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LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978**

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SUBJECT: "Making a go of it" during the great depression, struggling with land payments working on the threshing machine, old traveling peddlers, and "getting a licking".
SOURCE: ~~Adrian Heinonen and Denia Kempainen~~

COMMENTS: This is a lengthy (two tape) two party interview with Finnish natives of Pelkie. Adrian is 64 and Denia 55. Adrian worked in Detroit for many years before retiring in Pelkie. Denia is a self-employed carpenter.

I: Let's talk about the Depression years here from '28, '29 on through the early '30s.

I wasn't here.

Well, there was lots of deer killed. That was when people lived off venison.

I: That's what I've heard.

Well, it was (very tough?)...we (didn't?) any more in 1930. The last time they logged where Matt Kokko's camp used to be out there in the woods and the fire went and burnt it down...

That was after '28...that was in '34 when that burnt.

Yeah, but they were logging there just before the Depression.

Yeah, Hilliard, Rudy Hilliard was logging in there.

Well, my dad and Joel, Henry Tauriainen, his brothers and brother-in-laws, they were logging there. Honkanen was their only worker and they logged down there. Then when they got done they took all the marketable trees, the hemlock and that, there was no demand for that...and they left all that stuff out there.

I: What happened to farming here at the time?

They were farming.

I: Could you make money farming that time?

Five gallon can of cream was worth 75 cents.

Well, then I heard somebody sold one five gallon can of cream for 50 cents.

Well, we were getting 75 cents there in the Depression.

It was about that \$1 what we were getting.

I: There was no market for milk at the time?

R2: No, there was all cream.

I: So you didn't get rich off the farm?

No, no, we got subsistence, that's all.

Yeah, subsistence. And we had our potatoes and rutabagas...we used to have oh, all an acre of rutabaga.

I: That's one thing about this area during the Depression--at least the people didn't go hungry.

We didn't go hungry.

R1: No, no, but didn't have money, though.

We never were on welfare, either.

No, there was nobody on welfare here.

R2: Oh, yeah, there was...they got the Red Cross stuff but we never got any Red Cross.

Who got out here?

R2: Welfare? Horoscope.

R1: Well, that's a little foreign to this country, here.

I: Well, that's one thing...the people in this area are independent and they don't like welfare and they don't like welfare people.

No...let's say that they put welfare people on a lower category...they're not shunned as such but they're looked down on as such, though...but they're not shunned.

I: A perfect example, for instance, Emil Pelto out there. He could obviously get welfare on some sort of disability without even trying. He won't.

R1: No, pride.

I: Fierce independence. I've also got some relatives on the other side of the Canal who could qualify for welfare on the grounds of disability...such high blood pressure and heart condition...but won't do it at all. Were the early people that way?

Yeah, a lot of them they were proud.

Yeah, proud people, boy, they don't want...that's why when he said welfare I never knew of any.

No, it's Horoscope people.

Well, now that's like going into another country.

Yeah, well, these were young people who got married. Well, actually, some of these parents were on welfare in Finland...they've followed the family tradition.

I: It tends to work that way. I heard a lot of young men would go in camps in the woods in those days...shoot deer, play pinochle?

Oh, yeah. They'd break away from the home...and they'd go and isolate themselves in these small camps they built themselves...and well, they played pinochle like you said, yeah, and live off the land, that's true.

I: Did you ever go to any of those camps back there in those days?

Yeah, I did.

R2: Well, no, I didn't. They had a hunting camp but I never went there. We had, already, our farm was so big that we were needed home...we had our chores.

R1: Well, yeah, and your brothers were yet too young to, see.

R2: Yeah, we had work already. We had enough cows to keep going.

R1: But lot of families, they had big families...well, we were just excess baggage, that's all.

I: So that's one reason they left...lighten the burden?

Yeah, that's right...you'll find that in a lot of cases.

I: I know I've heard about a perfect example, Art Mutkala down the road, there...he went out into the woods...lived on venison, puurua (oatmeal), coffee...

R1: Yeah, they'd be gone for weeks at a time...weeks at a time...wouldn't come home.

R2: They knew where they were...and if they needed them home, they could get them. But, I mean, that they were just an extra mouth to be fed...they were cleaning land out here and we had guys they'd come and work for 50 cents a day...that was their basic pay... that's to keep their clothes...

I: Were these lumberjacks?

