



Finnish
American
Historical
Archive
and Museum

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

(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

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

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

CONDITIONS FOR USE OF .PDF TRANSCRIPT:

Finlandia University, formerly Suomi College, holds the exclusive copyright to the entirety of its Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, including this .pdf transcript which is being presented online for research and academic purposes. Any utilization that does not fall under the United States standard of Fair Use (see U.S. Copyright Office or Library of Congress), including unauthorized re-publication, is a violation of Federal Law. For any other use, express written consent must be obtained from the Finnish American Historical Archive: archives@finlandia.edu.

PREFERRED FORMAT FOR CITATION / CREDIT:

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

Note: Should the Finnish American Archive be a resource for publication, please send a copy of the publication to the Archive:

Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum
Finlandia University
601 Quincy St.
Hancock, Michigan 49930 USA
906-487-7347 - fax: 906-487-7557

Erickson, Arthur B.
October 5, 1974

Michael M. Loukinen

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Employees of loggers	2162-63	
Worcester Lumber Company	2162,	
Transportation of logs	2162, 63, 68	
Riding logs	2164	
Log jams	2165	
Log Drivers	2166, 68, 2203	
Nestor Lumber Company	2167, 75, 85	
Income of loggers	2171	
Wife of a logger	2176	
Logging camps	2179	
Baraga	2181	
Saloons	2182-83	
Pelkie	2187	
Cheese factory-creamery	2190, 2212	
Erikainen, Urho	2198-2201	
Hunting -- deer	2202	
Advantages and disadvantages of living in the early 1900's	2214	interesting article
Weekend entertainment	2215	

Subject: Pelkie History

Respondent: Art Erickson

Comments:

- I: October 5, 1974, I'm talking with Arthur Erickson in Pelkie and we're going to talk about his father's logging operations. His father was John G. Erickson, pretty big logger around here at the time.
- R: Pioneer logger.
- I: We're going to get some of the locations. O. K., now the first one, where was that again? That John G. Erickson was logging...you mentioned the section.
- R: Section 14 and Town 50 35.
- I: It's in Baraga.
- R: Baraga Township.
- I: O. K., can you put just a little dot on the map where.
- R: I'd have to study this for a moment now to see where I'm at, the Sturgeon River, yes, it's on the Sturgeon River...Pelkie...Alston...West Branch, West Branch... they got Pelkie in the wrong place...that there...
- I: O. K., this camp on the Sturgeon River...he was logging there in 1914.
- R: He employed about 50 men.
- I: Had about 50 men working for him at the time. What was he logging out of there?
- R: Hemlock logs...for the Worcester Lumber Company
- I: His contract was with Worcester then.
- R:
- I: And they sent them down the river.
- R: They were hauled to the river in the wintertime with horses and sleighs, and then they were rolled into the river when the river opened up, when flood waters come in the spring of the year and they were floated down to Chassell.
- I: Who did he have driving them?
- R: The Worcester Lumber Company would hire their own crews to drive the logs down to the river to the mill at Chassell.
- I: Oh, so the local contractors didn't hire those...

R: No.

I: Would they dump the logs in, too?

R: The company?

I: Yeah.

R: No, my dad...well, they would have to...part of them were dumped in the river till it got full and then the rest the contractor, whoever took the drive, would finish rolling them into the river.

I: Oh, a guy would contract to drive?

R: Yes, yes.

I: He'd have a gang...

R: Oh, he'd have about maybe...say 20 men with him and they living in tents and they went down the river and they had cooks with them and choreboys and they went down the river, they'd go so many miles, every other day they'd move the tent.

I: You remember any of these old contractors?

R: Yes...his name was Clemeau from Chassell.

I: How's that name spelled?

R: Well, Clem, you got that all?

I: I think his name was spelled C-l-e-m-e-a-u, the French pronunciation would be CleMEAU and I suppose the local pronunciation was CLEma...this man was a Frenchman, eh?

R: Yes.

I: What was he like?

R: He was a big, tall guy, a 6-footer, big, husky guy.

I: Was most of his crew French?

R: He had all nationalities on there...he hired local men and then a lot of them came up from Chassell with him...those that came from Chassell, at that time Chassell was just about all Frenchmen.

I: Working at the mill there?

R: Yeah, they worked at the mill at Chassell in the summer...see, the mill was never run in the winter those days, only in the summertime...and they'd go with him...in fact, they had a boat with them...they'd bring it as far as here with a team, well, that's 18 miles and then my dad would take it with his team from

here up to where my dad's lumber camp was, you know, near the river and then they'd launch it there and then they took it with them, see...they had to have it there as a safety precaution in case somebody fell in the river they used that boat to go and pick them, pull them out or fish them out, whenever they had to cross the river they, some of them crossed in the boat, some of the guys were caddy enough they could jump on a log and they could go right across the river like a squirrel on a log...I watched them do it.

I: I bet they were something to watch, eh?

R: Oh, were they ever good with the canthook...many a time I'd see them come and ride, two guys riding a log standing on that just like a bird riding along...boy, that was nice to something to watch...the guys that were, you know, real, they called them riverhogs at that time...that was wonderful to watch that.

I: That was quite a job.

R: Like I said...they'd move camp about every other day, see, it'd be too far back to walk back up for their lodging at night, see, and then the one they called the bull cook he had like a, they can use dynamite with them, too, he had a little door on that and shelves in it and straps on it so he strapped on his back like a packsack and then they had those little compartments filled with sandwiches, they usually boiled salt pork and made salt pork sandwiches and then he carried a big coffeepot with him and so many cups, see, and then he went down to where the crew was working and they'd have lunch...and so on all day long till it got dark.

I: That man worked, didn't he?

R: Did he! Well, they all worked then, there were no 8-hour days then, it was from daylight till dark...it isn't like now, 8-hour days, they worked from daylight to dark.

I: You'd think they'd freeze and get pneumonia before they'd get down to Chassell.

R: No, no...they were all hardy guys, I never heard of any of them ever getting sick or freeze or anything.

I: I mean, if we were to do that, this generation, you know...

R: They couldn't take it.

I: We'd be in the L'Anse hospital.

R: I'll say you would.

I: That's amazing.

R: I, Evert and a couple of other guys are the only men living that worked on the last drive on the Sturgeon.

I: When was it again, you told me in that other tape but I've forgotten momentarily.

- R: In 1930...my brother-in-law Bill Ruona had a small drive on the Sturgeon, he took down probably 500 logs and they pulled them out of the river in Feltie and loaded them on railroad cars and shipped the logs to C & H at Calumet, they used them for a mine stall, they were elm...elm and basswood, see, they would float...and we were the, some of the last men to work on the drive.
- I: Who else was working on that?
- R: A fella by the name of Victor Hulver from Baraga and...
- I: Was his last name Hulver?
- R: Yeah, Hulver...and then there'd be Eino Hill...and I think a couple of the Haataja boys and I mentioned Evert already.
- I: Evert Larson.
- R: Yes...and then Bill himself was up and down...that was about the whole of it.
- I: So it wasn't that big of a crew.
- R: No, this was a small drive.
- I: Did you ride logs down?
- R: No, no, no, we didn't ride logs...we had no time because the logs were all decked at the river bank, we worked from daylight to dark to get them rolled in, it took about two days to get the logs rolled in, they'd go, nobody had to ride them then, the river was full, see, we waited until we had a good, heavy rain and the river was full...when the river is full you don't have to ride too many but it's usually when the river is low, that's when you run into trouble, you know, that you run into a lot of jags and that's when they use their, I guess, dynamite to break a lot of the jams.
- I: Did you ever see them break a jam?
- R: Yes, yes, they put in maybe dozen sticks of dynamite, you know, right where they figure the key log was...big geyser of water would come up and logs and all and then it'd start to go again.
- I: Logs would fly up in the air and...
- R: Yes, you bet...it was interesting.
- I: Were some of those jams big?
- R: Oh, gosh, some of them maybe had 300 logs in a pile jammed up.
- I: That would almost dam up the river momentarily, wouldn't it?
- R: It did, it did.
- I: Like beaver doing it?

R: Yeah, similar to it...only thing the cracks were so big the water could go through, you know...but that was interesting.

I: You remember any of those old drivers?

R: Yes...remember I told you about Swede Pete? He's one of them.

I: What was his last name?

R: Peter Nelson Rane.

I: Didn't they also call him Whiskey Pekka?

R: Yes, Whiskey Pete...he was that guy I told you could write seven different, read and write seven different languages.

I: That man was really smart, wasn't he?

R: He was educated from Sweden or Lapland where he come from.

I: Do you remember the exact location in Sweden?

R: No, no, I can't tell you that, I don't believe I ever heard him mention.

I: Tell me a little bit about him, O. K.? Just the kind of man he was.

R: Well, he was like I said he was a well-educated man and he could do just about mostly anything around the woods, he was a good cook, he could make, a good tie maker...he was good at sawing logs...like I said he was an all-round man around the woods like making roads, he could take and take a compass and go out and lay out a road, you know, in the woods...he was a good all-around woodsman.

I: He was pretty humorous, too, wasn't he?

R: Oh, yes...and then there was a Finnish fellow by the name of Emil Kempainen up here, I remember he used to work on the drives.

I: Was he from Elo, too?

R: Yes, and a fellow the name of Fritz Chartier up on the other side of Pelkie and I remember he worked on that.

I: Fritz?

R: Fritz Chartier...he worked on the drive.

I: About this Pete, I understand he used to pull a lot of pranks on people, he was...

R: Well, I wouldn't...

I: 'Course all those lumberjacks at the time were constantly playing little tricks, friendly tricks like, on one another, right?

R: Yes.

I: Do you remember any of those?

R: No, I can't really remember that he pulled any tricks but I told you about..

I: 'Cause they'd make good stories today.

R: Yes, I told you about the time, though, when he had sold the timber on his homestead...when he had been drinking in Houghton and he was going to take the train to Baraga and he got a little bit late and he come down to the depot and buy a ticket and the train was gone so he asked the depot agent how much it would cost to hire a train to take him to Baraga, well, they had him wait a while and the depot agent called someplace and they found out it was \$50 so he handed over the \$50 and had a special train take him to Baraga. I told you that story once.

I: Yeah, I understand there was quite a reception crew there.

R: And all the bigshots in Baraga, that was the Nestor's, you know, they were with the Nestor Lumber Company, they come out to meet the train, you know, the special train, here comes that little lumberjack with a pack on his back, off the train...that was the bigshot.

I: There's a picture of a river drive, Picture 73, there...old river drive...yeah, it looks like it's on the Sturgeon somewhere.

R: Nice big, gray horse, anyway.

I: When was the last drive down the Otter? You told me that, too, I believe.

R: Right about 19...wait a minute, I got to figure for a moment now....about 1917, I believe, or so.

I: That sounds familiar with what you said before.

R: Just about '17

I: Where were the logs piled up, decked up?

R: We used to have an iron bridge, right below the iron bridge right here...where the bridge is now but there was an iron bridge then...down there and then a little farther down there was a road cut across the woods in there...see, the river made...

I: That's kind of, there's a little clearing there today behind Ravi's, on the other side of the river from Bill Ravi's.

R: Yes, yes, right there...see, they cut across the woods over there, you know where them house trailers are there? There was a road went through the woods to make a little shortcut and they landed a lot there and, well, then that was full, well, then they landed a lot right here where the bridge is now.

I: Was that landing, did it have a certain name at the time?

R: Well, it was really Otter Landing, that's all...that was the Pryor Lumber Company of, Pryor Lumber Company of Houghton but they had their mill in Hancock... on the Houghton Canal there.

I: Who had the contract on that?

R: Well, that was their own job, Pryor Lumber Company...it was known by the name of Houghton Lumber Company...Pryor's sawmill at Ripley but it went by the name of Houghton Lumber Company.

I: I see, good enough...did you ever see that man before, that's Picture 112.

R: I don't know, the guy looks familiar, well, that's Swede Pete, isn't it?

I: You bet.

R: But he don't look right with that hat on.

I: He must have been just joking.

R: And the guy to the left looks familiar but I can't place him right now...yeah, that's Swede Pete right there.

I: Did you ever see that before?

R: Logs on a railroad car? Lots of them.

I: That's the Mineral Range No. 89.

R: Yeah, I loaded lots of those for many, many winter, one of those guys, one guy there looks like my Uncle Matt...right there.

I: That guy in the background, Matt Mattson?

