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

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Arthur Erickson  
October 20, 1973

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## SUBJECT:

SOURCE: Arthur R. Erickson is a native of Pelkie. He is a jack-of-all-tradesman. His father homesteaded in Pelkie and Art

COMMENTS: still works that farm using the old technology. His memory is exceptional and the interview is worth reading

- I: Tell me about William ~~Lein~~.
- R: I'd say he's a man who weighed about 240 pounds...a real husky guy. I told you he was a foreman down at the Nestor Lumber Company. There used to be a big mill at Baraga, the Nestor Estate or the Nestor Lumber Company first of all. He got to be...he worked there as sort of a foreman (my uncle tells me this story)...years ago they used to get salt in by the carload...in barrels, I think the barrels weighed 280 pounds. He sent a team over there...a team of horses and a wagon and a couple of guys to unload that salt and they couldn't lift them barrels of salt. They started rolling them down, on the ground they went and broke the barrels. Pelkie, he didn't like, so he climbs up into that box car and takes them out like a nail keg and sets them on the wagon. Mr. Nestor comes along and says "That's the way to do it, Bill." I guess they use that salt somehow when they were drying the lumber, I can't figure out any other way that they would use that salt.
- I: So Pelkie worked down there as a foreman? And he lived here?
- R: Yes, and he lived in Baraga
- I: When was this...would you say?
- R: Before 1900...say 1895 would be a good guess. I can't give you the exact date. He was married then, but he didn't have too much money raising a family. So Mr. Dunnsmore, he was our next neighbor over there, he was driving team in the yard. They had a lot of horses down there then, everything was horses then, there was no cars or trucks or anything. Mr. Dunnsmore at that was still single called him a bachelor and he saved up some money and they homesteaded these four forties...two over there and two right here. They split the homestead...Mr. Dunnsmore took the two forties on the south side of the quarter section and Mr. Pelkie took the two forties here on the north ~~side~~ side of that quarter section.
- I: And today that corresponds to Hietikko's land...? Leins land?
- R: Yeah, they (Hietikko's) had in Pelkie. Lein's, no. Bill Narhi owns that now..or his wife owns...he married Fern Dunnsmore and it would be in the name of Mr. and Mrs. William Narhi...they live in Florida now. Then Mr. Pelkie sold that to Mr. Albert Liminga. And Werner Hietikko married Elma Liminga and that's how it got the name Hietikko.
- I: So when did Pelkie move here...around 1900?
- R: Right around 1900.
- I: Did he quit his job over there at the mill?
- R: Yes, he couldn't travel back and forth. He started farming...they had timber here...they logged off the timber and sold it. Sold the timber off their land and made a living that way. That's what my dad did. That time they were selling the pine...no market for the hardwood then. The pine and the hemlock.

- I: This was right around 1900...there was still some white pine here?
- R: Absolutely, there was just about virgin timber here in most of the places.
- I: Up to 1900?
- R: Oh, yes.
- I: They would log it themselves? How would they get that out?
- R: Yes...with a team of horses and they rolled it on a dray. A dray is a little affair like two long runners. Say they are about 8 feet long and they had that dray about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 feet wide because too wide you couldn't get in and around the trees. It had a little bunk on there and they put a chain under the log and rolled it on with a team of horses...put a skid...
- I: Was this the big wheels?
- R: No, there were no big wheels then yet. A dray used a skid...a round pole about 4 inches in diameter of hardwood and they put the chain under and hooked it in the dray and hooked the team on and rolled that pine log on the dray. That's called a dray...that little jumper. You know a jumper...a little sleigh with wooden runners. Then they tied that off of there and dragged it over and rolled it in the river and the logs were floated down the river in the spring of the year.
- I: Right here in the Otter?
- R: Yes, they went through Otter Lake down to Chassell, then wrapped a boom...a bunch of logs (I think they were 20 foot sticks) they were chained to this one...they would go right around...say it would cover a quarter of a mile. Then the steam tug would take them down out in the Portage Channel and take them down to Baraga. They call that rafting.
- I: So the Otter River was used to get them down to Portage Lake?
- R: That's right. Just like the Sturgeon was used.
- I: So in the winter they would haul them up to the sides of the river..?
- R: Yes, and they even stock piled them and rolled them into the river in the spring of the year and they went down...so the water was deep
- I: That's how Pelkie made his living here?
- R: Yes, to start out...just about everyone did..around here logging.
- I: Most of those pine logs went to Nestor?
- R: Nestor Lumber Company at Baraga.
- I: Where they sawed them up, and where did it go from there?
- R: Well, they shipped lumber...Nestor lumber shipped them as far as France...that I remember. I had an uncle who worked there and my dad worked there.

- I: And also they shipped to Lower Michigan?
- R: Everywhere...wherever there was a market.
- I: And that pine was used for building homes?
- R: That's right. They even build a couple of big lumber barges or boats in Baraga...the Nestor Lumber Company. And they used those for hauling lumber to anywhere...say to Detroit or anywhere where there is a seaport where they need lumber.
- I: And then Pelkie started farming. Did he dairy farm?
- R: Mostly logs. They didn't dairy farm...they had a couple of cows so they had milk and butter for their family. Then they would raise cabbage...cabbage is our main crop here...years ago. My dad raised cabbage here in Pelkie and a lot of people along the Sturgeon flats raised cabbage. That was the biggest cash crop. They would load it on cars and ship it out by carloads.
- I: So the French, to your knowledge, and this is how I've been thinking, they didn't go into dairy farming really big. The farming they did do was more or less to feed the family.
- R: That's right. Then the latter years, say around 1908-1910, there was a creamery built here in Pelkie. Then the farming started. Some started raising more cows seeing you could sell your cream right at Pelkie and we had a creamery where they made butter.
- I: By this time, of course, the Mineral Range Railroad...
- R: The railroad came in around 1900.
- I: Then the cream was transported by railroad?
- R: It would be butter that was shipped out by railroad
- I: Do you know where the butter went?
- R: To Copper Country...any outlying..even as far as Ishpeming, I understand it was shipped. The Copper Country was big at one time. Calumet, I believe, at one time rated the largest city in Upper Michigan.
- I: So the way the people made a living in order to pay for their land was to, after 1910 or 1911 when the creamery came in, ~~they~~ sell their cream and got a little cash that way and a few eggs.
- R: Yes. A lot of the men would go out and work in lumber camps. They were logging every winter. Not much in the summer, but in the winter there was lumber camps all over the country here. My dad was a logger. He would employ sometimes as much as say 50 men. He would take a contract to go and log a certain piece of property...there used to be a mill in Chassel called the Wooster Lumber Company... and my dad would take a contract with them and he would log back of Pelkie in that area and he logged back of Tapiola and well most of the people around Tapiola worked for my dad, John Erickson. Like said most of the people at Wooster Lumber Company they would have a camp and the farmers would work there in the winter. Then

in the summertime they would work their farms. There was no logging in the summertime, because everything was either hauled out with... you know...floated down the river or sleighed hauled if it was close enough to the sawmill...or shipped out by rail. There was logging every winter over here. Farmers had a few logs and they sold them to local mills say at Chassell there was Wooster and at Baraga there was the Nestor Lumber Company and L.G. Hilliar Lumber Company also in Baraga. They would load on the railroad car and they were shipped to Baraga and there was also a mill at Alston for awhile. Loggers shipped up there. The Christianson Lumber Company in Alston. My dad even logged for them for two winters the loggers shipped up there.

I: You said he logged an area back of Pelkie here?

R: Over on Section 10...where the Pine Creek gravel pit is now. And then on the Power Dam Road over there where Wickstrom's place is he logged a section back in there. At the Pine Creek it would be about 1916 and on the Power Dam Road that was about 1917.

I: Did he have a camp? What was it like?

R: Yes, he did. I was only a kid then. They would employ about 50 men. They had a cook there, bunk house, horse barn, office, blacksmith shop.

I: Would most of the men stay at the camp?

R: Yes, there were no cars...nobody walked that far...10 miles or so. They stayed right at the lumber camp.

I: That is one of the features of the early life here that strikes me as being important. It was so darn hard to get cash those days that in order to get it, the man would leave the house and the woman would take care of the household, the farm and the kids.

R: That's right...if they had a few cows, the kids helped if they were old enough or big enough. The mother took care of the cattle and run the farm while the man worked out in the winter time. Probably he came home once a month.

I: When did you go to the woods?

R: When I was 14 years old...the year of the flu. That was in 1917 even the school was closed here.

I: Bad flu epidemic?

R: Yes, a lot of people died around here.

I: Can you tell me more about that? Who was the doctor then?

R: Dr. Buckland in Baraga was the only doctor we had. Then they had a couple of doctors in Copper Country, one was Dr. Turner and Dr. Gallon.

I: Was it mainly Dr. Buckland?

R: If he was called...in fact we were the first to have a telephone up here...that come in about 1910. Lot of the people from way back they come over here...my mother could speak Finnish...she was Swedish.

nationality and when she came over to this country, she learned to talk Finnish before she learned English...how do you like that? Lot of the settlers that came in that area were Finnish people. She could talk Finn to them and they would call the doctor. I remember many a time she would have to go with Dr. Buckland...walk through the woods at night with a lantern because Dr. Buckland couldn't speak Finnish so my mother would have to go along to translate.

I: Your mother's name was?

R: Lena Erickson. She learned to speak Finnish when she came over from the old country. Her dad came ahead...he was a carpenter...he sent her a ticket and she came to Baraga...she got a job up at Alston working for a Finnish lady, Mrs. Luomanen and she could only talk Finnish so my mother learned to talk Finnish. Yet, after a couple of years she learned to speak English and she could even write and read English. It didn't take long.

I: Do you remember when Dr. Buckland used to come here to take care of someone?

R: Yes, our neighbor over here, Mrs. Dunsmore fell down and her shoulder was knocked out of place and he come up and set her shoulder. And then another time, I remember Johnny was fooling around a wagon or something, and he fell off and broke his leg, doc come up and set the leg. There were no hospitals to go to then. You broke your leg, you stayed in bed...he put a cast on it and to keep you in bed so long until he figured it was time for it to come off and then he would come whatever time was available and take it off.

I: I've heard that man had a reputation for being very, very good doctor?

R: Well, he was the second best <sup>bone</sup> doctor in the USA. You heard of some people who just came in here a few minutes ago? One time, his name is Harry Plough...he'd be my brother-in-law...he was fixing a hay track up in a barn about 1936 and he fell down and fractured his ankle into many, many pieces...and another doctor would have cut that leg off...so he layed all the pieces on the table and fit them all back together and the guy walks today...his ankle is a little bit crooked but he can walk around anywheres as good as anyone.

I: Right on the kitchen table?

R: No, he took him to the St. Joe's hospital for that...we had a hospital then. That doctor was that good. And another man that he, Pete Kokkonen up in Elo, he was cranking a Model A truck and it backfired. It smashed his wrist and he was sent to the hospital and he took that all apart and put it back together...the arm is not perfectly straight but a little bit crooked, but otherwise as good as ever. That just goes to show how good a doctor he was.