Old lumberjacks and there was no work. Fifty cents a day...but then you didn't pay for all of these. Some days they'd work today and then tomorrow they'd get room and board. So that it was one day work...one day board. There were some that lived over the winters.

Yeah, well, see, there again we go into another era of, we'll say Depression or need. See, our farm, there, we had four and five from the Copper Country strike...there was no food over there...now that was a more drastic depression than the regular depression we had after.

I: 1913, 1914?

That's right...now that was worse. They were actually starving to death over there... well, not to the death but really in (??).

I: It hit them harder here, then? That's when this area, according to what I've read, became filled in...that's when they really started moving in.

Yeah, that's when she started, you bet...now when you're referring to, we'll say, labor versus your subsistence...it was not quite so drastic during the Depression here as during the strike when they were coming in. All they cared when they come our place... all they wanted was food and some Peerless tobacco...that is all they wanted...they didn't want no more, just food and Peerless...and smokes were so tight then at that time that you know that they smoked two pipefuls...one in the morning...one in the evening... and they'd take the teräs...teräs they'd put in their mouth for noon.

Yeah, that nicotine from the pipe.

Yeah, they'd scrape that nicotine out of the pipe for noon time...now, that's how tight it was. Now, when we talk about depression it's in the '28, '29, '30s...that was nothing like that one.

I: But still you could survive...there was food...a man could always get deer and fish, right? I bet that river was filled with rysäs (nets).

No, hook and line...you could get all you wanted with hook and line. Because I know the fishermen when they started coming...you didn't have to go...Hilliard's Road...was the farthest they ever fished...go Hilliard's Road...you could go off on that...that was virgin there, you could get all kinds of them. I remember one time this Reverend Heideman, that's Lauri Heideman was here, he used to come and fish up our place...and one time my brother Leslie, Lauri Heideman, and Dad, they went fishing just for (net???) and

they came home with a tubful of fish...and then there was some 16-, 18 inch brook trout and that...Ma wouldn't have wanted to give all those big ones, she would have wanted to salt, but Dad would not let them...he said, "We went to fish for them, and they all go." The only thing they held back was the small ones...was it 7 inches or...well, they had them measured...any fish over that went to Heidemans...anything below, we had...we fried. Dad used to...every evening that Dad...there were many evenings that when the sun would start getting cloudy, we'd have to dig worms and then Dad would go fishing... and it got to the point where Ma...we used to get company in the evenings...we didn't have a car that time...and company would come over, where was Dad? Dad was out fishing, he'd fish till dark. He'd come home in pitch black.

I: With fish, too?

Oh, yes, yes. I tell you, even...I thought it was a pretty poor catch if he got around 50 fish...well, we had 10 people, sometimes more...company...and then you got to figure out for 10 people they eat all the fish you want, well, small ones, you had to have many.

I: But those days it was possible to live off the land?

R2: Yes, it was.

I: It would be pretty rough picking now, wouldn't it?

You couldn't live off the land as such. Now when you refer to the term "live off the land" now, that the wild part of it is what you're referring to.

I: Can't be done, eh?

No, no, you couldn't do it now...no, no way...but you could live off the land as produce what you get off the land...you could live off the land here yet...but not when you go into wild life.

I: That's been the big change...like this summer I've seen one deer...and I've been on the road as much as anyone 'cause I've been on the road every day and up till 10'clock at night.

R2: Well, like before, even, well, they had these salt licks...and I guess Adrian has (sawed?) some of those salt with ladders.

R1: Yeah, with my sawmill. They had them all over the woods...salt licks...they would nail cleats so they could climb up the tree and they'd...the wood would rot...and the nails would get left in there, see, and then the tree was maybe that high and the tree got that high they'd bring it to the sawmill and saw into them spikes.

I: Oh, a guy would have a salt lick and then a stand up in the tree?

They had a platform up there and sit down in there and the deer could not smell the person...they'd come in and they could be just in this...shoot down.

That's why it's contrary to law now to shoot a deer out of a tree. They're easy to shoot deer from a tree.

I: In some states you still can.

Yes, down South, you can

I: But there was no problem in getting deer that way?

No, and lot of them had a stand of a bear trap.

I: They'd trap deer in a bear trap?

Yeah, that's easy to catch a deer.

And then snares.

Dad never had a snare.

I: How would you catch a deer in a bear trap?

Well, they'd step in it.

