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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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*An obituary*

Urho Errikainen  
Sept. 20, 1974

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The following recording is an autobiographical interview with Urho Errikainen. It took place on September 20, 1974 in the Winkler Nursing Home. Urho has had a stroke and his mind seems to come and go, that is he fades in and out and it's sometimes rather difficult to keep him on the subject. I did the best I could. There is valuable information here. Urho is a folk historian.

- I September 20, 1974 in the Winkler Nursing Home. Well when were you born Urho.
- R 1904.
- I Was that a good year?
- R I don't remember but it must have been an ordinary year as the rest of them have been. I can't remember every year but there must have been some poor years too. I have a memory and I can talk about what I've heard.
- I What do you remember most of your childhood when you think back right now? What can you recall? Can you recall going to school?
- R Yes I can recall going to school and I would have been interested in having more education at that time. I asked Ma when she asked me to stay home a day. Then I was asked another day to miss from school. Then again the third day she asked me to stay home and I asked her when am I going to school again? She said you're school days are over, there's alot of work on the farm. I'm needed to hlep on the farm.
- I That must have been a problem with alot of young men in those days because there was so much work on the farm.
- R Ya, and they were opening up new lands for cultivation. I remember seeing black smoke rising and they were burning pine stumps and roots or something piled up and that's where the black smoke come from. Then towards what they call Section 12 nowadays we could sometimes see black smoke and my pa used to look at the smoke and ask where is the fire. He said it's way down in BelAir. He figured it must have been in BelAir and somebody was burning something but I don't know what was burning. I assumed they were clearing land pulling up pine stumps and roots. They had to have horses for that purpose. They didn't have hardly any tractors in those days so I can't say anything about the tractors being used for cultivation then. It was around 1925 that my dad left home and I wanted to go with him but he didn't allow me to come along then.
- Where did your father go?
- R He went towards L'Anse. It was for some other business that he went but I don't remember what his business was then. He bought a tractor from John Encode and he said if he was going to buy a tractor no one else was going to sell him a tractor, only John Encode.

R He had a bigger family and he bought farm vegetables raised mostly from him. So he had a reason for buying more from him, John Encode

There was an implement agent who came from Covington, Michigan and Mr. Emil Koskimaki as I remember and he wanted to try to sell some farm equipment them days. He, my dad, said he wasn't going to buy anything from him because John Encode was a good buyer of vegetables and he wants to do business with Joh Encode.

is this?

R I think that's me, because I don't think there is another guy who looks like me anyway.

That one there?

R Ya on this side

I When was that taken?

R I can't remember. My memory is failing. Maybe during our school days.

I When would that be?

R That would be about 1924 or so.

I Do you remember this one? That's a picture of you.

R Ya, that must be picture of me.

I Can you remember the day that was taken?

R I don't remember the day it was taken. We had a bigger picture with a cardboard background on there.

I There's a picture of you and John Wick at a fire, you were cooking some grub it looks like.

R Ya, we were roasting some fish that we caught from the Salmon Trout Creek.

What were they brook trout?

R Ya, everyone was a brook trout. In that river you couldn't catch anything else but brook trout. They weren't very big but big enough to be a legal size anyway.

I Was John Wick your fishing buddy?

R Ya, he heard me talking with another guy who was a good friend of his, his name was Uno Murto from Pelkie, I was supposed to go for a fishing trip with him.

R I was supposed to go with Uno Murto. He overheard me talking with Uno and asked me couldn't he come along, on that fishing trip. I didn't want to say no, I couldn't refuse him. I said there's alot of room in this world. I said there's room for him so he fixed himself or whatever he had to do to come along. I remember that day. We got by a little lake that was called Cliff Lake because there were pretty high cliffs around that lake. There was kind of a red spot, I'll remember that spot always but I don't remember what it was. The red spot always stayed there on the cliff above the lake. I wanted to see what that rock contained on that cliff but I didn't have no means of getting out there. So I had to let it go and forget about that red spot there on that cliff.

I In this picture you've got a bucket of potatoes and there looks like you have sacks of potatoes on the ground there. Did you used to like to handle those potatoes?

R Ya, that was in my dad's potato field. I remember that because we had the farm then. We picked potatoes and they were nice potatoes. I don't remember anymore of they were Russetts or Early Ohios.

I When was that about?

R I gotta think, I don't remember. It was quite a while back. It 1913 or maybe later than that.

I 1930?

R 1913. It could have been later than that but I don't recall the when we had these nice spuds.

I I'm kind of confused, I thought you said it was 1922 when you were in the school. You were much smaller when you were in that school picture than here. Here you are already a man it looks like.

R Ya, it looks like I'm a pretty good sized man.

Looks like you ate a few potatoes already.

R That's true all right

I I mean you probably were about 35 or 40 years old by then. When were you born, you said 1904 so that must be about 35 or 36 then right.

R It could have been 35 or 36. Perhaps around 37 too. My dad entered them in the county fair and he won a prize for them potatoes. I remember we had the potatoes down to the Houghton County Fair which was held at the old Amphedrome. That's what they called it in them days. I don't know if a new or better one has been built any later than that.