I: He wasn't one of those doctors who was primarily concerned with making money, was he?

R: No, he pulled my teeth...the first one who ever pulled a tooth for me. I remember having an awful toothache...I was about 8 years old...and my uncle brought me to Baraga with a horse and a cutter...this was wintertime...it was early in the morning because he would take a train to go from Baraga to St. Joe's hospital. There used to be a

drugstore in Baraga and so I waited there and he come in there and he takes a pair of tongs out of his satchel and he says open your mouth, which one is it...he pulls it out and threw it in the cuspidor and that was all...never charged me anything. Just that fast.

I: Often he would come for a call from Baraga he would spend the night over here...?

R: Yes, and I'll tell you another thing what happened...one time there was a lady...he was supposed to come up and deliver a baby...and on his way up he heard of the fellow of Edwin Erickson...he was a great man for horses, too, this doctor...on the way up he stopped to see if that mare was having her foal properly...she was having a colt so he stopped there to watch that on the way up before he come up to take care of the woman. The same doctor. Then he come up to deliver the baby, after that was taken care of.

I: I understand he was quite a man?

R: He said he was a guy who would never holler "ouch" or anything. One time...he also had a farm in Baraga and he had a couple of horses... and he had a buckboard...a buggy with a flat bottom on it...and a seat and a railing going around. He had some fellows driving fence posts...so got up on the buckboard and said this is the way to drive so he raised his hammer, the horse gave a jerk and off went Dr. Buckland and my dad was there...did he ever holler...dad picked him up and brought him home. I don't know if his shoulder was out of place or anything, but it hurt. He hollered...so my dad says, "remember doc, one time you hollered." My dad was huskie guy, so my dad picked him up like a baby. Brought him down to his home.

I: Do you think doctors have changed?

R: Boy, have they ever. They're cream puffs now compared to Dr. Buckland. You wouldn't get any of those doctors to go out in a snowstorm now with a horse in the wintertime to come and take care of you. But Dr. Buckland he went out rain or shine, it didn't make any difference. He came out with his horse and buggy if you were sick...call him and he came. He never really charged anyone. I remember I fell through the hayrack and I scratched the hide off my leg and I had quite a gash between two bones. We had a car then, my mother could drive, she took me down to Baraga and he bandaged it up. I went down there about three times and then I went to pay the bill and I says how much? He says a couple of dollars... and I been there three times. That's fair enough! If you broke your arm, nobody sent you to the hospital unless it was real serious. Just a year ago last winter, I was filing in the mill down in Baraga and I got a chunk of emery dust from the emery wheel and it got into my eye and I went over to Dr. Winkler to dig it out. He took it out and I felt alright and you know he wanted me to spend the night or a couple of days in the hospital just because I had a speck of dirt in my eye...I wouldn't stay!

I: I find that interesting that your folks had one of the first telephones. In the area around 1910.

R: That's when they first came true...I might be out of wack a year or so. The neighbors would come here...they had one at the (GoKey) *Authier* store, that was the first store in Pelkie and then we had a phone. There weren't too many, there were about six phones between here and Baraga. Neighbors from all around would use the phone. Somebody was

close to <sup>Gauthier</sup> Golkey's store in Pelkie, they would go over there and he would have to call in for them. Our telephones were different then. Now you got a number, then our phone number used to be a long-short and a long. Pelkie store was two short. You didn't dial...you had them old wall phones...you cranked it...you turn a long and short ring. You just pause a moment. As long as it kept on ringing, you kept on.

- I: This was a man named Golkey store...spelling different...
- R: Spelled like Gauthier...G..a..u....wasn't there a name in that book? It is a french name.
- I: Where was this store?
- R: First store was over there by the second river beyond Pelkie. They just pushed a house down a year ago...it belongs to my niece now. The first store was over there on the Silver River. He hauled his groceries up by team of horses from Baraga before the railroad come in. Then when the railroad came in, he built the store right where Sulo Jokela lives...my grandfather was the first carpenter around here. he built that store for Gauthier. Alfonse Gauthier was the first storekeeper.
- I: So when the railroad came through he built the store and got the goods from the railroad.
- R: They come in by rail then.
- I: What other buildings...was there a blacksmith shop?
- R: Then the saloons came in...right around that same time. Right across the railroad where the post office is was Thomas Bond...he had a saloon. Right where the Mobil gas station is now...Mitty Gauthier had a saloon. Not related to Alfonse Gauthier that I know of.
- I: What were these saloons like?
- R: It was about...a one-story building with a peak roof...I was in it. We had a passenger train going through Pelkie at that time, too. I remember my uncle going out to meet my mother and dad that was in December they were coming in on the train. My uncle took me in that Mitty Gauthier saloon to sit by the stove because it was cold. I remember the bar and that big mirror and I remember sitting by the box stove...that's all I can remember of that saloon.
- I: It had a big long mirror?
- R: Yes, say around 6' x 8'...when you are small it looks big anyway.
- I: Is that where the men would hang out?
- R: Right by that bar, yes. That's where they would hang out and have a beer.
- I: A lot of railroad men would probably stop in there.
- R: Well, some yes. They didn't have much time to stop because they had their duties to take care of on the railroad...they couldn't stop too

long. They had a saloon on the other side of the track...Thomas Bond.

I: What kind was that saloon?

R: That was living quarters in the back...he had a family. Remember where the old Pelkie school was right over there...that there town hall...this is the old Pelkie school...a building that looked like that with a porch built and you went into the door there was the saloon...that had a big mirror and a bar...he was a big huskie guy.

I: He was a bit huskie?

R: A man about 230...he had no trouble with the lumberjacks. They had a couple of rooms upstairs...like sometime a salesman come through... they would go over there and she would put them up for the night like a hotel...she was a good cook and she raised a family...two girls and three boys.

I: Any other old business establishments at that time?

R: Yes, then we had another store come in around 1912...Matt Ruona and Kivi company...Kivi company must have financed them. Right across from Ralph Ketola's gas station is now...where Co-op building supply is now. Shortly after the Co-op store...it was called a farmers store right across from our present Co-op store...the building used as a warehouse. That was the Farmers Store to start out with. About 1917 We had three stores and the creamery...that's the Fire Hall now.

I: What was this creamery like? Lot of people worked there?

R: They had about 5 people...a couple of girls packaging butter, one guy taking care of the boiler and couple of guys emptying the cream cans, one watching the churns and there was a guy in the office upstairs. I'd say there was about 5 people.

I: Farmers from all around would...

R: ...bring in their milk or cream...they brought in with horse and wagon until some of them got far enough ahead to buy a car then it was ~~was~~ hauled in with the car...there was no pickups in them days...put it in the backseat of the car.

I: Do you recall what they'd get for...

R: ...for 5 gallons of cream we would probably get \$1.75.

I: That would buy a little more in those days, wouldn't it?

R: Well, you could buy...when my dad first moved up here they used

(Side B of Tape)

I: This is about that passenger train...

R: He said his dad worked on the railroad and he got to be section foreman. I asked if he remembered what year it was when the passenger train was discontinued? He figured for awhile and he thought it was around 1906 or something like that. He said it was off for a year and then

they tried it again for awhile. I guess it didn't work out..I guess it wasn't a paying deal. They quit the passenger and they would hook a passenger coach onto the freight train...you rode on that then.

I: But at one time there was a separate passenger..

R: Yes, I remember riding on that when I was about 4 years old

I: What did that cost?

R: About \$.50 or so to go the Copper Country...it wasn't very much. I shouldn't quote that because I don't really remember. My mother bought the ticket. He would be able to tell you that.

I: You mentioned that a can of cream would bring you \$1.75...5 gallons. What you buy with that?

R: I bet you could buy so much groceries then you could hardly carry it then...everything was so cheap. You could buy a big barrel of toast for about \$3...you know what a barrel is...they were wooden barrels they would stand about 3' high and about "that" big around! You could buy that full of toast for about \$2.50 or \$2...Korppua...and we used to buy them from the bakery in Baraga and almost all the farmers would buy one or two barrels and you had toast for the whole winter. Bought in the fall of the year when it was kind of getting cold...you could buy cinnamon toast or plain toast.

I: What other kinds of prices? What about the salt pork?

R: Yes, you could buy that for \$.10 a pound...all that you wanted. I remember during the Depression in 1930's you bought all the salt pork you wanted for \$.06/lb. It was down that bad.

I: Men wouldn't make too much in the lumber camps in that day. What was the wage about for a man?

R: They got \$30 a month and the board. \$1 a day.

I: Did your dad pay men in cash?

R: To start off with, yes. Later on it was pay by check. It was sort of a voucher...like on the Wooster Company. They gave what was like a order book...it looked like a check book. Say I owe you \$25..pay to the order of...you wrote it out just like a check and filled out your stub. They would cash that anywhere. In the local stores, Baraga or anywhere...because everyone knew the Wooster Lumber Company was good. They had a good rating. Talking about cash...one time when my dad sold some pine logs...he sold a lot off this homestead here... he went down the Otter ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ River to Otter Lake and over to Pequaming to the Hebard Lumber Company. Before Ford come in. So when he went to get his pay, he went over with his horse and buggy and he had a half a beer box full of \$20 gold pieces when he paid him and he set that down in the buggy...they paid in cash. Not silver dollars, \$20 gold pieces. A little less it would be \$10.

I: I've always heard that in those old lumber camps that they really ate well...?

R: Why...there was the best chuck you could ever think of. There was

always roast beef or pork chops, all the sausage you wanted, all the pies, doughnuts, fried cakes, rock cakes, bread...my mother worked in the camp one time...she said you bake up a '98 of flour a day...well, 100 pounds of flour they were called...she would bake that into bread or cookies everyday. She cooked sometimes for my dad when he was logging. I remember I used to work in the cook camp with her. Why, I used to...we don't have a dishpan (2' diameter + 1' deep) as big around as that...I used to turn them...when she cooked doughnuts...that's was the winter of the flu...I would help sometimes in the cook camp...roll them fried cakes over...a tub like that full in an afternoon of fried cakes or doughnuts. She made as much as four different kinds of pies...always a pie for every dinner and a pie for every supper.

I: What about a typical breakfast? What would happen in the morning?

R: In the morning they had...she got up early and made the breakfast...had all the tables ready and then they would ring a bell. They would ring a bell...like that triangle...they would ring that in 6 o'clock. Then after a certain length of time you would go and ring that again and then they would come and eat. The second bell was come to eat. There were long tables...maybe thirty feet long...two of them like that with a long bench along each side...cups and a plate. A big coffee pot almost as big as one of those cans in the corner over there with a big handle on it. They were filled up from the coffee kettle on the stove...then you took your coffee and your pancakes...some mornings they had cereal. There was always ~~korppua~~ korppua and cookies also. There was bacon and eggs or pork sausages and fried potatoes...all you wanted to eat. It was like that in all the lumber camp.