R: Yeah.

I: I guess that first guy's Aksel Tepsa.

R: I guess it would be Aksel Tepsa.

I: What was it like to load those cars?

R: Well, we had a jammer, you can't see a jammer right here now.

I: It didn't get into the picture.

R: No, it's like a big, shaped like a A, it was shaped like this and it had a like a runner, set of runners on the bottom here, then it went up, say, 35 feet, the poles were, then they had a guyline, two guylines, one, you know, one way...

I: Anchored back, eh?

- R: Yes, and then they had a ring there where they had a pulley and a block and it come down, three lines came down, and that one where they had a pair of hooks on where they hooked on each end of the log that was called a traveling block and then the others were, they called them jammer hooks or some called them jammer pups, see, well, they hooked them on each end of the log and then the team would, where the cable come down to the bottom of that jammer, the team would hoist the log up on the car.
- I: They did that with metal cable?
- R: Yes, well, usually about a 3/8 diameter...it's called a 3/8 but it actually looked about a half inch when it was swelled out...and it usually took about 150 feet of cable for...and you could go back a reasonable length then and hook onto a log and so on, too long was no good either, then you run into trouble.
- I: Two-man operation then, right?
- R: No, there was a teamster, a top-loader and the two hookers...this man here evidently is the top-loader, he'd be on top, see...see, when that car got full they'd take these stakes, short stakes out and they put in 9-foot stakes, see, well, then when that log would come up like on a cable, I mean where the hooks are on, made like this, when that log come up enough over the edge he'd jump on that log, jump over, and then he'd push it out to the outside, see, and then because when the hookers were on this side of the train they couldn't jump over, you know, he'd have to be over there, he'd push it over and then drop it where he wanted it, see.
- I: Guided it exactly where he wanted it.
- R: That's right, see, you had to know your business when you'd top-load if you wanted to get a decent load on, too, otherwise it would just spill all over.
- I: You ever see any loads kind of fall off?
- R: Well, a couple of them, not too many because usually by the time you got up there you knew what you were doing...they wouldn't let you up there otherwise because you couldn't afford too many mistakes.
- I: Those look like pretty big logs there.
- R: Yeah, those are, that's virgin timber.
- I: Big pine, eh?
- R: No, that would be..
- I: Hardwood.
- R: That would be hemlock and hardwood...those look like hardwood...they're clean cut...a hemlock has more of a churned butt on it, more taper.
- I: Would they be doing this year-round in Pelkie? Loading those..

- R: No, no, mostly in the wintertime and the spring of the year because those were sleigh-hauled in...then when it got, say, to the end of...end of May...well, even by the end of April you were just about all done with your logging or so.
- I: Boy, there must have been some big piles there in the winter.
- R: Oh, were there, I even had some out there with, I betcha they'd reach from here to the barn and they were at least 30 feet high, all piled up...then we'd load them out in the spring time...the trouble was we couldn't get enough cars in to keep the logs going out every day...there was so many, you know, small loggers, big loggers, all over here, well, we'd pile them up...then in the spring time, why, we loaded them out doing this kind of work...I done lots of that, too... that's a nice load of logs.
- I: I guess that's the teamster for Turunen, the guy had a kind of a bad leg...a crooked leg.
- R: What's the name, I know the guy good, he even worked for me one winter, drove team here.
- I: It was kind of crooked and he walked funny with a limp but he could drive team good.
- R: They mostly had him sleigh-hauling, you know, because that was hard on his leg, she probably remember his name, he was related to the Silvola's also...doggone, I know the guy good and I can't get the name now.
- I: It'll come to you.
- R: Yeah, he drove team for me one winter...I logged back of Larson's over here one winter, I took out four forties, took out about a million feet...that was my first logging job, I was twenty years old then.
- I: When was that?
- R: 1922.
- I: Were you back in Quincy Location?
- R: Yeah, '22 or '23, '23 it was.
- I: Were you back in Quincy Location?
- R: Yeah, Quincy timber, yeah...I logged for the Quincy Mining Company.
- I: All ties, eh?
- R: All logs.
- I: What did they use them for?
- R: They used them for mine stalls.

I: What's a stall again?

?

R: It's a log and they use, it's a log full-size with a virgin piece of and they take them down in the mine and somehow with their box and tackle they can get them in there to hold the roof from caving in.

I: Ah, they were like pillars to hold the

R: That's it, pillars, they called them mine stalls, pillars.

I: And they were generally about how long?

R: Well, all the way from 14, I mean, all the way from 12 to 18 feet, we never monkeyed too much with 18s, they were hard to fit them on the railroad car... you'd get, you know, too close to here you had trouble, so as a rule we stayed away from as much from the 18s, 16 was about the longest...once in a while you'd make an 18.

I: What did a man get for one of those logs...by the time he got it to the railroad what would he gross for one of those...a contractor.

R: He'd probably get about \$1 and \$1.25 for it, \$1.50, that's all...on that job I got \$14 a thousand...make the roads, saw the timber down, haul it there and put it on the car, \$14 a thousand.

I: By the time, though, you pay off for the labor and all that work...

R: You didn't have much, you were lucky if you grossed \$2,000 in the spring of the year...and that was big money those days because as a rule most of the guys worked for \$1 a day and the board.

I: Well, let's keep on this theme before I show you other pictures. Where was your dad's second camp?

R: Across the river from there...down a little bit...where did I show you up, where's the Sturgeon...in 1918 and he also had...

I: 1916 and 1918.

R: Yeah, and he had one in, he had one more on the Sturgeon where I showed you the first time...farther up.

I: Closer to Sidnaw?

R: No, no, just, where's the Sturgeon here now...there's the river in 1917 and '18, he had two camps.

I: So he logged in that area from about 1914 to about 19...

R: 1918.

I: All right...and that was all contracted...

R: For the Worcester Lumber Company of Chassell.

I: Did he have any other camps?

R: Yes...when you go down, I'm getting a little bit ahead, then he had one up, we call it M-38...you know where what they call the Kyro road comes out in the corner, back in there he had a camp, back in there, that was a smaller job.

I: Oh, like where Schwalm and Sarja

R: No, up, up farther, one mile up there's a crossroad there, you know where that windmill is...there's a windmill in the field there, setting there...

I: Yeah.

R: Well, then toward Baraga a little farther in there he had a small camp.

I: That's all clearing now, though, isn't it?

R: Yes, there's nothing there now, it's all clearing, he did log there.

I: Who was he contracting for?

R: That was on his own then, see, he bought the land there, logged it and sold it to Sterns & Culver Lumber Company of L'Anse...see, Sterns & Culver were there before Ford...and he hauled the logs by horses over to Kyro Siding they called it, loaded on cars.

I: I see, and when was this that he was doing that?

R: That would be in 1919.

I: And how many men did he have working for him over there?

R: Oh, he probably at that time had around 20, but those other camps they were really big, about 50.

I: I imagine there were a lot of local guys at that one because it was so close.

R: Yes, yes, and then he had a big one..

I: Did you have a name for that camp at that time?

R: No, no, just Erickson's, that's all...and then he had the next year then he moved down to L'Anse...you know where Ruona's sawmill is, well, there was a road from there or just...oh, where that there Shrine of the Priest is, just right there the road went up...and went back in there 4 miles, there he had a big set of camps on that would be the Ogema Creek...he had about, oh, say, 65 men working for him that winter.

I: All in one big camp?

R:

I: When was that?

R: '20, was 1920.

I: What was he logging out of there?

R: Hardwood and hemlock, everything went out.

I: Who had the contract on that?

R: My dad had a contract...there was a mill right where that Ala gas tank is, Northern Propane it was, right back in there was a pretty good-sized sawmill there, that was Joe Knaff and Vic O'Connell, they owned the timber and he logged it for them.

I: Joe who?

R: Joe Knaff...that'd be K-n-a-f-f-...and Vic O'Connell, he was a partner.

I: Did your dad own this land back there, did he buy it?

R: No, no, he contracted out, contract logger.

I: Oh, was that, those guys..

R: Vic O'Connell and Joe Knaff, they owned the timbers and they had a little mill there and they sawed it in the summertime, that was all piled up...no sawmills hardly ever run in the wintertime those days...they'd just pile the logs up and cut in the summer...so then the next year...he had a camp we called that the Long Stretch...you know when you go down, well, how will I explain that... you know when you get down across the Otter River, you know, where you cross it...well, it's 11½ miles from here...then there's that kind of a long, used to be a long swamp there.

I: In between Tapiola and...

R: The corner there.

I: Yeah, they call that the nine-mile stretch, Smith's Swamp there.

R: Yeah, Smith's Swamp...well, right on the end there on the left there's a bar he had a camp there for two winters.

I: This was in '21 and '22 now?

R: That would be in about '22...and he logged for Worcester Lumber Company that year, they had a railroad back in there, oh, say, about a mile and a quarter back...and that's where he cut the logs and stacked them up along the railroad there.

I: How many men were working in that camp?

R: Oh, about...I'd say 40...and then there's few local people that walked back and forth...there were no automobiles being used those days in the wintertime...no roads were open, you had to walk.

- I: How come they called that area Smith's Swamp?
- R: Well, he had a lumber camp in that same spot the year before...then my dad took it over then the next year...that's how they called it Smith's Swamp.
- I: Well, there was a railroad that went right pretty close there, that went straight to Chassell from...
- R: Yeah, up on top of the hill...you wouldn't know that Heikkila's hall been gone before you come, just as you get up on the hill there it says, what is it, Torro's...just a little ways beyond there the railroad crossed the highway right there...it come from down in the valley, come up and went down to Chassell.
- I: Is that where you loaded the logs?
- R: No, they were loaded back in the woods right back of the camp, they had a big landing cleared out.
- I: Well, how did you haul them in then?
- R: With horses and sleighs in the wintertime...out of the woods, see, and they stacked them up like you saw over here.
- I: Were there any other camps then?
- R: Well, then the Worcester Lumber Company had a main, had a camp of their own also about two miles from there...they did the same thing...they'd stack up logs in the winter.
- I: About the same time?
- R: Yes.
- I: Must have been a lot of timber in there.
- R: Oh...and then over there they had many camps, Evert worked in a couple different ones and he worked for my dad that winter...one of the winters he worked for my dad.
- I: O. K., then, after '22 did your dad log some more? Hardwood must have been getting scarcer and scarcer.
- R: Yeah, well, then we, then my dad and I got together, we bought some timber and we logged up on the Sturgeon...then we...
- I: Where was this about?
- R: Well, that'd be farther up from where this would be.
- I: Still going closer to Sidnaw but not..
- R: Going up towards Sidnaw direction, a little farther, and then we sawed lot of the softwood into lumber, we had a small mill then, and then we sold hardwood

logs, the big ones, to the Baraga Lumber Company...that's when the days we started hauling with tractors in '26 I believe it was.

I: Skidding them out with tractors, you mean?

R: No, we skidded them with horses and then loaded them on log sleighs and hauled them with tractors, you probably heard of the Holts, 10-ton Holts, 5-ton Holts, that's when we started hauling with tractors...hauled them to Baraga, we hauled 12 miles with tractors.

I: What mill was this in Baraga at the time?

R: Well, it's right where All-Wood's is now.

I: Who owned it?

R: Baraga Lumber Company that time.

I: What's the history of that mill now?

R: First of all it was Funke in there...and then Hillyer, that's what they called the Baraga Lumber Company...and then a little ways down from there was that big mill Nestor Lumber Company, that big pioneer logger...he started off from scratch, he...

I: He had quite an operation going.

R: Yeah, well, my uncle, I guess, worked for him, he talked about how he had a forty of land and he had a team of oxen, Mr. Nestor himself, and he was skidding and the wife, they had a couple of guys sawing, and the wife did the cooking, that's the way he started out, started from scratch.

I: Well, did that work the same way with your ma, was she in there cooking?

R: Yes, yes, yes, you bet.

I: So a farmer's wife is a farmer and a logger's wife is a camp cook?

R: You bet....Caterpillar 15, eh...whose is that one?

I: I think that's Matti Oja.

R: That's a Caterpillar 30 then if it's Matti Oja...looks like Art Waisanen on it.

I: Could be.

R: That's back in 19...right around 1931...Ford truck on there.

I: That's Picture 86...

R: And then we had another bigger job in 1935 for the Ford Motor Company and that was the last logging my dad did...that was up at Herman, beyond Herman...and we had 105 men working.

