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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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SUOMI COLLEGE, HANCOCK, MICHIGAN

ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEES: Mrs. Mattie Gray
Mrs. Olive Funk
Mr. Wilmer J. Savela

INTERVIEWER: Bonnie J. Longenecker

SUBJECT: Recollections of early teaching careers in the Chassell, Mich., area.

DATED: 7 August, 1974

L: This is an interview dated August 7th, 1974, with Mrs. Mattie Gray, Mrs. Olive Funk and Mr. Wilmer Savela at Mrs. Gray's home in Chassell. The interviewing is being done by Bonnie Longenecker. Mrs. Gray, we will start with you. When did you start teaching in the Chassell area and why did you get into teaching?

G: Well, I had thought . . . why did I get into teaching? I won a scholarship from high school and planned on going to school, so I decided I wanted kindergarten work. I liked children. I went to Ypsilanti for two years and got a life certificate. That's funny now. Then from there I taught at home. I landed in Mackinac Island one year to fill a vacancy and it kind of intrigued me with the North and I came to Chassell. There was an opening here and I became a first grade teacher. The first day I was ~~put~~^{over} near flabbergasted. We had about 30-35 children in our grades before and there were 54 that wanted to come into first grade. So they had to weed them out. French and Finn were the two predominant languages for the children. We had a few English speaking children, not too many. I don't know what I would have done that first year without a very understanding janitor. He was French and he helped out. One of the good things that we started that year they put in the Beacon System of phonetic reading. We started it and the children took it as they went along. Some of them were very bright. And one thing, we had the cooperation and the backing of the parents. They were all interested in school and they wanted their children to learn which was a big help. And as the year went along, we had discipline quite different from the privileged child today. We marched out of the building and down the steps and there was no pushing, shoving or any of that. That was off. And I think our contracts called for three entertainments. We had a choice of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, or closing of school. We were suppose to entertain the parents and show off our work. And I think I'll let you tell about those.

L: And 1914 was your first year of teaching then in Chassell?

G: In Chassell.

L: Ok, Mrs. Funk, when was your first year and why were you interested in teaching in this area?

F: Well, when I was in my last year of high school, there were about thirteen

of us that were interested in teaching. And some of them thought that they would get a certificate from high school and go into the teaching work. But my idea was to go to college and learn all about it in college. And so there were thirteen or fourteen of us that went down to Ypsilanti Normal. And I think the thirteen graduated after two years. We all finished at the same time. And, of course, I was anxious to get home to Calumet to teach because that was a bigger place you know. I didn't . . . when the jobs were handed out I didn't get one. I was quite disappointed. So I held out through the summer into August and finally I had a telephone call that there was; from the superintendent of schools in Chassell saying he'd like to have an interview with me. I thought, gee, down in Chassell, that little town. I don't think that I'd like it, but I'll go and see. So I came down and interviewed Mr. Goddard. Before I went, I went to see the superintendent of schools in Calumet. I wanted to make sure there wasn't a job opening I was going to get. He said, well he couldn't see any opening now it was getting close to September and he thought I'd better go to Chassell and take this job. So I came down and interviewed Mr. Goddard and I had a good recommendation from Mr. Hall because he had been my superintendent all through high school. So he gave me a very good recommendation and Mr. Goddard read it and he said, "Well, the job is yours if you want it." So I thought I'd find out what the accommodations for teachers were here. So I asked him where do teachers stay. He said that there are two or three places you can get rooms. And I said how about the boarding house? He said they have a good boarding house down here. So I said I'm going to look at the rooms first before I give you my word. So I came down to Mrs. Ingram's down on the main street. She was visiting with somebody upstairs and she said she would be down in a few minutes. So I waited. Who should come down the stairs with Mrs. Ingram looking for a room was a girl that I had known at Normal. Her last year was my first year. She was from Houghton. I said what are you doing here and she said, "I just rented a room from Mrs. Ingram. I'm going to teach here next year. I've been out in the country and now I'm going to teach in town." I thought, gee, well, I know one of the teachers anyway. She said, "How about us rooming together." And I said well that would be something. So we arranged that. I went back and told Mr. Goddard that I would take the second grade. So I hadn't had even in my teaching experience at Normal, they hadn't said anything about the phonetic method. They had maybe mentioned it, but they didn't instruct us in anything about phonics. Not a word. So when I got here and the system was the phonetic method, I thought I don't know much about that. But I got acquainted with Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Gray told me what she knew about it. And so I thought well I'll make a stab at it. So I did and, of course, I liked it a lot. The children responded to that method very well. Then I taught second grade for four years. Then we had a fire in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade rooms were destroyed. The township decided to build this nice new elementary building. The first year the teacher that had third grade was called home and so they offered the third grade to me and I took it. I was elated because it was equipped so wonderfully. All new seats and books and everything you know. I was delighted with my room. I kept that room until I decided to get married. Let's see. The teachers had strict rules when we were teaching. We were suppose to keep hours during the week. We weren't suppose to have any parties during the week and if there was a party given like the K.P.'s would have a dinner dance at the hall and we would be fortunate enough to be invited to go, around half past nine, quarter to ten the superintendent would make his rounds. He would say, "Working day tomorrow." That was the signal that we get our traps and go home. He would make very sure the next morning that we were on our toes. Because those teachers that were at the dance, at nine o'clock he started his tour, visit. He could tell whether