R2: You put a salt lick...and then it's a certain distance from the salt lick you'll set the trap...and you make it so that where they come (so you put the?) logs so it's awkward for a deer to go anyplace else but to where the trap is...and you could get them, then...then lot of them had just a short block so the deer could keep moving and all you have to do is put some thick brush...everything is (dark?)...that's where the deer has gone.

R1: Our way they had more snares.

I: (How would you put a?) snare there?

Same thing as a rabbit...only it's a bigger snare...we used to have this galvanized clothes-line, that's what they used to use...and a spring pole on it...and when they'd jerk on this trigger it'd raise the deer partially off the ground.

I: And hang it...pretty quick kill that way, too, wasn't it?

And a man can get hung up the same way.

This was in the '40s...I like these smoked meat, smoked venison...I wanted to get some... well, we had the bear traps and I set the bear traps and nosiree, I could not get a deer, deer was standing in between me, they even stepped between the pad and the jaws...(??) and I told Dad about it...I couldn't...and Dad says, "That's funny," he's never missed it... he'd make it...so he came and showed me how to set the bear traps...and I learned...didn't have any more troubles...but I did have once...I had set the bear traps for salt lick and the rabbit jumped into it...and the bear jaws went right through the whole body...the middle of the body...it was dead. The biggest deer of the year I ever caught was 14 point...I haven't done any violating since '45. I haven't killed any deer, either.

I: That's when it stopped, mainly, right after the Second World War?

Yes.

Is that when the Conservation Department started...

No, that don't bother, but I figured that our family was so small already, that we didn't need it...that we could buy the meat and I guess when we were kids we ate enough of the venison.

I: It was a bit different years ago in history when people violated...they would eat all the meat.

Yeah, it was for personal use or then if you got a deer in olden times, I guess they divided it up...they gave to the neighbors.

I: Generally because there was no way to store it and you couldn't consume all of it right away and it would spoil otherwise, right?

That's the main reason...unless you smoked it. That's about the only way you could keep meat them days...if a neighbor butchered, you'd expect meat 'cause when you butchered you'd give back. That's the way we had it our way.

Yeah, we had it up here, too. If you gave a nice chunk of beef for the neighbor, neighbor butchered, they brought the same kind back.

That's right.

I: Oh, the same kind of meat?

Yeah, you might say the identical piece.

Not the same piece, but identical....same (kind?) cut.

Well, same cut of piece.

I: And it worked the same way with deer and beef?

Well, deer it wasn't.

Well, our way it was, yeah. If I gave a neighbor a hind quarter, I got a hind quarter back...but if I gave him just rib cuts, that's what I got back.

Yeah, well, that's true...it's what you gave, you got back...'cause actually you didn't give it, you just stored it up there for the time being.

Just like a Indian, he caught fish and he ate it...it was fresh always in the river... that's where some of these white people differ with my way of thinking...like Denia did mention, that they take so much...now we never did that...we never did that...we took what we needed at that time and we didn't take no more...see, that's why I can't see taking a hundred and two hundred, we couldn't use that much.

But we used it.

How could you?

I: They had a bigger family?

No, you were feeding other people.

Well, they went to fish...

That's what I say now, we never did that, never, never.

I: But did those other people sometime, then, give you fish?

R1: No, never, never.

R2: No, well, this was a minister...that's the big....the ministers.

I: That's a different story, then? The ministers around here seem to sort of get a lot of fish, a lot of vegetables, and a lot of bakery, right?

R2: I don't know now, but...

R1: But the olden days they did.

I: Why is this?

I think they wanted to become a Lutheran minister.

No, I would say there is definitely, had to be, a guilty conscience...there is no other reason for it...in order to be in good graces with the preacher that figured you're just one step closer to good grace with God...I can see nothing else for that...you're in good graces.

Well, I couldn't say the same, but see, old man Heideman, that's Paul's brother, he used to be...1925 or '26...

I: Before the split here?

Yeah...he used to come and fish...stay up our place.

R1: He came our way, too, but he did not get that reception...definitely not.

R2: Lauri?

Never got that...he did not hunt or fish our way because of that...nobody would take him fishing or hunting.

I: Why was that?

We never...us young punks, you know...we never put such value to the preacher as the older people did.

Well, they did (what the minister's son or ministers?).one was a father and son were preachers.

We never put that value on preachers.