- I: That was a big one, eh?
- R: Big set of camps...and then they didn't all stay at the camp because then they were using cars, some of them traveled for 10-12 miles and worked in the woods.
- I: When did the cars start becoming available to people around here so that they could work further out?
- R: Well, they started plowing the roads here right around 1925...not all the time you couldn't go but sometimes the big tractor would come through here and open it up and it stayed open until the next snowstorm.
- I: Then you'd find more of these farmers working at these camps, right?
- R: That's right, that's it...and the way it was years ago the farmer would leave the home and stay right at the camp when...maybe he'd go home once a month... could even walk 10 or 12 miles or 15 miles.
- I: Boy, everyone had it tough then, the women at home...what about your ma working in this camp, what was that like cooking for all those men?
- R: Well, they didn't bother her because like I said she knew her business...she had a couple of girls helping her...in fact, she cooked up at the camp where we had 105 men, she had two girls helping her...she'd bake up a 98 of flour every day into biscuits and bread and cookies and whatnot.
- I: That's a big barrel, 98 pounds, right?
- R: Well, that's a half a barrel, I guess...a barrel holds, I believe, 200 pounds of flour.
- I: They'd call it a 98?
- R: Yes...now isn't that a lot of cooking when you tell somebody that that never saw it done they'd say you were bughouse, wouldn't you?
- I: Can't quite realize it, you know, unless you saw it...well, how did she raise a family, too?
- R: I don't know, we got along, we were small, we'd go up there, then I had an uncle.
- I: Were you living in the camp then?
- R:
- I: These times?
- R: Yes, we all stayed there.
- I: Were these tar paper?
- R: Yeah, on the outside, they were made out of rough lumber, tar paper on it, but the first ones were made out of logs...the first ones I told you about, they

were made out of logs even that big.

- I: Yeah, that Carlson had one right here close to where Evert's road is.
- R: Yes, yes, they were all made out of logs years ago, everyone of those I told you about on the Sturgeon my dad had they were made out of logs and the butt ends they were that big...they cut the full length of the tree...dragged them in and...
- I: So those were really warm.
- R: Why, yes, and then they chinked them with moss and rags or gunmysacks, I should say, rags weren't too plentiful but gunmysacks.
- I: I'm going to show you a picture of one of those, in fact, it's the picture, I think, you gave me...Carlson's old camp, what number is that picture there?
- R: 89...that was right at the corner right here.
- I: Do you remember that guy?
- R: Yes.
- I: What sort of an operation did he have?
- R: Well, he had a small operation...he had about two team of horses and 2-4-6- maybe 10 men the most.
- I: What was his name again, Gunnard Carlson?
- R: Yeah, Gunnard Carlson, then he had a brother that logged right in the same camp by the name of Ed Carlson...he used the same camp after that.
- I: When did Gunnard Carlson log there?
- R: Oh...I'd say right around the '20s would be a good guess, '18 to 1920 he was there a couple years...he logged kind of kitty-corner back from the corner in there.
- I: O. K., and then Ed Carlson was just after that.
- R: Well, then Ed Carlson was across the road there where Waino Hakola lives, right in there he logged a couple of forties...he mostly logged alone, he had one or two guys, he was a man that had his team trained...when you skidded a log, they never used a jammer, they put a chain around it, I know how to do that, too, and they sent it up, and he hung the lines on the hay and he'd say, "Get up" and the team would go so far till the log got up on the sleigh and he'd catch it with the canthook and he'd holler, "Ho" and the horse would stop...I watched him, he was good at it and my uncle was also good at that sending up a log with a chain...and you'd hook on the next one and so on and when you got a load of logs, well, he hauled it either...some of them went in the river, if there was hemlock they hauled them into the river and if they were hardwood they went to Pelkie and they were loaded on a car, see, the hard-

wood wouldn't float so they were shipped by rail.

- I: Man had to really know what he was doing to do it, log alone like that.
- R: You betcha life, they knew what they were doing...but it used to be fun to watch them horses how well he had them trained, he'd say, "Giddap" and they'd go and hollered, "Ho" they usually stopped and he says, "Hold it"...if that log was going crossways till he could straighten it out with the canthook... they'd hold it...they were that good...but it took patience and time to train those horses...some of them you could never train...I tried that...horses were bull-headed, you could never train them but some were good, you could train them in a hurry.
- I: I think you gave me these pictures...there's Picture 46 there first...who's that there?
- R: Somehow it looks like my Uncle Matt...not sure now...sure, that looks like my Uncle Matt, Matt Mattson...that would be Evert's brother-in-law.
- I: Where was that?
- R: That was up on that same place he worked up there...
- I: On the Sturgeon, eh?
- R: Yeah.
- I: It looked like they were just building the camps there.
- R: Yeah, there's my mother in there, Mattson, and Evert's sister Hilder, and I think that guy with the white shirt on that's me...I was only about 12 years old there...there's Mattson again...I think the Larson's must have given you this one.
- I: Those camps looked pretty big, didn't they, I mean, those big logs.
- R: Yeah, well, they were virgin timber.
- I: The other guys I've talked to living in those tar paper shacks said that...
- R: They were mostly made out of lumber.
- I: And they weren't as warm, either.
- R: No, no.
- I: Big difference.
- R: We had to almost fire all night, you know, to keep warm...you bet.
- I: That was a little rougher.
- R: I had an uncle, my dad's half-brother, he stayed home here and took care of

the stock...in the wintertime I'd stay here so I could go to school...I'd stay home one week and go to school, the next week I'd stay in the camp...so I could be with my mother and dad.

I: And those log buildings were pretty warm in the winter?

R: Yes, you never froze in there.

I: Those are green logs they made them out of.

R: Yeah, but they were made in the spring of the year so they dried out to some extent.

I: Who would make them, the lumberjacks would make those?

R: Well, my dad and so many lumberjacks, we made them.

I: I bet it didn't take too long to throw up one of those.

R: About a week they had them all made.

I: Oh, those guys knew what they were doing, didn't they?

R: Oh, certainly...they made the cook camp, the bunk house and the office all in about one week...and they were big...well, all it took is about six ordinary logs and you had a six-foot wall...they were that big, just imagine a log that high, well, then they put the butt the other way, it went up...wouldn't take more than six and you had all the height you wanted...and the rafters were made out of round balsam or spruce poles...everybody knew how to swing an axe then or crosscut...there were no greenhorns in the woods...and just about most of them knew how to drive a horse or a team, they'd drag them out, it didn't take long and those camps would go up...then they'd buy, bring in a team-load of lumber, you know, for the roof and like the doors and the floors..that was made out of rough lumber.

I: It would take a little while for today's younger generation to toss up a camp like that.

R: Good gosh, I'd get sick watching them.

I: They just wouldn't know how to do it.

R: They wouldn't know anything about it...wouldn't even know how to swing an axe to start out with...you'd give them a horse they'd kill themselves with it...took a little brains to know how to drive a horse...and like if you were raised around a farm or the woods, why, that, I don't know, that came naturally, you were always monkeying around, you know, with horses or working with them, why, just about as a rule most of the guys knew how to drive a team of horses, not all, but...

I: What about that working that crosscut saw, that was...

R: Well, that was a sort of an art, too...that wasn't, you had to know how to pull

that out just right to make it cut good and you had to know how to file it... you used more set in it for softwood than you did for frozen hardwood.

I: What's set?

R: Well, that's spreading the teeth, you know...if you didn't have enough, you know, it would pinch, you couldn't drag it through the cut.

I: That must have been something to watch two guys who really knew their stuff.

R: Didn't take long and one of those trees came down...even if it was that big around, I betcha...ten minutes, it was down.

I: Ten minutes for a 2-foot log?

R: Yeah, that was nothing...boy, that went down fast when you knew how to cut ten minutes you had that all...

I: Lot of time was spent filing, though.

R: No, they filed them maybe...once a day, sometimes twice a day...that's about all you had to file it...as a rule most of them carried a saw back in at night see, then they'd file it in the bunkhouse...then it was ready for morning.

I: Take a little bottle of kerosene out?

R: Yes, they had kerosene with them...especially when you were cutting pine or some of that gummy spruce or...that you had to have a little kerosene with you or it'd get sticky...it looked like a vanilla bottle they carried and it had a little V cut in the cork, you know...

I: Oh, they'd whip it with their hand and throw a little drop.

R: Yeah, it would drop a little bit on each saw, you know, and they would whip that bottle...many a time that old pocket on one side was soaked with kerosene, too...I still remember that.

I: But I heard that when two men would be on that saw and working it, it was a certain rhythm, it was almost like it was...

R: Singing.

I: Singing, and they used to call it that, eh?

R: Yes, yes...it would sing a little bit when it was working right...did you ever notice how a saw is round, you've seen a crosscut...like when you pull it you always kind of pull it up, you pull it straight across, the other guy'd soon jack you up for it, you're riding the saw...and the same time when you went back you kind of give it just a slight push...it'd make it cut faster...oh, 20 inch log, ten minutes you had that all...nobody run out of wind after you been sawing for a while, you go right through that, you never run out of wind.

I: I imagine those men were in good shape.

- R: Well, were they ever...and they cut from...80 to 90 logs a day in that virgin timber...yeah, that time there was no powersaws to saw the limbs off, you chopped all the limbs off with an axe...you first sawed a good notch and you'd chop that notch out with an axe, then you started to saw and knocked it down... you bet, that was interesting...I done a lot of that, too...I guess everyone that worked, Evert done a lot of it, too, sawing in the woods.
- I: Do you remember Baraga when it used to look like that? I don't know exactly when that is.
- R: Yes, and when the streets were, before the streets were paved...take me for a while I could maybe figure out some of the stores.
- I: That would be good if you could.
- R: Right there, that looks like Nestor's old store.
- I: That very first building up on the left.
- R: And that one way back there looks like Gilson's Livery Stable.
- I: How many buildings down is that?
- R: Well, 1-2-3-4.
- I: What was that like in there?
- R: Well, that's where they had horses when they had them for hire...you hired a team of horses or a horse to take you to Pelkie, that was before when cars were in their infancy...and I believe right across the street that's the drug store, there's Martin's gas station there now or Phillips 66, that was a drug store right there.
- I: So that's taken like right from today's corner, eh?
- R: Just about.
- I: What was that Nestor's store like?
- R: Well, that was like a company store, it was long...oh, it was longer than the Co-op store like I mean going back...and all they had was that one floor where they had their groceries and dry goods and I suppose upstairs they had more or less like a warehouse.
- I: What's standing there today where that building was?
- R: The bank...Superior National Bank.
- I: That was Thomas Nestor's office, too? He had an office in there?
- R: No, no...I can't say no but I don't remember there being an office in there.
- I: Bill Waisanen said he had an office in that, too.

R: Maybe they had an office there because I was pretty small when that went out of business.

I: You remember going in to Baraga with horse and buggy?

R: Yes, yes, I remember that

I: Was that like going into the ^{big}city in those days?

R: At those days it seemed like a big city to us.

I: Well, it was lot busier than it is now, isn't it?

R: Did they have 18 saloons in that town.

I: Now they only got about 3 or 4, eh? Three...well, Nestor had a big operation going and...

R: Oh, there was many saloons, I remember a lot of them but...

I: What saloons were there?

R: Well...one by the name of Andrew Dulver, he had one more or less up on the hill right across from where the...or almost across from where the church is...and going down that long hill, you know, on that street, it seems that almost every other building was a saloon...down at the corner there, there is no building in that corner now...kitty-corner from Nestor's store was a big saloon...after...

I: Do you recall the name of it?

R: No, no, I don't know...then later on Evert Larson's brother and a fella name of Emil Olson converted that into a garage...and then there was Getzen's Saloon, well, I forget who is there now, it's still the same original near that there Gulf station...there was one there...and then going down along the street, there were...I don't know, 3 or 4 more were in there...seems to me like I said one time they used to boast of 18 saloons in that...I remember the wooden sidewalks.

I: What was it like walking on those?

R: Boy, that seemed wonderful when I was a kid to walk on a wooden sidewalk...it made noise when you were walking, clump, clump, clump...and some place where there was a little gully, you know, they were built over like a bridge...and a railing.

I: Well, they had one of those in Pelkie.

SIDE TWO

I: ...was Silvola's pool hall.

R: That's right.

I: What was Tom Bond like?

