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

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

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

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

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

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SUBJECT: Family History in Pelkie

SOURCE: Otto Erikkinen, December 4, 1975

COMMENTS:

INTERVIEWER: Michael M. Loukinen

- I: This is December 4, 1975; interviewer is Michael Loukinen and interviewee is Otto Erikkinen and Threasa Erikkinen in their home in Pine Creek, Michigan in the Pelkie area. We're going to be talking about their family. Now, your father's name was...
- R: David  
Erikkinen?
- R:
- I: And where did he come from in Finland, where did he live?
- R: That's one thing I'd have to look up in the books. I wouldn't know.
- I: Do you know about when he came here?
- R: Before the 1900's something. I think so. That I'd have to look up in these books also.
- I: What was your mother's name?
- R: Wilhemina and her maiden name was
- I: Okay, how do you spell Wilhemina...I can almost get it...W-i-l-h-e-m-e-n-i-a?
- R: M-i-i-n-a
- I: Un hum, and spell the last name
- R: P-i-p-e-r...(hard to hear)
- I: Okay. And when your father came to America, did he...well first of all, do you know what his father did for a living in Finland?

- R: No
- I: Okay...where did he come first when he came to America?
- R: Somewheres in Wisconsin...I don't know where.
- I: Un huh, do you know what he did in Wisconsin?
- R: Worked in the lumbercamps because that wherehe seen his first porcupines and earth fireflies.
- I: Do you remember him talking about those?
- R: Sure
- I: Can you try to recall a couple of the stories he told.
- R: Well, I don't know much about the stories; but it was just odd for them because they hadn't seen the fireflies before. They thought they were sparks in the nighttime flying around from something or someplace.
- I: How long...was he married at this time?
- R: Sure.
- I: Oh, he came with his wife.
- R: Sure, and...no, alone.
- I: Oh, and he married relatively soon after he arrived?
- R1: No, he was married there and two sons were born there. John and Charles were born in the old country and Urho was born here. There's several years difference between John and Charlie and Urho.
- I: Okay. Then where did they move after
- R: Baraga.
- I: Came straight to Baraga.
- R: Sure.
- I: And did he live in the village of Baraga?
- R: Yes, he worked for the sawmill, whatever the sawmill was there at the time.
- I: Okay, he was working at the sawmill. Do you recall what he was

doing there?

R: Loading...loading lumber someplace...into the boats or; he was talking about loading lumber on the boats...to the boats.

I: I know they used to ship out a lot of lumber at the time.

R: Sure

I: ...and it could very well have been the Nester Mill

R: I suppose.

I: But I can check into that.

R: And then from there he moved to Sturgeon River Valley where Tahtinen's live on that farm.

I: Where Donald Tahtinen?

R: Charlie Tahtinen's father...Rudy Tahtinen's grandfather, the mail carrier here...his grandfather.

I: Who owns that farm today

R: I don't know. Might be Patterson and it might be somebody else... I don't know.

I: You know where Donald Tahtinen's farm is?

R:

I: Oh, okay. I can check that out. And how long did he stay there?

R: Maybe a year or so and the floods were terrible, so he took off. (Chuckle)

I: Very wise move on his part

R: Sure.

I: And then where did he go?

R: Here.

I: Straight to Pine Creek, Michigan.

R: Sure.

R1: Pine Creek Road.

I: Pine Creek Road...did he buy this property from someone?

- R: Sure, from Sam Hill from Baraga. Sam Hill was a grocery store man and whatever he was in Baraga; so I think he gave him five hundred dollars for this place.
- I: And how many acres was this at the time?
- R: I think this was forty acres at the time. It had been built partly by Perrault, William Perrault, he was father to this William Perrault in Alston by the Sturgeon River bridge now...I mean, Silver River bridge; but he had made a shack in here...I mean, a house and he had got it as a homestead from Ted Roosevelt at the time.
- I: Ted Roosevelt?
- R: Sure.
- I: Okay, that's all right. And why did Perrault leave here?
- R: Ah, he couldn't keep up with the contract or something. I think you had to clean so much a year or do so much work or something on it in order to keep it for so many years and he lost out on it; so he got another homestead where Massie lives now, or Massie's house is...that was Lasaars bought it from Perraults. Well, he moved there and he lost that place. I suppose from drinking or something like that...I heard from Bill Perrault that his Pa was quite a drunk, so he lost that place.
- I: And Sam Hill evidently bought this then from...
- R: Sure, he must have bought that and then Pa got it from Sam Hill.
- I: Ahm, let's see...were there any children at the time when your came here?
- R: Well, that was in 1907, and I was seven months old and Urho was older than me about two years and brothers Charlie and John were here. Brother Urra was the only one that was born on this farm.
- I: Okay, and what work had to be done then? I know there was a little woods...was there even land to be cleared?
- R: Sure, most of the land was cleared by us. There wasn't much land cleared when we moved in here; but then we kept on clearing and clearing and in 1917 we built this house and moved out of the house Perrault had built.
- I: How many acres did you fellows clear would you say just guessing offhand?
- R: Well, we cleared all this whole forty out of here and then he got