I: Did they both go the same church, both of your folks?

Yeah.

I: And the Apostolic church at the time was closest to where Pelto lives? At the time?

R: At the time, yeah.

I: At the time, there were quite a few people going to that church, right?

R1: Right.

Quite a few people, I think both of those churches was full.

I: You went to confirmation school there?

Yeah.

I: What was it like in confirmation school?

R2: Well, we had to take it in Finnish.

R1: No, I took it in English.

R2: I had to take it in Finnish and I didn't know a word of Finnish...to read or write.

I: Is that when you learned Finn?

R2: Nope...it was after I went out to work, I had to write to mother...I bought a book, a Finnish and English dictionary and it took a long time for me to write the first letter but then I got used to it...I think it'll take a long time to write again, but that's where I learned.

I: What was this confirmation school like? Do you recall who your teacher was?

R2: Torola was mine.

Mine was Paul Heideman...but I took it in English.

I: What did he teach you? What was taught?

Catechism and the Bible History.

Yup, that's right...that's all it was...and well, we had the Old and New Testament.

I: Well, what about the split in 1931, now?

R1: Well, let's say that I never was much for prying and never had any reason why I should delve deeply into the reason but some wanted a certain preacher and the other wanted the other preacher and disagreement came then because they had every other Sunday services... and all of a sudden when they were supposed to have this Heideman, they had a padlock on the door...that's all I hear about it, I don't know.

I don't know.

Yeah, there was a padlock on the door, I know that!

I know...that I know there was a padlock on the door.

And then they started building the one they got there now...that new one...they started building immediately as soon as the padlock came on the door.

No, they had churches, I think, in the school.

Oh, yeah, yeah, but what I mean is...

Yeah, well, they started getting ready...that winter...these brothers and brother-in-laws.. Kemppainen and that brother...there was Tauriainen...Joel...Joel wasn't a member of the church, but...

He was in it, though.

Yeah, he came and then Dad, Henry and Andrew. They were logging and then during the Depression there was no market for this hemlock and all this material that they needed in the church, those logs...they would have got left to the state, well, they weren't going to hold onto the land for the taxes so they gave all that logs free, they didn't want anything...in fact, they worked there to cut it.

I: And Mrs. Ruona donated the land?

Yes.

I: But the way the belief has arisen around here it was Matt Oja who did it.

R1: No, no, no.

I: But that's what people believe...and I don't know how that quite came to be.

R2: Well, then, those guys...Dad worked 125 days...I don't know what he did...I was looking for the...see, I had a day, all the days that he worked in a book...then I remember when they got all the material at the church and that...was the church built or what...but anyway it said 125 days with the team...he skidded the logs...Hiltunen, your father-in-law, and Waino Kempainen was another one that sawed all the...

R1: Fritz Tauriainen sawed them.

I don't know, but Waino Kempainen was there, too, sawing...and now when they wanted, was it new pews or something, in that church...they went to see if he'd contribute, and he said that he's contributed enough, that they sawed all that material and see, there was (?? and Kempainen?) that called...but Matt Oja wasn't on it.

No. He was a figurehead in it, but...

Not when it was big...that was before the Depression...this what Henry done in 1927. But then after that he wasn't...and the material for that church was got from these brothers and brother-in-laws...Matt Oja didn't have anything...but they're dead so whatever Matt says...whoever believes it...

R1: Who believes it...but there's some yet who remember, though.

Yeah, but like I remember about that when they worked and then Waino Kempainen, he was one of the sawyers left...and I'm afraid that he is one of the few that is left that actually worked.

R1: I think so 'cause Fritz Tauriainen is dead.

R2: He's dead...and Hiltunen is dead...and Bill Kuivanen that sawed all that material...he's dead...Pine Creek Mill...and he's dead...so then actually I don't think Matt Oja ever did a day of manual work there.

R1: Not one day. I did, though. I worked there.

I worked there, but it was later on.

I worked...I was on summer vacation from my factory job in Detroit and then I worked at that church...laying floors...and my dad was carpentering there.

Your dad was the head carpenter...and he was the one...they had a drawings for that church...two...there was, I think it was John Wanttaja and your...Otto Heinonen...they drew the plans for the church and they had a meeting and your dad's blueprints, or the drawings, were the ones they accepted and that's what they made by...I don't know what Wanttaja's plans were like or...