we had been out the night before and stayed later than ten o'clock. But we had quite a nice social life. The K.P.s had an afternoon during the week that the ladies, the wives of the K.P.s bowled and they invited the teachers to come down one afternoon a week. And they would have a social hour and then we were allowed to bowl. That was interesting for us.

L: And your first year in Chassell was 19 ?

F: 1915.

L: 1915. So a year after Mrs. Gray came to the area. Mrs. Gray was telling me beforehand about the boarding houses and rules. Mrs. Gray, you mentioned the parents and how eager they were to have their children have a good education. Do you feel that that changed during your teaching career? Mrs. Funk did you find that too?

G: I think it had changed. During the first years I didn't notice so much of it, but after . . . after when Wilmer?

S: I'd say that talking about this here, I think the general theme of all the people in this community here were they wanted their children to have an education. And I think that continued all the way up until the depression years. You know there. Because I know when I was going high school and that was up until 1926, gosh darn it, the kids use to come from way out in the country. There wasn't any school bus, but they came over stay in town and work at some place just so they could attend school. And the graduating classes in those days were just as big as they are now. They did not have all these comforts of bus rides and accomplished things there and I think they were very serious about their education.

F: Wilmer, do you remember the old . . . what would you call it, school bus that they brought in, the horses brought in?

S: I walked my whole twelve years that I went to school. I walked from the farm. We didn't have it.

F: That wasn't in your time?

S: Not in my time, but in 1930 or 31 is when they started with these horse drawn sledge. So it was just about 30 or 31 because I know my sister Lila and Ivy had the last years they were in high school. I think one of them graduated in 32, the other one 33 or 34. They had Mr. Happala which lived on the corner out there. He use to bring from that part and then there was Otto Schultz who bring and would bring way from that Warheim Road down there.

F: It was a very crude affair wasn't it?

S: It was, but it had a little pot belly stove in middle.

F: Pot belly stove in the middle and the seats on the side.

S: They were warm and they were comfortable.

F: They were comfortable, but you know I often look back and you know I don't think they ever had an accident and had a fire on one of those.

