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

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Paul & Eva Heideman

Art Puotinen

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Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Heideman 1.

- I I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about your parents. We'll start with the oldest part of the Heideman family and bring it up to more recent times. Your father came to this country and he was already ordained in Finland wasn't he?
- R
- I He was ordained in Finland but served how many years in Finland before coming here? *Missing Content*
- R I don't remember
- I He came to this country in the late 1880's or 90's?
- R 1890.
- I The ^{ges}L~~u~~stadian movement or L^ostadian Church had already been going for some years as I recall.
- R Yes, since 1873.
- I 1873. When your father came here did he do alot of missionary work, in otherwords, did he just stay in this area or did he travel to many other locations?
- R Mostly here
- I He was mostly here because this was an established parish. Was that the Pine Street.
- R Yes, they tore it down in 1900. They built the present church.
- I Most of the services were held in the Finnish language weren't they?
- R Yes
- I Were any of them held in English in those early years?
- R No.
- I Both the older persons and the younger persons spoke Finnish very fluently?
- R
- I Did any of the members of your father's congreg~~a~~tion work in the mine?
- R Yes, quite a few.
- I The majority of them were mining company families that belonged to the church?

R

I Did your father ever speak to you about the miners and their concerns? Did the miners have a pretty rough time, was it difficult for them, their work?

R Yes, it was severe work.

I The needs of these mining families must have been great, it must have been very hard to minister to them. Your father had quite important work on his hands to help all of these people.

■ E In the beginning, they would have many baptisms, they would go into the evening and marriages the same thing.

I These were all in the homes then?

■ E Yes.

I I see. Do you recall what was a wedding like in the home, we are so accustomed to having weddings in the church, what was a wedding like in the home? Do you recall?

■ E Well alot of the weddings were at the parsonage, weren't they Arthur?

R

■ E How were the home weddings, like the home weddings are now? They would have their attendents at home and it would be the same.

R Yes.

I Looking back in those early days, were there enough women, was it about half and half between men and women or were there more women. Were there alot of single men at that time?

■ E That's real interesting because he married a Mexican Finnish marriage, the mexican spoke very little English and she spoke not Mexican at all.

I Is that right.

R It was most interesting.

I Was there a translator to translate for them?

R Yes, a Mexican friend of the grooms.

I That is very unusual

R The whole romance was very interesting.

R This Mexican worked in the mines here and lived in a boarding house run by Finnish people. So he met this girl and he said he never saw people with such light hair before. He fell in love with her and started playing his guitar for her.

He used to serenade her on the kitchen steps

I Serenaded her on the kitchen steps, that's very good

R The Finnish boys didn't like that so they went to the Boarding house one morning and called to the girl from the kitchen steps. They told her to stick with her own kind and not the black Mexican. (Can't make out the rest.) So they came to the parsonage to be married. Finally one of the Mexican attendants said he understood English and would translate for them. So then they got married. Then they got children and I baptized them. *Missing Content*

I Evidently the marriage worked out then.

Yes, they moved to Crystal Falls and then the mother died and the children were all University graduates.

I That's a marvelous story.

I always thought it was.

I You had already been to Finland to study by then hadn't you?

■E Yes, he was.

Let me ask you a little bit about your studies. You were born and raised in this country but then you went to Finland for your education.

R Yes, I had planned on becoming an engineer because one of my uncles was an engineer. Also because the school was so close to my home and I wouldn't have to go to some strange place to school. When I graduated from the Calumet High School in 1908 my father took us on a trip to Finland. I was to come back in the fall to start college but when I was there I met a young Christian minister who called sinners to repent in a very loving way. (Can't make out the rest.)

Missing Content

- R There are many ministers who know nothing about the Living Spirit
- I It's important to get this down because that's really at the heart of your church.
- R Then we went to my grand father's parsonage and a young minister came from Helsinki to help my grandfather during the summertime to earn a little bit to continue his studies.
- I. Pekka Lappala was the person who really influenced you then.
- R Yes, that same day he preached a sermon so lovingly spoke. He touched my heart with warmth and I asked him to forgive me. So he forgave me for my sins and told me to remain in Finland when your parents go to ~~Finland~~ back to America and go to the University where you can study for the ministry.
- I When you went to the University of Helsinki Theological School, I read that Arch Bishop Johanson was somewhat critical of the ~~L~~stadians. There were others in the theological school who were much more sympathetic. Who were some of these people, do you recall? Some of your professors who were very interested in ~~L~~stadianism?
- R I don't think there were any of them.
- I There was still that strong feeling against them.
- R One of the members of the ordination committee came here and asked me are you the son of Arthur Heideman and I said yes. He said he was a hot coal in our hands when he was in Finland. He said is he as fiery now as he was in the young days. I said I don't know, he might have calmed a bit. He said I hope not because that's the kind of men we need.
- I Let me ask you this, your father from the way you described him, was a firey speaker in his early years. How would you describe yourself and your preaching after you were ordained. Were you very similar to your father in your approach?
- R Well I tried to be
- I When you came back from Finland to this country, did you work with him directly?
- R I was his Assistant. *For 30 years.*
- I You were his Assistant. So father and son worked hand and hand in the awakening here.
- R There were quite a few awakenings in the early days.
- I Why were those early years so fruitful in the terms of awakenings? Was it because of the preaching or was it because the people were going through hard times in their lives and became more open to consider the question of salvation?