R: He was a big, husky Frenchman...a man who weighed about 230-40 pounds...about the size of Art Waisanen...and lazy as heck...my dad tried to have him work on the landing out there sometimes and he was no good.

I: But he got a pretty good business going.

R: Oh, and when he was in the saloon business he didn't work for anyone then...he made good money because he bought quite a few nice cars...him, Thomas Bond, and Gauthier, the storekeeper, they had the first cars in Pelkie...Alphonse Gauthier, that's right where...Sulo Jokela lives now.

I: What kind of cars were they?

R: Well, Thomas Bond had a Model T and Gauthier had one with an initial like RCH or something...but Thomas Bond bought a second-hand Model T, one with the brass radiator.

I: What was it like inside that saloon there?

R: Well, you got into the door there was a big bar and a mirror in the back...I remember we could go in there, that was the only place you could buy any pop in Pelkie years ago...kids could go in there once in a while and buy white, white pop was the only kind pop you could buy, there was no other colors.

I: White pop?

R: That was all you could buy.

I: What did it taste like?

R: I don't know, it tasted mighty good, it would foam, you know, just like you'd buy what was that white when you get nowadays I forget...

I: Seven-up?

R: Yes, yes, it was white.

I: But maybe that tasted like a cream soda or something.

R: Yes, similar to a cream soda...it tasted mighty good and it would foam, you know...nickel a bottle.

I: And that wasn't every day that you got one of those, was it?

R: No, maybe you'd get one once a month or so...if you were lucky.

I: Do you remember lumberjacks in that bar before?

R: Yes, yes...I remember them standing at the bar drinking.

I: What would it be like to walk into a bar and see a bunch of big, old, burly lumberjacks drinking?

- R: Well, they'd look back to see who was coming, I remember that, if it was a little kid like me, I was small, why, they'd get back to their drinking and they were always chewing the fat, you know, arguing about logging, which one could skid the most logs or saw the most logs or something, you know, it was always talk about logging, you know.
- I: And talk about who was the best at doing things.
- R: Yes, that's right.
- I: Then would they get into arguments?
- R: Oh, sometimes they got into a hot argument, you bet...old Bond himself would have to sort of shut them up, he was a big, husky guy, it didn't bother him any.
- I: Did he ever throw any out?
- R: No, I don't think so, no, that would hurt business, you know.
- I: None of that stuff like they had out in the old west where they'd throw them out in the middle of the street.
- R: No, no.
- I: Was there a hitching post up in front of it?
- R: Yes, there was like a long rail over there, different fellas would tie up their teams...there used to be one by each store years ago...a hitching post...like where the Co-op's lumber warehouse now...Ruona's had a store there...and there was a long pole there where you could tie up your horses.
- I: We'll get back to that in one second, I just forgot while we were talking about Baraga I think this is a sawmill in Baraga.
- R: Yeah, that's Nestor's Mill.
- I: What picture number is that?
- R: 90.
- I: Can you describe a little bit about what's in there so I can include this?
- R: Well, that's a sawdust and slab burner.
- I: That very big thing that looks like a silo?
- R: Yeah, that's where they burnt the sawdust and lot of the scrap slab...that's a smokestack.
- I: Did that thing used to smoke a lot in those days?
- R: It was smoking all the time, day and night, that there...it was like a big

screen on it...that sawdust, you know, burnt slowly...and this is in the lake or the dock...and this is a tram, that's where the lumber went out.

I: That thing on the right that looks like a...what is a tram made up of?

R: Well, that there, that's built like a road up on top...it was about, say, 16, no, 12 foot wide...it was just like an elevator road...up about 12 feet above the ground, this here...well, see, the horses had...they put the lumber on two-wheel carts...and one horse would pull that cart like kinda up on the incline and on that tram it went down where they had the lumber, see...they didn't have to lift the lumber up, they pushed it down...and started a pile.

I: Oh, let the logs fall right off.

R: No, not logs, lumber...no, the logs, they went up on what they call a bull chain...these are the logs here...but when the lumber was manufactured, see, they put it on two-wheel carts...when it come off they called it the tram, why, the chain or the tram, or transfer, rather, they, different species and different dimensions went on different carts, see, and then they were hauled out and they went to their piles, where it was 2 inch or 3 inch or so forth, see...and they pushed the lumber down till the pile got built up...from here to the top of the pile was about 16 feet...I remember those lumber piles...well, then there was a dock right by there...when the boat would come in, well, then they'd take the lumber out of that pile and push it into the boat.

I: Oh, a lot of boats would come right up there.

R: Well, Nestor Lumber Company built two of their own boats right in Baraga... two big, they called them lumber hookers.

I: Where were they shipping that...

R: Well, they'd ship lumber anywhere around the U.S. that went out by water... and then it went out by rail also...if I don't remember wrong some of their pine even went to France, pine lumber.

I: Did you use to see men running, dancing, across those logs and trying to get them in order?

R: No, usually when they came that close they had like they called it a pike pole long about a 16-foot pole and a hook on, you'd hit that on a log, see, hook the log with it and you'd sort of steer it over that chain, that chain what they called it a bull chain went up into the mill.

I: That man made some money, didn't he? Thomas Nestor.

R: And then the kids spent it all and he died in the poorhouse...that's right, they went broke...they had their own baseball teams and they were bidding on rooster fights...my dad told me about it, he remembers them good, he worked on that mill 11 years in the summertime.

I: What was it like working in there?

R: Well, I guess they worked from 6 o'clock in the morning to 6 at night...you worked, you bet.

I: Was it noisy in there in those days?

R: Oh, yes, just like any sawmill now, they're the dickens...they had a 400 horse power steam engine in there...the belt on it was 4 foot wide and the pulley was 36 foot across...just imagine a wheel like that...and that run the whole mill...and they had two big circle saws, one on top of the other...one set up high...the bands weren't, well, it was something new yet, bandsaws, they used circle saws when they cut those big pine, you know...they'd cut a 100000 feet a shift of lumber.

I: They didn't have a night shift there, too, did they?

R: No, no, they just run a day shift.

I: Quite a place...and then here's another mill in Baraga.

R: That's Baraga Lumber Company.

I: That was owned by Ludey Hillyer, eh?

R: Yeah, that's the one that where All-Wood is now, but all of this trams and everything is taken out of there, that's all gone now...you notice this is lower down right in here...see, well, that's where they went out with the horse and a wagon...and like I said that one that switched out like a bunch of railroad, it went way out in the yard...oh, I wouldn't say quarter of a mile but two-thirds of a forty, it went a long ways, you know, with that lumber...see, and then it would dry out through the summer.

I: They must have had a big yard there...I heard that a lot of what is now Baraga, you know, houses and that, that was all lumber yard at one time.

R: Yes, well, where 41 is now...the road never went...well, you know you turn down where I told you that saloon is, that was Main Street then, and that was the main highway.

I: And 41 wasn't even there, that was all lumber yard.

R: That was lumber yard then.

I: Well, nothing's left of the Nestor Mill, is there?

R: No...that's right where that Gitche Gumee gas station is now...just beyond that was the Nestor Mill.

I: When did they take that out, boy, that was...that's quite an establishment there.

R: Oh, say, around the 1920s or early '20s, something like that, they took that out...a fella by the name of Clausen, they went haywire, and a fella by the name of Clausen took it over and he run it a couple of years and the crew went on strike for higher wages and he couldn't afford to pay those high wages...he

shut the mill down and took it all apart and moved it up to Alston...I remember when they were hauling that big wheel, half at a time, see, it was in two halves, that big wheel*

I: When was this that he did that?

R: Well, right around 1920s when he hauled that...they had about six team of horses hauling that half a wheel on a sleigh.

I: Early '20s?

R: About in the early '20s when he moved that...say right around 1920 would be a good guess...when he moved that up to Alston, set up the mill.

I: How about that...got some pretty good pictures here...remember that?

R: Couldn't anybody else tell you any stories about them mills?

I: Not like you.

R: This looks like Pelkie, don't it?

I: Yeah, it is...I understand that's Middy...

R: Middy Gauthier's old saloon over there and that's Gauthier's store.

I: Alphonse Gauthier's store next to it on the right hand side, this is Picture No. 1.

R: Yeah, and that's the old, that's the Section House.

I: What was it like in this saloon, in Middy Gauthier's saloon?

R: Well, I'll tell you a story about that...many years ago I was about, I don't know, four years old and my mother and dad were coming in on the train and my uncle, this Uncle Matt, he went out there with a team to meet them, the train came in around 1 o'clock and I went along to Pelkie for a ride and he took me into the saloon to sit by the stove where it was warm, this was wintertime... and I remember there was a big mirror on the wall and maybe a half a dozen guys standing at the bar drinking beer or whatever they were drinking...I remember sitting by the box stove...and that's a long ways back, probably about 1908 or so.

I: When did they take that building down?

R: Oh, saloon they call that and then Matti Oja used that for a warehouse, see, Matt Oja used the store now where that Co-op building material is...he also bought Alphonse Gauthier's store...and then he moved across the road and...

I: Was Tom Bond's in Pelkie at the same time?

R: No, no, no, yeah, they were there ahead but they were where the Post Office is.

I: But at the same time?

- R: Yes, there were two saloons in Pelkie...I'd say about right about 1930 or so they took that saloon down...'cause they just kept oil barrels and hardware in there...they called it the saloon warehouse.
- I: Here's another picture of Pelkie.
- R: That's Ruona's store right there.
- I: What was it like inside there?
- R: Well, it was...it looked like Karvakko, you've been in Karvakko's, it was a store like that on the inside.
- I: You mean, there was little room and a lot of merchandise...
- R: That's right, hung up high, it was high to the ceiling, hung along the walls and everywhere...horses' harness and horse collars, you named it, all them country stores had everything, you could go and buy a horse collar or a harness or parts of a harness or...
- I: Tools?
- R: Axes and saws and all that lumbering tools.
- I: He had some clothes in there, too, didn't he?
- R: Not suits, but, anything in the line of work clothes that you wanted to buy like overa...heavy sewel pants, overall jackets, and overalls, you name it, they had it, everything...the line of dry goods.
- I: And some food?
- R: Food? Everything...you could even buy a half a cow at a time if you wanted.
- I: Did you ever look in that old medicine chest they used to have?
- R: Yes...what was the name of that, Selma? Those there famous Finnish medicines they had years ago.
- S: I don't know...I wasn't here at the time.
- R: It was about maybe that high, that wide, and I remember there was Hoffman drops and Japanese oil in it and Ward's liniment and...White liniment, I remember...Balsam of Meer...I forget all the different names.
- I: What are these Hoffman drops?
- R: They were supposed to be for a cold and there was a lot of ether in them...they bought them and drank them instead of whiskey...they mixed it with water and you could smell that guy 10 feet away from you when he was coming.
- I: Oh, it was a liquid.
- R: Yes, it was a liquid, they called it Hoffman...

I: How was Hoffman spelled? H-o-f-f-m-a-n?

R: That's right, that's about the way it was.

I: I heard that stuff really used to stink.

R: Yeah, did it ever...must have been 90% ether or something...you could smell a guy a long ways off especially if you passed...Evert could tell you the same thing.

I: What was that White Liniment like?

R: That was strong, that was about 75% alcohol, they used that mostly for rubbing like a horse...horse would sprain his legs or something like that they used that for sort of a...

S: Wasn't it a thick liquid like milk?

R: Yes, and lot of them would drink that, take a tablespoon of that into water and drink it for a cold, you know...and same with that Ward's Liniment, that was strong, you know, you could never drink that pure nohow, it burn your tongue out of your mouth...they'd take a teaspoonful of that and put it in half a cup of water and drink that for a cold...oh, we had all kinds...I even heard of some drinking kerosene with water when I was a kid...yessir.

I: Ever see that?

R: It's a gas pump, that's a famous gas pump...Coca Cola, Kendall...that looks familiar.

I: Laase Peterson's gas station.

R: By gosh, that is now...I bought gas there dozens of times...don't look so good now.

I: Well, what are some of these other buildings there in that Pelkie picture?

R: This is where...

I: No. 2 there.

R: This used to be...

I: Murtto's?

R: Murtto's lived there but there was...I think Gauthier's lived there, wait a minute, no, Gauthier's, Gauthier's...

I: Turunen lived there.

R: Yeah, but there was somebody else then now before Turunen...some of the Duquette's,

I was a kid then, I just kind of remember the name, they built that...they had a kind of a boarding house and what-not, and then Turunen was there for a long, long time...and then they sold it to Murtto's and they used it as sort of a boarding house...and now Matt Oja's son lives in it.