I There's Ruona's store and Matt Oija's store there

R Yes, I remeber both stores

OJA

- R I remember Lena Maki, she had her home on that they call the Eilola Hill and she was an Eilola girl and the oldest of the Eilola girls.
- I Here she is working in Matt Oija's store.
- R
- I Did you ever go in that store to buy anything?
- R Sometimes I did. I didn't go very often there. I remember George Maki and they had the one boy. They had the garage where I went and had my automobile fixed, especially the brakes sometimes. It was rented that time from Lena Maki. She lived in Pelkie at that time and rented out for Ralph Ketola.
- I Is that where you had your car fixed in that garage there?
- R Ya, I think that was the place where I had the car fixed. I get confused with these pictures, sometimes I had a car fixed at the old potato warehouse. Which was bought out by the farmers of Pelkie. Then it became the Pelkie garage. I don't know if it was called the Pelkie Garage, but garage work was done there.
- I Where did you work your first job Urho?
- R I don't remember, but I found a job from Beckman Brother. Fred Beckman. and Louie Beckman were German people and they were all right guys. I never had no trouble if I went to get money from them. If I needed money he gave me a check and sometimes currency also.
- I What were you doing for Beckman?
- R I hued ties and planting for Beckman
- I Were were the ties and flat timber going? After you hewed them
- R I think some of the ties went to the Duluth and South Shore Atlantic Railroad. That's where part of the ties were going.
- I When was this when you were working for Beckman?
- R It was many years ago as I remember 1940 was the last year when I worked for them. The Beckman brothers.
- I Then where did you go?
- R I don't remember if that was the time when I went to work for William Ruona. Bill Ruona had a job across the Sturgeon. The water was flowing fast in the sturgeon and then we got across the Sturgeon River. I didn't fall in and I didn't want to fall in because the current was so heavy. I got over by jumping to rock to rock which weren't slippery.

- I Where on the Sturgeon was Ruona logging at the time?
- R We went across what they call the Chipmunk Rapids. I don't know how it got it's name but we had to hike for some distance to get to the woods.
- I What were you doing there?
- R I think I was hewing ties and flat timber for Bill Ruona.  
How many ties could you hew in one day back then?
- R Well easily them days I could hew 24 ties in a day.
- I Twenty-four ties a day.
- R Well not every day but that was an average that I could hew 24 ties a day.
- I How much would you get paid a day way back then for hewing ties?
- R Well you have to figure the Depression years in there and the Depression lasted until 1931 or 32. I think it started picking up a little bit in 1933.
- I DO you recall at all what your wages were? Back then when you were hewing ties for Ruona.
- R Well, they weren't the highest wages anyway but.. As I remember he Ruona was a quite strict guy to work for. He would come in the woods and take just a glance at what I did and he didn't have any complants so I kept working for him.
- I How long did you work for him? How many years did you hew ties for Ruona?
- R I didn't work for years, I remember I didn't work more than one year.
- I Where did you go next?
- R I think I went for Waisanen's. The old man was living at that time and sometime but very seldom he came in the woods too. Sometimes to see what I was doing and if I'm living yet. I talked with him about something and just what I don't remember what I was talking about.
- I When was it that you were working for old man Waisanen? What year was that about?
- R It was quite a while back during the Depression years.

I Who did you work for next after Waisanen?

R I worked for Arthur Erickson. That was in 1933 and I remember because I wanted to go to the World's Fair then and the World's Fair was on.

I Where was the World's Fair at that time?

R In Chicago

I Did you go?

R Ya, I went. I went to the World's Fair and saw the way the cattle were slaughtered and the pigs and hogs. That was a job I wouldn't have taken for no money. I watched the man slaughter the hogs and he was bloody from the knees downwards and he said no man can stand that all day. I don't know what meant by all day. They were already working eight hours a day. He mentioned to me and the whole crowd who were around that nobody wants to work in the slaughtering business no more than eight hours or so.

I I forgot to ask you what kind of work you were doing for old Matt Waisanen.

R Hewing ties and flat timber.

I Where were they going, the ties going?

R Well he didn't mention but I think they were going for the Duluth South Shore and Atlantic Railroad.

I What were you doing for Art Erickson?

R Same thing.

I Hewing ties?

R

I What kind of wood were the ties? What kind of timber were you hewing?

R Mostly cedar.

I How do you hew a tie. Is there a special way?

R Yes but

I Is there anyway you position the log?

R No we didn't cut into the logs at all, cut the cedar or fell the hemlock down. In a spot that cleared of branches and brush. Where you could swing an axe without hurting yourself. I was lucky that I never hit my toes. One day when I was working for Beckman Brothers I remember I tried to chop a dry hemlock branch. The axe just bounced out and I thought I gotta get that branch out of my way. I hit the axe more slanty and it cut easier than I expected and I hit my foot. It might have been my left toe but then again it might have been

R been my right foot. There were a couple of boys a a couple of men and a man called Jacob Hahka and he was working with his oldest boy Wilho there. I walked up to them and asked them if they have a handkerchief. I wanted it to wrap around that toe to stop the blood. They said they didn't have nothing that I could wrap around that toe. It was a hot summer day and I took off my shoe and my toe was still bleeding so I wrapped a sock around it for a bandage. After I got through wrapping that big toe, the blood didn't show any more. I went to Doctor Winkler and he was comical in his ways. He did put three or four stitches in that toe. That toe had such tough skin that he couldn't get that crooked needle of his to go through the skin. The skin on that toe seemed to stretch something like rubber.

I Well back to hewing ties, what kind of axe did you generally like to use?

R Well the axe that I used said the axe was hand made from the Kelly Axe Company. I liked that axe because it was tempered just right. It lasted on a tough hemlock branch which were the toughest to chop. From the root of the tree to the low branch so you didn't have much to cut with the broad axe. I didn't want no brush around me so the axe wouldn't catch. I heard of one guy who had his instep cut pretty badly with the axe. That happened in Mohawk when he was working for the Mining Company. He hit his instep pretty bad and he didn't tie it himself, he had another guy do it. Axel Myjoulla was his name. The doctor asked him who tied his foot up so good because it didn't bleed any more.

I Did you use a broad axe for the hewing of the tie? You must have used two axes then hey?

R Ya, I had two axes, one was the Kelly Hand made axe.

I Then did you use a French Broad axe?

R I don't know if it was French anyway it was my brother Charlie's broad axe.

I Who made that axe?

