things. I never noticed if he got any numbers out in the world from traveling around, see; but I know there's nothing that he didn't know about. You could mention anything.

I: I suppose the school...the college then was pretty well known

R: Oh, the college was well known.

I: ...all over because of his work.

R: Well known...you'd be surprised how many students he had studying under him on music. See, most of them went there for the harmony part, see, he was great on harmony, see...teaching harmony. Lot of them there don't even tell you but I know quite a few studied harmony under him; but I can't think of the names of them all. And a lot of girls that play piano they studied harmony and that's what makes a good musician out of them, see. But he was a good piano player. Boy, he could touch them keys...he was wonderful. I know he was a great help to me and anytime you meet him he always had a smile. He always had something about the (???) country. He said, "You know, in the (???) country they go out and they don't get much money, but they have good times." He said, "You know, when they have a little lunch, a little salami and cheese," he said, "sometimes a little glass of wine with it, that was it." Boy, he used to...I don't know if he drank or not, I couldn't say. I don't think he drank much; but at least maybe in his younger days he did, but I know that he didn't touch nothing on college.

I: Well, how many years off and on did you work with him?

R: Well, most every time I come in and out. Everytime I come up here

I was...from 19...of course in 1912 I don't know if he was here then yet, I don't think so.

I: I don't know either.

R: No...I figure from only 1930 on. 1930 when the theaters got through in Detroit, see, the (???) and music orchestra was all done. Out of thirty-nine hundred musicians we...at the end when I left the Adams' Theater was only fifteen hundred working in the theaters, cafes, hotels and dance halls. That's all was left.

Only fifteen hundred.

Yeah, out of thirty-nine hundred and the rest was all working steady playing jobs all over here and there...theaters had sometimes as high as fifty-two men working them theaters, sitting in the pit.

I: That's quite an orchestra.

R: Oh yeah...we only had...in our theater where I played the Adams' they had long run pictures there. All new pictures had to come to the Adams' first, see. And they'd hold them there for about four weeks steady. They'd run four weeks and then one run five weeks. I forget what picture it was. But mostly three weeks and four weeks.

I: Well when they had these pictures and that, did they also have personal appearances by some of the...?

R: Yeah, the real actors in the picture come up there with their managers besides.

I: With their managers besides.

R: Yeah, sure. Like I told you, J. W. Griffith, he come up with them two Lillian...Gish sisters...

I: Gish sisters?

R: Yeah, oh he was sittin beside me in the pit in the orchestra. Yeah, he was there for quite awhile. He said, "I'll tell you," he said, "I played trumpet too," he says, "I used to play trumpet too." See, that's why he sat down beside me, between me and the other fellow. I was wondering why he sat in the pit there for me; but he wanted to see how these girls act on the stage. They give a little prologue up there on the stage...about fifteen minutes, you know, before the show starts. And they always had...sometimes as high as fifteen to a half an hour of their own acts. And then Turk and all them fellows, Harry Moray...and I don't know, way back I could mention...Mojule...

I: Adolph Mojule?

- R: Yeah, Adolph Mojule, he was a good talker...he was a little short fellow.
- I: Had a little mustache
- R: That's it...that's him.
- I: I remember him.
- R: You remember him, yeah. He spent a whole week and some of them that was in the act only stayed one week. They didn't have any acton the stage, they just stayed there one week themselves. But the others sometimes they stayed longer if they had the girls there...the actors would.
- I: Well, the early days...in the early nineteen hundreds in the Copper Country here now, in Calumet, they had quite a few of those same people come up here didn't they?
- R: Yes, that's right. I played quite a few shows here with the... O. Henry and all them shows way back...O. Henry they come and I can think of a dozen of them anyway...now I can't remember the names.
- I: How many theaters did they have in Calumet then?
- R: One. They only had a couple of small movie picture shows in Calumet in front in the Pic's, you see; but the big theater was the one for the big shows, you see, that came here with a company, see. Fifty-five - seventy-five people in them shows. They all had as high as sixty-five.
- I: Well I imagine that was one of the...
- R: Sally Ivy and Mary Almond shows, they came through here, oh my heavens, after awhile they come in my mind.
- I: When they came in, did you have to play in their orchestras or did they have separate orchestras then?
- R: Well, if they came...I used to belong to the Calumet...even when the shows run here we'd play a part of the picture sometimes. And when the shows come in there was no picture, see. We had a rehearsal this show about half an hour before the show start, see...I was mostly talk men or so...so much of this, so much of that...whatch the cues where you hadda stop and this and for that one, and that's about all. We hadda play 'em here and the same orchestra used to play 'em...because we rehearsed it we hadda go down and play 'em in Hancock when they stopped there for a couple of minutes.
- I: Was that at the old Carriage?
- R: Old Carriage...yeah, Old Carriage. That was a good...pretty good theater there too. My brother played there about twenty - twenty-