I: Reuben Oja.

R: Yes.

I: Well, there's a building beyond that, too.

R: That's the old Co-op...that's the Creamery, Pelkie Creamery...that had a quite a history...I forget all the name of all the managers but there was one by the name of Mr. Kannanen, he was known as the Sturgeon Flats, he was one of them, and there was Dave Murtonen, and what was that there Larson, what was his name now again...you can't remember his name? Larson was with him, that there...doggone it, if I can remember his first name, maybe I never did know his first name, we always called him Larson...no relation to this one, he was a guy from Calumet...and after that Nels Plough took it over...and he had it there for...until it buttoned up...see, then when they built the cheese factory, why, they sold their milk to this Pelkie Cheese Factory, well, nobody would take the bother of separating their milk just to get the cream when they could sell the whole works without, less work, so that folded up.

I: The cheese factory folded up the creamery...

R: That's right.

I: When was that about that it folded?

R: When it closed? Would you say about 1930s when it closed.

I: And about the same time the cheese factory started or a little earlier?

R: The cheese factory started about that time...just about.

I: They had some problems there, too, didn't they?

R: Yes...that was carelessness...we'd still have that there if the manager would have been on the ball...Pokela, that's his fault, that's what I've heard some of the directors say.

I: That's what I've heard, too.

R: You see, the inspectors warned them to clean certain places up...three times...nobody would do anything about it...the next thing they came along and closed it up...see, Pokela was manager of the Co-op store and he was manager of the cheese factory also...well, he should have stepped on that manager in the creamery, had him clean it up which he didn't do...and that was a million dollar business.

I: Of the cheese factory?

- R: Yes, he was, yes...he should have stepped on that manager over there and had him clean it up...and that was a million dollar business for the Co-op every year...that cheese factory...and first thing you know they shut her down and now we don't have any cheese factory...and that's probably why lot of our farms went on the bum around here, no place to sell the milk and they called her quits.
- I: The cheese factory then was always a part of the Co-op?
- R: Yes, it was owned by the Co-op.
- I: But the creamery was always a private deal.
- R: Yeah, that was sort of a...farmers got together and built the first one.
- I: So it was kind of a cooperative thing at first but it became private and the owners were the people you mentioned.
- R: That's right.
- I: Good enough...I'm telling you, you're a historian.
- R: Yeah, that one looks familiar...that's when Matt Oja and George Maki were in here together and that's the Pelkie Co-op lumber warehouse now...that's between...no, between 1925 and, say, about '35 or so...that's when Pesola and Maki...oh, even Arvo Pesola wasn't in here...remember there was that Pesola's store over there?
- I: In Elo, yeah.
- R: Yes, and he was in here with George Maki run that store.
- I: In 1927, the fall of '27, I know that date.
- R: I said from '25 on or something.
- I: No, that's the same store that Ruona...when did Ruona start that store, help me on that one.
- R: About 19...maybe 1914 or '15.
- I: That late already, eh?
- R: Yes.
- I: Like that would be the start of World War I.
- R: Yes...it was N. Kivi Company and Ruona...see, this Kivi Company and...you've heard of that in South Range...well, it's Kivi's IGA now...well, Ruona used to live in Baltic long ago and he was quite a carpenter, I suppose he like took jiffo jobs building, he was quite a carpenter, boy, it didn't take him long to build that store, I'll tell you that...and they probably...see, there was a Kivi store there and they probably helped him out to get that store, that's the

way I got it figured, to get that store going, so it was called N. Kivi Company & Ruona, that's what used to be on the window shades when it first started out...boy, did that store building go up in a hurry...

I: And then Ruona bought out the Kivi Company and it became his store...

R: Yes, that's right...then later on Ruona sold it to Matt Oja.

I: Do you know when that happened?

R: When was it Ruona died...1924 when Ruona died...remember we had a new Studebaker Touring...and I know Dick went over with them...1924 I'd say about as close as... '24 or '25 when Matt Oja bought Ruona's store out.

I: Didn't Matt Ruona, then, have a store across the street?

R: No, that was Matt Oja, he bought out Funke in Chassell...see, this Gauthier's store was sold out to Funke in Chassell...and then Matt Oja...

I: When was that sold?

R: Oh, golly, it was about 19...I'd say 1917 is about as close as you could get when Matt Oja took over...around the end of World War II, '17 or '18.

I: World War I you mean.

R: World War I.

I: And Gauthier had that store there real early?

R: Yes, 'cause my grandfather built the building.

I: And when was that?

R: About 1906 or '07.

I: After the railroad, eh?

R: Yes...it was down there by the Silver River, the first store.

I: He decided to move close to...

R: Well, then when the railroad come in, well, then he built near the railroad, see.

I: Right...and then when did Funke buy out this Alphonse Gauthier?

R: Oh, about...right around 1912 maybe...and then 'cause there was a guy that was name of, a Jew by the name of Windsor...that was the manager...he was a Jew, half-Jewish, because I know they were good friends of my dad, they used to come him and his wife used to come over here on Sundays and visit and have dinners and so forth...and then they sold out to Matt Oja right around probably '17 or '18...he bought out Funke's store then.

- I: And Ruona sold to Maki...his store, right?
- R: No, I guess he sold out to Matt Oja.
- I: And Matt Oja then sold to Maki?
- R: No, they were in partnership together for a long time and then he sold to Maki.
- S: What about Pesola and Maki were together.
- I: That was afterward's, that was afterward's...but there was something interesting now, Ruona was kind of a partner in Matt Oja's store.
- R: Yeah...he financed Matt Oja to buy that store from Funke in Chassell, but that was on the q.t. for a long, long time because they figured it would hurt one another's business, I know that to a T...wasn't supposed to say much about it but...
- I: I know, well, he told me that, too, Bill did.
- R: Yeah, well, then you know all about it then...they bought out...well, Matt Oja didn't have nothing, he was just a working man, he had to get capital from somebody to get started...he was just a clerk in the store.
- I: So Ruona really gave him his big boost.
- R: Yes, he helped him finance and to buy it out.
- I: And then Matt Oja...
- R: Well, you see Ruona got killed in an accident back in 1924 up near Lake Roland there on that Lake Roland road and then the kids tried running it and they run it for a couple years and then they finally sold it out to Matt Oja...and then Matt Oja sold his share to George Maki and Pesola got in with it, and that's how he got out of the picture.
- I: So at one time Ruona owned both stores on the q.t.
- R: Well, yes.
- I: And then another time Matt Oja owned both stores but this time everyone knew it
- R: Yes, that's right.
- I: That doesn't do much as far as creating competition to lower prices, does it?
- R: No, no, it didn't...the only thing is we had the Co-op store over there going then, they called it the farmer's store then...not any more...that's the old farmer's store and the creamery you show me right there and a box car.
- I: Yeah, that's in 1918.
- R: Yeah, that's the old farmer's store.

- I: Here's another picture of it...what was that like?
- R: Just about like Karvakko's store, you remember the old farmer's store, just like Karvakko's store in Tapiola, just about the same.
- S: This is when the railroad was here yet.
- R: Yeah, and the warehouse was in the back, they still use it for a warehouse.
- I: Did you ever go in there?
- R: Did we ever go in there? Half of the time we lived in there you might as well say, we done a good share of our trading at the farmer's store, they were a little bit cheaper.
- I: I bet Ruona and Oja didn't like that Co-op coming in there very much, did they, that kind of cut their...
- R: No, and then there was a lot of friction, Urho Erikainen told me, between those farmers which wasn't fair...the manager would say so to this fella, "I'll give you so many sacks of feed, so much"...well, they had a set price, you know, say, \$1.50 a sack, you know, well, if the next farmer bought, say, 10 sacks, well, he'd give him quite a cut, you know, there got to be some friction between those farmers...
- I: Unequal pricing.
- R: Yeah, about the price, well, then finally the directors, I guess, finally got together and decided, well, "We'll make a certain price, we'll make a profit" and I guess that sort of settled that...which wasn't fair now supposing I sold you a box of, sack of, oats for \$1 and to somebody else it was 75¢, now you wouldn't like that if you heard it that the next one would buy it for 75... there was some friction there for a couple years but...
- I: You mean it got pretty hot, eh?
- R: Yes, they finally straightened that out, all right.
- I: And then they developed a standard pricing policy.
- R: That's right, that's right.
- I: So one reason the Co-op kind of turned from the original Co-op idea into more of a profit-making store was because the farmers themselves used to get jealous and hot at one another getting things at different prices.
- R: That's right, you can't blame them.
- I: No...and you can't blame the board of directors for doing what they did, either.
- R: No sir, they did the right thing, they set a standard price or so and then everybody paid the same thing which was fair.
- I: But they really got the business then.

- R: Oh, did they ever...like in the Co-op store or farmer's store then you could buy just about anything, I even bought lot of odds and ends of harness over there like my dad when he logged here we had was it 14 team of horses...we used a lot of harness, you know...and you could get anything you wanted in Pelkie...bolts and...
- I: At one time they had three stores going.
- R: Yes, yes...that was Gauthier's store then that time, or Funke's store, one of three, it wasn't Gauthier's anymore, it was Funke's store and the farmer's store and Ruona's store.
- I: Well, it probably got to the point where the competition between the stores got to the point where it wasn't all that profitable so Ruona...
- R: Like I said when Ruona died then and the kids were running it, why, I suppose it wasn't going just going right to a T or something, that's what I figured, so then they sold out to Matt Oja.
- I: So the people who used to go to Ruona's store probably started going over to the farmer's.
- R: That's right, that's right.
- I: Probably a great deal of Ruona's trade was due to the personal friendship with Matt Ruona himself, right?
- R: That's right, yes...he did quite a bit of logging around, too, you know, he'd buy like supposing now you had a carload of ties...and you'd go over there and get so much groceries or whatever you had on credit, you'd sell the stuff to him, see, he used to sell a lot of ties and flat timber and mine stalls to C & H also...well, they'd trade through him, you know...or if you had a few logs if you didn't have a carload, couple a thousand, he'd buy it and somebody else had a few, well, eventually it'd accumulate a couple of carloads, see... well, that all helped, see, Ruona would do that where Matt Oja couldn't do that at first, see...you follow me now?
- I: Yeah, 'cause you gotta have cash.
- R: Well, that round up his business a lot.
- I: You gotta have cash to do it.
- R: That's right, see.
- I: And he built up a good business
- R: You bet, he had good business there...and then he finally got farther ahead where he bought a bunch of timber back of Winona and they were logging...they logged in there for a couple of years and he was going up, he had a Model T that time, he was bringing up some groceries, the way I figure, and somewhere in the turn or something he met a woman that crowded him off of the road and the Model T tipped over and he got up and he told the woman, he says, "Now

look what you did" and he dropped right on the road there.

I: He had a bad heart.

R: Heart attack...he had kind of a bad heart.

I: Kind of excited over that.

R: I suppose.

I: So then there was Matt Oja's store and the Co-op competing for the available business.

R: Yes, at that time it was the farmer's store, you see the name on...

I: Then finally Matt Oja phased out, he couldn't compete with the Co-op.

R: No.

I: Partially because of his own practices and partially because the prices were cheaper at the Co-op.

R: Yes, yes.

I: When did he end his business there?

R: Right around 19...right around 1930.

I: Right in the Depression time when things started getting rough, eh?

R: Yeah, right around 19...wait a minute, no, a little later, 1931 maybe, I would think that that's right, that's the Depression...

I: Then he went into logging with Turunen, right?

R: Yeah, yeah.

I: And he financed the logging operation and Turunen had the know-how, right?

R: That's right...a lot of poor farmers went hungry that winter, too...they had big store bills and they were working in the woods and when they'd come in for to settle and Matt Oja would take the whole store bill out of the wages, well, gee, they went home with just about nothing...that hurt his business, see, they would never go back there and trade again...they didn't get any cash...you know as well as I do they needed cash for clothes or taxes or lot of things, they had kids going to school...and if you choke a guy like that, well, you going to get mad, he isn't going to come back and do business with you again, you wouldn't either, would you?

I: Darn right no...Mamma Oja was the Section boss.

R: Section boss, see, on the railroad there...for, I don't know, 10 years is a good guess or something like that...and then when...