R They made the broad axe handles in Ironwood. You couldn't find many trees to make handles because they were hard to find and if you found one it was twisted so it was better left standing than to fell it.

I How did you make the head of the axe? Did someone make it or did you buy it?

R It was a bought axe which I used.

I Would you stand on top of the log with the top towards your feet?

R A person had to stand on a log in order to get a better job and a faster job.

- R Most of the time you marked the logs eight feet long. You measured with a measuring stick and you always marked the log with your axe as you were proceeding. You always made sure it was a full measurement because I didn't want to make any undersize ties. The longest tree I ever felled in the woods made nine ties.
- I Was that a hemlock?
- R That was hemlock. Ya
- I You mentioned something about twisted cedar, that was no fun hey?
- R No because the twisted cedar always wanted to rip towards an under. I didn't want to make any of those twisted ones because they made torn up ties if you didn't watch the way you were hewing them. Some one would have complained about that too. I used a sharp axe and tried to chop under the tree where I could see it was going to make a twist under the tree.
- I Did you have to carry the ties out of the woods after you chopped them?
- R At one time I didn't carry them but then I was promised a nickel a tie if I could carry them or find some way to get them to the road. Some I carried because the cedar was lighter than the hemlock. I had a rope along too and on that rope I had a big loop. It was the month of March and the snow had frozen because it had rained a little bit on the snow and it formed a crust on the snow. If the ties were hewed right they slid good on that crust.
- I So you were your own horse that day hey, you were doing the horses work?
- R Ya, that's right. I think I worked too hard in my day, I should have left that hewing go.
- I Who did you work for after you worked for Art Erickson?
- R I worked for a while for Adolph Waisanen. Adolph was a straight guy. He was honest in his ways. A person never had to think that he would try to gyp anything from another guy. He would come in the woods once in a while to see if I'm working or not. He would come to see if I got myself in trouble to see if I had fallen a tree on myself or if I had hit myself with an axe.
- I Did you have any close calls?
- R No, not any real close ones. In the woods work you had to watch out in the windy weather especially. You had to make sure the trees were standing pretty straight and the tops didn't come down. The falling tops I was afraid of the most. If a big branch comes down on your head you'd be a dead duck.
- I What kind of work did you do after you did this hewing work?

R I went to work for Adolph Waisanen.

I What were you doing for him?

R Carrying ties and I don't think I had to do anything with the flat timber except leave them as they were skidded on the logging roadside. One of the boys, Art was his name, he drove around in the woods with the full crawler. He made tracks with a ten ton caterpillar and then you knew where to drive from after he made the tracks. They were hauling then with the ten ton caterpillar as I remember. A ten ton holt was used also. I think it was on the radiator where it said Holt.

I Did you ever see that before? That sort of scene

R That looks familiar.

I That's the Mineral Range Railroad. It looks like they are putting logs on there. Looks like Axel Tepsa is putting logs on the Mineral Range right in Pelkie.

R Yes that's right. I don't remember who owned the team of horses in those days. I remember we loaded logs in Pelkie but I don't remember if we loaded pulpwood in Pelkie.

I Did you ever work loading logs in Pelkie?

R I loaded logs and I think it belonged to Ludy Hilliard that to get the logs out.

I Did you ever see that kind of logging work?

R I had a few old pictures and the pictures got left on the upper story or upstairs of the house.

I What's this picture of?

R Looks like I was loading pulpwood then. An eight foot length onto that car. Then the locomotive from the Mineral Range would come long and take the cars out that were loaded.

I Did you ever see the Mineral Range caught in the snow like that? That's between Limestone Mountain and Norman Marshall's.

R I don't think I ever saw that picture.

I Did you ever see the Mineral Range go by before on the tracks?

R Ya many times I have been to the store in Pelkie. I remember Matt Oja bought Alphonse Gauthier's store from Baraga. I can't hardly make my tongue twist the way it's supposed to twist.

I That's good enough, but you remember the trains going by?

- R Yes. I think they had four trains going along the Mineral Range Route. One was a rock train and it was hauling rock towards the Rockland Mine. I think they were situated close to Keweenaw Bay
- I You remember the trains going by, what other trains were there? You said there was the rock train.
- R I heard this from other people, but they said they also had a pretty good passenger train on the Mineral Range.
- I Okay, what other trains were there?
- R Then there was a freight train
- I What would the freight carry?
- R It was carrying logs and railroad ties and so on. Sometimes it had barrells of salt and they were pretty heavy. Maybe 350 pounds. There was one strong guy who's name was Gus Moilainen. He could handle all that heavier stuff. He could do that better than any other man and he had been a wrestler in his younger days.
- I You said there were four trains. What other trains came through Pelkie. You said there were four trains.
- R Yes, there were four trains
- I What was the other train? There was a freight train, rock train and a passenger train. What was the fourth train?
- R I don't remember anymore what was the fourth train but I heard from the Pelkie girls that there were four trains. They said they had four trains running at one time over the Mineral Range Railroad track.
- I Did you enjoy farming?
- R Yes, I enjoyed farming. The South Range driver from the co-op store came over to our place and he wanted to bring cabage for the South Range store. I started feeling the heads that were big enough. There were two kinds of different cabbages that Pa had sewn. He drew a line with a stick and then pulled a tight twine or a binder twine or it might have been a thinner twine also. I don't remember the drivers name but he wanted to take some cabbage to the South Range Co-op Store. I got busy right way and I started cutting the hardest heads out, so he could take them to the South Range Co-op Store in South Range.
- I When did you start writing the history. When did you start getting interested in history?
- R I've always been interested in the old writings and then I got interestedin the school.

R  
I Okay you said one morning you left for school.