- S: They never had a problem. There were no problems what so ever.
- G: No.
- F: Even with buses, motor buses, they have accidents you know. Some of them turn over but with those crude buses and all the snow banks that they went through, I don't remember of them having an accident or the horses running away or anything.
- S: No.
- G: But I was told that farmers would get out after bad storms with their shovels to make sure they got through.
- S: Oh yes.
- F: I remember one was parked down here what is our vacant lot between.
- S: They were using the area in the back there.
- F: Yes. He would, the team would back the bus in there and then he would take the horses and put them over in Harry's barn for the day or during the day.
- S: And then the other group over there when they got around had more of those. Then they was using the old company barns across from the post office which has a bank there now. The lumber mills had those for their horses because their lumber was transported by mules and horses over there. I recall they came from the country and they stayed around here all day those bus drivers. I don't think their compensation was any more than probably 50 or 60 a month. A little sideline for them. And then your country roads were never plowed.
- F: Oh no.
- S: All they ever did was when the snow got there it was that huge metal roller that they use. Just roll em and flatten them out, but they were good roads.
- F: And then too, there was one thing, of course, when the end of the day came, I don't remember if we dismissed at 3:30 or 4 then. Do you Mattie?
- S: You dismissed early. In the winter season you had a different schedule . . . in the winter than had in summer.
- F: And of course, there was no keeping any of those children after school you know because they had to be at the bus because the bus was suppose to leave at a certain time. And some of the children, even though in the second grade, they caught on to that. Well, if I don't get my work done, she can't keep me after school to do it. I can remember that.
- S: I know when I started teaching though, it didn't make any difference if there was a bus out there, if the crime was serious enough, you walked home. Whether it was 3 miles or 4 miles. But in those days I don't think the discipline problem was there.
- F: No, I don't think discipline problem was bad.
- L: But you all feel that the parents really were deeply interested in their children's education?

- F: Yes, if you chastised a child, if you had trouble
- G: You know, the permissiveness in the home showed up in school.
- F: You know, if you had occasion to we were allowed to spank, use a strap and that. If you had a run in with a child, usually the next day the parent would come up and it was very seldom he took the child's part. He'd say, "Now I want my child to behave and get his work and if he doesn't do it why it's all right for you to chastise him." Of course, there were exceptions as well, the child who couldn't do any wrong. But on the whole they wanted their children to get all they could out of school.
- S: It was during the end of the year . . . I think you mentioned this Mrs. Gray pertaining to really a parent day over there where all your best of what each child had done during the year was put on exhibit and it was a big day and kind of proud for a student.
- F: And the parents would come in, of course, go through all that work and, "Well where is mine. Now, where is Johnnie's paper and is that all that he did?", so on and so forth. They were interested in it all.
- S: You had a roll of penmanship too.
- F: Yes, and it was penmanship!
- S: That's right! It was stressing up on penmanship.
- G: You know they put Palmer Method in.
- F: Yes, the teachers had to . . . you know they put Palmer Method in and the teachers, of course, who hadn't had it and there were very few that did have it. You know. So we would have about two nights a week that we would go into the office and practice Palmer penmanship. And then you had to make special copies you know. The work was all outlined and then you had to send that in to the company. And then we would wait anxiously for it to get back. And if it said to do over, well we didn't like that very much but it had to be done over. I remember our superintendent he had the worse time with penmanship. That was Mr. Goddard. How many times it came back with do over, do over. He said, "Let me see yours." And we'd hand ours. "Well, yours is better than mine." So then he would go at it again. He finally did get his Palmer certificate. Then, of course, we taught the Palmer Method in classroom. There were a lot of good penmanship papers on display.
- S: It was one of the three R's and it was really stressed.
- G: Reading and spelling and penmanship.
- S: I went through that when I went to Northern. I went through that experience at Northern with ole Casey Wiggins who was a strict ole-timer of A. N. Palmer. And boy we had to buy one of these Palmer books and then also a celluloid copy there. This ole guy, by golly, you went home that evening and you practiced and practiced and practiced and you handed your paper in. And he flunked people because they didn't get it during the term. You might as well learn it that term because you'd spend another term on it. Well, I went down Northern. Actually in school, when you start get in high school you get a little bit careless. You had the basic. You get careless. You just scribble it off. I remember one guy Anatole LaTendresse, you remember Anatole?

F: He was visiting here.

S: Yes, he was here just a week ago. There was principal here by name of Truscott that I had over there. You remember Arthur? An English theme that we wrote . . . he didn't have much permanship himself either, Truscott. We handed this in and, of course, he wrote on the bottom of Anatole's paper, "Please see me, I can not understand what you have written down here." So Anatole knew what he meant. He went up over to Mr. Truscott and he said, "Mr. Truscott, what have you written down here on the bottom?" Mr. Truscott said, "Forget about it." He said, "It's your permanship that I'm referring to, but if you can't read mine I'm not going to criticize you for it." I'll never forget Anatole.

L: Both of you ladies then started right here in town, you taught right here in Chassell. What was the building like and what were your rooms like your first year here?