- I: Something happened that he lost his job, wasn't it a kind of a...?
- R: There was some friction somewhere or something and he lost the job, well, then he bought that farm, see.
- I: Right across from Waino Mantila's.
- R: Yes, Waino Mantila owns it now
- I: And he was farming...
- R:
- I: And so Matt started very humble origins as just a farmer's boy, right?
- R: That's right....
- I: Mrs. Pelto?
- R: Well, during the Depression she was like a midwife...and she donated a thousand dollars...there got to be some friction in that first church and she donated a thousand dollars toward building a new church...I even made a donation by letting the farmers use a couple of my trucks to haul some lumber wherever they bought some lumber...and all the farmers and, not all farmers but members got together and built the church, see, and there was ^{some} good carpenters around here, they built the foundation, pretty soon they had a church of their own over there.
- I: Who was this Mrs. Pelto, not Alfred Pelto's.
- R: No, no relation at all, just that same name.
- I: Another one...do you recall the circumstances in 1932 when they did have that split? Do you recall what you hear about it?
- R: No, I can't...I didn't belong to the church, I can't tell you what the friction was all about...
- I: Because most of those people are dead, I've got a little...?
- R: Where the door went into the warehouse in the middle, you wouldn't see the door it'd be behind this lady.
- I: So one long wall in...
- R: Was all canned goods, you know..
- I: ...in Ruona's store.
- R: No, this would be at Funke's store that time...Matt Oja's later...that looks like Matt Oja's old store or Funke's old store...this is Ruona's store.
- I: Did you ever go up with the old man and have a cup of coffee?

- R: Once in a while...mostly with the Mrs. would come and invite me...she'd tell me, "Come, tulee kahville" ("Come for coffee")...I used to repair, I was a, in fact I was the only mechanic around the country...once in a while their car would break down, I'd go over there and fix it, well, she'd come and get me and tell me, "Come and have some coffee"...she couldn't speak hardly any English but she'd come and invite me for coffee in the afternoon...Mrs. Ruona, that's Bill's mother...those good old horses, they...
- I: In those days business was, they were really nice to their customers because they depended on them, too.
- R: Yes, you bet...now this, I don't know who that really is.
- I: Do you remember Turunen's mules?
- R: Yes.
- I: Do you remember anything they ever did?
- R: No, I can't remember only that they were mules, they were kind of mean, that's about all I can tell you, I was a kid going to school then, you know, that's a long ways back...but I remember the mules, he had them when he lived right there in Pelkie between...there was a barn in the back of the house over there.
- I: You ever drive a logging truck like that?
- R: Lots of them, I had no less than four of them.
- I: What was it like to drive one of those, that's a '35 or a '36 Ford.
- R: Those are '35s...yes, I drove lots of them, in fact I had four of them one time.
- I: What's it like driving one of those?
- R: Well, for one thing you had no brakes on your trailer...you had to go down all the hills, you had to be cautious and you made sure you shifted into 'duel low before you started braking over the crest so you got to go down slow enough and you kept up trying to hold it but it would gradually pick up speed if you were going down the hill...and where there were curves in the road you had to slow down because you could tip that big load of logs ^{over} pretty easy...and like when you come to the hill you usually had a, well, you got to where you'd learn your hill, what speed you could make it in, if you had to go in 'duel low you'd start her from the bottom because you could never shift her hardly on the fly...that took a chance of breaking the rear end...in fact, I got one of my old '37s left yet and I got a '33 left...down hill there.
- I: Do you remember Urho Erikainen?
- R: Urho? Do I ever remember him, he even worked for me different times and I guess he worked for my dad.
- I: Tell me about him and the things you remember about him because I'm going to

try to dedicate this to him.

R: Well, his dad started out with...this fella's born and raised on a farm...and his dad was sort of like a, they call it a truck farmer, you know, he'd raise vegetables and he'd peddle them down to Baraga around...in the wintertime he'd go down with a sleigh load and Urho worked on the farm with his brothers... they had a good sized dairy farm...then it got to where some of them died off, the brothers, the parents died, you know, and some of the brothers moved away, one went to Chicago and one to Alaska, and then Urho got left with the farm... and they built a new barn there and...then there got to be some friction with the wife and the brother and they come back from Chicago and they took the farm over and it didn't work out and they in other words kicked Urho out of there... and he start batching here and there and he worked in the woods right along, you know, sawing logs or whatever work there was to do, mostly piece work, sawing logs, and that's when he was trying to collect that history for that book.

I: Oh, this was in the later days when he started this history?

R: Yes, yeah, after he quit the farm.

I: Do you remember him ever coming over for a visit?

R: He used to come to my mother's and ask her all kinds of questions because my mother was one of the last old-timers around here...and he'd come over and get some history from her.

I: Would you listen to them talking?

R: Sometimes, yes, when I was home.

I: Did you ever hear him tell any stories?

R: I'd hate to start to tell you all of the stories that I know that he's told me.

I: Can you remember any now?

R: I'd have to think for a while which is a good one.

I: Do you remember him when he used to work for your dad?

R: Hardly, I was too small then.

I: Did he ever work for you?

R: Yes, he made ties for me long ago back in the Depression days, he hewed some cedar ties for me...back of Hazel and then he took care of the cattle for me here one week while I was gone to Chicago...and he helped me make hay a couple of times...he was a good worker and like running farm machines, well, he can run anything.

I: He was a very good worker, wasn't he?

R: Oh, yes.

I: Very honest man, too, wasn't he?

R: Yes, honest as the day is long.

I: You can tell that about him.

R: I guess so.

I: You know, it's just he's so honest that he almost hurts

R: Then just a few years back before he got laid up, well, he had a Chevrolet truck and he took it over, I'm not going to mention the name, to a fella's place over there, he was supposed to be a mechanic and he couldn't even get the cylinder head off and he had bars and what not trying to pry it off... well, finally Urho got disgusted and he come over and asked me if I'd fix it for him...I said, "Sure"...so he had somebody tow it over here and we looked it over and come to find out he had a bolt left...one bolt left in the middle of the cylinder head...and that's why he couldn't get the cylinder head off...so we took it off here and I ground the valves for him, we put a set of rings in it and...in fact, I didn't charge him anything for it because he had helped me many times around here...anyway I fixed the truck up for him... we used to go a lot on, out on, a lot of those tours together, you know, and he was collecting information for his book...I'd take him around because I had that four-wheel drive...and he's the one that showed me that there cemetery out in the woods, you know, back of Kenton...oh, it's just like going in to the wild woods, he showed me where all them tombstones and so forth are... otherwise I'd have never known where that was if he wouldn't have showed me that cemetery.

I: Is that where you learned a lot of your history?

R: Yes, through him...and he gave me a lot of history of some, he'd track it down, like there's a fella used to over what they called Nelson's Siding which isn't anymore, that's on the old Mineral Range Railroad, he told me a story of that he tried to track down...there was a fella there by the name of Joe Moon...he must have been a well-educated guy because he had a compass and a transit and a lot of good books and good clothes...he had a good, a well-built cabin...and the man disappeared, like the door was left open and he walked out in the open space and nobody ever heard of whatever happened to that man, not yet today, nobody ever knows what happened to that man...it's a mystery...he just, like I said, disappeared like he fell out of sight...and Urho's the one that tracked that history down and gave it to me...that's something now...and he had also told me of a story that he tracked down of a fella living right on the edge of Silver Mountain...I never knew that there was a little farm on Silver Mountain...a fella name of, Swede, by the name of Peterson had a little farm there.

I: Right on Silver Mountain?

R: Yeah, right on the edge of Silver Mountain where it peters out, you know, into the Plains...and he had gotten some free apple seed from the Government, or seedlings, and he had planted a lot of apple trees over there...but then a fire came along and burned up the apple trees so that's why there's no apple

trees in that spot...this same Peterson...some of the natives up there found him dead on the edge of Silver River...apparently died of a heart attack long ago and I got that story from Urho...though he done lot of hunting to get that.

I: He did...as you recall, you know, in your...just the knowledge you have of the community here and that, what do you think happened to all this history? He told me, I've heard many stories, many stories, as to what happened to it so if you can shed a little light on that...

R: That was about in 19...

I: '28, it says.

R: Yeah, '28 or '29 I was going to say.

I: I've got another picture of a steel bridge that was there, too, somewhere.

R: Would you believe that bridge was about 16 feet above water that we had that much water in that river, you'd never believe that, would you?

I: That looks like some kind of temporary bridge there.

R: That is, that is, see, that was built after the iron bridge was washed out... see, that really turned out good.

I: Oh, yeah...well, these, you know, it's good paper, that makes one big difference.

R: Yessir, that really turned out good.

I: It must have been kind of a serious operation crossing the river in some of those days, right? I mean, you couldn't...

R: Do you have a picture of that? That's the house that was here that burnt down.

I: No, not that...that was right here?

R: Yeah, that was on this foundation...we did have the nicest home in Pelkie at one time, my folks had.

I: Could you just look at one of those little pictures with your glasses on and let me...tell me a little about what they called the homesteads.

R: Well, there was a couple of the Pelto brothers built those up....that's Alfred Pelto's dad and when you go down there Emil Pelto's dad...they lived in...

I: I think it was Emil Pelto's dad, I don't think Alfred Pelto's dad was there, he was out toward Nisula, I think.

R: I believe, as I remember, both of them were there because..

PART TWO

I: How about a deer storv?

R: Oh, well, anyway it was deer season and Tom Michaelson was with me, we split... he had got his buck, oh, we were out maybe a half an hour and he got his, well, then I finally left him...we traded rifles...'cause I had the small rifle, he had the big rifle, so I took the big rifle then...and he didn't tell me he had lowered the sight on it...I hadn't walked far and I saw a big buck and I shot and I shot in between his feet, his legs, I missed him, 'cause I was standing on a railroad trestle and all I had was six shots, shells, altogether...so I emptied the gun, I still didn't get my buck, I was always shooting under...so I had to hurry up to where Tom was dressing the buck that he had shot and I got the small rifle back which we probably had about twenty shells for it... and I took up the tracks and I tracked that buck, this was in the forenoon until late afternoon, I must have tracked him about...I don't know, in the neighborhood of 2½ miles so finally when I saw him go over a windfall I shot and I got him...well, I didn't dare leave him on the ground because there was an awful lot of coyotes in that country so I kind of dragged him up in an evergreen tree, I had some twine with me, I tied him up in the tree at night, I had no compass along but I had a general idea which way the camp was from there...so I sort of made a, I'd break down branches here and there so I could find my way back...and I found my way to the railroad 'cause the camp was on the railroad at that time.

I: What railroad was that then?

R: That'd be the Menasha Woodenware Company...that was a logging railroad...and it came out at Ontonagon...and that was also Thompson Wells Lumber Company railroad, they were sort of a partnership on it...well, that deer was way back about 2½ miles from camp so the next day being Sunday the horses were idle so I took a horse and I put a harness on him and we took some hay baling wire along with us and I didn't take any whipple tree or anything, just the harness, so we went after, I had a young fella come with me, and we went and we got that buck and we tied him on top of the horse...because there were so many windfalls that we'd be in there all day getting the buck home, well, where the horse could step over the windfalls, see, with the buck tied on his back...so we saved a little hard labor, instead of dragging it I had him on, you know, brought him in by tying him on top of a big horse.

I: That must have looked nice seeing that deer on top of a horse.

R: I don't care what it looked like but we got him home anyway, it was about a, I don't know, 175 pound buck...nice rack of horns on it.

I: Did you ever watch right around the homesteads, lot of people, I understand, used to watch right in those old buildings.

R: I didn't but I heard of it.

I: That was good deer country, wasn't it?

R: You bet...it was all good deer country here...now, well, I did see a couple this summer but it isn't anything like it used to be, and when they started shooting all the does and fawns, well, that was the end of it.....oh, and I forgot to tell you that when my dad had those camps on the Sturgeon he took the the biggest drive of railroad ties, flat timber, that ever come down that

river...took down 20,000 railroad ties and 60 carloads of flat timber...and we had a boom here at Pelkie, you know a sort of a dam made across the river, you know what a boom is, have you heard, and we pulled all those ties out of the river and they were loaded on a railroad car, that's when the railroad was in Pelkie.

I: Was that between 1914 and 1918, do you remember the year of that drive?

R: That was about 1916 when that took place.

I: Do you remember seeing all those logs?

R: I worked there every day while we pulled them out of the river...I'm not going to tell you I saw all them logs but the most of them.

I: Who else worked on that drive...