more land, another forty later on and then another forty later on again; so that other two forties, there's about half of that cleared up. But that's about thirty years ago...forty years ago.

I: And so you'd say roughly you cleared almost eighty acres.

R: Sure.

I: How did you clear that?

R: Oh, just with horses and dynamite. My dad was great in dynamiting. He'd put thirty sticks of dynamite underneath a big stump and there was just a big cellar left when the stumps flew up about a quarter of a mile away. He made sure when he blew a stump, that stump was gone. (Chuckle)

I: Sounds like dangerous work too.

R: Sure...what them pieces they flew from way over there up to the railroad to that county road to Koivanen's, but they never hit the house.

I: Were some of these chunks pretty big too?

R: Well, they were mostly those big pine stumps.

I: Ah, so this was mostly pine.

R: Sure, mostly pine.

I: Is that why they called it Pine Creek?

R: Sure, cause a lot of pines have been taken out of here.

R1: Also on account of the fact that Pine Creek run through here.

R: Sure, the Pine Creek runs through here too.

I: Well, was there some logging done in this area earlier?

R: Sure, in the 1800's...I think it was Sirard's Pa that had taken the pines out of here in the 1800's; but that was only pines that he took out. Nothing else; the hardwood and cedar and all that was left here.

I: Well, where did you go to school? All of the boys go to school?

R: Well, brother John and Charlie went to school the other side of Pelkie to that school. And me and Urho went to school to...they called it Pine Creek School where Pine Creek Road hits the blacktop on top of that hill where Alfred Pelto had the sawmill.

Did you know when that Pine Creek School was built?

R: I don't know...somewheres around the...because brothers Charlie and John they went to Pelkie and then we went to Pine Creek School; so Pine Creek School must have been very recently built around 1911...around those times.

I: Okay, I'll leave it at around 1911.

R: Yeah.

I: Do you remember your teachers in the Pine Creek School?

R: Well, the first teacher was Nelma Heikka of Calumet or Laurium.

I: Nelma Heikka?

R: Un huh.

I: Okay, that's N-e-l-m-a and H-e-i-k-k-a.

R: That's right.

I: Okay, and the next one.

R: I don't know her first name, just Miss Clements they called her.

I: Clements?

R: Sure, if I remember right.

I: Do you know where she was from?

R: No! I took her to be from Baraga, but I never found out for sure because I would have to ask Bill Ruona. Bill Ruona was going to school there too in Pine Creek.

I: After Miss Clements in the Pine Creek School, the next teacher was Dewey Kellokoski from Laurium; and in January 14, 1914, the Kostamo School was completed just south of Pine Creek area in Pelkie; but the local people often referred to it as the Poplar School simply because there were so many Poplar trees all around the area. The first teacher in 1914 was Miss Krebsaw. She was evidently an Indian and came from the L'Anse area. In 1914, the next teacher was Rosanna LaCosse from Baraga. She taught for three years. In 1917 came Lexie Oberg and she lived in the Swedish settlement of Carlson just a few miles west of Baraga. She taught for two years. In 1920, Emma Nord taught and she is from Baraga. Her brother owned a grocery store there and her father was the local watchmaker. In 1920...well, toward the last month of the year 1920, Edward Gerard of Baraga completed

the turn as Emma Nord was dismissed. In 1921, the teacher was Senia Wanttaja from Baraga and she taught for two years. And now we'll continue with another aspect of the history.