two years on that stage.

I: He did?

Boy, he played mostly for pictures, see. And I used to...play those (???) shows come up and then I'd come up and play them here...they'd stop in Hancock and I'd play 'em there first and then come up and play 'em here when they stop in Hancock and we hadda go down and rehearsal there and then we hadda come up and play here after too if they played there first. If they played here first, then we'd have to go down there and play in there too. Wherever were first. We had about six...no, seven to eight men in the orchestra that used to play all them shows, see. And then some of them...most of them carry their own piano player and them shows carried their own player player and their own music. And sometimes they carry one instrument of each, like a violinist, a piano, sometime even had a trumpet...some-time I even hadda sit down and play second trumpet for them...they had a second part too, see, and they never carried more than one of each section, see. Then we doubled in. And always used the Calumet-Hecla orchestra with them to fill in to make it look bigger, see.

T: Well, did you get...when you were working for this Calumet-Hecla now, did you get paid extra when you had to play at night like this for these theaters or was that just part of your...?

R: That was all extra. That didn't have nothing to do with C & H no more then. We were just using the name, that's all. No, C & H used to give us a...if the full band was all playing someplace, hadda go someplace, you'd get...they'd allow you three full days a month with pay. That didn't last long after (???) left...they cut all that thing out. That's where we lost the good director we had. I was only a kid them days. Like I said, a man like Art Kinney was here then...was at that age when the C & H was backing it, he would have made the best director of the whole bunch of 'em they ever had here, no matter how good they were.

I: Now, Art Kinney was local, wasn't he.

Local man...yeah. Yeah, he was very smooth. What I liked about him I always said, he should hire me, you know, when I come here he had the band, see, and I sat in there for awhile and watch him close. I never used to say a word to him, never even say boo to him...come and go. But I got to like him so much and I liked the way he handled things, see, and the way he used to handle the public then. Like he said, "I'm kind of strict." He was kind of strict, you see, some of them didn't like that but say if you want to get by and wanta learn something, you gotta listen, that's all there is to it.

I: Well, now about what years was he doing the directing up here?

R: Oh, between '30 and '37.

I: In that time

R: Yeah, 1930 and '37. That's all that band...C & H band didn't have

hardly any band. They had about sixteen or eighteen men left around here then...that's all. And half of them was with the WPA band...that was when that happened, see. I had them between 1937 and 1942. I had the band then that time. After Kinney had the band, he had the WPA band right from the start, right from the beginning but he didn't lead too long because he owned property and had a little money in the bank. But me, I didn't...about everything I had was left in Detroit, see...left in that house I had down there, see. So I was cleaned out as far as pocket book, see. (???)