- I What impressions do you have as to why these awakenings took place? Do you have any opinions of those early days? That's a very difficult question to ask because most naturally the spirit of God is working through people.
- E That's right. There's still a lot of criticism when they come to church but so many were awakened under the sermon.
- I What was a sermon like in those days. Was it a long address? How long was it roughly?
- E I don't think they were any longer than they are now, it depended on the moods he was in.
- I He may have read a scripture passage but when he went into the pulpit to speak he let the spirit move him. It wasn't written out ahead of time?
- R No. He had to suffer persecution also. My mother was converted when she was 16 years old in their bedroom. ^{Through the bedroom window crashed a big stone! Just missed them.}
- I Was this strong feeling from other church Finns or the Finns that became Socialists?
- R It came from the church Finns.
- I So in those early days there was a lot of strong feeling between the Finns themselves.
- R Yes, they called themselves Holy Hoppers because when they had a celebration they clapped their hands and jumped for joy. There was a lot of this jumping and praising and clapping their hands and leaping for joy.
- I Is this what you would call Pentecostalism too? Is there any correlation here? One of the things that's a little strange to me is I'm a teacher at Central Michigan University and we have students there who are interested in different phases of religion and I teach religion courses. I've had some students from the Roman Catholic Church and others who are really moved by the spirit, the baptism of the holy spirit moves them. I've gone to a couple of prayer meetings and they are really moving experiences. So this type of change of heart, it's interesting to see how it's taken part in their condition.
- Let me change the subject a little bit now, you were helping your father. One of the big events that took place in those early years here in Calumet and throughout the Copper Country, was the copper strike in 1913 and 1914. Were you in Finland at that time?
- R Yes.
- I When you got back from Finland, I recall that some of the people that were crushed in the Italian Hall fire some of the funerals were held at the Pine Street Church weren't they?

R Yes, 14 bodies.

I And your father officiated at these, that was really a terrible tragedy.

R There are people we know that were in that and saw them crushed.

I Did your father at that time have a number of the strikers in the congregation too.

R Yes.

I What happened then after the strike, did some of these families move out of the area?

R

I They were sort of forced out of mining as a result of this tragedy.

R

I Was there a L^ustadian minister who ministered to them or did your father keep in contact with them?

R For many years he was the only preacher, but then a number of Christian converted men began to preach.

I Did he ever mention demonstrations of some of the events that took place during the strike besides the disaster?

R I think a lot of people took part in the parades.

I I suppose most of the Suomi Synod clergymen wanted to remain neutral in the strike.

R Yes

I Do you have any recollection of any of the Luther ministers, for one Bernard Routinen was here at one time wasn't he?

R

I He graduated from the University of Helsinki too didn't he?

R

I Were you and he in the same classes?

R No

I He came a little bit before you returned?

R

Tape 1, Side 2

- I Let me ask some questions about your own work as you assisted your father. What types of pastoral duties did you have, you preached,?
- R Baptized and buried.
- I Did you and your father do alot of home visitation?
- R Quite a bit
- I Were there alot of devotional meetings in the homes too?
- R Oh yes, meetings were held in their homes because people were closer to each other there. Then regular church services on Sunday.
- I That must have been pretty exhausting work? You kept up a pretty rugged pace going back and forth to these homes and preaching. What did you and your father do for hobbies? Did you like to go fishing?
- R Yes.
- I Did he go hunting?
- R My father liked hunting and fishing and I took part in it also.
- I I asked you about baptisms and weddings before, let me ask you about a funeral. What were funerals like in the church in a finnish community. Were they occasions that all the people in the congregation attended, what kind of events were they?
- R They were attended in great number
- I Were the services very sad?
- R No, they were very gentle. Sometimes they would jump up and down and clap their hands and say lord Jesus be praised and repeat it again.
- I And this took place at the funeral too. Was it praise to god for the life of his brother or sister or for taking him or her into eternity?
- R Yes. *Missing Content*
- I You mentioned baptisms and marriages and we talked a little bit about funerals, did you have a confirmatinn instruction for children?
- R Yes. Two weeks in the year
- I And that was probably in the summertime?
- R Yes.
- I Did you hold it at the church?
- R At the church, yes.