- I: I understand there are four brothers in the family...John, Charlie, Urho, Otto and Uno. Can you tell me just a brief history of Charlie. I understand that he's deceased now.
- R: Yes, he worked on the farm until he was about twenty years old. Then he operated logging for about a couple of years with Bill Koivanen; and then after that around 1920 or '21, he took off for other work off the farm, you know, on his own.
- I: What was he doing?
- R: Well, I don't know exactly what he was doing, but then he got into driving the township or county trucks...snowplows and truck driver for the county for several years until he got sick and he quit and then that was his last job.
- I: Okay...he died then?
- R: Sure, he died then. He died sort of a lingering disease. He was off from work for awhile and had some operations, but nothing became of those operations. They didn't help him.
- I: He died as a relatively young man then
- R: Sure, well he was sixty then when he died...I think he was sixty, I don't know.
- I: Okay, and next to Charlie...
- R: Well, John was the oldest.
- I: Okay, can you tell me about John.
- R: Well, he worked on the farm for quite awhile and then he was working on the railroad on the construction gang and from the construction gang he came back home to do farming; but then he worked the winters always at lumber camps until he got married and moved to a place of his own.
- I: Where did he move?
- R: Oh, up by...I think the place was called Champayne's Farm on the other side of M-38 and about a couple of the years there and then he moved to Papin and got Raino Tarriainen's place. And then he was there until he got sick and went to the hospital and he died. That was...when was that when he died?

R1: Same year that Kennedy died.

I:

R1: '63, yeah.

R: Sure...Kennedy died November 22nd and John died the same month... November 8, something like that.

I: Okay, and we'll go directly to Uno now

R1: Don't you want John's wife in there?

I: Oh, okay.

R: Sure and they were married, John was

R1: He married her April the 4th, 1948

I: April the 4th, 1948, John married.

R1: Martha Neston.

R: Of Finland

R1: Yes, she come from \_\_\_\_\_

I: Okay, now let's go to Uno.

R: Well, when Uno got out of the school, he helped in the summertimes on the farm and from about August to the next May he spent trapping...year after year after year until he went to Alaska.

I: He was considered an outstanding trapper woodsman wasn't he?

R: Sure, that's right...that's right. His name is in the Trappers' Hall of Fame in Amasa.

R2: In Alaska he had spent seven years painting barns before he was allowed to do any trapping because that was a residency required at the time.

I: Oh, you had to be a resident before you could trap.

R2: Now you have to be there for six months but before it was seven years.

I: Oh, and I understand he died on his trap line.

R: Yes, he went through the ice with his pack and gun and snowshoes and all.

Stop in tape

I: I have a newspaper clipping here describing the circumstances of the death of Uno Erikkinen. Right now I'll just mention that he was drowned on the Deshecko River north of Anchorage. His tracks were followed along the trapline from the Caswell area, seventy-five miles north of Anchorage to a point where they vanished at a large hole in thin ice of the river. I have the newspaper article here and I'll xerox off a copy and include it with the manuscript so leave a little space in the typing for it.

And now can you tell me anything more about Uno's life? Was he married?

R1: Yes, he was married in 1940 to Ellen Usitalo.

I: Where was she from?

R: Nisula

R1: And of that marriage come two children...Diana and David; and the children were raised in Alaska.

I: And where are they living today?

R1: Diana lives in Medford, Oregon and David lives in Alaska. Ellen now lives...Ellen has remarried since and she lives in Ontario, Oregon.

I: Okay, is there anything else? Do you recall any of the outstanding feats that Uno achieved while trapping? You know, any exceptional catches? He was a crazy motorcycle driver, we know that.

R: One thing I know, he never bothered with the weather when he went out trapping. He had a cabin out some far place or a camp or a dugout where he stayed; but he stayed sometimes three and four nights just in the woods in a leanto as he was going along. And then about a week or so he'd come back...he'd dig his motorcycle battery out of the snow so it wouldn't freeze and get on a logging road and drive back home and catch up with his breath a little bit and take off with the motorcycle again and cover the battery in the woods in the snow so it wouldn't freeze and then went so many days in the woods on his trapline with snowshoes.

I: There's not very many people who, without great reluctance, spend a night in the woods around here.

R: Sure, and them days some of the game wardens, they used to come to the house here and they talked about the animals in the woods; so he trapped in several counties and that way they got information from him about deer and bear and coyote and all that in all the different swamps and territories. So, he was valuable in getting information for the game wardens.