R: Evert worked there and.

I: Evert Larson?

R: Yeah, there used to be a fella by the name of Carl Suominen that would be his neighbor across from the road there, you probably, Evert talked about it.

I: Anyone else from around this area on that drive?

R: Yeah, a fella from Baraga by the name of Raleigh Draper, worked there...and a fella by the name of John Dahlstrom, he was from Baraga, they boarded right here with my mother then, he worked there...and a fella by the name of Arvid Engman, he was the one that pulled them out of the river with a pickaroon, like on a pole and put the chain around them, he was a chainer...Evert drove one of the horses, I drove the other one...and Suominen was one of the guys that pulled them up on the car and loaded them on the cars.

I: Were guys driving them going down with the logs, too?

R: No, no, they were down at the boom at that time...but some of these same guys drove the timber down the river.

I: And that was the biggest single drive?

R: Of railroad ties that ever come down the Sturgeon.

I: Of railroad ties.

R: Yes, and flat timber, that ever came down the Sturgeon.

I: But there have been bigger drives of...

R: Of logs...some of those big drives my dad was the logger that took that timber out...well, you figure when you get a million and a half feet of logs into the river in one bunch that's a lot of logs...that stretches out down the river if they were even like corduroy, one after the other, would stretch out down the

river a mile and a half long...do you believe that, so much logs?

I: That's something, and those logs were about how long at the time?

R: From 12 to 16 feet...some 18s.

I: If you were to take the loggers in Pelkie and arrange them in order as to who did the most logging of the logging contractors, what order would you put them?

R: Well, my dad was one of the big ones...and then Matti Oja and Turunen was the last big one, they logged for Ford, that come into Pelkie...that's the biggest loggers.

I: And then Ruona a bit, but he was more...

R: Quite a bit smaller, you know, like the Wais, there were many loggers but they was in a small scale like Waisanen's would take out a forty or two...this Carlson they take out maybe a forty or two in the wintertime but that was on a small scale, all they had was, say, five or six men the most...where my dad had up to fifty men, some places more or less.

I: What kind of a man was Matt Turunen? I've got a picture of him.

R: He was quiet...he was a mighty nice guy, he was sort of on the quiet side.

I: He knew his stuff, though...

R: Oh, yes.

I: ...in logging, didn't he?

R: Yes, yes, he was good, you bet.

I: What about Matt Ruona? What kind of a man was he?

R: Well, he was sort of quiet...a religious, sort of a religious man but he was quiet also...but a hustler...didn't take him long to put up a store or a building or a barn...it seems as though it went up overnight...when he'd build something.

I: What about your dad, John G. Erickson? How would you describe...

R: He was another hustler.

I: He must have been.

R: You betcha...he built a bridge over the river alone.....that's Matt Turunen. Yeah, you betcha...who give you a picture of him, one of the boys?

I: Rueben.

R: Yeah, that's Matt Turunen...that's probably taken right out in Pelkie at the landing...from the way it looks.

- I: So Turunen and Oja then started working for big Ford contracts later.
- R: Yeah, Ford Lumber Company.
- I: Do you remember when Turunen was busted...he had some contracts broken on him.
- R: Oh, that was right around after World War I when one of those...
- I: Right around 1920-'21 I've heard.
- R: Something...right around '20 would be a pretty good guess.
- I: Do you remember that?
- R: Yes.
- I: What happened there? How did that affect people?
- R: Well, here's what happened...the mines quit buying, the mines couldn't sell copper, they quit buying and he got left with a lot of logs and stuff on the landing he couldn't sell, it'd break any guy.
- I: He had all the contract with the mines?
- R: Yes, mining timber mostly...and when they stopped, you stopped.
- I: They didn't have to honor their contract?
- R: No sir...lot of those contracts were just oral contracts...like my dad had one with the Baraga Lumber Company in Baraga...I think it was \$15 a thousand for the logs delivered down there, it wasn't on paper but it was just as good as gold.
- I: Sometimes it was.
- R: Well, at that time just about everybody was honest...as a rule the most of them were.
- I: There were very few written contracts in this [?]log-contracting business?
- R: That's right.
- I: Including with the mines, eh?
- R: That's right, a lot of that was oral...lot of it was just like a purchase order just ship so many cars of this...and they'd tell you, well, we'll use so many cars through the winter, well, you always cut so much ahead so that when they said, "We want a carload of ties or flat timber or that" well, you had it on hand at the landing to ship out.
- I: You told me once about Pelkie and Dunsmore getting a rough deal on their, the first timber they cleared out of their, this homestead here.
- R: Yes, yes.

I: Can you tell me a little about that, I didn't get that perfectly straight last time.

R: Well, see, Dunsmore, he was a teamster, he drove team for the Nestor Lumber Company, and William Pelkie, he was a sort of a foreman down there in the mill yard.....that's John Dunsmore, that's his last years...in it, he's all gray...

I: Continue with your story.

R: And he sold his pine logs, they went down the river, and he says that, "I'll take all of the...money for the...No. 1s and you can have all the money for the No. 2s and the No. 3 lumber, you know.

I: He told this to...

R: To Nestor Lumber Company...well, they were, fixed it with their lumber grader so it was almost all lumber 2 and 3 low grade...see, they had a crooked lumber grader, one that they could buy out...and that's how Mr. Pelkie got a skidding...see, there's six grades in lumber...No. 1s, they fixed it so he didn't get pay for very much No. 1.

I: So he wasn't totally busted...on it

R: No...but he got a raw deal, I'll tell you.

I: Can you say anything more about Pelkie, what kind of man he was?

R: He was a mighty nice guy, nice neighbor...and when I was small I used to help him out, he used to raise a lot of cabbage and I used to help him cultivate cabbage when I was a young fella.

I: He was farming here, then?

R: Yes...across the road from us.

I: How come he quit ?

R: Well, he got up to where, he must have been about 65 years old when he quit farming, time to retire, although there was no retirement plans at that time, but he had a daughter living in Detroit so he sold his farm and his equipment.

I: When did he sell his farm?

R: About in 1916... '16 or '17 just about, because I remember I used a horse and a buggy to bring him and his trunk to Baraga when he left.

I: So those two men were your neighbors, eh, these two?

R: Yes, Pelkie farm, yeah, they were our first neighbors...this one lived over here and this one across the road.

I: I heard Dunsmore was quite a character, old man Dunsmore.

R: Oh, yes, he was all right...he was a nice guy...he'd help you any time you needed help...it never cost you anything...and he was a mighty good teamster... and the same with Mr. Pelkie, you needed help you'd get help any time you wanted, 'course we all, my folks always helped him back, too...you bet.

I: Pelkie died in Detroit, then?

R: Yes...he was staying with his daughter and he had made a trip downtown, when he come back the house was on fire and it was such a shock to him he dropped dead, they said, right on the street.

I: Kind of like Matt Ruona did on.

R: Like a heart attack or something.

I: And Dunsmore, he lived to be an old man.

R: Yes, I don't know what his age was but he must have been up close to 80...he died at home over here.

I: Do you remember a guy named Kamppagusti?

R: Yes, he used to live right down on that corner, the Froberg road crossing, he had a little shack right there and when he passed away, why, when...see, Johnny married a widow and they went down to Florida and Johnny, he died down in Florida and the widow came back up here and stayed here and somehow her and Bill Narhi got going together and Bill Narhi married her.

I: What was her name?

R: Fern Dunsmore then...I guess it was Wright before that...well, then while they were farming over here that there little cabin was down at the corner and I had a pretty big bulldozer at the time, I still have it, so they asked me if I'd go and haul it up so they could attach it to their house and make an extra room which I did...I went up there with the 'dozer one afternoon and I, they had it on skids and I hauled it up and I pushed it up against the house and they connected it together somehow and made a bedroom out of it...made the house a little bigger, it's still there attached to the house.

I: Well, this Kamppagusti was quite a character, too.

R: Well, yes, he was a bachelor, he first lived out in Pelkie, I don't really know where, right where the old Ruona house is there was a camp there, a fella by the name of Goodell had a little lumber camp there, I was knee-height to a grasshopper when that happened, and he stayed there and finally when Kamppagusti was gone to the store or something that caught fire and burnt up...so he got a hold of some lumber and he got permission to build this little cabin of his on Dunsmore's property because he used to work for Dunsmore off and on on the farm and Dunsmore gave him permission to build a cabin on the corner of his property there, that's how he got the name Kamppagusti...and then he did a little gambling on the side, you know...fellas would stop in there, you know, and chew the fat, he was a nice fellow, though, I'll tell you.

- I: Who used to go and gamble with him in those old...
- R: Well, a lot of these guys from Elo would stop in there and gamble with him, some of the young fellas...and as a rule it seems, though, he always came out on top...made a little bit...and he'd, like I said, he'd work for anyone that needed a help for two, three days or a week or so, why, he always worked out, sort of a handyman he could do mostly anything that came around.
- I: Do you remember John Wahamaki?
- R: Yes.
- I: He was a bit of a barber, wasn't he?
- R: Yes, he even cut my hair many times when I used to go to school.
- I: What was it like to go have him cut your hair? Where did he do it?
- R: Right in the house in the kitchen...set you down on a chair...well, he'd get the clippers and scissors and cut it...probably give him a quarter...that was all.
- I: He cut most ^{the} heads around here, eh?
- R: Yes...that was a Sunday chore for him.
- I: Oh, he had another job, eh?
- R: Oh, he was farming besides and then he'd work out once in a while also.
- I: Logging.
- R: No, he'd probably work on the landing, you know, for some of the other loggers, he never did any logging, he'd work on the landing...there was always lot of work on the landing there for other guys.
- I: You know that old man Kahkonen who was the blacksmith?
- R: Blacksmith, certainly, I knew him good.
- I: What was he like?
- R: Well, he was a little bit on the hot-headed side...and he raised a big family, he was a good blacksmith.
- I: He was a good man but he just had a temper, right?
- R: Yes, high-tempered...short-tempered would maybe be a better answer, but he was a real good blacksmith.
- I: Do you remember taking your horses in to...
- R: Yes, for my dad, they weren't my horses, my dad, I'd bring them over there

when they'd put shoes on them...didn't take him too long to put a set of shoes on them...and I remember one time I was pretty interested in blacksmithing although I was small and he said, "Well, in the summertime you come here and go to school here"...I remember he told me that, you know, learn the blacksmithing trade...I learned a lot from him, he showed me how to do a lot of things...he was nice.

I: He was quite a character, though, he used to really get mad and ? things.

R: Yeah, he was hot-headed.

I: Can you remember any times that...

R: No, I can't.

I: ...he would really get mad.

R: No...sometimes a horse wouldn't behave he'd hit him with a hammer in the ribs, all right...you know, with the side of the hammer and he'd make them stand still...you know how they get a little fussy...otherwise that's about all I can tell you about him.

I: You had another character here, too, another blacksmith, Emil Pelto, old Emil Pelto, that...

R: Yes, he's down in Baraga...yeah, well, he had a sort of a blacksmith shop and a garage, you know, and he run a bus one time, we had a bus service going from Pelkie to Hancock...he had made a body and he had it mounted on a Model T chassis...to start out with...then he got competition, a fella by the name of Jalmer Liuska, he bought a Rio...that was faster and a little better bus body, well, he lost out on his passengers, sure they'd ride with the one that went faster, the Model T went slow, the Model T I guess top speed on that thing was probably 20 miles an hour...well, they rode with the other one that would probably get up to 40...so finally Emil Pelto bought a Rio chassis and then he mounted the body onto the Rio chassis so there was competition then...it'd usually stop at the Kaleva, that's where they'd start out from when they'd leave town about 4 o'clock, I'd say, in the afternoon and they'd go by here about 9...

I: What about the old Communist activities in Pelkie? Do you remember going to the Panikki Hall for a dance ever?

R: I went to just about all of the dances.

I: What were they like?

R: Well, they were just like any other dance but lot of the meetings and that they were always in Finnish and I couldn't understand them, I don't know what they talked about...but there was quite a few of them around here that belonged to that organization at that time.

I: In Pelkie?