I: I heard that they didn't talk very much..

R: No, you weren't allowed to talk at the table. Nothing!..Some of the cooks would hammer...*fish-up counter* "Quiet!" They what they called a ~~bishop pounder~~ and they would hammer on that...nobody talked in the cook camp. You had your own place and you kept that all the while you were there.

I: What about when a new man came in?

R: He waited...the cook...a place empty and he would go over there and that was your place from then on.

I: You never go to another place...you always go there. Have you ever heard of a green guy going there and sitting down where he thought there was a place.

R: Somebody would come along and say that's my place and he would just get up and move over somewhere where there was an empty place. There was no cane raised about it or anything. He would say I'm sorry I got the wrong seat.

I: How long would they eat?

R: Probably take 20 minutes or so. Then when they got done eating, out they would go...one after the other. Then you go back in the bunk house and get ready for work. You always went before daylight.

I: In the winter, what time would this be?

- R: 7 o'clock at least. You would eat your breakfast about 6:30. Then it was time to go, my dad would go and open the bunk house door...everybody was just about dressed to go. All right, boys, it was time to go, my dad would say. Then they all went to their jobs whatever their job would be...driving team or shoveling snow. Sawing logs when they were hauling, loading logs on the sleighs. There were all kinds of jobs in the wintertimes.
- I: Can you describe the jobs for me?
- R: Probably shovel the snow off the skidways. In the fall of the year they would saw the logs and they would skid them...they call it the skidway...where there were like two big round logs about thirty feet long..and they would pile logs up there with a team of horses and they call in a jammer...the pile was the jammer. There would be 100-150 logs in that pile and then you'd go down the road about another 100-150' or so and there would be another pile on both sides of the road...all the way down to the end of your holdings. In the winter those were sleigh hauls to the river or the railroad. This certain guy he would be there to shovel the snow off them deck piles and there would be another gang called the loading gang they'd move their jammer over there and the team came in with the sleigh, he unhooked the sleigh and he hooked onto the cable they used for hoisting the logs onto the sleigh and he kept on until he got say 15 or 20 logs...whatever he could haul... it depends on if he had a big hill or something he couldn't take too many. If they had a long hill somewhere they would have an extra team, they called it a tow team, they would double up up that grade. I even did that the first winter in the woods. Go out in the woods long before daylight with a team of horses and wait for the first team come along. It used to be cold waiting...you don't mind the cold if you're walking. By the time you got back there was another sleigh load and so on all day long.
- I: Those skid ways were iced over pretty good?
- R: Not the skid ways, no. The roads were...someplaces they iced them otherwise they just tramped them with snow.
- I: They got prettyslick?
- R: Yes, they did.
- I: It's that very slickness that made it possible to get those logs out?
- R: That's right. It be pretty hard to do any other way.
- I: What about the horses feet?
- R: They had shoes on
- I: Regular horse shoes?
- R: Yes. When it got icy towards the spring of the year, when the sun start coming out, they would have to take those shoes off and they would have to sharpen them...they called them sharp shod. They take them into the blacksmith shop and they would hammer them out until they were more like a knife edge. They would catch in the ice then.
- I: Two horses would haul how many of these logs? This isn't pine you

are talking about now this is mainly hardwood, right?

R: Hardwood, yeah. Say 20-25 logs.

I: How big in diameter?

R: They run...they never took anything under 12 inches. They all were running from 12 to 24 inches.

I: Mainly hemlock?

R: And hardwood.

I: When you say hardwood, what do you mean?

R: That's maple...maple, birch, soft maple, elm...that's hardwood. Hemlock, that's a soft wood. Classed as a soft wood.

I: That was one of your jobs...?

R: I used to drive team.

I: You were called the teamster?

R: Yeah, I was driving team. I also shoveled those skid ways, too. I shoveled snow when I wasn't doing that. I also sleigh hauled. Drove team hauling logs on a sleigh. I did every job in the woods

I: There were swampers, too?

R: Yes, they used mostly swampers in the fall. Where the logs were cut down, they would clear out a trail...it was called a skid roller. a skidding trail out to where them logs...then the team went in there and got them logs and brought them to the skid way. And then there was a team there with a jammer kept piling them up. Usually there were three teams in a gang. Two hookers...there was a guy who had like a hook to use on the log...each end of the log. (The cable came down like this then there was a log...there was a hook on this end and a hook here...this went up to the jammer...and they made a big pile.)---description of drawing. The team would pull them way up high. There was a pulley up on that and a pulley down on the bottom of that thing...it was called a jammer...it had 30 foot poles on it and a set of runners on the bottom...so that it wouldn't tip over. And you had a guide line...like a cable...two of them on the top tied to a tree and it would lean over so far so that it brought the log up and then you piled it. You started with a small pile and then up, up, up.

I: That was for the purpose of piling them onto sleighs?

R: Onto skids, yeah. Then in the wintertime, when the snow came, sleigh hauling start..they shovel the snow off that pile and then they were loaded back onto sleighs. And then hauled to the river or railroad or whatever transportation was.

I: They used to crop-cut in those days?

R: Well, yes. Up until just a few years ago. They were called sawyers They would get so much a log for sawing or so much a foot.

I: Was that piece work?

R: Yes.

I: What was it then, do you remember?

R: A sixteen foot log as a rule you got \$.16 for cutting that.

I: They pay a penny a foot?

R: Yes. Then later on you got maybe \$01.25 (~~1 1/2¢~~), when things went up. Around 1918-20's. Lot of times we had a big butt...supposing you cut down a big tree and it had a hole in it...you'd saw a chunk off that and they called that a butt and they paid them say a nickel a piece extra for sawing that butt off. So you'd get a clear log for the sawmill...they don't want them shaky butts either. 'The lumber is not good in them as a rule.

I: The sawers...there would be two man teams...?

R: Yes, when they crosscut.

I: Did you ever do any of that?

R: Yes. Lots of it.

I: What's that like?

R: That's a good job...sawing in the woods. I liked it...it's hard work, but you like it. When you made...they were making say \$2 a day, sometimes \$2.50. Lot of times at 2 o'clock in the afternoon you had your \$2 made you went to the camp...you had a shorter day than the other guys.

I: That was one of the better jobs?

R: Yes.

I: Was that the best job there?

R: Well, I'd say...except for the teams...that was a good job too. A hooker was a good job...put that hook on loading...that was a good job. But a swamper...that's....

I: According to the pay scale, those jobs that were paid the best

R: The teamster got the best.

I: He had to have his own horses...?

R: No...my dad had his own teams, but my dad would hire some farmers if they had a team he would hire them.

I: That happened every now and then...?

R: Yes, they...as I remember...the wage then was a team and teamster He used to pay them \$5 a day and that's the standard wage then.

I: But as a rule...my dad at one time had 14 team of horses. As a rule

of the loggers had their own horses

I: The teamster working for your dad made about how much?

R: \$40 a month at that time. The other labor was around \$30 a month. Sawyer made up to \$50 a month...depending on how hard he wanted to work.

I: Good sawers made the most, then?

R: Yes, they always made the most.

I: Good sawers are hard to get...

R: That's right. The trick was in learning how to file your saw and she cut easy...and didn't take no time to cut down a big tree. But that was the trick in sawing...learn how to file your saw. Then you had to learn how to fall your tree so it wouldn't get hung up in the next one. You get what I mean, now. There was virgin timber...there was trees everywhere. They way you judged that was you sized up your tree like if it was leaning it would go that way...and if it wasn't leaning you would pick out the side that had all the big limbs...that would be the heavy side...it would go the way the limbs were...the heavy side. You sawed a notch with your saw and then you chopped that out.

I: You sawed in a straight in cut and then chopped a notch?

R: Yes. Or sometimes you sawed it in. But in the cold morning, you didn't mind and when you are used to chopping, you didn't take but a matter of minutes and you chopped in a notch say 4 inches deep. On a big tree you started on one side...you usually sawed all the way around say the width of the saw say 6 inches, go all around up to the notch then you cut in the middle.

I: From the back of the notch?

R: Yes. Otherwise you take a chance of that tree splitting, if you just start going straight through. The idea of sawing all around it was so it wouldn't split before it started going down.

I: You liked that?

R: Yeah, that's a good job.

I: What about in the real cold winter, early in the morning when you got that saw?

R: Did n't bother me

I: Do you remember that?

R: Yes, you sawed to beat the dickens. You warmed up in about 10 minutes.

I: What kind of clothes did you wear? Did you have to dress light when you were...

R: No, no. You wore heavy woolen clothes and you usually used a heavy

Mackinac when you walked to the woods, but when you started sawing you usually peeled that off because when you had too much clothes on you were too stiff...get the idea. You weren't limber enough to pull that saw. You usually hung that up on a tree or laid it on a stump or something.

I: I've heard you could look over two men sawing with crosscuts and you could see a cloud of steam.

R: Yes, yes. When you are working for awhile your back starts to sweat. You bet, that's right.

I: Was it important to have a team...two guys working together. Could all guys saw together?

R: No. You got to get a good partner. Every guy isn't a sawer. An old story goes that if...one guy said I don't mind riding the saw as long as you don't drag your feet. That saw was kind of made round so when you pulled it you kind of bring it up...it's like a rocking chair affair...the runner on it. You don't pull it straight across...you kind of raise it up a little. That's why it's made kind of round. Have you seen a crosscut?

I: I'm not familiar enough with it.

R: (pencil drawing) When you saw it is sort of a rocking affair.

I: What's the purpose of that?

R: It saws easier. Straight saw would be a mean thing to saw with... you'd be sawing on one corner all the time. Pull hard...but when it is round like that it sort of rock through the cut. A lot easier.

I: With a partner you had to get just the right rythm going?

R: Yeah, you both...get some guys sometime...I wouldn't work with them only one day or so. They would play you out...you got one that was no good.

I: You mean you'd do the sawing?

R: Yeah.

I: How was it...I'm on one end and you're on the other...I am supposed to pull and then you pull?

R: You let it go...lot of times when you get the knack of it, you can even give it a slight push and it'll cut that much faster. After you learn how to saw cuts.

I: That's something that requires a knack?

R: Yeah. You can saw alone, but it is a lot slower.

I: Generally, each man would pull. Did you saw with any one man? Did you saw a lot?

R: With many different men, I saw.