I: Who were too lazy to go out there themselves, right.

R: Sure, with snow machines I suppose.

I: Did he ever get an exceptionally large pelt that you recall? Or any really prize pelts?

R: Well, I don't know. He used to get a good catch of pelts all right plus he had a man come from Mass & Stephen from St. Louis

to look over his pelts and buy them off of him; so this was one of the Mass & Stephen people that carried the name Mass & Stephen. Whether it was Stephen or Mass, I think it was Stephen.

I: And he came all the way out here just to buy his pelts?

R: Sure.

I: A special trip.

R: Sure, I suppose he was to other trappers too, but he stayed a long time here and he done a lot of talking with Uno about trapping. He was a tall man...very tall man. Sort of a thin built...but a tall man.

I: And Uno also hunted a great deal?

R: No t too much, just trapped mostly. He hunted some, but mostly trapped just.

I: Okay Otto, why don't you give us your own personal history. You mentioned that you started first at Pine Creek School in 1911 and then in 1914 you moved to the Kostamo School which was also called the Poplar School and in 1921, you left that school. Was that after eight grades of education?

R:

I: And then what?

R: I stayed on the farm winter and summer continuously until 1937; and from 1937 I worked a little while in Chicago and I started buying machinery for the farm and supplying money for the farm to build the farm up. And then I used to come make hay here for three months or a month or so and then go back to Chicago and earn some more money to send for the farm.

I: What were you doing in Chicago?

R: I was a tool builder. I took up the trade of scraping and tool building.

I: You mentioned something to me before about that. That's a rather unique trade, isn't it?

R: Yes, there ain't many people that do that line of work anymore. It was more or less taught from father to son or from one scraper hand to another scraper hand. They don't teach that much in schools anymore.

I: Can you tell me essentially what kind of work this involves

- R: Well, when the piece of work like plates or very close work comes out of machines, the machine heats it up a little bit and the grinder and so on so it does not come perfectly straight; and even if it is straight, it's new metal and this metal warps in time and gets crooked. So, it's cut by hand. It's straightened up by hand because machines couldn't straighten it up that straight by hand; so it usually was scraped so tight even if necessary that two pieces of metal then held kerosene...a light would get through and kerosene wouldn't get through. It included a good scraping about seventy-five spots per inch; but in rough scraping in big machines they only required maybe about sixty spots per inch. And when they make plates, they make the plates themselves and at first they're feed through the grind or milling machines and the grinders and then they were hand scraped from one plate to another, one plate to another...we used three plates...until every plate had the same number of spots from corner to corner. Then they were perfectly flat. You couldn't get them no flatter with the machine; and if they warped in time, then we scrape all over again. It took about two or three years before metal quit warping by itself. The heat of the hand even would warp the metal a little bit. So, it had to be cooled off a little bit and then rescraped again.
- I: Okay, you were in Chicago learning and doing this trade and sending money back to keep the farm going.
- R: Yes.
- I: And when you came back here...when did you come back here again?
- R: Well, Theresa came to the farm to take care of the farm in 1947, wasn't it, and I still worked there until '52.
- I: When were you married?
- R1: December 20, 1941, in Chicago.
- I: And how did you come to meet Otto?
- R1: I was a hash slinger...a waitress and Otto was a grease monkey. He worked at a gas station and that was in '37. And Otto left for the farm at that time and he come in to say goodby to my boss and he had...I had asked him, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going back home." I said, "How you gonna get there?" He said, "I'm gonna hitchhike." I said, "Well, would you do me a favor?" I'll give you my name and address and write and let me know that you made it home safe." And he said, "Sure." Well, a month went by and a letter comes in, I was already...I had changed jobs and a letter came in and when I came home from work my mother says, "Who do you know in Michigan?" I said, "I don't know nobody!" And she says, "Well, you got a letter from a man in Michigan." I says, "Well, what's his name?" She says, "Otto, I can't say the last name." I said, "Well, what'd you do, read it?"