F: Well, I was really pleased with the second grade room. It was a large room and the seats were situated at onside. That left space on the other side that we could play games in or we could sit on the floor and tell stories or you could have the little chairs and take your class over to that side of the room you know and teach them. Especially if there were children that needed special help, it was a nice way to do it.

G: We were in what is now the high school building and it didn't have all those partitions put in there. It was a big room. But you can imagine that to put fifty children in there, they had to have seats. We had little chairs for classes and we had window boxes for plants. I guess I was the only one that tried it, but I had a bird.

F: And you had a piano in your room and that's what I missed in my room.

G: So they were well equipped and well kept.

F: Oh yes, immaculate. Good janitor.

G: The janitors then . . . I know when I hear them talk of the chalk trays and few things now!

F: And during the summer season you know the buildings were gone through and every room was cleaned up. The desks were all polished up and everything looked so nice when you'd go back in the fall, real inviting.

S: When you folks were here we didn't have Mr. Collins as janitor then?

F: Yes.

S: He lived up in that little house by the school that was demolished and torn down. I was just wondering. He had a family of about 10-12 kids. In other words, he was just the ideal type to have as a janitor because he'd put Johnnie and you take care of the first grade boom and so forth. I was trying to recall if he was the janitor.

F: He was.

S: All his spare time over there was spent in a little storeroom down below

your grade and he'd be out there repairing shoes for all.

F: If we wanted any supplies, we'd go down and see Mr. Collins and he'd carry them up.

L: So you had a lot of cooperation from parents, employees and everyone

F: And don't forget one of the school board would come and visit the school once a year and we looked forward to that . . . or did we?

S: We didn't mind.

F: I remember Mr. Hall use to come to visit. He was usually the one that came

S: What about Mr. Hutchins?

F: No, Mr. Hutchins never visited by room. It was always Mr. Hall and he would

S: Wasn't Mr. Hall secretary of the board?

F: He would set up at the teacher's desk and he would watch us teach for a little while. We'd go through all our motions and then when that class was over he would say, "Do you mind if I speak to the children?" And so then he would give a little talk to the children and tell them they should be grateful they had such a nice teacher.

S: Where you at that time affected by the county superintendent of schools Jeremiah Bentons?

F: Once a year he'd come and you know we had sort of a little woods back of the school. There aren't as many trees up there now. I guess lots have been taken down because of playground. Almost a little forest, but there was a vacant spot every year in there.

S: There was a band stand in that clearing back of the school

F: I can't remember that, but I remember he would drive up between these two schools and he would go up in the woods and tie his horse to the tree. Well, one or the other of us would see him come and we'd write a note and give it to one of the children and say you take this to every room in the building. And on it said "The cat is on the mat." We were on our best behavior now I'm telling you.

S: See I started teaching in 1929 and I still had the influence of Jeremiah Bentons coming over and visiting me.

F: And do you know he was a crank on reading? He'd come in and you didn't have the choice of picking out your star pupils to get up and read. He would say, "Now this little boy over here will you stand up and read for me?" Well, it might be a child that was nervous and when he'd get up on his feet and look at his book he couldn't say a word. "What's the matter now come on read!" And the child would read. Oh he was gruff. And I remember Mr. Goddard, oh he dreaded it just as much as we did. And Mr. Bentons was a crank on mathamatics. And we'd all be upset you know because . . . and then if the child didn't talk loud enough, he'd probably be scarred to death, he'd go around to the boy and say, "Speak up, speak up, I can't hear you!" And the kid would look at him and pick up his book. The child would try to talk loud and he was shaking. Oh, how we dreaded that.

Tape 1
Side 2

L: He just came once a year?

F: Once a year.

S: This was part of the state law under his jurisdiction. He had to do this.

F: And another thing, you remember Mattie, he was a great guy on marching. And he'd say now we'll have the children march and he'd want them to interchange rooms. Well now, if you haven't been doing that, if the children haven't been doing that that's quite a feat. So we'd practice that during the year so that when he'd call for that they knew just how to go from that room and that room and back to their own room and up and down the aisles and come back to the seat they started from. If they couldn't read, they could do that.

S: Oh, them were the days.

F: Oh, those were the days.