- I: Do you remember any one of them in particular that you used to really saw well with?
- R: Yeah, he's dead and gone now...Henry Miller was good to saw with. And my dad was an expert at that. In fact, my dad and another fellow in Baraga one time they had a lumberjacks picnic long ago, him and this other guy won first prize for cutting a block off the fastest.
- I: When was this, do you recall?
- R: Before I was born...say around 1900...1902 down at the Nestor Lumber Company...they had like a lumberjack picnic.
- I: Do you know who the other man was?
- R: His name was Erickson...no relation to my dad, but an Erickson also. Ed was his name, my dad was John Erickson. But no relation, just the same name.
- I: You really liked that. When you and Miller got together could you buzz some trees down okay?
- R: We wouldn't have any trouble cutting 50 logs in half a day. Cut down the trees and cut them into log lengths in half a day...50 logs no trouble at all.
- I: What kind of money a day would that make you back then?
- R: Probably have \$5 a piece...something like that in half a day That was good money then.
- I: Your dad was a Swede?
- R: Yes, little bit Norwegian. Half Norwegian almost. His mother was Norwegian.
- I: Did he go straight out here? or did he go...
- R: He He come to Baraga..from Sweden he came to Baraga
- I: Where was he from in Sweden?
- R: Roland, Sweden...up near the Norwegian border
- I: Why in the heck did he come here?
- R: I don't know...why did all the young fellows come here. Somebody come over here and said how good it was in America. You got a quarter of a section of land for nothing...homestead. That's what brought all the imigrants over here...the biggest part of them.
- I: Your father homesteaded?
- R: Yes, this here place, here.
- I: You got  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a section...160...
- R: That's right, everybody that come here. Excepting Dunnsmore and Pelkie, they split that section...that  $\frac{1}{4}$  section. Then there was

some..only one forty...like my grandfather, he had only one forty. But he come a long time after, too.

I: By homesteading, you just had to live on it.

R: Yeah, you had to clear. So many years you had to clear 5 acres... that was part of the contract. That was considered a farm...that was all handwork, too.

I: Once you do that, it's yours?

R: That's right.

I: How did they clear that?

R: You sawed down trees. Burnt up the logs and everything.

I: Did they burn a lot of good wood those days?

R: Absolutely, it would make you cry now if you saw that happen.

I: Beautiful logs...

R: Beautiful timber...well, hardwood wasn't worth anything, only firewood. Only thing they would sell at first was pine.

I: When did that hardwood market come in?

R: I'd say around 1908 or so, somewhere in that order.

I: The same lumber companies..

R: Were starting to buy hardwood...they were starting to make hardwood furniture and flooring and so forth.

I: Flooring was the big thing?

R: That's right. And your furniture was hardwood. Maple. Your hardwood would be sawed into lumber and shipped to the furniture factory.

I: In Grand Rapids, most likely

R: Yes, and in Wisconsin there's a lot of furniture factories.

I: At that time for the hardwood market, the Mineral Range took most of that.

R: Right

I: There wasn't much on the rivers in them days, was there?

R: Hardwood wouldn't float. The only thing that would float would be pine and hemlock.and basewood and spruce and elm floated fairly good, but not good.

I: So in those days it was the Mineral Range that hauled it out. Then Pelkie became a big logging center...

- R: You ought to see the logs sometimes there was millions of feet decked up in Pelkie. Like I told you, in them piles. Then all spring long you'd be loading carload after carload. You could load up to 4 to 5 carloads a day with a team of horses and two man...no, it would be three men because one guy had to be up on top because you had to have stakes...they had so much...six stakes and wrap the wire around that...four strands...then you hoist it up and put some more logs on that...say a layer about 4 feet high and then you got up so high, then you put another four wires between each two stakes and then you put probably 15 more logs up there.
- I: So how many logs could you get up there?
- R: You'd haul about...about 100 logs to a carload.
- I: Around 16 foot logs?
- R: Yes. They would run from 12 to 16 foot.
- I: There would be a lot of guys in Pelkie doing that...loading?
- R: Yes, all day long...half of the summers. Loading all the time
- I: Farmers doing that?
- R: Farmers would do that. They would go out there and start hooking in the morning or whatever job. They would want somebody out there with a team, well...
- I: Who paid them then?
- R: The same one...like my dad if he had a contract with somebody he'd be loading out logs in the spring of the year.
- I: He'd get farmers to help or anyone he could
- R: Anyone who wanted to work they usually got a job.
- I: If they had a team?
- R: That's right. Or if they didn't have a team they would have another job...say like a hooker or someone on top, they would call him a toploader.
- I: When you walked into Pelkie in the summer, would you see a lot of activity during the day?
- R: All day long they were loading logs. Excepting Sunday of course.
- I: And they had these little sidings...Hamar, same thing went on over there.
- R: Same thing there. Hazel, Pappan...
- I: They had another thing in Pappan, the same sort.
- R: Loading logs, every side track used to haul logs. All along the line.

I: When would the train come through and pick them up?

It would come up in the morning about 9 a.m. all the way up to Mass and then come back in the afternoon around 1 p.m. or so, then stop, do the switching and hook on a few cars here. I tell you by the time they were all strung out even at Pelkie here they had 50 carloads. Oh, that used to be a long freight.

I: That used to be the Mineral Range.

That's right. They had a big locomotive on there, too

I: It would get those logs then down to the connection at Keeweenaw Bay?

R: Keeweenaw Bay and then they would hit the south shore and go either from there toward Houghton or Baraga direction and there was a mill over there in L'Anse also.

I: Turn either to the right and go south or left and go north?

R: That's right.

I: And at that time, from what I've heard, a lot of firewood...lot of that hardwood went for firewood...to the mining companies because all those boilers and smelters were run by wood.

R: And all the residences around town were fired by wood. There was no coal up here yet.

I: What did cordwood go for then?

R: I guess that my dad would get around \$50 a carload for wood split up

I: Was that a railroad car?

R: Yes. My dad had the first saw machine...he had a little horsepower steam engine like a boiler...it was shaped like a locomotive boiler and we usually hauled it around with the team. They had a drag saw that was like a crosscut saw and they cut down the trees in the woods full length and cut them off and bring them over to that machine it was a little, low...it had like a little trolley car and roller in the front. They would roll them on and put them up and that saw would lift and saw them off and then a guy would roll that block away and then another one would split...they would cut a carload in a day. In fact, Mr. Pelkie was the best sawer. He had a lever on that saw where you press to make that saw cut fast. He was a man I told you, around 240...he was the best to saw because he would put his weight on that and you would really see that thing cut.

I: I heard that when you went into Hancock that you could see black clouds up in the air that there was actually pollution.

SUBJECT:

SOURCE: Arthur R. Erickson

COMMENTS: Tape 2 of 2

I: Thinking back about William Pelkie himself, what kind of a man was he? You said he looks pretty strong.

R: He was a big huskie guy and he was a mighty good neighbor to get along with if you ever needed any help he would help you and if you wanted to borrow something, you could go and get it as if it were your own. He was a real nice man to get along with.

I: Did he speak English? Did He speak French?

R: English, yes. French, that I don't know I never did hear him speak French. I guess he was born in Canada. Same as this neighborman Dunsmore, he was Canadian Scotch, but he couldn't even speak French or Scotch. His ancestors were Canadian Scotch.

I: Do you know where Pelkie was born in Canada?

R: No. That I don't know, but I know he had a brother in Canada. Because my uncle tells me of the time he took a trip back to Canada to visit his uncle and he had a savage rifle he took it back to Canada with him and left it there with his brother. So I suppose they use it there for hunting, just like we do here. He used to raise a lot of hay and sell it to the lumber camps. That was another way of running farms around here...how the farmers made a few extra dollars in the wintertime. He had a big barn over there built out of logs he filled that up with hay. There was a couple of fellows around the country had an engine and baler, you had to pitch the hay in by hand to the baler years ago.

I: It was a big baler, it made big bales?

R: Yes, little bit bigger than the ones I make. They would run from 100-160-75 pounds like that...the bales. They tied them by hand with one guy in one section of the baler, one in the other...one guy would poke the wire through the other guy would catch it and bind it up as it went through. When it come out of the baler, it went on a scale and weighed it and you had a box of tags about 2x2 you marked the weight on there...if it was 165 you stuck that on by wire...usually the end of the bale. And he also...

I: Do you recall the name of that type of baler?

R: It was an Ann Arbor baler. Made in Ann Arbor, Mi.

I: What did they cost then about?

R: I'd say they run about \$400. \$400 is as good as \$5,000 now.

I: Can you describe it in a little more detail...what it looked like?

R: Well, it looked something like the baler we have today. You know where the hay comes out behind. It had big gears to run that thing. It had like a packer...did you see the Poninen brothers one...it is

goes up and down. There on that style of a bale, there was a guy up on a platform right by that baler...when that packer came up you forced the hay in it. And it comes out the back. Then there was about 4 guys in the barn getting that hay loose and one pushing it up to the guy who fed the baler. It took a crew of about 7 men to run that when you baled hay.

I: What men had done was tossed it into the barn at first...then from the barn they baled it.

R: That's right

I: Then a couple guys would get the hay from the barn, feed it up to the baler, one guy would feed the baler and one would pack it down. What would the other guys do?

R: The other...one on each side of the baler, they would pass that wire through...it was like a block of wood in there for a spacer with cracks in it so you could shove your wire through. And when that baler...it usually had a bell on it...would ring when it gone down to a certain place...otherwise, if you forget yourself your bale got too long. Well, then that block that came down on the end, you had a place or compartment where you put that block in. Well, when that packer came up, he tripped that lever where that block fell down and at the same time he had to hurry up and get a little hay behind it, so it wouldn't fall sideways. Then push it down. I've fed a baler once too so I know how it goes.

I: Pelkie would do this and sell this to camps...

R: To local lumber camps.

I: For their horse teams?

R: That's right.

I: What kind of money would they get for that?

R: You would get around \$20 a ton. That was about the average money. You would load about 2 ton on a sleigh and bring up to the lumber camp. That's about all you could pull, because the hills were pretty steep around here then.

I: Lot of the early farmers did this to get a little extra cash?

R: As a rule most of them did that had any size farm at all. If they had a couple of cows, well, the surplus hay, they'd have it baled. These same people they would go around from farm to farm if you had some hay to bale, they would charge so much a ton.

I: Who had the baler around here, do you remember?

R: Michaelson up here in Elo had one. Then there used to be a fellow name Leo Amos down toward Baraga, he had one.

I: No one right in Pelkie?

R: Burt Lein had one here

I: These men would drive around. What time of the year?

- R: In the fall of the year, usually before the snow would come. See, you are kind of done with alot of your farm work then. You had your grain crops in and then that bailer would go around.
- I: What did he...would a crew go around with it? If he brought it to your house, you would be responsible for it?
- R: No, crew. He came himself and fed the bailer. You collected enough men to pitch the hay out of the barn up to the bailer and take care of weighing the bails and so forth...that was up to you.
- I: Would all farmers have their hay bailed?
- R: Not all...some had enough ~~tazbaz~~ just for their cows.
- I: This was just the surplus hay that was going to be shipped and sold?
- R: Yes, they charge about \$1.50 per ton.was the rate. You could bail up to 20-25 ton a day if you had a good crew in the barn. That sounds like a lot of money, but you had to pay for that bailer,too. You had to have a tractor for belt power to run it.
- I: When did the bailer come on the scene?
- R: About 1905 when they started coming in.
- I: Let's go back to Pelkie...he made a little money that way.
- R: Yes, then for a couple of years he raised strawberries. Evert Larson, I and John Dunnsmore and some people out here named Doquette. We picked for 1¢ per quart around 1910. That was a lot of money...you got only 10¢ a quart when you shipped them out. He shipped them out on the Mineral Range...afternoon, just before the train...he kept them in a root cellar to keep them cool...he'd load them in his buggy and bring them out to the train...don't know where they went from there...suppose to the wholesalers in the /Copper Country...Cohodas, Godfried, and Peninsula Wholesalers.
- I: Did Pelkie ever work in the lumber camp?
- R: Yes, he had a team of horses. He go out in the wintertime and haul logs with his team or sometimes he would be on a tow hill. He also raised cabbage...almost all the farmers along the river here would raise cabbage.