R Yes, with my brother Otto. He was going school at the same time as I was going school. We had to walk to school two and a half miles from our farm. It was a kind of a long walk. In snowy weather when it was really blowing all over and drifting snow and high drifts my father would come and meet us with a horse and a jump or the front part of a bob sled. He come to meet us because he wanted to see us boys get home instead of freezing on the road. He came to meet us several times and I was afraid in a way of angry bulls and bears too. I was thinking that a bear wouldn't run every time he sees a person. I read that in a book that bears don't always run when they see a person.

We met an animal and we didn't know what it was so we paused for a while and I talked with my brother Otto to see if that animal came back on the road. Then when we got closer it did come back on the road. We figured it was a bear after all so we ran to abandoned camps. I don't know what those camps were used for or what purpose. The door was locked so we couldn't open the door to get away from the bear. I don't know whether it was locked from the inside or the outside. I think that property belonged to Tom.

I Well what happened, did the bear get you?

R No, the bear didn't reach up to us anyway. We ran across Wick's field to get away from the bear. Jacob Wick was living then and the woman was living then and the woman had some kind of eye trouble. She had to have her sister-in-law come and clear out her eyes of some of the long eyelashes that were getting loose and rubbing her eyes.

I Well did you get across the field okay?

R Ya, we got across the field okay. They were talking that the Frenchmen logged our place out of the pine and only the big stumps were left.

I Some like that?

R Ya, because I thought to myself that some of them stumps were at least six feet thick.

I That's who they called Vinceunti sitting on a big pine stump in Taurinen's clearing in Pelkie. Do you know Andrew Maki?

TAURIANEN

R

I That's him sitting on a big stump. They had just dynamited that stump.

- R Ya, I remember them days too that he was working for my father and that time if I'm not mistaken that he had a beard on and the beard was a nice beard. Anyway to me it looked like it reached his lower chin.
- I What was he doing for your Pa?
- R That I don't remember. Whatever he was doing my pa never complained. There was only one man that he ever complained. He didn't like obscene language or dirty work and he was using something of the sort and I didn't like that man very much. There was a woman who was our neighbor and she said that man had already once been in the Newberry Institution.
- I Who were your neighbors? Did you have any playmates when you were young? Neighbor boys or girls that you used to play with.
- R Ya, there was the Haka family. *HAKKA*
- Was one Wilho Haka? *HAKKA*
- R Ya, he was one of the oldest boys of the Haka family.
- I What did you used to do when you used to play with them? What would you do for fun?
- R Play ball especially and then a neighbor woman who had got left a widow.
- Who was this?
- R That was Mrs. Kangas. Her husband had been Matt Kostamo. I don't know where Kangas came from originally, BelAir country I don't know what they call that country.
- I I know. What would you do when you would play, you'd play ball. Where would you play ball?
- R On the country road that was wide enough in them days and then on the Pinecreek Diamond. We had alot better room there.
- I Who used to be on your team?
- R Will Haka and I don't remember the younger boys, they didn't play ball at that time. Bill Hakala , he played ball too and he was a better ball player so he practiced with our team and I was playing myself too.
- I What position did you like to play?
- R Sometimes I was catching too and I done pretty good catching.

R I was playing one of the bases but I don't remember if it was the second base or the first base.

I Who else used to play on your team?

R Well this William Hakala he played ball too and he was a good ball player. If someone went to steal bases from first base to second base he got fooled. Bill thre the ball and it was a straight ball and didn't sag much and it was a fast ball which he pitched and he would pitch it so second base and some got fooled that way. They left from the first base too far and then they couldn't get fast enough back.

What other things did you do for fun when you were young? Did you ever go fishing with the other boys?

R Yes but I'll tell you a different story now

I Okay.

R They wanted us to go on Memorial Day and pick flowers for the cemetery. The girls all left with the teacher to bring flowers or whatever they had to the cemetery.

I What did you do?

R It makes me laugh when I think about what happened. When we were supposed to leave to catch up to the teacher and the other girls the boys didn't want to go along with the teacher to the cemetery to bring flowers. I got left at the school with a couple of boys who were about my age. We were going to take a short cut through the woods to catch up to the teacher and the other kids. When we were going to leave, one of the boys found a corn cob pipe on the old logging road. That pipe was more interesting than anything else. I don't remember who had the tobacco.

I So you got together and had a little smoke out in the woods hey?

R We sat along side the county road as I remember it and we had a smoke with the corn cob pipe. I remember it was pretty strong and I remember how tough I had to be smoking a corn cob pipe that smelled so awful. So we didn't start out to catch up with the teacher and we abandoned the whole trip going out for a walk. The school was built by a Baraga contractor and I don't remember his first name now but the second name was Tieboldt. I don't know how to pronounce it.

I I think that's right.

R I went out once for a deer hunt and I took the deer rifle and I met a guy and he stopped and I exchanged a few words with him and I asked him what was his name andhe had been building that school house where I was going school.

I Did you start to get interested in History when you were in school? When you were in the Pinecreek School?

R Well most of the things got left in my mind when we, I'm saying we because my brother Otto and I were going Pinecreek School already and when we would come home from school we would go this once place where this man and woman lived and I don't know if they were living a common law life or not but we went there so our face wouldn't freeze. Eli Loukinen was his full name. We found out that his tooth ache medicine was sent from Finland because my mother used to have terrific tooth aches sometime. Finally she went to the dentist after suffering with those teeth of hers. He extracted those teeth out that were bad in her mouth. Then for a while she didn't complain any more about her teeth.

I started working for myself to make a few dollars for myself and my folks weren't very rich and we had to be satisfied with what my ma gave us. My ma gave us a few pennies or a quarter or so in small change and we wanted to go to the picnic and we didn't want to go flat broke. So I asked for a little money and she gave me a quarter and nothing more. She figured for what I would have to buy I could get along with the twenty-five cents. That's all we could have. Then I would go to the picnics sometimes with my younger brother Otto too.