I don't either, I didn't see them, but I did see my dad's...(just what that is???)

I think there was no labor paid on that church...I do know when there was ready and they needed money, Ma went to town...she knew all these...see, they used to live in town...and she knew all these business places in town...Sakari, Eilola, Sundquist, Lepisto, Lohela's...I can't remember an more now, but she went and collected and the first dishes to the church were got from Henry Sakari...and she collected I don't know how much...and how much money she collected also...but the dishes that Sakari had...see, he used to sell everything...they had...so then these old dishes that were not for...weren't moving...that's what he gave...I don't know how much he gave them.

I: In the early days, did the Apostolics associate with the ones that went to the Evangelical Church?

R1: No...let's say that they visited...but they weren't accepted. There was a little bit of animosity there.

I: But they still visited?

Oh, yeah...they weren't bosom friends, you know, bosom friends...but they were friends... there's a difference there, you know...but no...

I: There was that known difference in every (??) ?

There was, yes.

I: But one would help another?

Oh, yes, it was different...and they were friends.

I: Was the big difference when one would meet another and whether or not they'd say "God's Peace"?

Well, yes...this one church doesn't do that where the other one does...and they don't greet the other church members with God's blessing...they didn't recognize that as being a legitimate church of God.

It's almost like I heard about in Minnesota, there was a guy...or was it in the Dakota's... it's out there, close to the prairies...he was a well-to-do man, big farmer...he had made a suggestion out there at the meeting...and they turned him down...I don't know what kind of suggestion...and he got mad...and so he built his own church...and he had his services at his own church...that's the Finnish independence.

I: That's happened over and over again in Finnish religious history.

(Side B of Tape)

I: Well, how in the heck could these people pay for the land when they got it?

Very difficult...they, lot of them borrowed money from the land banks and from a company out of Chicago called the Hardy and Ryan.

I: They had an office in Hancock...and from what I heard, and from my interviewing thus far, it was tough...the interest rates at the time were 7 and 8 percent, which were monstrous... all the people could do...

They paid interest but nothing on the principal.

I: Do you remember any stories?

R1: Well, I'd say...we wanted to open land...first you bought the place, and then you wanted to open land...my folks borrowed \$1,000...I think that was in 1924 or '23...from Hardy and Ryan...that was not cleared up till...I think it was in 1936 or '37 when that was terminated, so we paid more in interest than the principal was.

I: This happened to a lot of people. Many of the early people were just downright "screwed" in terms of the deal, and there was this problem on the language. The term "tois kielinen" developed...people of the other tongue...and there was this suspicion in making deals. Do you recall years ago people talking about that?

R1: Well, I think that was all throughout. The minute even a person come in the house that wasn't Finnish, you'd say, "Se on tois kielinen"...and then you were on the alert right away, see...it's another language person, see...and then you went on the alert immediately for being taken.

Because people in those days were taken, right?

Yeah, they were taken...they even sold the land from down South, lot of people....I know... I think that Leinonen used to live in Honkanen's old place, I think it was Honkanen's place...they went down to...somebody sold them land down in Texas where it was dry... there was no water...so they went there and they lost everything...they had to come back.

Jarvi did the same thing out in Froberg...he bought in Texas and there was nothing there, just a.....

I kind of chuckle now when they were selling some of this old lands down in (Caboosa?) and all that and way out West, I said, I'll be damned if I...that every parent's kids stuck and then the younger people they'd begin trying it and it's every 50, 70 years they pull the same stunts.

I: When the new generation forgets about what happened. Is this where the meaning of that expression "tois kielenen"...

Well, that created...see, here, when you use that word it refers to that it's a different nationality and you become alerted...and defensive, of course.

I: Did the Hardy Ryan Company end up taking over any of these farms?

Some they did, but very few, very few. They managed to get...lot of them reverted from Hardy & Ryan into the land bank...Federal Land Bank...which was not much better.

I: But the Federal Land Bank was not associated with the federal government...I found that out afterwards...that is merely a name and what it is, is a company, a loan company, not at all different from the Hardy Ryan Company in morality or fairness. But they used that name, Federal Land Bank, and that fooled many of the early settlers into thinking that the prestige and honesty of the United States Government, (at the time there was a little prestige and honesty in the United States Government), was behind this and they paid interest through the nose. Can you remember, I don't know how problematic it was for your own folks, but how that was a constant source of worry to save enough cash to make the...