- I: Well, now these bands that were used during the WPA...this was to give the men work, I know this, you know, by the government...just to give them a little hand out and work and what have you. Basically, what was the band used for? Did you play public concerts?
- R: Yeah, they had five concerts a week, the ^{C&H} WPA band. Every location, even far out as Huron Town past Houghton up on top of the hill there; used to even go up there and play in a place up there in Huron Town... what's it called...Huron Town up there. Okay...yeah sure, we used to go up there. Everyone...we were away five days a week. Lake Linden, Dollar Bay, Ahmeek, all those places had a concert, see.
- I: Was this in the evening or...?
- R: The C & H band...the company used to pay us for that, see. And they used to pay us only a couple of dollars for a concert, that's all.
- I: But did you play the concert in the evenings?
- R: Yeah, always evenings.
- I: For the whole families
- R: Yeah, for everybody.
- I: Families could come.
- R: Right after...they all got home, after they had their supper...after supper time. Yeah.
- I: And these were paid for by
- R: All paid by the C & H band...the C & H Company.
- I: Were they pretty well attended?
- R: Oh yeah...you'd be surprised...there'd be thousands...I don't know how many thousands. I could see there four - five thousand at (???)²⁰⁰ Place, bigger than more then we'd have in a theater. More people than you would have in one of these theaters here...they had about three or four thousand, you know. Yeah...they all had stands, see, regular stands built purposely.
- I: They were outdoor...
- R: Outdoor stands, you see.

I: Outdoor concerts.

R: Yeah, outdoor concerts, yeah...all lit up then so in the night time we'd play until nine - ten o'clock was starting to get dark, see, and hadda turn the lights on. They had lights all around.

I: Well, what did they do during the winter time then?

R: Well, in the wintertime the band didn't do much at all...all orchestra work.

I: All orchestra.

R: Yeah, in the winter time we used to have as far as six orchestra to chase around. There was as high as five - six men here...three - four here, five - six there and go all over from here to Marquette, Chassell, L'Anse, Baraga, Mass City, Rockland, Ontonagon, we were always on the go. That's where I used to make the hundred and eight dollars and every day the month.

I: That was some money.

R: That's what I was doing, see.

I: Well now, what did these orchestras play for? Dances?

R: All dances, yeah. And what I got from C & H was only about fifty-two dollars a month.

I: Were these dances for different organizations like.

R: Well, they give...maybe lodges or someone would sponsor a dance, see

I: I suppose this was one of the major forms of entertainment then

R: Oh yes, that was. And we weren't the only orchestra. Every little place had a little band, little orchestra or something like that. Made groups, you know; but was the C & H Band...the manager of the band he used to...he had an office and they'd call him up and he'd book you for so many men to charge 'em...we didn't have to do it. We got paid by the month, see. When the month was up your check...mailed your check out. He was responsible for everything. Of course, he had his part in there too see, you know, so he'd average about the same as we did for being manager. Whether he played or not, he took care of the books.

I: You know, we talk about managers and that, who was the man that was doing the managing for C & H up here? Do you remember?

R: The manager of the band?

I: Yeah

R: Fred Cowley...one of the best managers we ever had. At the beginning when I started to take lessons...when the band went to Milwaukee that

time, that prize with the...the big prize was thirty-six men up there was Colonel Cox...he was a Colonel but he died a short time after I got in the band. I remember playing that funeral. I was in the band already when he died.

- I: Well, isn't there a fellow from up in the Copper Country...I think he'd still active who was managing and directing and would assign different people to different bands...Warnie Rue (???)
- R: Warnie Rue?
- I: Yeah
- R: Warnie Rue...he was going to Houghton High School and he was the one that came in with my automatic...that (???) band...he was only a kid see. But him and (???) was the fellows that got me to want to start a band, see. He was my drummer...my little snare drummer.
- I: This was the WPA band?
- R: No, that was the Twin-City Band
- I: The Twin-City Band.
- R:
- I: Well, when did you have..
- R: Well, he played a little bit with...if something was kind of slack and he got in with the WPA band too...but he was never long...maybe a couple months. Then I lost sight of him...he went away and that finished him. I think he was studying music under Nissunen already then, that's why he drug up. I think he was really good arrange all the music and all fellow. And he's got a good outfit right now. In Detroit he's the main...he's got the big office that they do all the booking for anything that comes into town, see. He calls out an orchestra right away...he can pick up what he wants...pick out the best man and go anywheres with him. Even played for...I...our President already. I seen him play at the State Fair Ground when I was in Detroit the last time...State Fair Ground with a big outfit.
- I: So, really from the Copper Country here we've had quite a few musicians.
- R: Yeah, we've had quite a few.
- I: Directors and..
- R: Oh yeah, have had a lot of them.
- I: And good ones.
- R: Yeah...we've had a few good ones, but the only ones that I would buy...the only one that I would buy that compose music and write music was Vander Cook first, then we had some between him when he left here and went to Michigan, Indiana...then we had George D. Barnhard...he was a great music writer...he has a lot of big standard waltzes out too.