And she said, "Yes." I said, "You got a lot of nerve." Well, I got slapped for that; but then I read the letter and I said, "Oh, that's one of my customers. He was a hot-beef, piece of apple pie buttermilk guy."

in tape

- R: So then I went back to Chicago again and then I stayed there. Then after that I took up the tool building trade and was at the tool building until I came back on the farm in about '52 it was, I think.
- I: Have you done any work like that since then while at the farm here?
- R: Well, over in Ripley at Fort Maddox I done some scraping up there and truing their machines up there; but that's not a very big place and they don't do too much of that. So, I spent a few years there. That is off and on.
- I: Have you been dairy farming continuously? There aren't any cows out here right now, are there?
- R: No, because farming went...dairy industry went so poor, so we got rid of the cows and I made more with pulpwood in the woods and this here scraping in Ripley that I didn't go back to dairying anymore.
- I: Okay, now we'll talk just a little more about your father. Your father, David Erikkainen was involved in the organization of the Co-op. Can you briefly tell me some of the things that you recall him doing or talking about in those very early days.
- R: Well, he used to...we had the grains here, years ago, National Grains. That was somewheres around before 1916; but then around 1917 or so they talked about the Co-op store and they started the Co-op store. My Pa and Emil Pelto were the first persons to talk about the Co-op store and I think from then on there is something on the Urho story written, not maybe complete, but that gives further information.
- in tape
- R: A great great man for raising vegetables. He had a green thumb and he really could make the vegetables grow. All summer long he took care of the cattle; but all winter long he used to clean vegetables and haul them to Baraga, Pequaming, L'Anse and he made as good with his vegetables as we made with the cows in the summer months...maybe better.
- I: So he was a truck farmer.
- R: Yes, a truck farmer. He didn't do much work on the cows or on the farm but vegetables. That was his line.

I: And the boys ran the farm?

R: Sure, we done the milking and took care of the cows.

I: I understand that he had such a green thumb that he was given a nickname.

R: Sure, his name was Rutabaga. When we talk about the people in Baraga if they knew my dad, they didn't know his name; but when we mention Rutabaga, they knew who he was. (Chuckle) And I can remember one time when my dad went to Baraga with a load of vegetables in the wintertime, and he'd go up the sawmill place where he kept his horses and the sled for the winter for the night...so it was dark when he got to Baraga and he went looking for this man, the night boss, to ask him if he could put the team of horses in the sawmill barn...he couldn't find him and as he was walking around, he walked into the millpond and fell into the logger pond up there and then he got out from there, he got on top of a log and got out of the water pond and went walking around again...then he found the nightman. And the nightman said that my dad didn't seem to mind that he fell in the pond or got his clothes wet, but he was mad because his cigarette went out. Laughter!

I: Is there anything else that you recall about your father that you'd care to mention? Urho told me that he spent some time in the Russian Army.

R: I think he did and one thing he could do, he was telling of the training he got in the Army when he was there. He could put one leg straight and using only one leg, he came down slowly with his rear and touched the floor and his leg was still straight and with the one leg he came slowly standing up again with only one leg using the other leg right straight up ahead.

I: Was that a dance step?

R: No, that was Army training; but he could do it. He's the only man that I ever seen or heard of that could go with one and with one leg down and hit the floor and come slowly back up again. And the people used to say that he was good with his fingers because he never wore gloves or mittens in the wintertime. Even in the frosty weather he could roll a cigarette with one hand.

I: Do you recall how he used to raise you? Was he rather strict?

R: He was very strict

I: I understand that there used to be a Russian command word that he used to give you when he wanted you boys to move.

R: Sure and there was no talking back

- I: Do you recall the circumstances of his death? The day he died?
- R: I think he had...the way I looked at him and understood, he had some sort of emphysema and his breathing got heavier on him. And one day while walking outside he just fell down. We carried him in the house and put him to bed. He was alive just a little while, just a few seconds after he fell down; but then he just like went to sleep and so that must have been sort of a stroke.
- I: Okay, now let's talk about Urho. I see that Urho was born in Baraga, Michigan, on February 21, 1904 and he died in L'Anse, Michigan, on Friday, June 27, 1975 at the age of 71 years. Did Urho also go to the Pine Creek School?
- R: Yes, he went there through the seventh grade. That was...I think Lexie Oberg was his last teacher.
- I: Did he then go to the Poplar School for one more grade?
- R: I mean he finished up at Poplar School. He didn't go to no other school after that. He went to Pine Creek School with me and then to the Poplar School.
- I: And what did Urho do next?
- R: Well, he worked in lumber camps and in the summertime on the farm; but winters he spent in the lumber camps.
- I: Do you recall who he worked for?
- R: His first job was Jacob Haakala in Alston. And then he worked for awhile in Waisenen's woods by Limestone Mountain way and then he worked for some people up Nisula way. I don't recall the name of the camp.
- I: And he would always work on the farm
- R: Sure, in the summer months.
- I: What did he enjoy the most?
- R: He was a good talker...that's all I know. Always then he wanted to hear stories or listen stories or tell stories. He forgot about work when there was story telling to do.
- I: Would he disappear every now and then and go tell stories?
- R: Sure...he wrote some articles for one article he wrote for the L'Anse Sentinel..."Herman the Big Buck" and he wrote some other items too; but I don't recall the others.