Well, I wouldn't on our part...we didn't...Ma, she was a tailor...and she worked a lot for these...from Hancock, these...big tailor, Sakari...we got a lot of stuff there...when they settled down here, living...our credit in Pelkie was no good...period...we got our food from town...it was shipped down from Sakari's...and then also this...and then during the strike, Copper Country strike, Dad was here...they were building this place...well, then this Nestor Jauhainen was some kind of official in the union, so then they gave a certain amount of relief from the union...and he, being some kind of official in there, and being a good friend of Mother's, well, she didn't have to go out there to get it...it was brought here by the (parents?).

I: But do you remember how that used to be a source of anxiety and worry scraping together enough to make the taxes?

Yeah, taxes and your, let's say, debt...what you purchased the property or else improved on the property...that was quite an anxiety...our place it was... 'cause you hated to be kicked off of your land...they'd send a representative over if you were late...he came over...well, that wasn't very encouraging news when he come over, you know.

I: Did he come over, ever?

Never came our place, but he came not far from our place, though...and that was a red-letter day when you heard that he came...it's more or less threatening at that time.

I: That scared everyone in the area?

Everybody in the area...well, you borrowed and made sure you made the interest rate... they didn't care about the principal, just the interest.

I: You had to pay that interest rate every year? Approximately what did these forties go for then? \$200?

I can't say, it'd be a guess on my part.

I: How did they save it? How did they make it and how did they save that much?

Well, they worked in the mines, lot of these.

Yeah, my dad carpenter-worked and worked in the mine, both.

I: Even while he lived in the Froberg area?

Oh, yes, my dad was always out...that's how we made a go of it...we couldn't make it off the farm.

R2: Dad, then, he got a job, he worked for Waisanen's...hewing ties...worked in the woods... then in 1920 or something like, they started logging...(??) one of the first...Henry and logged, we got the back two...not these two...but the third and fourth forties...they logged that and they started logging in 1920s.

I: When did that hardwood market open up? I know it was after the railroads so that you could get it out of here, but when did they start selling the hardwood and people start logging it?

Well, there was a sale for hardwood but it had to be prime stock used for mine rollers.. that was during the mining days, copper mining days...when you could sell mine rolls... that had to be very good, No. 1 maple...but it opened up, I'd say, in about 19...

R2: After the First World War.

R1: No, quite a bit later before the hardwood...I remember when hemlock was stacked as high as you could care to buildings in Pelkie...hemlock wasn't moving...and hardwoods, they weren't moving too good yet, then...but they were taking hardwood at Rudy Hilliard's there... but I'd say in about '27, '28, '29, '30...that's when she started opening up a little bit on hardwoods.

R2: See, they were logging in '21, '22, and (??) was working in '26, '27 real good, they were sending logs for Wooster...Wooster Lumber Company in Chassell. They had railroad down in the back...and they were logging from there.

I: But the Mineral Range didn't come through here?

It came from Gidding.

Oh, yeah, Mineral Range was here when we came...back in 1908 they had the Mineral Range here.

I: 1900 it came through. But there's this period between the old pine days. The pine was logged out roughly around the 1890's, 1900, the turn of the century, and there is this period when there wasn't much logging until this hardwood market opened up.

That's right...I wouldn't know exactly but the maple logs didn't start till about from '25 through to then, she started improving...but it wasn't the best.

I: So the men would work out...and when you were old enough as a kid...

R2: Well, Reino Kemppainen, I think he was 12 years old, he was working in the woods.

I: How about yourself?

I never worked in the woods.

I was 16.

I: What was it like in those camps?

Well, if you got a partner and went sawing, well, you could make a buck a day sawing, that's about all you could make.

I: Clear a buck a day?

Well, pretty near a buck a day sawing. But when I went on company count, I was getting 10 cents an hour...on company count.

I: What's that?

Day rate. You made better sawing than day rate.

I: What jobs were on day rate?

R1: Well, like tractor driving...I was a tractor driver in 1927.

I: For 10 cents an hour?

Oh, yeah, it came to that, see, when you figure out you got \$35 a month, and you worked 10 hours a day and 6 days a week...you break it down, it comes to less than 10 cents, yeah, that's what it breaks down to...then I got a \$10 raise that I got \$45 a month when I was working at Otter Siding driving tractor...well, you break that even down and it's very little over 10 cents an hour.