I Where were these picnics held?

R Where the former Kouvunen, she's a widow now

I Nan Koivunen?

R Ya, around there. Where her place is now

I Were these church picnics?

R Ya, I remember the church picnics were held in a different place what they called .

I In Kero?

R Ya, and Emil Johnson's land and the big maples were growing on those picnic grounds. Of course I didn't have nothing to do with those maples.

You were talking about a picnic with Otto

R Yes, then it was mother we usually asked for a little bit of money.

I Did your mother manage the finances in the family?

R Ya, and I don't know where she got the money from but she didn't give us more than a quarter anyway. I suppose she thought the boys can get along with a quarter of money. They could buy an icecream cone and a bottle of pop. Them days the pop bottles were hard to open. They seemed to be cork rubberized over cork. They really had a hard time to get the pop out of the bottle.

- R Them corks whatever they called them they should have had a different kind of an opener for the cork. I never saw them opened anyway else, just to press them down into the bottle.
- I Where did your father come from? Did he come from Finland?
- R Ya, it used to be in the olden days what Pa was talking about called St. Michaels. St. Michaels, Finland.
- I When did he come to the United States?
- R I was quite young at the time but I remember I was four years old when he came to the United States with my Ma.
- I Were you born in Finland?
- R No I was born in America so I could be called a Yankee also
- I What did your grandfather do in Finland? For a living.
- R I don't know exactly how to explain much of that because I never have seen my grandfather or my grandmother and I just know what I heard my folks talking about.
- I What did they say?
- R Well my father said he was more of a fisherman, not a commercial fisherman but I don't know how he got his nets. I think he wove little loops and the fish got their heads caught in there and couldn't get out. Once he said that he would have been put out on the street like a beggar and the fishing was real good because the wind was coming from the east and he was anxious to get some fish. He said now a person should have been on the lake setting nets with an east wind. He would have had better luck. He did go out and set nets and he did get alot of fish, more than he was able to handle. Almost every loop hole there was a fish in it and it was a heavier catch than usual. He called up my grandma who was yet living to bring some containers so he could empty his net.
- R And naturally when they had so many fish there was fish also in them
- I Did your pa fish here around the Pelkie area?
- R Only one day he went out and fished in Otter Lake, it's in Houghton and part in Baraga County.
- I I know where it is. It's by Askel over there
- R Ya, and then he brought a nice catch of perch home. If I remember right my ma was still living then, well somebody fried them anyway. I eat almost any kind of fish except sucker, I don't care what they do with the sucker.

R I never wanted them for my table.

I You didn't care for suckers right?

R Ya. I never cared much for sucker.

I How come your father came to the United States?

R Well somebody wrote to him in a letter to Finland where he was from. He had gotten the word to come to Baraga because there is plenty of work. There was plenty of work available and the wages were good in Baraga County.

I How did he get here? How did he come here? By ship?

R

I To New York?

R Ya, he came by I think it was a steamship. I understand that's what they had to travel long distances.

I How did they get from New York to Baraga?

R I think they came by ship or boat all the way to Baraga.

I Okay, did he immediately go to work in Baraga?

R Yes, well in them days there was a big lumber company operating in Baraga.

I What lumber company was that? Was that the Nestor?

R Nestor Lumber Company and they had a pretty big mill. They had 3 band saws going right along. I never saw those what I'm talking about now but I heard pa talking about them.

I Did he start working in the saw mill there?

R Yes he started working in the saw mills and the work was heavy. Mostly they were using the pine lumber in those days. The widest part was 36 inches wide at the widest part. It was either plank or lumber.

I When did your father come to the United States again?

R I was 4 years old.

I It must have been 1908.

R Yes somewhere's around there.

I Well, you said you were born in 1904.

R Yes, well I think you would be closer to right than wrong anyway. I think that's where pa got his sore shoulders from carrying those heavy planks on his shoulders.

I Was that his job to carry planks?

R Ya, well he took that because boats used to come to Nestor's and load lumber or planks or whatever they were loading and my pa said that was hard work and he was receiving better pay for loading boats. He was paid fifty cents more a day which I think was \$2.00 a day as I remember. Two dollars a day and with the fifty cents added to that two dollars well that was all they paid for the heavy work.

I Was that an eight hour day?

R I don't know if they had an eight hour day, it could have been an ten hour and even more. In the earlier times until the eight hour a day came as a law then nobody in the factories and the mills they didn't have to work any more than eight hours.

I Did your father buy the farm then?

R Yes, he bought the farm from Sam Hill his name was. But I don't know if he had any middle names then or not. The way he got the farm was Sam Hill was operating a store them days.

Where was this store?

R In Baraga. Old man Pero has been dead for a long time and he was 45 years old when he died. He raised a big family. There was at least 14 in the family with the girls and boys.

I How come your dad bought this farm from Sam Hill?

R Well when this Pero began logging in some time and I think he owed Sam Hill a store bill. He wasn't able to pay for it. He was quite often getting the provisions for needs of his family from Sam Hill in Baraga. He owed him quite a bit of money and I don't know how much he owed Sam Hill but in the end my dad got hold of the farm.

I Oh the farm was originally Pero's farm?

R Pero's farm ya

I And then because he couldn't pay the bill Sam Hill ended up with a farm and sold it to your father?

R Ya

R Ya, that's right.

I When your father moved out on this land was he married at the time?

R

I When did he meet your mother? Were they married in Finland already?

R I think they were married in Finland because I was already a little boy and I could remember the interesting talks about how he met my mother.

I How did that happen?

R My dad was working at that time in St. Michaels as they call it in a spool factory.

I Spoon?

R Spool factory

I Oh for thread?