- I What was the main purpose of that confirmation instruction, was it to or what did you cover, the Bible history and the catechism.
- R
- I Looking back were alot of the children already awakened in the faith by the time they got the confirmation class or was that often a time when they were awakened or converted?
- R Sometimes. Many of them were children of Christian parents and had home training and had confessed their faith at home.
- I I see
- R But there were alot of children who had not heard of the living Christianity.
- I Did any of those Finns with a Socialist background send their children to confirmation?
- R There was no connection there.
- I They pretty much stood away and didn't take part at all. Is that right?
- R
- I That strike was such an important event that it changed the thinking of some as you described, evidently the Copper Country was never quite the same after that. Did you ever go back to Finland after your theological training there?
- R Yes. Six or seven times.
- I Were these visits just for sight seeing, or did you take part in the L^astadian services there?
- R I took part in the services
- I Was there a pretty good living connection between the L^{ae}stadian movement in Finland and the movement in American here? Was there an exchange of letters, newspapers, and speakers.
- R They often called different ministers at Christmas time
- I I see. Do you recall, this is kind of a personal question and I'm kind of personally interested in this, do you remember a man named Alex Poutinen?
- R Yes.
- I I read this name in a book and another man said that he thought our family was related to Alex Poutinen.

I From what I read he was a preacher, was he a lay preacher or a minister?

R A lay preacher.

I Did he spend most of his time in Thompson then?

R Yes. He farmed there and made different preaching trips.

I So he was kind of typical of the lay preachers you had there. These men would either farm, or mine, or work in the woods during the week and then lead the services when they were called upon.

R Yes.

I When a lay preacher conducted a service, how was it like, how did it go? Were there some hymns sung, did he read the scriptures, did he preach, just what did he do?

R He would begin with a hymn and then the preacher would read a prayer then after another hymn he usually had a companion there who sat behind the pulpit there. The preacher usually didn't stand except for the sermon.

I Oh yes.

R Then after the closing hymn, a prayer for thankfulness

I I'd like to move on a little bit further and in the thirties this was when Eva came to this area. You were married then in the thirties is that correct?

R Yes.

I Those were particularly hard times for everybody, those were the Depression years. Do you have any recollections of those times here in the Copper Country? How were people managing, were they able to stand up pretty good to the problems of the Depression?

R Yes, I think so.

I Did people share their things with one another because of the hard times. How would you describe the human spirit or human condition at that time? Did people pull together?

R

I From what I've heard it was pretty rugged, some people had to be on Relief and WPA. One farmer told me he couldn't sell their cattle so they had to butcher it. They just gave the meat to their friends and that's how they were able to pull through. Looking back over your life and ministry, what would you say has been your biggest accomplishment.

R I consider the most important thing my conversion.

I Let me phrase the question a little differently. Is there any particular point where you felt god really worked through you? When did you really' as a vessel of the Lord when were you used in a very significant way? Was there any particular time that stands out in your experiences?

Missing Content

R [No response.]

I By the way did your father marry you two?

R He was dead then.

I Oh he was dead by then.

My two sisters and his brother lived in Washington, so we decided to get married there otherwise the wedding would have been so large. So we had a quiet wedding there at my sister's home. The Lutheran Chaplain of the University of Washington married us. Missing Content

I Do I understand you that you knew him ten years before that?

R Oh more than that.

I I would say these Finnish people have alot of patience then to wait like that.

R Yes, they do. but I couldn't leave my sisters, they needed me very much

I Sure.

Well we were going to be married in the spring but he said he just couldn't go back because his thought had always been with me. That's the reason we were so secret about it because we didn't want to have a big wedding.

I When you moved back here to the Copper Country was this your first time here?

No, I was here in 1923. Just for a visit. But his father and my mother grew up in the same vicinity just a block from each other. At my grandmother and grandfather's wedding his grandmother and grandfather were some of the attendents.

I Do you have any remembrances of those early days when you first came here and you were a pastor's wife?

■ E They would have a reception at every church that he served and Calumet was the first. *MISSING Content*

Is it true that years ago people would bring all kinds of vegetables and things to make you feel at home?

■ E Oh yes, whenever he would have services at any of those little side towns, they would always come with meat and vegetables. My father was the manager of a cannery but he still spoke at churches in the West. Just in the local churches but that wasn't his work at all. There's a young girl here in Calumet and she remembers my father when he was in Finland.

I As a pastor's wife besides taking good care of your husband, did you become involved directly in any of the church activities?

Well the only thing we had was the Sunday School and I didn't have time to go because I would go with him wherever he went. I traveled with him most of the time.

I When you traveled what were you driving in those days?