- R: 'Cause I remember working for him when he'd cultivate those with a horse, you know, I'd lead the horse or nine times out of ten I'd ride the horses back and that cultivator would come along one row and you'd go up another one. I remember I worked a whole afternoon and he gave me ten cents and that was a lot of money those days... I was glad to get that dime. There was no place to make any money, and then in the fall of the year why then they'd...when the cabbage were big they'd harvest 'em, you know, load 'em in a wagon, you know, you had a wagon with like a big box and they'd haul 'em out and fill the loader and then into a box car and then they shipped them, like I told you to (???), Godfried and to the wholesalers. And they in turn sold them to the people that worked in the mines and so forth around the Copper Country. They made their own sauerkraut.
- I: From what I've understood of that early cabbage history, that started when the Mineral Range started, right?
- R: That's right
- I: Not before
- R: No, no...you wouldn't think of hauling cabbage twenty miles in the Copper Country, although a few did, but...
- I: Okay, the Mineral Range made that possible.
- R: Yes
- I: The Mineral Range also made it possible for hardwood industry...
- R: That's right
- I: ...and also made it possible for the creamery...
- R: That's right
- I: ...to pump out the butter. Any other products?
- R: Yeah, they used to sell rutabagas and potatoes
- I: Where would they go?
- R: They all went to the same wholesalers.
- I: Where did they buy them...this is mainly to Houghton, wasn't
- R: That's right
- I: Cohodas?
- R: Cohodas and Hancock...Lieblin (??) was in Hancock
- I: What's this name?
- R: Lieblin...L I E B L I N...probably an E on the end...or a French

and Godfreid was over in Hancock, come to think of it...another wholesaler.

I: And, I heard some of these went as far as Chicago...some of these cabbages.

R: Yes, I guess they did

I: But the farmers, though, were upset at the time. Evidently they were not getting the best deal or making so much of it that many decided at a certain point that it didn't pay off.

R: Yeah, but I don't know...they kept that up for as long as I could remember 'til the cabbage market went bad...too the mines started slowing down and they started selling cabbage by the piece in the store...you know, or by the head I should say, that's when the cabbage market died out. But years ago when all these Italians and all them would make a barrel of sauerkraut the market was good. It was good for about twenty years, I'd say. But, then when it got, like I told you, you could buy a head of cabbage in the store, the lady of the house would go and pick out, that was the end of our cabbage market.

I: The cabbage market for the most part then was the miners in the towns who liked sauerkraut...

R: That's right...that's right

I: ...and when the mining industry collapsed the cabbage died along with it.

R: You bet your life.

I: That's interesting to see that it was the railroad that made it possible for products to be shipped out and therefore made it possible for people to make a living here.

R: That's right

I: That must have been a happy day when that railroad came through.

R: Well, was it ever. That was before my time, but I imagine everybody was glad to have that come in.

I: Let's talk a little bit about farming. Now, how did your dad clear this land?

R: By hand. He had a team of horses and sawed and cut down the trees and they piled up the brush and they burnt it.

I: How did they get those stumps out?

R: Well, they'd go out and use dynamite...they'd buy a box of dynamite you'd get a hundred sticks in a box.

I: How much did that cost years ago?

R: Around five dollars a box and that was lots of money.

I: But it was necessary, wasn't it?

R: You had to buy that cash...but you never took a stump out the first year when that tree was green. You waited about two or three years 'til it rotted a little because it would take twice the dynamite to blow that out if the tree was green...all them green wood strips in them all...well when the stump was dead it'd blow apart and what the dynamite didn't take out you hooked a team of horses onto the rest of that stump and pulled 'em out piece by piece.

I: Were these pine stumps you're talking about?

R: No hardwood...some of the pine stumps they took out, but a lot of 'em they just tried to pile the brush on 'em and burn 'em because, gee whiz you'd use a half a box of dynamite on one stump, you know they were so big. And the way those roots would spread out they'd ...oh some of 'em if you went around you'd be out twenty feet them roots would go way down in the ground. So, as a rule, most of the pine stumps were left and they'd like burn 'em up and then you'd pull 'em out root at a time with a team of horses or if it was too solid you'd use a little dynamite here and there to break the roots up.

I: That was a job, wasn't it?

R: Uh huh...talk about work...that's why when I see lot of these people planting those clearings and that back into trees, it makes me wonder if they had ever done the work like those farmers did or forefathers did to clear that land, they wouldn't plant it back to trees I guarantee that because I even done a lot of land clearing here when I was a kid...I helped my dad and I'm telling you that's hard work. Chop out all that brush and...it was all hand work and then what a job to plow that. The first year or so after you cleared that off you never plowed it, they used a spring-tooth harrow and go around between the stumps and you'd...

I: What's a spring-tooth harrow?

R: Well, that's like a...seen a field cultivator or anything?

I: Yes

R: Well, a spring-tooth harrow is something like a field cultivator. There were no field cultivators at that time, but if you dragged that down, you know, and it tore out the ground a little bit, you know, and you threw your oats in by hand and raggled it again and then when the rows grew up in the fall of the year, why you cut it by hand with a scythe...there were no binders then that was all cut by hand.

I: And that was inbetween the stump.

- R: Yes, and then you'd haul that in on a jumper or a wagon and use it for feed for your horses and, then like I said, when the stumps rotted, then they start blasting the stumps and then they'd tell you when you got a bigger clearing well bought a mowing machine and said they'd cut the hay with the horses.
- I: When did the mowing machine start coming into the area?
- R: Oh, I don't know...around maybe 1908 at first when...
- I: That horse drawn mower with that long...
- R: That's right. I loved it when my dad got the first one I'd say, something like that and that was only a four and a half foot blade on it and that was enough for going around between those big stumps. Lot of them big stumps they left them there for years till they rotted out pretty good.
- I: Especially those pine ones, right?
- R: That's right...yeah, they were a corker.
- I: Does that make you...give you a sour sad feeling in your stomach to drive by these clearings and see them becoming brushed in?
- R: Yes...yes because I know how much work went into that to make those clearings...it's a dirty shame to see all them beautiful farms growing up into brush and barns going down. It would to you too if you ever helped to make one of them farms...to clear it.
- I: Do you remember the sweating your dad...
- R: Your dog gone right I did.
- I: Do you remember doing it?
- R: Clearing land?
- I: Yeah
- R: You betcha as if I'd done it yesterday
- I: All day long?
- R: All day long you went out therewith an axe...with a hoe sometimes...chopped some of them smaller stumps out and pile up the brush and burn it. If it didn't all burn then haul it to the next pile and made another one and burned some more when they're dry. And when you were plowing there for the first time was a job, boy, you'd go only four - five feet with the plow or ten feet and get stuck on a root...you'd have to pull the plow back or if you pulled up a root you'd throw it ontop of the plowing and you went some more and you got a piece plowed and you run around with a...you call it a jumper like a little stone boat or outfit with two runners, you know, you piled the roots

and that on there and you'd haul them to some big brush pile. When they dried you burnt 'em. There's a lot of work went into clearing that land. Nobody will know unless you once did the work how much work it took to clear an acre of land and a lot of time. Because, there were no bulldozers then. And, in fact, you had a better farm when you cleared it by hand. A bulldozer sweeps all that good top soil off into a pile...you've probably seen them piles...look like a big mound. I was on a bulldozer too, I know what it does. But, when you clear by hand all your good dirt is left right there.

- I: I heard that in the good dirt...that new dirt is where they'd plant the potatoes.
- R: Yes, in the nice top soil...black dirt and talk about we could get the potatoes and good potatoes. Why, about three hills you'd get a bigger pail than that full they grew that good...you know, you hilled 'em up by hand.
- I: In between the stumps
- R Yes
- I: In between the roots there was crops growing.
- R: That's right, and I'll tell you, you got some real good potatoes.
- I: You know, it stands to reason that that would be the best soil because the richest soil here...
- R: Is on the top...that's right.
- I: .isn't in the fields, it's in the woods
- R: That's right, you bet
- I: Soon as the woods are cleared you've got the best soil because that's where all the leaves and the needles and the wood rots and it builds it up justlike one great big compost pile out there.
- R: That's right...that's what my brother does when they come down here with...I got a place over there I pushed a lot of it in from around the mill there with the bulldozer...they come down here with some tubs and pails and get that black dirt and they put that on their garden over in L'Anse...and ones over in Pequaming. Well, then they got a wonderful garden. Otherwise they don't...plant it in that red soil there...nothing will grow over there...clay. But years ago, used to get some dandy potatoes...any vegetable you planted among those stumps.
- I: Would your family have a garden in those days?
- R: Everybody had a garden. You raised all your own potatoes. Years ago everybody lived on the fat of the land. You planted a piece of wheat a crop of wheat and you took it to the flour mill...there used to be

one over at Walitalo's...

I: Gristmill, eh?

R: Yeah, and one at Atlantic Mine and one down at Chassell. Well, you took a wagon load...so much...many sacks of wheat and so many sacks of rye or barley...you took it down there and you had it ground and you had flour for the winter.

I: Do you remember doing that?

R: Yes...I remember that.

I: What would they charge to grind your wheat in those days?

R: That is a thing I don't know...what the price was, but it wasn't too much.

I: Would you leave them a portion of your grain?

R: No, it was so much...they charge you so much a hundred pounds for grinding it.

I: And you'd have your own flour and you'd store it in the grainery then.

R: That's right...where it was cool. We had enough to last for a year.

I: What else would you grow?

R: And you'd raise your own oats for the horses, and you'd raise peas everybody had a few hogs on the farm and we raised mostly peas for them...green peas, most of the peas were green...

I: For the hogs?

R: Yeah for the pigs...that was the best pig feed there was...peas. I know many a times we'd have a dozen hogs here.

I: Most farms had a few hogs, huh?

Yeah, every farmer had two or three for their own use.

I: Did they have a couple chickens?

R: Oh, I guess everybody had...we had as much as maybe fifty.

I: How many people were living at your house here at the time?

R: Well, there was four of us kids, my mother and my dad and my uncle. And then what eggs you didn't eat you sold 'em at the store at so much a dozen...you probably got ten cents a dozen.

I: Ten cents a dozen and you usually applied that ten cents to merchandise.