R Ya, and then you wind up thread or whatever you please on those spools. Then she came and brought the ~~cotton~~<sup>coffee</sup> for my father and they met but I don't know if it was the first time or not.

I Did your mother work for the factory also?

R No she didn't

I How come she came there to give him a coffee?

R I couldn't hardly explain but she must have known him already before. I think we have it yet an old picture of my dad.

I Well why don't you describe your mother to me. What was your mother like?

R Well she was rather a small person and not very tall and she was rather old time anyway she had the old time ideas. Then of course I had to live up to her ideas.

I What kind of old time ideas were these that she made you live up to?

R It makes me laugh although it isn't nothing to laugh about but this is true what I'm telling you. I remember my ma made me leave my pants down and she got a switch and she gave me across the bare but.

I That's something you don't forget easy hey?

R A boy had to obey their folks. It wasn't only ma that gave me a whipping if we upset pa the belt strap came loose in a sudden. He said don't you remember what my ma told me.

R We didn't still listen to her and off come the belt and he gave us the licking with the belt. I call it licking, of course it has many meanings but I call it licking and I wrote that even in my history. The history was typed by Elizabeth Cruze, that washer name. I saw her ma too and we had a long talk with her Ma. I don't know if she was married or had he died earlier. I never seen the Mr. Cruze himself. Elizabeth Cruze was her name and she was teaching in the Baraga High School the upper grades, maybe tenth, 11th, and 12th grade. I had written a few sheets but I don't remember how many and then I had to go to Baraga High school and bring the sheets that were written to the old, I couldn't call her old because she wasn't yet old them days. I brought them to her to correct my writing. She told me to come anytime I please because she's going to be around so I can hand her my writings.

I Did she teach you how to write better?

R I'll tell you she didn't find no mistakes which I'm glad about and she didn't have to make no corrections in my writings. I looked the papers over for what corrections she had to make and I didn't find no corrections. Then I started wondering if it's worthwhile writing any more. Or else I'll call it quits when she reads my last writings so I told her I wonder if it pays for me to write anymore, that I feel like quitting all ready. She said don't you quit now, it's too late. It's too late to quit now because she has not found no corrections to make in your writing.

I Did you continue to write then?

R Yes, well I finished up on the pages or sheets of paper. Then I was thinking should I write about myself or would I have to explain where I got my information from which would have made a book when all was put together. So I asked that school teacher where I always took my sheets of paper but I made a mistake, it was L'Anse High School where I always took my sheets of paper and my writings.

Well did you finish it up?

R Not quite, I had a little bit yet to go but not much anyway.

I How many pages altogether did you write?

R I read a book first before I started on any kind of writing. It was a book that was a little thicker than a book you would call an ordinary book. I remember writing about the boys who rode the train and tried to jump and get cut up by the train and I remember one time he came with a binder and we didn't have a binder and a reaper yet. So he come and cut our grain what we had that time. That time the fields weren't very big and although the fields aren't that big even to this day.

Let's get back to your mother, you said they had some of those old time ideas and they used to enforce them with a switch from your mother and the belt from your father. What were the ideas?

- I What kind of rules did they think that you and Otto ought to follow?
- R Well I'll explain a little about that. At times us boys, I say boys because I'm talking about my brother too and she got the switches and in frosty weather she brought the switches in and they were froze yet. She put the switches down by the stove so they would thaw out faster. She wouldn't whip us with a frozen switch because a thawed out switch would sting more harder.
- I She was a little woman hey?
- R She was a little smaller than what you would call a middle sized woman.
- I You still haven't told me what kind of rules she would make you follow. You said quite a bit about her enforcement machinery and it sounds like she was quite an enforcer. What kind of old time ideas from Finland did she insist that you and the boys ought to follow? What kind of rules did you have?
- R Yes, well we had to bring wood in the house that was dragged on a sleigh. It was bought for us because any one of our brothers could use that sled.
- I So you had to haul in the wood and if you didn't haul in the wood you'd get the switch right?
- R Ya, that's right. And sometimes especially me, I was kind of lazy for starting right away and Pa had served in the Russian army or the Russian command. Yet to this day I don't know what he meant when he would hollar bot yum. He meant hurry up.
- I Is it a Russian word?
- R It wasn't a discipline word.
- I A command word in Russian.
- R
- I How did he say it again?
- R Bot Yum.
- I Would you get to your chores pretty quick when he would yell that?
- R Ya, well he meant immediately that he wanted me one way or another way to get that wood into the house.
- I What other kinds of chores did you have to do?

- R The other kinds of chores I had to do were the river was running pretty close to our front yard.
- I Okay when I mentioned what other kinds of chores you mentioned the fact that the Silver River ran very closely to your house.
- R Yes and then during the spring floods it was eating down the bank which was a sandy bank. I still remember when the ground was caving into the river and there was quite a splash. The river made quite a splash when all the sod went into the river. So my father got working and got many neighbors helping him and they cut the river shorter for quite a ways.
- I Who was one of the neighbors who came?
- R I can't remember his name
- I Okay, maybe that'll come later, okay what did they do then to restore the bank?
- R They cut the river going through a point which there was 2 teams at least if not 3 teams and a bunch of guys working on the project. So they cut a deep excavation for the flood waters to reach up where the other river left off. It was left up to the mother river to do the rest of the job. Well the faster the river would run the more it would eat the banks. I still remember the noises it would make real heavy splashes when the banks were caving in. In a short while it didn't take many days until a new river bank was made. Later on it was still doing damage to our property so we had to cut another peninsula to the river. It was cut across to make the river run still straighter.
- I So you always had work to do regarding the river so it wouldn't eat away your land.
- R Yes, the land was the most important and we didn't want that to be made into river channels although my dad if he didn't take care of that part it would have eaten more. My dad one winter cut down al balsums and the bough and hauled them with a team of horses to where the water was eating away the bank. My pa anchored them down to the rocks which made many loads of rocks which were pretty big rocks. He tied them down with hay wire or something of that sort.
- I I don't quite understand. You mean he threw the balsum in there and anchored them down and then threw rocks in on them.
- R Yes
- I Oh the balsum, he put the whole tree in there with the branches and limbs and everything?