I: Well, why don't you tell me the story of "Herman the Big Buck".

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

He had a big rack, had a rack of about fourteen points and he was beautiful. He'd come to the house and I'd bring him apples and grain and Urho would bring and we had lot of people come looking for Herman. He was finally killed by an eighty-six year old hunter...that was at the other house...at our other house.

I: Do you remember anything about the story?

He told me parts of it, but I can't remember it

I: But any rate, the story was published in the L'Anse Sentinel in approximately what year?

In the early 50's

I: In the early 50's, so the reader may wish to find that. Well, Urho was know most for his desire to write a history of Pelkie

R: That's right.

I: Can you tell me how he started on this project? How did it all begin as you recall?

R: Well, he used to do a lot of visiting and a lot of going around and he got so much information that people told him, "Why don't you write some of that down, that information that you get from the people." So, he started doing that...writing the stories that the people told him about the communities like history for instance.

I: Do you recall who it was that suggested to him that he should try to write some of this down?

R: Well, I don't know...it was just lot of people just like I can't recall names; but lot of people they just said that especially when they seen that buck story..."You're a good writer, why don't you write this and write that..." and they were different stories.

I: When do you think he began writing this information down?

R: Well, I would say twenty years ago...more than twenty years ago.

I: It was in 1950?

R: Mostof the manuscripts in there...some of them they started out, he's got the date on them and they're already in the 60's and that's when they've been typed over.

I: Also, he didn't start very early in his life. This was around in the 1950's...or late 50's that he began...

R: That's right.

I: ...this project.

R: Sure

It's over twenty years that he has been writing.

I: Un huh, he has been writing for twenty years. Can you tell me a little bit about how he would go about writing his history and traveling around.

R: Well, I wasn't with him, so I wouldn't know

He'd offer to take me fishing. We'd get out there and fish for about fifteen minutes and..."Oh, by the way, I happen to know some people here. Well, let's go see them for awhile." Next thing you know, goodbye fish!

I: He'd spend a lot of time there?

Yeah.

I: Would he tell his stories over and over and people would listen to him?

Yeah, he'd go and split it between the two like he'd ask some information and that, swappin something somebody learned from a little while back.

R1: He would go to Maronens and take Anthony. That's where most of those times they'd be at Maronen's. Maronen's was the other side of Nisula.

I: And Maronen's...is that M-a-r-o-n-e-n?

R: That's right.

I: Who are the people there...the first names?

R1: Oh, I couldn't tell you. If you contact Esther Hiltunen, she could tell you.

I: Okay, were they two old bachelors that lived out there?

R1: Yeah

I: I've heard about them. They're still alive, aren't they?

Yes, well one is. One is there because the other one became paralyzed and he was in the hospital. He was in the L'Anse Hospital Nursing Home with Urho...Winkler's Nursing Home.

I: Well, what happened to Urho's history as you recall. There are stories of this and that...some of the manuscripts have been lost. Can you tell me a little bit about how he went about getting it typed up and how he would go about writing it. He would go visit someone and they would start talking and he would write it down.

R: Yes.

I: And then what would he do once he had written this down?

R: Then he'd go and have it typed and then he'd take it back again... the way I understand it. He took it back again for approval if that's the right way. And then I don't know...I don't know too much about his writing or his getting things typed because I never went around with him. He done that always with other people or by himself. I never was one to go around visiting, so I stay nearly always home.

I: Did people ever object to what he had written down?

R: Not that I know of.