R: That's right...trade...it was the same thing as cash.

I: Most of it was trading, hey?

R: Yes...trade for trade. And before the creamery we had a few cows, you milked 'em and you made your own butter and you sold your butter at the store, you know, in a solid chunk, see. He'd weigh it and you got so much a pound. Say, maybe you got twenty-five cents a pound, something like that, and you'd take home so much groceries for it. I can remember, I stayed at my grandmother's one winter, an she told me that to buy her ten cents worth of lemons...that was in about 1915. I got three lemons for a dime and then she'd make a lemon pie. I don't know how many she used to make that pie, but she'd make a lemon pie.

I: What other kinds of things would you plant? You said rutabaga...

R: Yeah, and cucumbers...you know the soil was so good then you could take your cucumber seeds out of that package...you threw them around in the stumps and that's all you hadda do and they grew the beautiful cucumbers and the same with your rutabagas and turnips. You didn't have to hoe that or anything. You threw that around the stumps all you hadda do was harvest them in the fall, the soil was that good. You never had to make a garden like you do now a days...and then you got a hard time to get 'em to grow.

I: That was for mainly feeding the family, right?

R: That's right. Like I said, you lived on the fat of the land and you had a few cows, you made your own butter, you had your cream and your milk.

I: I'm interested in finding out what life was like on the early farm... how everyone kind of pitched in. When you were young, what was your work to do on the farm...before you went into the woods?

R: Well, I used to help milk the cows...we had a few cows...I helped to milk them.

I: How many did you have in those days?

R: Oh, my folks they had usually around eight

I: Eight you were milking

R: Yes...and I helped milk them and we had to feed them hay, you know, take care of them...do the chores.

I: The barn chores?

R: Right

I: Who would do that...you when you were home? How old were you when you started doing that?

R: About ten years old.

I: Would your mother be doing that too?

R: She'd help milk them and I had an uncle that stayed here...he used to be a tailor and he'd make a few suits and then he'd help do the chores

I: What kind of things would the sisters do?

R: Well, she just helped my mother with dishes and that around the house and some of the cooking.

I: Would the sisters go out in the barn and work?

R: Yes, sometimes they would if you were short handed...they'd come and help you.

I: What about the garden? Who worked the garden?

R: Well, that was mostly our job...the kids and my mother'd do a little bit, but as a rule my sister'd be out there and my brothers and I when they gotto be big enough and that uncle that stayed with us... he'd help with the garden too.

I: But it was the kids job to weed that garden and take care of it.

R: Yes

I: It's funny now a days the kids don't...

R: You can't get 'em to do anything.

I: It's funny, eh?

R: Oh, times have changed, I'll tell you.

I: The children now don't garden...don't work in the garden.

R: Do they work anywhere?

I: Not that much.

R: No, not much

I: That's funny...the only people that garden now are those that kind of like to...kind of as a hobby and kind of to save money.

R: That's right.

I: In between, you know, both things...but the kids don't work in it. They don't. And years ago, from what I've understood from talking to people here, the kids were weeding the garden until they were blue in the face.

- R: Yes...and if you were old enough to make hay you were out there in the hay field making them hay stacks, you know, when the hay was loose before you had bailers...and if you were old enough...
- I: You would make them with those wooden...
- R: Some, yeah, but we didn't do much...my dad had a horse rig...they called it a dump rig, you know, and you used the horse. That used to be my job when I got old enough so I could drive a horse, you know. Rig that into stringers...winter rows they call them now, and then they'd pile them up into little piles they called them hay cocks and then you came along with a team and the wagon and two guys, as a rule, usually loaded that on.
- I: With pitchforks.
- R: That's right. I've done lots...I've done my share of that too. And later years they got what they called a hayloader...it'd go along the win-rows and bring the loose hay up on top. Well, then you'd have to spread it around and tramp it go ahead some more with the team and brought some more up. That was a life saver when that come out. But bullwork to take it away from there...I tell you, you'd really sweat. You could put a big load on...let's say a ton...in ten minutes if you could just keep it away from that wagon and tramp it...something like that. I know one time we put a ton on in eight minutes actually when it wasn't too hot so we could pitch and tramp. I never liked that job...that was just bullwork.
- I: Tramping?
- R: Pitching away from that thing...that there hay come up fast...just imagine when that team is walking and that hay is coming up a big win-row and you gotta pitch that and go all around the wagon, you're working...and try and tramp it a little at the same time...you're working, I'll tell you.
- I: But it was the kids job to tramp that hay down.
- R: Yeah, sometimes, but as a rule they got in the way if there was any kids so you usually try and tramp it yourself and spread it. Once in awhile...every now and then you'd have to stop the team because you couldn't get it spread out quick enough and tramp it.
- I: Spread out on the wagon?
- R: Yeah...on the wagon. You'd go all...like I said, you'd go all around you know, and so much in the middle you'd have to tramp it and keep on until you got it brought up. You couldn't pile it in the middle because after awhile it'd all slide off. You'd kind of have to go all around the wagon...
- I: Start on the outer edges and work in.
- R: That's right...and put some in the middle that would tie it...

- I: Then tramp down that layer.
- R: That's right. And you went around again and put somemore in the middle and tramp it, see. Well then those tails got in you put some in the middle that would sort of tie it together and so on. You'd do that about maybe six times 'til you got up high enough then you hadda load.
- I: Oh, so there was a system to piling that on the wagon.
- R: Yeah...yeah...you couldn't throw it on any old way...oh no...it had to be a certain way.
- I: What do you mean about the tails pointing in?
- R: Well you know when the hay is loose, you know, like the tails of the hay...
- I: The ends of it, right?
- R: Yeah...that's right, then you put so much in the middle and tramp that and kind of tie it together and it was hauled in the barn...
- I: Oh, I know, the stuff in the middle holds those ends down.
- R: That's right.
- I: Un huh, now I see.
- R: And in the barn you usually had that outlet...have you seen one of those hay forks, one of those big forks that came down...well they're say about that long...
- I: Four feet long?
- R: Yes, and about that wide and they'd have a lever on each side t hooked like a prong...it would spring out and bend up, you see.
- I: Draw a little picture of that for me there if you can.
- R: I got one over in the other barn...I could show you the **dog gene** thing. Well, maybe that one's better...there it is. Well, see you go over something like this...and three bars...and an eye right in here...and this lever came down to here...and this was double...and that came **all** the way down to right here and when you pulled up that lever there was like a little prong or harpoon would spring out there and, you see, that would lift the hay up. And then there was a little rope went from the eye of this...this thing had a hole in here. This came down like you had a guy on top of the load...he had a little light rope that came down from here and whenthat got over to the end of the barn where he wanted to drop, he tripped that, see, and those things would telescope in there and then the hay would fall down.
- I: There's some kind of a pulley system on the top of the barn that slid it.

- R: That's right...was like a railroad...a rail up on the top.
- I: After then it went to the rope sling...after that, right?
- R: Yeah
- I: Three rope sling?
- R: That's right. You use this thing or if you used rope slings you didn't use a thing like that. But you hadda have a trip up there on it anyway. And one time, they also had a fork made like...it had the same up here just like a big hook like that you shoved them down in a loose hill like that and that rope sling it started to go up it would grip it like this and bring it up and that tripped with a rope almost the same. I have one of those...I have it up on the other farm...I saved it and I have a couple of these laying around. And like up on the peek of the barn there's a little railroad affair up there where that thing goes up on a little carriage and goes down and you could trip it anywhere you want it in the barn.
- I: All loose hay, right?
- R: All loose hay at the time.
- I: Was that a pretty nice day when that bailer was invented?
- R: Heh...heh...saved an awful lot of bullwork. Then when you got so much in the barn you hadda go in there with your pitchfork and you spread it out.

#### Stop in tape

- I: Now, you'd have to spread the hay in the barn after each day or so?
- R: Yeah, you usually do it two or three times a day you'd get up there and spread it as you're hauling hay you'd spread it out and tramp it otherwise you wouldn't get much hay in your barn. You'd only have a lot of hay in the middle...so you'd spread it all around the walls and tramp it down.
- I: Really pack it down.
- R: That's right...the more you packed it the more hay you got in barn.
- I: Specifically, what work did that bailer eliminate? You said a lot of bullwork.
- R: Well, that was bullwork making all those win-rows into those little piles and then loading that hay back on the wagon by hand...that was bullwork, don't you think? With two guys it'd take all you could lift to get that on the wagon.
- I: Oh, sometimes two men would get one great big pile
- R: Usually two men always took ahold of a pile...you could take a pretty big pile then. You could put on a good load of hay...say a ton in

about twenty minutes or so. And of course, was a teamster always on top...he was tramping it and spreading it. And that helped a lot when they got that thing they called the hay loader that brought the hay up loose...so that was bullwork too because the guy behind that loader hadda pitch to spread it out. I remember I told you that. So, we got the bailer why we got away from a lot of that. The only hard work it is now is collecting those bails off of the field and hoisting them up in the barn.

I: Some people have eliminated a lot of work there by getting a thrower

R: Yes...gee that thing is about...over three thousand dollars for that bailer.

I: For the bailer with the thrower?

R:

I: What is a bailer without a thrower.

R: About twenty-one hundred.

I: Un huh, nine hundred for that...almost a thousand.

R: Yes...and they don't last too long...Turunen's had one now about four years and he's traded it in for a new one again. I suppose they wear out like anyother piece of machinery.

I: It seems to me from how I've seen farming is...the kind of farming has changed. Before there was a lot of bullwork and hand work... now there are machines that do a lot of the bullwork and the farmer's work now is that he has to be an expert mechanic.

R: Yes, you're dog gone right and a good tractor driver, you bet.

I: It's changed...he has to really be a mechanic. You don't stand a chance farming now, do you, if you can't repair your own stuff, huh?

R:

I: What do they charge for labor on a tractor...to repair a tractor?

R: Down in the shop...I'll tell you...it's six dollars an hour.

I: That's pretty reasonable...I'll bet elsewhere it's more.

R: Yeah...I don't really know what they charge, but I think it's six dollars an hour.

I: Almost every farmer around here seem to do just his own stuff.

R: Yes, you bet.

I: You found it necessary to learn to do things your own way haven't you?

R: Yeah, I learned that business long ago. I was mechanically inclined so it sort of came easy. We always had a blacksmith shop and I used to like to tinker around in there...make things...like I told you I always kept buying one tool after another until I got plenty of my own tools. And I used to work with blacksmiths...well that helped a lot...you learn how things are done and learn how to do it right. You know, every day this past week somebody was over here for some kind of a job...a welding job or...Wednesday, Art Waisanen got me to come down in there...he's a tractor they couldn't get going. Yesterday Paul Santi called me...asked me if I'd do a welding job...wanted to put his mower on and I said, "well you wanta come over right away I can do it"...which it didn't only take a half hour and I had him fixed up, but it's surprising how much there is of that. And last night just as I was gettin my cows...come here and there is Art back again, him and his brother and they wanted to get a big nut to fit a piece of equipment and one of those woodrow keys...do you know what that is...that half round key. Well, I had a few of those, so I helped him out with that. But, every day the last week, somebody come here...they had their troubles.