George...and he was a great violin player too. He was good symphony man, but they got him here and they charged the orchestra and band that time and he used to do a lot of orchestra. And he had one of the heaviest tone I ever heard on the violin...a full quality of tone on the violin and he was known for that. And when...he used to take the band out Tamarack Park...there used to be a park in Tamarack out...had picnics out there, big picnics...sixteen or twenty piece band...some-time he wouldn't say...the assistant director who was assistant director to take charge of the band, just for dance work...he'd go out on the bench and sit down and listen to what's going on...even see birds flying...he'd be writing music. He was always thinking about writing. He was a good writer and he used to compose music, write music on four different names. I says to him one time, "What do you...Mr. Barnhard, why do you do that?" I says, "You say that's your music, and you'r running that name that don't sound like your number." He said, "No, I have to do that otherwise," he says, "the houses won't sell too much on the same man...they want different names see." He was running on four...one was Williams and the other one was something...all had different names see. Was four different... between his name and then there was four names.

I: And all the same man.

R: He was going by that so he could sell more music. The house, Carr - Fischer in New York. He used to work with Carr - Fischer of New York, see and that's how he used to get rid of music. Otherwise he said that some people they don't like you so much they won't use your music, see. And that way...they'll play my music now." But when he had it here he'd advertise it in the paper...George D. Barnhard underneath the programs. All they...that was the only two that was top notch as musicians...them two. VanderCook and George D. Barnhard... but I liked...a lot of them liked the others better...kind of flashy, but they was no more than I am nor anybody else. Like I say, they could never compete with Art Kinney far as knowing how to handle a band. He had the knack, that guy, I've gotta hand it to him. That's why I said, "I'll play 'til the last day of my life for him." Lot of others didn't even want to play with him. They maybe played in bands years ago, but all they...you know on that side of music they (???) It's like me, I could go up...I could direct anything the C & H Band had without a rehearsal as far as that's concerned...I went over it so many times you know the number, see. But when it comes to something new, you have to study strain by strain out.

I: Well, did we have any other fairly well known musicians here...not necessarily directors or composers or anything, but just well known for being able to play piano or different musical instruments?

R: Well, there was Joe Eddie. He was very good on piano.

Molly
Marty
Alseph ()
Alseph

I: Oh yeah, she's still playing.

R: Still playing, eh?

I

- R: I don't know if I'd know her. I used to live right close to her.
- I: I lived in the same house with her when I first came to Calumet. I rented the other side of her house. Yeah, I know her very well.
- R: Where was that?
- I: Calumet on Eighth Street.
- R: On Eighth Street?
- I: Yeah...oh she comes over to my place fairly often. Oh, she's been playing for years and years.
- R: Now that kind I can still remember, you know. Oh there's a few others, but them was the ones I really know that had musical talent. I'm just touching on the highest ones.
- I: Oh, Molly wrote...composed a march.
- R: I know that...that's why I say, they're all people that had something to do with the college studying. That's the only place you could get that stuff here. They didn't go to (???) when they got that.
- I: Soumi College was kind of a center for it then, wasn't it.
- R: Yes it was. The college wasn't too big yet...now it's a college, see.
- I: Well, how about Michigan Tech? They didn't...they were mostly engineering and that.
- R: Michigan Tech as far as music all they had was like military bands, see. And that style...as long as you could play military music and marches and things, that's all they wanted. Art Kinney had the band at the college for awhile, but I don't know why he didn't stay there too long. A couple of seasons, see; and he had a good band. But I don't know if they liked him or not...he says to me, he says, "Maybe I was too strict with them people." See, he was too much for higher class music. That's the way he explained it to me. I said, "How did you leave the college?" "Well," he says, "you know sometimes you're a little too strict and they want something of their own style." They were getting close to the popular stuff, see, coming in little by little, see. They wanted more of that and he didn't like too much of that if you're a good symphony man, see.
- I: I suppose the college students...the younger kids...
- R: Yeah, the younger kids, that's the trouble see.
- I: Yeah, I can see where the problem would be there.
- R: But he had that for awhile...I remember when he had that.
- I: Well gee whiz, they must have had a lot of competition between the different bands and everything between the different bands and

everything back in those days.