It was a Ford car

I How were those trips, were the roads pretty rugged?

It was really rugged in the winter, it took two or three days. The first time he went and took the car, it took three days. They were rugged here but in the west we didn't have frost bite or snow. On those trips he would do the highway driving and I would do the city driving. When we went west we'd drive 200 miles and then change.

I I'm still sticking in the thirties now, after you got married. did quite a few of the Finnish families have cars? Were quite a few of them going around with automobiles?

■ E Not too many of them did but I guess some of them did.

I I understand at that time there was a pretty well developed street car system.

The street car wasn't here at that time.

I It was already out of circulation by that time?

Yes.

I Oh, I see.

That was in 23 when I was here but you had a Dodge then didn't you?

R Yes, I think so.

I I wonder now if we can't jump a head a little bit, we've talked about the twenties and the thirties, do you recall getting a little bit closer to the forties when the Finnish people in Finland fought against the Russians, the winter war?

I There was quite an extensive relief program that was started in this country. Was the parish involved in that too?

Yes, we were the first ones to send huge boxes of clothing to Finland. In the church basement, we had these huge boxes of clothing and bedding of all kinds. The ladies made quilts to send too.

I Did just the Finnish people help out or were there other nationalities too?

R Usually it was just the people from our church.

I One of the questions that I haven't asked yet but I think it's an important question to raise. How did the Finnish people get along with the other nationalities? You mentioned this very ~~well-known~~ ^{well-known} story of the Finnish girl and the Mexican boy who got married. Just in a general sort of way, how did the Finns in this community get along with the other people?

E Do you remember when you went to school how you got along with the Irish, the Cornish and the Italians?

R We got along all right.

Yes, because these friends were what was that doctors name who graduated from highschool when you did, he's in New York?

R He was Italian

E Oh his friends weren't all Finnish when he was in high school.

I Evidently the highschool was a good place for people to mix sort of?

E Yes. But I know here too they called us Russian Finns and in the story I heard they called us Russian Finns. *Missing Content*

Let me turn finally to a couple of questions about today, life as it is. Has your attitude towards life remained about the same? I think I have a pretty good idea in just what you've said about your conversion experience and how you see your faith relationship, that has pretty much remained a constant sustaining force in your life.

R Yes.

I As you look at the church work today among the ^Lastadians, are there some things that kind of stand out in your mind as hopeful signs?

R I think we have alot of young people in the church and alot of the older ones have passed away but that's the only hope. As long as we have been in church there has never been so many young people as there are now. Those who have stayed with us after confirmation and then we have quite a few conversions of other faiths other than Finnish.

- I Is there any particular reason why young people are turning now to the church? Have you talked to any of them?
- R A few years ago, a young mother was converted and she was brought up in the Catholic Church. I didn't know her but they say she had come to church many times with her husband and he was from a home of parents who went to our church. I talked to her in Bible class when I heard she had been converted. She told me I've been seeking and seeking and at last I've found it. So that brings us so much joy because there are still some left to be converted.
- I Yes, indeed, well that's encouraging. Looking at not only the church work in the Copper Country but life in general, what would you folks predict for the copper country say ten or twenty years from now? Will it be about the same or do you see the mines reopen or more tourism, or what do you expect is going to happen?
- R I don't know if I could answer that.
- I Well maybe if you don't know what's going to happen would you say what you would like to see happen?
- R I would like to see the life as it used to be. I would like to see that.
- I Life as it used to be, what do you mean by that?
- R Well I know it will never change but in our time, the children had great respect for their parents. They never thought of disagreeing with them.
- I And that time has changed, there's a little more resistance now.
- R Oh definitely. It's just heartbreaking to think of the generation the way it's coming now. Of course there are exceptions, I know there are, but as a general rules.
- I I wonder where that influence has come from, has it come from the tv or is it just general across the country?
- R It seems it used to be just a little but it's natural as the children see what's going through the tv, they will pick it up too.

Suomi salutes the people who make this

Rovasti & Kevyys

Mother
a. Lempi Kankkunen
b. Kankkunen
c.

Father from Finland 1893
a. Frans Kankkonen
b. Astoria
c. Solmonen
Earning

Christina 2 d

Mother
a. Amelia Haggren
b. Astoria
c. Kankkunen

Sabri

Suomi College
Folklore Album

Father
a. Arthur Leopold
b. Pastor
c. Calvert

Krank
16
Kankkunen

ordained in some
church in Porvoo
all 3 want to U of Michigan

Father
a. Paul Arthur
b. Calvert
c. Pastor

Mother
a. Eva Kankkunen
b. Calvert
c. Kankkunen

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child (30)
a. Arthur Franz
b. Detroit
c. Wayne Co.
Sheriff Dept

Child
a.
b.
c.

Child
a.
b.
c.