I: Lot of machinery breaks down, eh?

R: Yes...like I said, I got just about a good line of tools anybody would wanta have...I've got drill presses, I've got a lathe and I have both weld...asetiline (??) and oxygen, I've got a blacksmith forge and everything in the line of tools. I've got all the mechanic tools you'd want to overhaul almost anything...cylinder hone (???) I do all that work. I even used to work in a garage years ago, that's how I learned the business...a lot more about it. When I was twelve years old I invented my own steam engine...it wasn't much to look at, I was only a kid then, but it run...that was the main thing. And one time, we had a blacksmith shop over there and John Dunsmore, he was young then, he come over and he wanted to see that run. And all I had was a five gallon water can to...for a boiler, and I went out to get something...I said, "don't you crank that forge too fast now". It was going and of course, Johnnie was one of them guys he wanted to see it go faster, well I stepped out for a few minutes I heard that dog gone can explode...blew the bottom of that can out and all the black coal out the bottom of that forge...his face was all black... why I was scared for a moment he had scalded himself, but he was only dirty. That's the last time I run the engine with that can, I'll tell you. He was just lucky that he didn't get scalded.

I: You've learned to do your own work because you had to, eh?

R: Surely...and like I said, I worked with blacksmiths and that helps a lot when you got somebody to get you on the right track. And I've done work for lots of guys around here. Now I don't have too much time for it because I've got a lot of my own work to do...like when I'm making hay or that, I haven't got time for all that outside work. Yet, you hate to turn somebody down when they're stuck like I told you Art, he came in the night before the fourth...the draw bar was broke on his corn planter...he had the day off...Fourth of July, he wanted to plant corn, well, it was almost dark when he come here, so we welded it and fixed it up...gee it was eleven o'clock by the time

he pulled out of here...well his machine was fixed, so he could plant corn the next day.

I: He probably hated to ask you that late at night, too.

R: Well, I had an idea what I knew he wanted...he wouldn't acome over here otherwise if he didn't want that fixed. Do you think so? And, there's nobody else around here that'll work at night during the evening when the Coop's closed at five o'clock. Well, that's that. You can't go out there...and there are no other shops right around here., Anf, if you go to Baraga, well they're closed at five o'clock. There's no where to go unless you gota welder of your own...well then you won't have to go anywhere, do you?

I: That's right. How did the neighbors use to help each other in the old days?

R: Oh, like when bailing hay? Alright, I worked over there and he'd come over here.

I: Pelkie...right over at Pelkie's?

R: Yes, when he bailed over there, why my dad used to help him and Dunsmore...anyone around the area when he needed somebody to...like bailing hay, why they'd help him. Alright, then at the next farm, somebody went over there and help each other.

I: And then when it was your turn to bail hay...

R: Well, they came over here. That's how you hadda work it. You bet.

I: What about the thrashing?

R: Same thing.

I: How did that work here?

R: Well, when they trashed here, so many farmers from around the community came over here and then we went over there...did thrashing work.

I: How many men worked that thrashing machine?

R: Well, I even done that. See, there'd be...if you had the grain in the barn there'd be about three in the barn and one guy...at first you hadda cut that twine off the sheaf by hand...while we're cutting that one would be feeding and that's five and there'd be one guy watching the thrasher sacking it, that's six, and then we had a guy carrying it away...was about seven guys to run that. And if you hauled your grain out by the field, well if you had two teams, well there'd about at least four more.

I: Eleven guys, maybe, if you had two teams.

R: That's right.

I: What'd the women..

R: Oh, they did the cooking and come in have coffee and they'd get your coffee and dinnertime, dinner. You bet, they took care of the cooking.

I: That was quite an event in those days. It was more than just work, it was hard work, but wasn't it...

R: You got better grain with a thrashing machine than you do with a columbine.

I: Is that right?

R: Yes...I'll show you why. I don't know if you've noticed in a field of grain, there's a lot of green ones and a lot of ripe ones. The green ones in the columbine go right through...you lose them, they're heavy. You cut that down with a binder into shucks and shuck it...that was done with a team of horses as a rule years ago with a binder and you shucked that...they all dried up, see you put about four or six of those shucks, you know, with the grain up, and you let them out there a week in sunshine and they were all dry. When you thrash that you got even the grain...the green ones were even dry. Yourcattle ate them just as good as one that was perfectly ripe. And then you didn't have trouble with your grain heating up like if your...we had a variety of oats they called bond cross...years ago...oh that was a mean one. Half of the grain would...seemed as though half of it was green and the other half ripe. Well, if you waited for the green ones to get ripe, you lost the ripe ones. So, they cut it kinda of green. Alright, then you hadda bother with scooping them back and forth 'til they get hot, you know. And, 'til you got 'em cooled down. Well, they finally got rid of that variety; but, see if you would have had a thrasher...did it the old time way with the thrashing machine, that grain would have dried...it would have worked better. And you don't lose hardly any grain when you used the old fashioned thrashing machine, but you lose a lot with the columbine machine. There's lots of it blows right through...it's a loss...goes out in the field. You go and pick up a bunch of that chaff where the columbine's been going you blow the chaff off you see a lot of grain in there. But with the thrasher you hardly ever lost any.

I: Who would own these thrashers?

R: Well, who ever owned one...there used to be...each community used to have a thrasher of their own...like used to be one over at Pine Creek

I: David Erikainen bought that, I think.

R: Yes...they had a tractor there and a thrasher and there used to be Michaelson's up here, they had a thrasher.

I: One tractor and a

R: A thrasher machine.

I: A little neighborhood got together and bought it.

- R: That's right...say a dozen guys or maybe twenty. Then over there... you know where Hugo Kemppainen lives...right in the corner...there's that building there yet now...
- I: (???)
- R: Right. There used to be the Limestone Mountain Thrashing Machine Company they called it...there was a thrasher and a tractor there. And you got up toward Alston there was another...
- I: What about out toward Froberg?
- R: Yeah, up on the hill there was a fellow by the name or Miron had one. He had a steam engine that never used to run and then a thrasher. And you got down towards Baraga there was the Bomeirs and a little further there was Mathes's.
- I: What about Hamar?
- R: No...Hamar didn't have any. These here people up on the Froberg hill they took care of Hamar and that area. And then Tounikainen's had one, come to think of it...that was on Hamar Road...that's right. In the later years he got one.
- I: What about Kiro?
- R: No they didn't have any. Tounikainen's took care of Kiro...that was area.
- I: Hamar and Kiro?
- R: Yes, and he even was here a couple times...some of those that took care of this area they'd get drifted too far away...you had grain to thrash, you took the one that was handy.
- I: What about Grist Mill area?
- R: Ah, what's his name...Bomeir took care of that and then the Mathes's, that's on that road that goes round and comes out toward the Baraga park in there...
- I: Park Road (???)
- R: Yes...there was a people by the name of Mathes, they had a thrasher
- I: Mathes?
- R: Mathes, MATHES...there's a bunch of brothers there.
- I: What would the rate generally be? A man...
- R: They'd charge you eight dollars for a setting...there'd be a man or usually two men with the thrasher and the engine, they'd charge you eight dollars for that setting...

I: What does that mean...setting?

R: Well, where they set that thrasher down by a stack to thrash, see; and then they'd thrash a hundred bushel for that eight dollars. Then, from then on it was five cents a bushel, as I remember it now...I could be off a little bit.

I: And when was this...in time?

R: Well, starting from 1908 maybe was the first thrasher come in here and up until say about 1925 they still kept going around with thrashers. Then the columbine started coming in.

I: Did that eliminate that then?

R: Yeah...I like the old fashioned thrasher better.

I: What heppened when the columbine came in? How many men worked that?

R: One man run the columbine.

I: And that did all the work?

R: Yes

I: And eliminated that crew, right?

R: That's right. It had its good points too, I mean you lost more grain with it. I got one man on the tractor and columbine...he runs that only thing is that when that there bin gets full well you gotta go somewhere and empty it or if you got a wagon with a box you'd go up where the columbine stops...when he's full he'll stop, see, and then you run it into the wagon or that container, whatever you have...and he goes again.

T: The columbine also had the effect of wiping out a cooperative activity that might have contributed a lot to the community spirit.

R: That's right.

I: That was really something in them days...didn't the kids look forward to that?

R: Well did I boy, I was sure I stayed home from school that day when the thrashing machine come.

I: That's what everyone says.

R: I'll bet you everyone told you that...that was a great thing. Oh the women got together...that was a great day when the thrasher machine came around. Hay bailing, the same thing...you know, when you'd have a crew of men...oh that was fun to watch that hay bailer when you was a kid, you know.

I: The men would get together and make jokes and.

R: That's right...that's right.

I: And the women would all get together...from wherever a man came a woman came, hey?

R: Help with the cooking, yes, you know.

I: And did they have a feast in those days for...?

R: Every place they stopped, boy, one woman tried to top the other with a better meal. That's the way that went.

I: Was that sort of the woman of the households chance to show what kind of a spread she could...

R: That's right...you bet.

I: That's where her reputation was made.

R: You bet, and how good a cook she was.

I: Did she work hard?

R: Well, you bet. She prepared many days ahead for that too...to get a lot of stuff cooked ahead, you know, so she wouldn't run short. And it saved a lot of work...you couldn't maybe do all that work in one day.

I: The other women would help too?

R: Yes, help set the table...wash dishes...

I: Would they bake stuff at their house and carry it over?

R: Well, yes, lot of times they would and you'd trade...bring some back to the next place.

I: What about the kids? They had a ball, eh?

R: Eat... 'til it stuck out of the ears.

I: And the kids would play.

R: Yes, you bet...oh there wasn't too much playing, most of it was watching the thrasher machine...that was the most fun.

I: Watching?

R: Yeah watching and...

I: What was so much fun about watching?

- R: I don't know what the fun was...then you'd be jumping up in that hay... straw stack rather...sometimes let yourself get buried with straw and was coming out of there.
- I: Oh, there would be a big straw pile?
- R: Oh would there ever...like a house.
- I: Oh, and that's where the children played.
- R: Yes, that's right.
- I: Oh, I see, the thrasher was stationary.
- R: That's right...stayed in one place and you haul the grain or sheaves or shucks to the thrasher.
- I: Several men hauled it to the...
- R: Right there, yes, with a team of horses.
- I: Okay, two men operated the thrasher.
- R: No...it took three men...one took care of the sacks, you know where they come out...kept bagging it, one would feed it and one cut the twine around the shucks...and if you had your grain in the barn, you had about three men in the barn there to bring them shucks up there with pitchforks. And like I told you, if it was out in the field you had maybe two team of horses and a man and a team with each wagon and he got a load he came in...
- I: Haul it to the grainery?
- R: No, haul it to the thrasher...see were in shucks.
- I: How was it hauled?
- R: Just on a wagon...
- I: Just on a regular wagon...the shucks were all tied up? Could one man lift the shucks?
- R:
- I: About how heavy was that?
- R: Oh...ten pounds.
- I: Not that bad...you could put a pretty big pile on a wagon, eh?
- R: You could put a couple hundred of those maybe.
- I: Okay, then someone had to carry the sacks.
- R: Yes...well you fill those sacks full of grain...you usually put a

bushel and a half in a sack...right around fifty pounds or so.