R: Oh yeah, there was a lot of competition. As far as bands, there was no band that could beat the Calumet Hecla Band as long as that was George D. Barnhard's days. After that we had some director by the name of Clarence Cook. Clarence Cook came in from Chicago. He used to play with some band out in Chicago in his younger days; but he was a lively director but I couldn't see where he was a strict enough director...he wasn't strict enough in music even in my days already. I could see that...after being under the other I found out that it wasn't much of a pleasure for me to stick with him because he wasn't watching close enough all the time. I was getting a little bit on that...catching the idea from those other fellows, see. I was getting a little too strict myself, maybe that's why them days...'til I went to the theater in Detroit. As long as you had...you play in tune, that's the main thing. As long as you played in tune...didn't play out of tune...if you did them cellos and violin players across you, you know, thirty-five - thirty-two men, they jump on your back right away..."Hey that instrument is off with me." You know, this or that, you know. But you had good musicians around here...they had some few good musicians. But them three is the best I can tell you about that belonged to this part of the country, see...was raised in Calumet. Art was raised here and born here...(???) was born here and Nissunen. That was Nissunen...Finnish. I still got that book...I didn't even read that part...I didn't get around to read that...I was gonna give that...

End of Side A

R: C & H used to send them to her...a fellow by the name of August Beck used to be the Sheriff of Calumet Hecla them days...he'd dead long time ago. August would send them down to Mrs. Bigando's. We says, "We ain't got no room for 'em." He says, "You got an attic up there, put 'em up in the attic." Hadda climb a ladder to go up in the attic to go to sleep.

I: Twelve boarders?

R: Twelve boarders.

I: That was kind of common, wasn't it. Lot o people had boarders back in those years.

R: Everybody...you take here in old Alloway...when I got close to sixteen years old I'd go and see that girl from...the (???) Brewery...Copper Inn...where the Copper Inn was...it's all down now...and they used to have...would come up here with a team of horses and would pile ninety-eight cases of beer up on that wagon of theirs. They'd start from the bottom six and one less and less and they'd come up to a peak like that and you could see it way over their heads, see. Come down here and drop half of it...forty - forty-five or so cases right here in Old Alloway. There used to be all log houses...sometimes all boarders.

I: What did you do, deliver to each house?

- R: Just...all we had was two houses to deliver it to boarders and then we go down to Copper City, drop the other half right there and go right home...winter or summer.
- I: Yes, I think...
- R: I used to just help that teamster as a kid, you know.
- I: I think some of the people used to have...some of the boarders were even sleeping in shifts in the same beds.
- R: My mother had that. They come up...night shift come and the day shift go to work and the night shift come up and they just had change the sheets and bang...go to sleep...sleep in the same bed. Hadda do that.
- I: Boy, there must have been lots of people around at that time.
- R: Do you know what the boarders used to get for board a month?
- I: No
- R: Sixteen dollars a month
- I: Sixteen dollars!
- R: Sixteen dollars a month. That's all we were paying for board that time, see she used to give buckets full...couple of pork chops and fruit and bars of Hershey candy...them thick bars yet...a bar each in the pail. They didn't make no money on it...they didn't make nothing on it...just lived, that's all. When my folks died...my dad died, all he had was one penny left and you know he got that...he had that bronze medal for working twenty years for C & H, see, when they had fiftieth anniversary they held that big picnic in Agosee (???) Park and he got it for twenty years working for C & H and I got that somewhere around here yet; but the big copper penny, regular penny and then he had a little penny, one of these regular pennies, in there with it. I got that. That's all he left me. Didn't have nothin more. Used to live just time to time, that's all.
- I: Hand to mouth.
- R: Yeah, that's right. But they always had good lot of eating...buy the beef...they used to buy it from some of these farmers...there used to be a lot of these Finnish farmers, Austrian (?) farmers and things like that, they'd come around with a horse with a half of a cow or heifer...they'd buy a half and the other'd buy some other part...that way they'd get rid of their meat right on the street. Always fresh meat and a lot of rabbits. They'd come out with rabbits too. Used to go down to the farm down the street down here...^{Switzerland} used to get a rabbit for twenty-five cents...could get a rabbit. But they just waiting to get that chinchilla hide...they just wanted the hide see and they'd sell you the meat for twenty-five cents.
- I: All your mother then must have been busy all day long with boarders