Occasionally there would be a slight difference in...not exactly opinion, but like dates and that...then he'd go and mark it off and bring it and have it typed over again and bring it back there to get it (?). But he has I think about three or four different people typing for him and the problem with it was with the manuscripts then. Some would write it as a history, more or less; that this was...in all past tense. And then others would bring it up like it's going to happen so much in the future and that much; and there was about four different ways of taking that the way the manuscript was written. Was four different ways that it could be seen.

I: Did Urho have anyone working with him trying to edit it?

R: No.

R2: He did all the editing himself like he'd just bring it back and see if everything was right.

I: Who tried typing it for him? Um...that you recall? I understand he had many typists.

R: He had, but I don't know.

Had school teachers in L'Anse...at the L'Anse High School, they

had the high school teachers typing for him. I think even the pupils were typing.

I: Do you recall the specific names of the specific teachers?

No sir! No sir, I don't because I went on his ride and he went to the school and he picked up and he come back and he'd bring more to the school.

I: Can you tell me a little bit about the incident when one of his typists evidently lost or perhaps even stole some of his material? Her name was Mrs. Harju and I believe she lived in Alston, is that right?

R1: That's correct

I: Can you recall when Urho gave her these manuscripts?

That was before he took sick

So it must have been around...

I could say...see Urho has been sick for about five years and that was just before then.

R: In the earlier 60's

Early 60's

In the early 60's?

R: Something like that

I: And, as I recall the story, somehow Mrs. Harju or Miss Harju... whichever it was...heard that Urho wanted someone to type his manuscripts and she said that she would do it if he could get a typewriter and some paper and the equipment like that. So, Urho borrowed a typewriter from John who had borrowed it from Otto, his brother, and Urho brought this Harju woman both the typewriter and the manuscripts. She evidently started typing it and suddenly she left town with another man taking with her both the manuscripts and the typewriter. Evidently they left town rather suddenly because the State Police were also looking for them and neither the typewriter nor the manuscripts nor the Harju woman nor her friend have been heard of since and no one seems to know where they have gone and there is no telling how many pages of the manuscripts that she has. Do you have any idea of how much?

No, I don't

R2: There was...I went through the manuscripts there and I marked off

because they're numbered and I marked off what pages are missing and there is about twenty-five pages unless there were some afterwards...after the last page.

I: And can you now tell me how Urho became sick?

R: Well, he just started losing his memory on a lot of things and he didn't even know what he had talked or he couldn't know the directions. He started walking one way and like in L'Anse even, he started for the drug store and he was going right past the drug store. He just...his mind just didn't seem to be working.

I: Was this when he was already living at the farm?

R: No, it started a little bit...I noticed that his memory wasn't very good when he was at the farm off and on...in the earlier 60's it started working more on him.

I: When did Urho move away from the farm? What year?

R:

I: 1961, and then he moved to the cabin?

R1: To the cabin

I: On the Prickett Damm Road.

R:

R1: I think it's Prickett Damm Road, yes.

I: And he lived there for how many years, about?

R2: Until '70.

R1: He lived there until 70? Let's see.

R2: 1970 because I started high school.

I: 1970...and during this time he was working very intensively on the history too, I imagine.

R: Yes, he worked in the woods sawing logs or something like that; but then inbetween time and...as in the summertime, he'd work on the story.

I: Who was he working for in the woods in those days?

R: I wouldn't know. I think it was...was it Connelly?

R1: Conners

R: Conners, that was one of his last places. Who he worked before that, I wouldn't know.

I: When did Urho start to show signs of losing his memory capacity? About what years did this begin? If he moved out there in 1961...

I noticed it...that he was missing...that he didn't talk right. There was times when he didn't talk right. He'd talk out of...off beat that he'd say something and then he'd deny it and I'd say, "Well, you said it."

I: He probably just forgot that he had said it.

That's what happened

I: And you'd say it started happening more seriously around 1965.

R: Sure...anyway, when he went to...when he was first brought to Dr. Clark, Dr. Clark thought he's got a tumor on his brain that the tumor is acting that way on him; so they sent him to Marquette to examination up there and the examination showed that he had no tumor. So he was then supposed to go back to Marquette so they'll do some more diagnosing and examining that what causes the way he acts in his memory or like that; but he never did go back. So that's how it got left then. So, Dr. Clark wrote down in his papers then that he was...what they call it again when you get old...

R1: Senile

R: Sure, senile. So he marked it down senile because he would go back to no more examinations to Marquette.