L: What was a typical school day like for you ladies when you first came? You left the boarding house early in the morning. Did you eat at the boarding houses too or your rooms?

F: Breakfast.

G: We ate at the boarding house and we were all, most all of us there. We were suppose to be at school at eight o'clock and left at four. We had a busy day. Recess we were suppose to take charge of our children outside. Quite different now, they hire someone to supervise.

F: Physical training teacher or somebody, but we had to go through all that you know.

L: You did everything yourself then. There were no specialists brought in?

F: No special teachers at all.

G: I think one of things that I marvel at now is the equipment and things children have to work with. I can remember in first grade we had a big box of wooden beads, round, and square and cylinder. And a bunch of shoelaces and for occupation work or something they were given those. And another thing we had was a box of cut up letters.

F: But you had to go around to the stores and ask for the boxes and you had to cut up the letters.

G: They'd come in a big sheet. A sheet for every box. And that was one of their ways of teaching spelling. We didn't have spelling books. We put the words on the blackboard. The children copied them.

S: The little boxes were always spool boxes

F: Spool boxes and you'd ask them to save them for you down at the store.

S: That's right and they did. You were talking about specialization. We did

have a music teacher. Miss Dill wasn't it?

F: My last year teaching Miss Dill came and she taught music in each of the grades and then she also had an orchestra and she did very well with that first orchestra that was organized.

S: They sold something to get a record player up over there and I don't remember what march it was on there, but oh boy. I had a little bit of music training from her but I forgot all about whatever it was over there.

F: I think it was at commencement that year that Miss Dill gave her first . . . presented her orchestra at commencement and don't you know they played the march and she did very, very well with children that hadn't had much music. Very well. But then they couldn't afford her the second year and so she had to give up her job.

L: Mrs. Gray, you mentioned that you didn't have spelling books. What books did the children have? What subjects did you stress in your classroom for the little ones?

G: Reading. They had . . . we started in first grade with the chart. They had story on a page and when we went to the chart along about Thanksgiving time we gave them primers and that was their first book. Outside of that, they had their tablets.

F: We didn't have any language books or spelling books or anything like that. We had to put all that work on the board.

L: Mr. Savela, do you have recollections of these two ladies as teachers?

S: Why shouldn't I?

L: What were they like in the classroom?

S: That's a long time ago. It's a long time to go back, but I think all the recollections has to have been very good because we've been friends ever since. We've known each other every year since then.

F: We both married and came back to live in Chassell so that had something to do with it. We met each other in social

G: The things the children remember though. One time, Tony Suomis had a little get together with some of the retired teachers and invited some of the students. Tony said, he was our supervisor at the time, that the thing he could remember about Mrs. Gray was, "Tony, I'm tired of telling you to keep still," and she panted by mouth shut.

L: That's what he remembers?

G: That's what he remembers about me. Billy Sormonson lived back of me for awhile, the thing that he could remember he said was I couldn't write. I never had a pencil and would always lose them. He said you gave me a brand new pencil and you sat down in the seat beside me and said, "Now Billy, you do lots of other things and you can learn to write." And he said you put your hand right on top of mine and you made me make all the letters. It's funny what someone else will remember. I suppose some of the others would have stories to tell too.

L: You two ladies then you weren't married when you first started teaching here.

Were there special rules for the women who taught here?

F: There weren't any married teachers.

G: No, there weren't married teachers.

F: If you got married you had to give up your job.

G: Do you remember Lucille Ryman?

F: Yes. I think that rule was changed when Helen Johnson married. What was the name of the fellow she married, his father was a mill boss.?

G: I can't remember.

F: I think she was the first one that was allowed to teach after she got married.

G: And it was because they couldn't find someone to take her place

F: But that was a rule if you got married you were washed up.

S: If you were married you couldn't get a job either teaching school,

F: Oh no.

S: You had to be single

F: But you could substitute. They took married teachers to substitute, but you couldn't hold a job.

L: Did they ever give any of the women a reason for this; why they felt a married woman could not teach?

F: I don't think so, it was just a rule that they had made up

S: Just a rule.

F: And you didn't ask any thing about the salaries when we first started to teach.

L: There was no professional organization among the teachers, you were just each an individual teacher?