all that cooking.

- R: Til ten o'clock in the night and four o'clock in the morning she was up already gettin breakfast ready for them. She didn't have no wash-machine them days yet either...I mean no machine at all...all by hand yet. I bought her the first washing machine and that was a second hand I paid five dollars for it...a Maytag. I never forget it...I bought her the first one. But when they had that there everything was going easy lately...they had to wash those miners...the fellows that worked in the mines clothes...they were always dirty, you know, muddy...dry mud on the clothes. Yeah, the lines used to be full all the time...day and night.
- I: It's hard for somebody like me who has come up here, well since World War II, to picture what it must have been like with everything booming around here.
- R: Oh, them days...if you were down Rambletown, around now you don't see nobody...there's nobody here. Them days there was people on board...hanging on fences just like birds around here all the time see. Just like sparrows...one talking to the other fellow to meet here...they used to have the young people around...used to have the Butcher ball games, you know, you've seen the Butcher balls.
- I: No, I don't
- R: Those big balls that they roll.
- I: Oh, like bowling?
- R: Yeah, like bowling but they're bigger than that...big enough...big as a good sized...between that and a bowling alley they have a dozen of them, see and see, four and four, eight...eight and a little one. They throw them out...they roll 'em and they go one, two, three and just throw it then and get down to a certain end and the other four have to push you...who would go closer to that little one, see, the little one, see, and then the other'd come around and was right on top of it and they'd just take their hand and just throw it and try to bounce them right off it, see. When you'd hit that ball, yours would stay right there, see, and his would go.
- I: I suppose they just played that on the lawns.
- R: Yeah...no, they had a regular...they'd play right on the lawn here, right, but they had certain places all clay and hardened...hard clay, smooth like an alley.
- I: So they played that then. How about horseshoes? Did they play a lot of horseshoes then?
- R: Not so much. Well, I seen a place where they played horseshoes there.
- I: But mostly this game
- R: I used to play horseshoes myself; but that game was a big game as long

as the...in the olden days, see. In Detroit they still play yet. I know I went out to the State Fair Grounds for some doings while I was in Detroit now they still play in State Fair Grounds. Certain time they have a certain spot, see, I suppose a certain gang knows when they're gonna go out there, see, and certain picnics.

- I: I suppose, John, back then they had a lot of people that had just come from Europe and couldn't speak English.
- R: Yeah...half of them in the mine that couldn't speak English.
- I: And I imagine the Italian people tended to live in the same little area so that their neighbors could speak Italian.
- R-1: I suppose.
- I: And the Finnish peoples..
- R: Well I noticed they all mixed together...they didn't live...they all mixed together.
- I: Well, how did talk? You know, if one is talking Finn and the other is talking Italian or Austrian or something.
- R: They managed to get by, anyhow. That makes no difference...they that didn't...just as many Finns as anyother nationality. Then every second house was Finn and you know, like Austrian then Finn and all like that...all along like that, see. That's how it was.
- I: How did they get along together?
- R: Got along good...all very good
- I: Did they have any problems?
- R: No...never no problem...no, no, no...just like one family like them days oh they were (???) very sociable
- R-1: Not like nowadays. People aren't sociable anymore.
- R: Them days don't care what nationality had a picnic, If Italian had a picnic they'd all be there, every nationality. Austrian had a picnic, they'd all be there. Finnish had a picnics, they'd all be there same way. How many picnics did I go there to Three Rivers past Houghton with the Finnish picnics? Well, every nationality went there to Finnish picnics. Well, every nationality wenthere they had Finnish picnic there. Well, I think I went with Nissunen one time with the outfit. I forget what it was no more. I know every summer we used to go up and play one big picnic.
- I: Yeah, I guess she picnics were the great things back then.
- R: Yeah, generally Twin Lakes, you know Twin Lakes, they hold a lot of

picnics there.