I: So then, what happened to Urho? He was in St. Joseph's Hospital in Hancock, and he was then transferred to the Houghton County Medical Facility and he was there for awhile.

Yes.

R: Sure, and from Houghton County Medical Facility is where they said that they don't want him to live by himself...that they want him to stay in a licensed home. It's got to be a licensed home for him and the only licensed home for him where they can take him is Tarvainen's. So they took him to Tarvainen's then from... I don't know what people they were that were connected with the doctors anyway.

I: And that's a place in Hancock?

R1: No, Tarvainen's is located in Covington.

I: Oh, in Covington.

R: Sure.

I: And he was there for awhile?

R: Sure, about a year and a half or two years.

R1: Almost two years.

I: This was in what year now that he was there?

R1: Let's see, I was.

I: In November 15, 1972, Urho was taken from Tarvainen's to L'Anse Hospital suffering convulsions...

R1: Suffering a stroke and at that time he had suffered a massive heart attack and I worked at the Post Home that night, when I come home Otto had told me that the hospital had called that we have to register him for admissions. I said, "Well, we'll go in the morning. I'm too tired. I worked hard". We work on a scholarship basis for Hunters' Supper. So then the next morning we went to the hospital there and Urho was in a convulsive mood and I turned to the nurse and I says, "Have you checked his sugar?" And she says, she didn't know he was diabetic...and I got angry. I said, "He was here a while back and he's got sugar." So, they had to call the lab technician to come and take care of him and the nurses weren't around and I told the lab man that I would help. They removed two pints of blood from him...the convulsions stopped and then a little while later Dr. Winkler came in because he was Lanzy's patient but Winkler came in and Winkler had asked him how he felt, and he said, he felt fine and he said, "Would you like a cup of milk?" And he said yes and Dr. Winkler said people that have gone through what he has gone through wouldn't even drink the milk; but Urho drank the milk. So that was a sign that he was picking up. Well, they had called several times then about his that he had many small heart attacks after that and the hospital kept calling and we'd go; but Urho would...when the nurse would tell him that he had company, he said he don't want to see nobody. So, we'd leave and then they put him in Winkler's Nursing Home where he was there...two winters and finally...the first winter that he was there in January they removed his leg...his left leg. It was gangrene and I was angry because Dr. Lanzy said he would cut it off below the knee and he cut it off close to his groin and Urho was...when we went to see Urho, he didn't... he said he felt better but he didn't know where he was at. Otto had to sign the papers for the disposal of the leg and following that...just before he died when I was to see him, he says, "I went to bed last night and I woke up this morning and I see my leg is gone." He didn't know he had a leg missing for a year. So, following that it wasn't long after I had had surgery, Urho had...I went to see Urho after that and Dr. Lanzy wanted to see

me. Mrs. Drew had said that Lanzy wanted to see me. I went to see him and he told me to sit down and I said, "No, whatever you've got to say I'll take standing up". And he moved the eye-ball up and down...he looked me up and down then and he remembered who I was and he says, "Please sit down." I said, "No!" And he told me he'd have to remove Urho's other foot because the big toe had no circulation and I told him no way. I said, "Urho is a dying man. I can see death in him already and you're not cutting his...you're not going to end his life." He says, "No, I'll prolong it." I said, "You'll kill him." That's what I told him. And I said, "No way, you're not butchering no more. That was your last butchering job and you goofed it. No more." And I went back to Urho and Otto was...Otto was with Urho while I went to Lanzy and then Urho went from bad to worse from then on. He was failing fast and I was sure it wasn't the leg that bothered. It wasn't the toe that bothered him then but it was where they cut the other leg off.

I: and then Urho finally died then.

R:

I: Is there anything else you'd like to say at this time that might be of some use in Urho's biography with regard to his history... anything?

R: Well, he was known as a good hewer...making ties with that broad axe...he'd always get it back into the same spot...same spot so when the tie was cut there was no broad axe marks...was just like planed. Was always right up to a fraction of an inch in thickness the way he wanted it. That's about I know that he was good in was hewing ties.

T: I've heard that also. Is there anything else?

Stop in tape.

R1: At his wake and funeral, there were so few friends that all I know that Urho was taken for a ride most of the time. You know, that they took advantage of him. People would take advantage of him because he was good hearted. That's all I can tell.