R

I It acted as kind of a fence that would hold the rocks in here hey?

R Yes and when the current flowed down the river it deposited alot of sand into the boughs of the balsums.

I Ok, so the sand would collect there and you could build more land?

R That was done as far as I'm concerned.

I Did you as a boy have alot of work to do?

R Well the most important thing was to watch the guys work around there but we didn't have to work much as I remember.

I Well let's get back for a second now to these rules and regulations. That your mother made you follow. With the penalty of the switch. This is kind of important because it tells the kind of rules that you grewup under.

R Yes and they were severe rules

I Okay you had one, you had to get that wood in.

R Yes and Pa was the boss them days and when he gave an order we had to mind, and finish that job what we were.

I Oh he would tell you a job to do and you had to stick to that job until it was done.

R

I Do you recall any times in your childhood when he told you to do a job and you didn't quite stick to it long enough?

R Well I was going to say he had attended the Russian Army themdays and all of a sudden he would command us in a Russian way. But Yum he would say meaning to hasten up and take faster steps. I would remember what he told us and I was always listening to his Army words too. So I started minding him. If we didn't listen right away he'd say bot yum and if we still didn't hurry up he'd grab a leather belt what was holding his pants up and still his pants didn't fall down. He would give us a spanking with that strap. It was a wide strap about an inch wide and it was narrow enough to hurt but not irritate the skin. We knew what he meant by that so we had to mind my pa. My pa was rude in his ways but anyway I think about him yet even. He was rude in his ways but he made us obey.

I What kind of work did your mother have to do?

- R Well I'll try to explain. First thing was sweep the floor which wasn't hard at all. The baking also.
- I Did you have to sweep the floor too?
- R Yes many times the whole house. The upstairs and we had stairs going to the upstairs and when I had to sweep the house I swept the upstairs too. When the scrubbing days come I had to scrub them too. But I don't remember if I ever had to go down on my knees. I don't think I had to because my one knee was tender. It came out of a car accident where another man hit me. I'm just lucky that I'm living anymore. I was thrown out of the car on the side where a little excavation work was being done there. It was along time ago when a better road was built. That was into the Pine Creek Country.
- I Who was driving the car that hit you?
- R I was driving the car myself and I was going kind of fast according to conditions. I found that out later but it was too late. The car I met on the road was John Aurik from South Laird.
- I John Aldrick?
- R Aldrick yes. I think there were a whole mess of bottles that he had in the back seat that were medicines and he was selling in them days, well whatever was in them bottles came into my car during that ram. The cars ran head on. I couldn't avoid it because I was on my side of the road and I few on the side of the excavation that had been done. I landed on my hands and knees on the hillside.
- I Did you hurt your knee then when you landed?
- R No not at that time but I had to be careful in starting to stand up. I had to be real careful and then when I would stand up all of a sudden I would pass out and faint or whatever you would call it. I started falling backwards on all the glass that was strewn all over the hilltop. My older brother Charlie next to me he happened to come along and took us to St. Joseph Hospital in Hancock. That's where I landed then.
- I What year was that?
- R I'm not sure if it was 1918 or around that year.
- I Okay back to the house and sweeping the floors. What kind of broom did they use at the time? When you had to sweep the floors of the house?
- R It was a store bought broom but when my pa went to look for hazel nut brush and switches, he made a switch broom out of them.

- R Then he made a hoop and if I had to make a hoop like that I would have lots of figuring on that. He even used boiling tar in some of those hoops he made. Any old handle was good enough for that purpose, but it had to be a good solid handle. He made the brooms just so he could sweep the floor and pick up the grain that was spilled around.
- I In the house or in the grain room?
- R Outside of the barn.
- I Okay what other jobs did your mother have to do? She had to bake right?
- R Ya, and to milk the cows.
- I What kind of things did she bake?
- R Well sometimes we raised our own wheat and had it ground at the grist mill. The grist mill was operated by water power.
- I And the grist mill was operated by water power?
- R Yes. I went to see the Grist Mill after so I could write my history but them people that had the say so of the place and they didn't care much for it. These people had to make a little dam on the little creek down the hill in order to run the Grist Mill. It didn't a pretty good job and then at that time we had our own wheat ground into flour. They ground it pretty fine and even the cakes my mother made you didn't notice too much difference between them and any other flour used.
- I What did she call her cakes?
- R Well she didn't have no special name but the one bread she made she called the fast bread because it was the fastest bread she could make.
- I What did you like the best?
- R Vieska was good. Although I was never very fussy with my food
- I What did you usually eat for breakfast?
- R Well I remember one time she had the barley ground a little rougher and she used that for cereal.

- R That was used in place of oatmeal but we didn't always have oatmeal at the table. As I mentioned I was never fussy with my food so it was okay, the break or the rieska.
- I You mentioned that your mother also had to go and milk the cows.
- R Yes she did and she would call to the upstairs of the house because us two brothers lived in the upstairs of the house and she would call up the stairway it's time to get up and I still remember it's time to go to school. So we had to get up before we were too late for school so when we heard that we had to hustle up a little bit in order that we wouldn't miss our school.
- I Did you have some barn chores to do before you went to school?
- R Sometimes we had to
- I Did your mom go and milk the cows herself?
- R
- I That's pretty tough work for a woman isn't it?
- R Yes, and then some of them cows, I remember, they would kick too and my mother would have black spots on her heavier muscles where the cow had kicked her.
- I Did she ever get hurt?
- R Well naturally it hurt in that spot where the cow kicked.
- I I mean was she ever hurt seriously?
- R No not what I remember.
- I Now a days many women don't like to go into the barn.
- R Ya, they don't like farming and I heard one of them saying and she was supposed to be my girlfriend and she said if I ever get married well no more farming for her. So that ended my thoughts of ever asking her to be my wife.
- I Oh you had a girlfriend and she didn't want anything to do with farming?
- R Ya, that's right
- I So that ended your thoughts of matrimony?
- R Ya, that ended it right there and we didn't continue much longer.