F: We started out at the salary of \$50 a month. And they retained \$5 of that a month, wasn't it? They just paid us the \$45 and kept 5.

S: \$5 for retirement wasn't it

F: Yes, \$5. In case you broke your contract you didn't get that money back. That was for you to keep your contract.

S: Didn't it go up also for retirement fund?

G: No.

F: No.

S: When I started teaching they took \$5 out which started off a retirement fund. There was no percentage basis then.

G: No, we didn't have it to start.

F: It was a thing of the school board that we would keep our contract.

G: I was fortunate when I started out because I had had experience, so I got a little more than the rest.

F: \$50 a month didn't go very far when you had to pay for your board and room. And I had to travel back and forth each week to Calumet. Weekends I went home.

L: You were required to live here in Chassell during the school week?

F: During the school. I always went home on weekends. I used to save \$5 out of my salary because that was going to be my fare back and forth for the month. Then there was your room. Of course, room wasn't very expensive at that time. I think when I first started to teach we paid \$6 with a roommate, so that was \$12 a month that she was getting for that room. I think when we first started here our board was \$18 a month about.

G: It was a dollar a day.

F: A dollar a day. So you see \$50 didn't go very far. When I finished teaching, I taught seven years I guess it was, seven or eight years, I was making the big sum of \$125. I thought that was pretty good.

G: And that was the year that mill quit wasn't it?

F: Who? Mr

G: No, was that the year the mill?

F: I believe it was. The mill was finished. Think it was the year the mill closed down. You couldn't save very much. Of course, we didn't wear silk stockings to school then. We wore cotton stockings. We only wore our silk stockings to parties and on Sundays. But you were supposed to be neatly dressed.

L: That was the only rule then your school administration had about women teachers as far as your dress, that it was neat?

F: That was all. I don't think they ever told us that, but I guess we just thought we had to dress appropriately.

L: Mr. Savelle, you said that you started out in one of the country schools, how was it different than the large rooms the ladies had here in town?

S: There was really basically no difference in it outside of the fact that you had to put in eight different subjects because you had eight grades. Otherwise, the subject matter pertaining to each individual grade there was no variation. But I'll still say this, that when a kid came out of a country school he came out a lot smarter than he came out from eight years over here because he had repetition of eight years of hearing somebody else.

He studied his lessons, but subconsciously he was reviewing what was in the second grade, the third grade, the fourth, the fifth grade. And if he was in the eighth grade he reviewed everything that he had learned in the seventh or eighth. And that's the honest truth. Of course, I was a teacher from the old school, I stressed phonics. Oh, I pounded that phonics. I had those charts up there with the ac and back and so on and the tch and ck and ack, ick, ocks and all of them. I went through it. I really pounded it and I pounded them on permanship. There was no ifs ands or buts. We didn't have a special permanship period for the first grade or second grade or third grade. It was using all the grades in combination with something of that nature. But I started out I had kids I call kindergarten. There were some of these parents that lived over there that had a little child. John Carpi was one, he had a little girl, Marie Carpi, the oldest of John Carpi's daughters. She was only four years old. John says and her mother, was it Signi said, will you let Marie come to school. I said sure. So I had Marie come to school and I had a kindergarten even for one year. I didn't mind her there, she enjoyed her-self.

- F: And it's surprising how much she picked up from the other children
- S: She picked up from there and well, first grade was really nothing to her. The grades were not too big.
- S: No, but you still had to give them the time. Approximately 12-15 minutes. But when I've analyzed it, over there if you only had 2-3 or 4 children in each you gave a total of 15 minutes. Now you assigned nearly the same length of a history lesson or geography lesson as you do over here in the country school, but that poor kid answered questions. He had to answer 4-5-6 questions pertaining to your lesson. Yet get a class of 35-40 he's lucky if he gets called once during the period of time. I'll still go back. If I want a real education, I'll go back to the country schools.
- F: And half the times he's hoping he won't be called on because he doesn't know that question. Half the time, well I hope he doesn't call on me because I don't know that.
- S: Over there you had to know it. And if you didn't know it at least you were sure you were going to get called on another 2 or 3 or 4 more. I carried over a lot of the traditions from the past. We had definitely our Christmas program every Christmas and then the end of the year when it came around we had our own exhibit of all that was learned during the past. The best of each student and every student was represented. Whether he or she didn't have a very good one, but Ma would come over to see it, so Mary had to have a little something up over there to show. So every child was
- F: Do you remember toward the end of my teaching career we put on the spring program and each school
- S: The May festival right over there. Now don't say any thing, I lanced around that Maypole myself.
- F: And every grade had to put on something. Or maybe they'd put two grades together to get enough children. Oh, someone would have the Maypole .
- G: The Maypole was first grade.