I: And people would carry it then to the grainery.

R: Yeah, there was one special guy for that...he would carry it up into different bins. Everybody had a grainery then...they called it...a storehouse where you kept your grain.

I: And when the columbine came that ended.

R: Well you still hadda have that storehouse to store the grain...

I: But that activity where everyone..

R: Oh, that was gone...that's gone for good.

I: And that was gone about what time...when did that columbine come in here?

R: About 1925 or about in that order.

I: When did the columbine take over...when did everyone starting using the columbine?

R: By '30

I: Un huh...by the depression.

R: Yeah, even the Paanonen boys run their thrasher...they had a thrasher up until say four years ago and one of the brothers got sick, why then they finally hired a columbine. But, they have a thrasher somewhere out there.

I: I should go over there then and photograph it.

R: You know where it is, don't you?

I:

R: Where they got the thrasher part...I imagine it's in one of them barns. See there was three brothers there, they'd bring in a couple of wagon loads and then they'd thrash, you know, and when it was thrashed well they'd shut the thrasher down and go and get some more

I: Would the hay be made first...first you'd have a big bailing crew and then after that it was the...

R: Harvest time, when you'd make grain.

I: And after that then...

R: You had potatoes after that...you dug your potatoes.

I: Did others come and help you do that?

- R: No, most of the time you did that alone unless you were in the business and had an awful big field, then you'd hire some help. But like for your own use you dug the potatoes by yourself.
- I: For those who were in business, how much did they pay to hire some help?
- R: Oh you were lucky if you got a dollar a day and board...years ago. that was good money.
- I: It always has been the custom that wherever you'd work a day for another man be it grain harvesting, hay bailing the old way or even now, that you had a meal there.
- R: That's right...that's the way...you always as a rule you always eat there.
- I: What would a person think if you didn't get a meal and you went and worked some place? Has that ever happened to you? You don't need to mention any names.
- R: No matter where I've gone, I've always gotten a meal it seemed and the guy that we hire to haul bails, we feed him here.
- I: That's just part of the tradition, eh?
- R: It seems that way.
- I: Okay, after the harvesting of the grain and the potatoes, there was also this wood cutting. From what I've heard, there was another wood cutting crew that went...
- R: Yeah, I used to do that too. I had one of the first machines, I made it. I'd go around and cut for this farmer...I used to charge say a dollar an hour. And he'd cut his winter's wood and that'd take a day and then the next farmer...wherever it was well we'd go over there and saw.
- I: Describe the saw. Everyone didn't have one, eh?
- R: No...no, I had one of the first ones here. The first one was made out in Pelkie. Then the next buzz-saw machine I had.
- I: Who had that first one?
- R: There was a sort of...this thrashing crew...Pelkie thrashing crew...
- I: There was a Pelkie thrashing crew?
- R: Yeah there was one here too, there was Burt Lane in it and Paaninen was in it and guy by name of Barkey...it's long ago...mostly around that Pelkie community...was Mantila I believe in it also. And they had one machine...they bought a big circle saw and they had the blacksmith make kind of a saw rig, you know, you could put the whole

tree on there...I mean say about a twenty-foot length, see, and it pulled through the saw...you cut it in a block...there was a guy there to grab the block.

I: How many men would this require?

R: Four men.

I: Was yours...yours was the same set up...

R: Yes...yes

I: How was it driven? Tractor belt?

R: Tractor...from the circle saw with a belt.

I: Okay and it required four men, right?

R:

I: Would more than four men come to work...at a time?

R: Sometimes...well it wouldn't take hardly any more than that and you'd cut about a carload of wood in a day.

I: And the rate was generally a buck an hour

R: I usually charged a dollar an hour and I furnished the gasoline for the tractor.

I: And the farmer would have all the logs ready.

R: Usually in a pile.

I: And they'd be dry already. When would a man start cutting his logs for his winters wood?

R: Well, you usually did that sometime in the early spring of the year when the snow went off...you'd cut a pile or some of 'em would cut it in the fall of the year after they got through with their harvest... you know grain crops and it would dry out to a certain extent.

I: Would a man then get them over to his woodshed?

R: Well, then you'd haul...well lot of times they cut 'em right in the woods, see and then you hauled 'em after they were sawed up...they were easier to handle then into blocks rather than to lift the log by hand why...you could do that but a block of wood you'd load that in your wagon and haul that to your woodshed.

I: When that happened would you go inside for a meal too?

R: Yes, you always had a meal there.

- I: Same sort of thing. But this is generally a four-man operation.
- R: That's right.
- I: What about coffee? If you had coffee, would you have it out there?
- R: No, as a rule you came into the house and had coffee unless you were a mighty long ways out in the woods then the women would bring coffee over there in a container and lunch along which did happen a few times. But, as a rule if you weren't too far from the house you came to the house and had your coffee.
- I: When did the wood-cutting seem to die off?
- R: Oh...I'd say around 1940 when it sort of petered out. There was a lot of people cut their wood then. Then we got to where everybody almost cut their own. All around the thirties I was out around the country sawing wood.
- I: It's changed now that people have their own equipment
- R: Everything has changed. Now it's the power saw...you go out with the power saw make your own wood now.
- I: A man can make his own wood now.
- R: That's right...he don't need any help.
- I: You can saw it into blocks and everything with that power saw, eh?
- R: That's right...you
- I: You don't even need a circle saw?
- R: Nope...just with a power saw although with the small stuff I prefer a circle saw. Small ones are mean to hang onto with a power saw. They always want to roll around or bounce around, so, the small ones I always bring 'em to a buzz saw and I cut 'em up. Big ones I cut with the power saw.
- I: Do you ever miss those days when people used to go around from house to house either for the hay harvesting, the grain thrashing or the wood cutting?
- R: I guess we all miss those days. It was sort of a get together of the community, you know...shoot the bull - you know how that goes...tell stories what happened here what happened there...and so on. But everybody got along nicely.
- I: From my own point of view it seems that those sorts of things hold the community together a bit.
- R: Oh, you bet.

- I: And when those things peter out, it has an effect on the community.
- R: Yes, you bet
- I: Have you noticed something like that?
- R: Yes...I don't know...it seems as though things aren't just the same
- I: You still make your own wood
- R: Yeah, I make my own wood
- I: Power saw?
- R: I use a power saw and lot of times if I got a little bit of a pole I got a buzz machine down the hill I cut 'em there with a tractor... throw them into my pickup truck and then haul them to the basement.
- I: When do you cut your wood?
- R: Anytime that I got time to cut it...really don't make too much difference. I cut some here about six weeks ago so I'd have some ahead for hay-making time.
- I: And you fire up with that stove there.
- R: Yeah...it keeps us warm in the winter.
- I: What kind of stove is that?
- R: That's an ordinary wood heater...if don't know if it's full of junk or not...but I had a fire in there this morning...it's burned out.
- I: That looks like a...what brand is that?
- R: Niagara
- I: Niagara...have you had that for a few years?
- R: Well...no...I bought it second-hand right around 1940
- I: That can hold a fire for quite a while...can't it?
- R: Well, you put a big block in there...well there's lots of coals there in the morning. We usually try an pick out a block with some knots in it for the night...and they burn slower and you don't need as much at night anyhow...and you, like I said, you put some with that big knots in there...lot of coals there yet in the morning say five o'clock in the morning or whenever you get up.
- I: And you can toss on some more wood and you got your fire for the morning.
- R: And your fire's going again...and...

I: And your wife does all the cooking in that?

R: Yes...most of the cooking is done on that old-fashioned wood stove... we got a gas stove there too when you want coffee in a hurry or something use that...but otherwise use the old wood stove. We've had that since about 1939...that stove. Handle come off awhile ago and I never did get to put it back on.

I: Do you have fuel heat also?

R: Fuel oil?

I: Yes

R: I don't use it...I have a fuel oil heater in the basement...I don't use it...not when I got plenty of wood...that's nothing. Sure it's a bother carrying the ashes out, but that's only once a week only takes a few minutes.

I: Save money

R: Well...at the price of fuel oil now, you bet.

I: It's up twenty some cents a gallon.

R: Oh...I haven't bought any in...three years...I'll betcha...fuel oil. I suppose when I get too old that I can't make wood then I'll have to go to the fuel oil heater, but long as I can make wood I'll use a wood stove.

I: There's something about that wood heat too.

R: It's a nicer heat...isn't it?

I: It is.

R: Anyone will tell you that. I don't know what it is about wood heat. they even claim that bread that's baked in the oven of a wood stove is tastier bread than a electric or gas stove.

I: I believe that. At first I didn't, but...

R: Sure...there's something to it, but I couldn't explain it

I: Well, it has a little to do with the smell of the wood. I think that somehow permeates the bread a little and the little bit of wood smell in the house and also it's kind of a cosy radiating heat. It's more cosy...more comfortable.

R: Yes...I don't know what it is...like there's a lady in Baraga...she's dead and gone now...her daughter had me bring her a load of wood. That's when I had that sawmill going here...why she said "my Ma likes to sit by the stove and watch the flame in the stove and hear that wood crackle". There was something homey about it, you know, makes

you feel like home...that heat from the stove. They had an old fashioned cook stove there too.

I: And the people kind of...well when the whole house was heated like from the main furnace and it's forced air throughout the whole house... everyone can kind of go to their own room and everyone gets separated into their own thing, but when you got that wood stove...by gosh early in the morning everyone's down here and sitting around that stove, right?

R: And another nice thing about it...you keep a little fire in there and your coffee's hot...stays hot as long as you leave it on there. But a gas stove or that...you shut it off why the coffee gets cold...isn't it?

I: Right.

R: But the old wood stove...you got a little sizzling fire why the water stays warm in the kettle...it has its advantages.

I: Yeah...one thing it keeps people together...just because this is the comiest room in the winter...where do you stay? Right here, right?

R: Right...say, by the way, how do you like Waisanen boys' kitchen?

I: That's a big kitchen.

R: Isn't that a dandy...there was a big family there at one time too. must have been about ten of them at one time.

I: The kitchen is the place up here where people visit and where they get together...

R: That's right.

I: ...over the kitchen table and coffee

R: Yes...lot of bull stories.

I: You bet...you bet

R: Oh...or whatever you would call it

I: And the wood stove keeps that coffee warm so it's ready all the time and the people are in the kitchen most of the time...it has its effect. Everyone doesn't sneak off into their own corner of the house.