I: Everybody I talk to they always remark about the picnics.

R: And Eagle River used to have a picnic down here...all them different places. And some'd just have a regular picnic and a few speeches... I played a lot of Finnish picnics down here right here down Eagle River and Eagle Harbor and place like that...just parties get together and about four five hundred people.

T: Now that's big ones.

R: Today it's hard to find four or five hundred in one bunch. Was nothing to have four five hundred down in them days.

I: I imagine all the politicians from around were always at the picnics too where they could slap a few backs and get a few votes.

R: Maybe...maybe, I didn't take notice of that.

I: You didn't pay attention to them, huh?

R: No, I didn't pay no attention to the politicians. I would^{n't} know who they were in them days. I was just looking what they had and if it was something good to eat, well time to eat and drink but was never hardly no Finnish picnic never no beer, no...never seen beer and of course mostly ladies used to give that or someone...that was straight, see. Oh, them days were good days. We didn't get much money, but we had a good life.

I: Yes, and I think even during the Depression from what I can find out about talking to people up here. Even during the Depression nobody really went hungry.

R: No...no...

I: They didn't have any money but...

R: No, they couldn't eat the best, but you got enough to eat anyhow

I: Yeah, it wasn't like down in the cities where you hadda have big long bread lines and soup lines and things of this type. It seems to me from what I can gather, everybody kind of helped each other out and raised gardens.

R: Well, after 1930 that's why I come back. There was too many of the theaters closed up and no orchestras. Only dance hall and a few hotels that was open. I see people go behind my house...I had on the corner of Mass and Dryset (?)...Mass and Dryset on St. Josephs Street, came up on my back...in the alley...get up on my top where I had my garbage cans and go there and find cabbage leaves, you know, find a bag with cabbage leaves and take them out of my bag and put in there bag and take them home. Oh, terrible.

I: Yeah, I don't think anything like that happened up here.

R: No, not here...in Detroit.

I: No, I know.

R: Usually had places to go where they'd give you...if you signed up for it you'd get ham or bacon or different thing like that...butter and everything...they used to have places where you could go to get it. But I never got down to where I had to go for that. I didn't get down to that...always by a little music always kept me enough to get by.

I: Do you think the Copper County will ever get back again...come back to where it's booming?

R: It's hard for me to tell now. Of course, you know, everything is changed around. Just like you, you are studying it...you'd know more about it than I would. With me I couldn't say nothing more about that now because I wouldn't even know how to start it to think about anything like that.

I: Yeah, you often wonder, you know, whether the mining will ever come back. Of course they'd got...

R: Well, I have an idea that the mining will come back. That's one thing about it...I'll tell you another thing about it, John...there used to be a fellow name of John Belletson(?) in Ontonagon, used to be a (???)...yeah, him and I we used to bring the WPA band in for two or three seasons straight on Labor Day. They'd play a parade and a baseball game and oh...everything. He used to say to me, he said, "Now," he says, "You take your men and bring 'em all up for supper at the Elks Hotel." You know where the Elks Hotel is?

I: Yeah

R: Yeah...well there was chicken for everybody...little spring chicken for everybody.

I: Well, did he think that mining would come back at (??? and Bennett?

R: Oh yeah...there's lot of good veins...you know that...there's lot of veins here that they haven't started...but years ago I used to hear these fellows that diamond drilled that's all gone now, they were good diamond drills, they said that when they struck...they got copper here because when they pull up that core and bring it to the C & H that as soon as they find it was copper, they cover it up...forget it, see...forget it...just pull away, they didn't want nobody to know about it. They claim that from here to the Lake there's about sixteen veins if they want to use different veins, see, and they only use two veins now. (???) and the first veins, see.

I: Holy smokes!

Stop in tape