- S: There was one with brownies because remember Mother made a little brownie suit for me.
- F: I remember I had to drill with boys one year with fishpoles.
- S: I don't recall that but I know I danced the Maypole.
- F: I remember I had an umbrella dance and I bought the umbrellas, paid for them myself, I got them at the \$10 store. They were, oh sort of a Chinese affair. Well, I didn't care for that part of it, so I covered them with green paper and put flowers, pink flowers all over them so the top was a floral affect. Like we say, each grade or each two grades would have special programs. Then the country teachers would practice their, what they were going to put on out in the country. Well, then the day before they would come in and have to practice on the green down here, so that the children would know just about where their position was and all.
- S: That's all this area here where they have this Chippewa Court and the PowWow. There was even a baseball field over there. As a matter of fact, we even played football on that same area. And from then they started building..
- F: And then they would put on bleachers up over there for the people to sit in. They'd bring them down from the baseball park and we'd have a big parade from the schools down around to the grounds and then each one would start, the first grade, the second grade. We'd go through our program.
- S: I danced the Maypole. Intertwining, that's that old method, in and out.
- F: If you made one mistake you were sunk.
- L: This type of activity seems to have phased out where you have this type of program for the parents and community.
- G: They don't do it.
- S: They don't produce anything for community.
- F: You wouldn't believe the crowd that you'd get down there. All the seats would be taken and they'd stand all around the field to watch the program.
- S: We liked to show our year's efforts to the parents
- F: They expected something.
- S: Yes, they expected something in the end of the year. Now I think the school teacher's life right now is when four o'clock come around get out of here as fast as you can. So nobody can come around even asking you questions.
- F: Even when they have down where Jean is you know at the end of a semester they have the children that aren't doing the work they're suppose to they make appointments with the mother or maybe both to come. The teacher will go over the work with the parents and show them what they haven't got. You'd be surprised the indifference. And it takes time to make out all those cards and send them and make the appointments and that. You'd be surprised to see how few parents are interested enough to come and see why Johnnie

doesn't have a good mark. They've got other things to do. They all work and they haven't got time to come and spend an hour or a half hour in the evening with the teacher and go over the work.

L: Mr. Savela, when you were out at the country school did you live with a family there or were you close enough?

S: No, I drove home. That's when I had my first car. I bought my first car when I started teaching. But I started teaching at \$70 a month.

F: At what?

S: At 70.

F: See you weren't too . . . It wasn't raised too much.

S: It was 70 and then it went to 120 but then the depression hit and I was back down to 70 again. I could have been better off on WPA than I would have been teaching school. In other words, I had an education, so I could have got a little bit of an administrative job on WPA. I didn't think about it, I enjoyed teaching, I really did. So I just can't say anything more. I was telling Bonnie when we were talking about this, I said they can talk about their hot lunch programs over in school, but I said I initiated the hot lunch program over there in that Snake River school. It happened to be the first. They had those big furnaces up in the back part of there which heated the building had a big flat top of them. I told my mother I'd like to have something warm when winter came. Let's try a bottle of pea soup or something like that. She said how you going to heat it. I said never mind, I'll just take a tin can or something like that and I'll put it on top of that stove and let it warm up recess time in the morning and by the time noon came around I had warm pea soup. I talked to the children and said wouldn't you like to have the same thing do the same thing? I'll tell you I had more bottles on top of that stove inside of about a month and that maintained all the period of time I was up there, six years. They'd come around and there was always somebody made sure all those, they were about two inches high cake pans or something of that nature would hold water. Every year you had to renew them because the darn things would heat up and eventually get hole in them, but we got em.

L: First hot lunch program in Chassell.