- R: Yes...by the name of Pulkinen was in there...and Wayrynen was in there...and Emil Pelto was one of them...Bert Lein I guess was in it.
- I: There was a Lytikainen.
- R: Yeah, yeah.
- I: Who was that, old Charlie?
- R: Charlie, what was the first name, he was way down there...that's about the whole of it...of course I mentioned Pulkinen...he was down there on the flats, and then a Juntunen...Juntunen.
- I: And there were some out toward Hamar, too.
- R: Yes, Uusitalo's.
- I: Uusitalo?
- R: Matt Uusitalo and John Uusitalo's.
- I: And out in Grist Mill?
- R: I guess there was a fella by the name of Lehto out there.
- I: And out around Kyro?
- R: We got to Wayrynen, he was in Kyro at that time.
- I: That's pretty heavy church country there.
- R: Yes, but he was one of them.
- I: What about Pine Creek area?
- R: No, there weren't any around there...no, that was church people mostly in that area...no, there weren't no Communists in that...
- I: What about Horoscope?
- R: There was no Horoscope at that time.
- I: What about right in Pelkie there?
- R: Emil Pelto was the only one right in Pelkie.
- I: He was kind of...
- R: He was the top man.
- I: ...recognized as top man, eh...I understand that he got quite a few people to go over to Soviet Karelia, some came back, some stayed there.

- R: Yeah, there was a couple up in this area that I know, the Saari brothers, they went.
- I: Which Saari's were they?
- R: Jack Saari.
- I: And there were several more around Elo, weren't there?
- R: Yes, but I don't remember all of them now, they talked quite a few into going, boy, they fixed it so they never could come back either.
- I: Some came back, though...and they evidently didn't have the best time of it.
- R: No...some had like I say a one-way ticket.
- I: Talk was in those days that old Emil was getting bounty for them.
- R: Yes, that's what we heard anyway, I don't know how true it was.
- I: I think that may have been rumor...I talked to him the other day about it but he was very unwilling to chat about it.
- R: Yeah, well, you see then there was Kiiskela, he was really the main kingpin.
- I: Oh, he would come out here.
- R: Yeah, and he'd give a speech...because I remember one time we were in there, they weren't dancing, they were just listening, I couldn't understand them because it was in Finnish and somebody was making some, you know, a little too much noise in the back and he spoke in English, and he says, "Hey, you young fellas, if you don't like it," he says, "just step out"...I remember that... he said that in English, well, then everything quieted down.
- I: He used to be quite an orator, wasn't he?
- R: Yes, yes.
- I: I heard that you could hear him on a summer evening, you know, for quite a ways.
- R: Yeah, oh, he was [?] right up there, I remember him...he was like I said really the main kingpin, you see, he was educated.
- I: Well, wasn't there also some around Herman, too, that...
- R: Yes, Dantes was one, I remember, Charles Dantes' dad, the old man, they're both dead and gone now...and he even used to be sheriff of Baraga County one time... Herman Dantes.
- I: Most of those old-timers that were in that are dead.
- R: I knew a lot of the names of those that were up there...I can't remember any of their names, Dantes was one of the main kingpins.

I: Wasn't there a woman that'd come out here, too?

R: Yes, yes...I don't know if I heard her name, she gave quite a talk in Finnish... she was, belonged to the Communist Party or whatever it was...but I don't believe I ever did hear her name.

I: She would come here some time and teach the children, educate them...

R: Try to, anyway.

I: Do you remember the time they tried to take over the Co-op?

R: A little bit about it but I wouldn't make any commitments 'cause..

I: You're not certain.

R: I don't know too much about it.

I: One thing that I forgot to ask you before was when did that cheese factory start? We said that around 1930 it ended, I mean the creamery start, when did the creamery start...you said around 1930 it ended when the cheese factory came in.

R: The creamery might have started around 1914.

I: Around the start of the First World War?

R: Right around then...because a lot of people, there was, whoever was at the head of it I remember come around and asked different farmers if they'd sign a \$50 note so they could get some money from the bank to start building it...my dad was one of the signers and he lost the \$50, they had to pay the note because it washed up...all the first ones, I guess, lost their money.

I: In 1930 they lost it or earlier?

R: No, earlier, right around 1916 or so...it didn't go too good the first couple years...started off good but lot of the fellas that signed the note, I guess my wife's dad signed the note and he had to wound up paying it.

I: That was a lot of money in those days, too.

R: Well, was it ever.

I: I bet they were pretty mad...but yet they got enough support again to...

R: Well, the building and everything and machinery was all there, it was easy then to get started.

I: Did they have to go around and get capital again?

R: No, they didn't...whoever did if you had a \$100 you could get going then, you know...so then they got it going again...and then it went for pretty long time, till finally Nels Plough took it over...see, he used to be a, he run a creamery

out in Minnesota for a long time, or was it the Dakota's...he knew the business and he come over and took over.

I: They were making butter is what they were doing, right?

R: Yes, butter, and they made butter.

I: Any ice cream?

R: No, not in Pelkie here they didn't

I: Made butter and shipped it out on the Mineral Range.

R: Yes, that's right.

I: Well, farmers, they couldn't make out too well then because all they could sell was their cream.

R: Yes...they always had that test down, too, where the creamery made the money... if you had a four-point test you never got it, they always cut it down enough to make sure they were on top...just like between those two cheese factories they have now, the one at Dollar Bay and the one at Bruces...at the one at Dollar Bay over there they really chisel it off over there...not that the other one don't take their share, too, but they aren't quite as bad as the one at Dollar Bay.

I: And then how did that cheese factory go when it was here? Now you said that...

R: Well, I told you all that on account they didn't keep it clean, the inspectors shut that.

I: Did they have some^{labor} troubles there? There were only a half a dozen guys or so, I think.

R: In fact, there was only about...four of them worked in there.

I: They were going to start a little union of four people?

R: I guess they were trying it, trying something, I don't know too much about it... but they had some trouble there...that's why I suppose they didn't give a dog-gone about keeping it clean, they figured that they'd button it up and they sure did.

I: Oh, it was a part of that, that was all involved together in it?

R: You bet...that and getting too dirty, certain things they didn't keep clean and they buttoned them up for good.

I: Well, that's about it, we've talked a lot...someone 2,000 years may listen to this...some great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, grandchildren from the Pelkie area, this might even be a city by then, hundred thousands, maybe million people...is there anything you'd like to say to them now?

- R: I don't know if there's much more I could say...that's about the most of it I remember.
- I: Would you tell them they're lucky they didn't have to live then or do you think that they miss something?
- R: I think they miss something...that's what I think...it was fun growing up around here...long ago...I couldn't ride to school in a school bus, I had to walk...and no matter how stormy it was, we always got to school, I betcha we didn't miss two days in a whole year and we had to walk to school back and forth, same with Evert and them...we never had no indoor toilets or anything... a little house in the back...you had a pail of water and with a dipper in it, everybody drank from the same pail and used the same dipper and nobody got sick and died...I guess we were a little bit tougher that time than what probably they are now.
- I: I wouldn't want to do that now...course now we've got some of those viruses, too, that are different.
- R: And all we had was a big wood-burning stove, it was cold in the morning when we come to school, the janitor would get there maybe a half hour before school, before the bell rang...built a fire but it was cold when you got to the school and never warmed up really till about 10 o'clock...then when they left the school the fire died out and it was out till the next morning again in the wintertime.
- I: Did you wear your coats and that on in school?
- R: Sometimes you had to have your coat on till it warmed up...or you'd freeze.
- I: They kept discipline in those days, too, didn't they?
- R: You betcher life...when I went to school there there was as much as 50 kids in that little school...some of the seats you had to sit double...it was that crowded at times.
- I: So you think this generation missed something, eh?
- R: You betcher life they did...was kind of tough at times but I think it was better than what it is now.
- I: Was the average person different then? Than they are now, the average man?
- R: A lot more friendlier than what they are now
- I: People used to visit more, eh?
- R: Oh, you bet...they'd even have parties around the country like at one house maybe the next house some other Saturday night or...if the kitchen was big enough you had a little dance...you don't have that anymore.
- I: People used to dance a lot more then, like in the kitchen they would dance?

R: Sure they would dance in the kitchen.

I: What would be the music?

R: Had an old Victrola...or else somebody could play a violin or if my dad could play a violin.

SIDE TWO

R: We always had a piano, my folks did, somebody could play the piano, why, always had some music.

I: So you'd start stepping, eh?

R: You betcha.

I: Now people don't dance as much it seems...and you had these dances over here. When did you have these dances?

R: Mostly in the wintertime.

I: At Punikki Hall in the winter?

R: Yes...oh, in the summertime you had one just about every Saturday night at the Punikki Hall...that's an irrigator, that name, I betcha.

I: Is that what you called it in those days?

R: We always called it the Pelkie Hall but lot of them like Evert he always called it the Funikki Hall, I remember that...he used to go there about every dance, too...I never did see Evert dance...Evelyn, I used to dance with Evelyn, all right.

I: Who used to come out and play there?

R: They'd get somebody from the Copper Country with a piano-accordion, even Jimmy Contratto from Calumet would come down, come down on the bus.

I: What was he like?

R: He was an Italian accordion player, real nice guy, and he usually spent the night here at my folks...and I used to work in the garage in the Copper Country, my brother give me a ride to town Sunday evening and he'd ride up to the Copper Country with us and take the streetcar from Hancock to Calumet to his home.

I: He was quite an entertainer, wasn't he?

R: Oh, you bet, he was a good musician, they used to have him pretty regular. then they'd pick up some other outsider once in a while.

I: Viola Turpeinen?

R: She played a few times.

I: What did she play?

R: Piano-accordion...but Jimmy Contratto I thought was better...he played a lot more of the popular songs.

I: When people used to dance and that were there ever any fights over there like the Klo boys and...

R: Almost every Saturday night someone got shined up, there'd be some fight about something...I never knew what it was all about but every once in a while somebody got into some argument about something...yes.

I: Seems like Pelkie was a heck of a lot more busy and there were more things going on than there are today.

R: Well, just imagine, we had three stores going one time, we had to be busy.

I: Three stores, two saloons.

R: Yeah, well, the saloons died out long ago, you know, but the stores, you know, were all busy doing a good business there...all the farms were opera, in operation, there were no vacant farms then, not that I know of.

I: Of course the families were big, too.

R: Sure, you bet...and everybody was dressed well and got along good, plenty to eat.

I: Saturday night they'd wear their white shirts.

R: You bet.

I: What would they do in town on a Saturday night? Would there be people hanging around the town visiting and...

R: Yes...I never was to many towns on Saturday night, we'd always go to the Hall up here.

I: That's where most people went, was it just [?]young people here?

R: Lot of them come from the Copper Country down here to Pelkie to dance...Painesdale and South Range and Houghton and Hancock.

I: That must have really been...how many people would be there then?

R: Oh, would be a 100 sometimes...on a Saturday night.

I: And in the winter?

R: Oh, there'd be a lot in the winter, too...only that'd be mostly local people in the winter because you couldn't come through with your cars then, the roads weren't open.

I: When did they have those dances there?

R: It'd be always on a Saturday night.

I: I know, but what years, when was that Hall put up?

R: Oh...right around 1920, I would say...or maybe before, maybe '18...right after World War I I believe that they built it.

I: And when did they take her down? Oh, in fact, they didn't take her down, they moved it to Keweenaw Bay.

R: A fella bought it for...it sort of died out...when the beer taverns got in full swing, the Hall died out...there weren't too many who would come to the Hall anymore and...

I: When did these dances begin to phase out, what year?

R: Oh, right around the Depression times...that's when they started phasing out.

I: They didn't serve alcohol there, did they?

R: No, no...about 1935 it was just about all washed out.

I: Alcohol was available here during the Prohibition, wasn't it? I heard there used to be a few bootleggers around.

R: Oh, yes, there were quite a few around.

I: Who used to make moonshine?

R: Well, there used to be a fella ^{over here} by the name of August Bohto, he used, I don't know if he made it but he used to sell it...and there'd be one down by Otter Lake by the name of Moilanen...and Andun up there toward Tapiola he used to sell some of it...a fella up there when you go toward the dump by the name of Dufour...I guess he used to make it and sell it...

I: Dufour? What kind of a name is that?

R: French...because, see, he was getting pretty old and sometime some of the young fellas would watch where he had it hid, somebody would go and buy a pint, you know, and then when he come back in the house somebody I heard would sneak around and go and help themselves wherever he had it hid...oh, they do their tricks around here, too...

I: And there were the Beckman brothers.

R: Yes, they were German...they lived up toward Waisanen's up in that area...I suppose that there'd be more if a fella could think of all of them...if I remembered.

I: Well, that's about it then, all right?

R: That's about it, I guess.