I What was here name? What was your sweethearts name?

R Her name was fanny

I Fanny Who?

R Fanny Waisanen. Fanny's sister was Ida Waisanen

I And you liked these two girls hey?

R Ya, she was kind of a good looking girl the older one, Fanny. I heard others brag about Fanny also that she's a good looking woman. Mr. Waisanen came over to our place and he liked my pa pretty well. Although they didn't get around to visit enough. Then I heard Mr. Waisanen ask my father has Urho that's me said anything about the matrimonial? My pa said not yet and he said we didn't have nothing of the sort of a talk yet. Perhaps he would have liked the idea and although I worked alot for the father of the Waisanen family.

I So you were on their good side? Old man Waisanen liked your dad but Fanny didn't want anything to do with farming. Your heart was in farming right?

R Yes that's right.

I Well why didn't you give up your inclination to farm in order to have Fanny as your sweetheart? That would have been one of your choices right?

R Yes that would have been one of my choices and I was thinking after that when my father and old man Waisanen got together I didn't act fast enough. I thought when they got together I'll do what's in line matrimonial. I remember the record yet and I might have bought it myself from the Dover's Music Shop in Hancock.

I What was the name of it?

R I don't remember exactly the name of it.

I But you bought your sweetheart a record?

R Ya, but my pa had been at Waisanen's one day. I don't remember what day it was but I suppose it was the end of the week sometime. Mr. Waisanen asked my pa did Urho say anything about the matrimonial and Mr. Waisanen was kind of comical and so was my pa also.

I Did your mother make your clothes?

R Yes. When we were younger she made just about all the clothes and she bought all the material.

I Where did she buy the material?

R Well I don't remember if the co-op store was running at that time but it might have been ~~Gecke's~~ store. That was bought then by Mattie Oija. OJA Gauthier

I So your mother would make the clothes for the children when you were younger?

R

I Well what other work would she do? She kept the house clean when you fellows didn't, she cooked the meals. Who worked in the garden?

R Well I had to work in the garden myself and I remember hoeing those carrots and beets and the turnips.

I Who had the authority over the garden? Who decided when it would be planted?

R I think it was me myself.

I Oh the garden was totally up to you?

R Ya, I was the boss of the garden.

I What about when you were younger? Who was the boss of the garden?

R Well that was my pa, my father.

I Did you enjoy gardening?

R Yes, I didn't have anything against that and I could do anything that my parents told me to do.

What did you like best in the garden?

R In gardening he would tie a tight line to two sticks or hardwood sticks or cut off handles from some broken handles and he used them for measuring between the plants. How far they were supposed to be planted. The rutabagas and the cabbage but you didn't have to be so particular with the rutabagas as the cabbage. They wouldn't grow so wide and they would stand more upright.

I Okay when would you generally plant your garden?

R Well there was a time but I don't remember exactly what the date was. Johnson was the name of a guy who used to peddle some fly dope to keep away those horn flies and some other kinds of insects. My pa was complaining that he should have had the cabbage and the rutabagas planted already from the seeds. That would have required a hot bed then as they call it.

I A hot bed, I didn't know they had a hot bed at the time.

- R Ya, that's what they called it those old timers like my Pa.
- I What was it?
- R Sometimes it was four and five feet wide
- I What was hot about it, how did they keep it hot?
- R I don't know if they kept it hot.
- I Those were horse flies you were talking about before?
- R Ya, and our cows on both sides of their spine would get bumps.
- I Ya, I've seen them.
- R Ya, and there's a worm inside there and I wanted to see what was in them but you have to be careful how you squeeze them out so they come out head first. All you could do was leave it there but infection never came to our cows anyway. They were a nuisance. I didn't like the looks of the cows back.
- I Did you ever have any moisquitos in the Pine Creek area? Along that Silver River?
- R Yes but more on the Sturgeon River Slough or what they call the old river holes. My pa said they were so thick that you had to wipe your face all the time with your hands or if you had a cedar switch. They came as what they call a tadpole.
- I What time of the year did you like the best on the farm?
- R Well of course I liked the spring time better
- How come you like the spring?
- R Well I was always occupied in the field after we got the plowing done in the fall. Then my father retired and I didn't have nothing to say against that and then I figured he's retired now and he's not bossing me anymore. He told me he was going to be left in Finland and then he came back and when he came back the first one he shook hands with was me.
- I Your father when he retired he went to Finland and then came back here again?
- R Yes he came back on the farm. He was talking to me and he said that he wasn't going to come back any more that he was going to get left in Finland and I felt kind of bad about it.
- I He did come back though didn't he?

R Yes. He said that he's giving up the boss and that he depends still on me. I knew what to do on the farm and the other brothers, they weren't interested on the farm. They would look for another job where they could earn a dollar or two.

I When was this, when did your dad retire?

R If I remember right, that was in 1937. I don't remember if that was the year he made the trip to Europe or Finland.

I How long was he in Finland?

R He was there for at least two weeks. I was afraid then already that he wouldn't never come back.

I So then in 1937 you took over the farm. Did your pa still work on the farm?

R Ya, well he did a little bit of work but he said already that he's too old to work. He said he can bake us bread and do other things.