I: What was it like? What did you think when you went to the camp the first time? What were your impressions?

R1: Well, it didn't look very good...you didn't have no mattress on the bunk, you had boards.

R2: It was straw.

R1: No, it was hay...they told you to go in the barn and get hay for your mattresses...so you take gunny sacks and you fill them up with hay and you lay them down, that's what you laid on...and I had a gunny sack for a pillow with hay in it...now, the food was good...but the sleeping wasn't much...and one stove...the camp was about maybe 60 feet long and more...and they had one stove in there...and it was just thin boards with tar paper on it...yeah, inch board with tar paper on it so the wind wouldn't blow in there...well, when the fire was in the stove I see the temperature was in there around about 50 degrees, winter-time...but, boy, in the morning water was froze in the water pails...so it was quite a bit below zero in there...and boy, you hated to get out of that sack.

I: What would happen when the men would go to bed?

R1: Nine o'clock.

I: Would they tell stories?

R1: Well, there was some that would talk...but others would make wedges...but me, I was a tractor driver, I didn't have to make wedges...so I used to play pinochle and play stud poker...that's about the pastime you had...well, there wasn't very much time, anyway. Well, you get back to camp it was dark...and then you ate.

R2: You had to wash up every...wash and comb and be neat when you went to the cook camp...and you had to go into your...and when a new man came, you had to wait until everybody was and then you were assigned a plate...and that was your plate, you didn't go any place else.

I: What was this again if a green guy...

He stood near the door, there, and see that everyone was seated before he sat. Then "Cooky" would show him, then, where he could eat.

I: What was this again if a green guy went to the wrong place?

R1: Well, he got evicted...he got evicted.

I: By the shirt collar?

R1: Oh, yeah.

The guy whose plate it was...it used to be...I remember that Matt Laho or it was Walt Laho...he used to be a "cooky" at our camp and then there was some new guys came...they went into a table a little ahead, and he only hollered that, "Siat (? oman karsinan?)" the pigs into each his own pen...every pig get in his own pen.

I've only seen once when a man was evicted.

That meant that guy that was in the wrong place get out of that table and wait until all the crew was in there and be assigned to another place.

I: But the chuck was good, eh?

Oh, that food was good, oh! Well, if you didn't have good grub, you didn't have nobody working there, let's face it.

I: Did the camps get a reputation for having good or bad food?

Yup...they had no trouble getting hands...no trouble.

I: Were there some places, though, that didn't have the best chuck? Can you remember any of them?

No, I don't remember any that were...well, let's say it'd be difficult to remember any specific camp that was noted for it, but I heard rumors that there was up in the Huron Mountains some camps that they couldn't get men, that's rumors again.

I: But that word spread quickly through the lumberjacks?

Oh, it spread like wildfire...they couldn't get nobody then, no.

We used to go...my brothers and us kids years ago...we'd walk all the way down to the old homestead there in (??)...and oh, we used to like...like Saturday, we could go in the afternoon and then come back with Dad and then when they came back...and this cook, we could eat all the baloney and that we wanted and boy, that was good...coffee and pies...and all that...and the cook would bring us all...well, we were the owner's kids, not that we never realized it that time, but we enjoyed it really much when we could eat up there, but then now that I been thinking about it, heck, we were the owner's kids, and the cook made sure that we got good food.

I: Although from what I've heard from the cooks in general, they were good to any kids that were around.

R1: Yeah, well, you didn't see too many of them. But one thing I'll have to say that the camp..

a transit, whether he was hired or not, he got fed and he stayed the night there...if he was not hired, he could stay the night there...the next morning he pounded the road, though.

R2: I think they gave the breakfast, too...they didn't put them hungry on the road.

I: That was an unwritten rule?

R1: That's right...they were entitled to that one day.

R2: I do remember once, I won't mention names...he was from Tapiola, that guy...and years later...it weren't long ago...he was peddling fish...and he came up our place and peddled fish...and he slept the night here...Ma said, "Well, I don't know..."...yeah, he wanted to sleep one night at the camp up there, they wouldn't let him sleep...and he said he was so mad that if he had a gun, he would have shot the guy...they had to leave in the night time so then...we had lights...and they had come in up our place and asked if we could keep them...they weren't allowed to stay a night at the camp...and Ma...we had a big family and we had a lot of times four teachers (before years ??.....) we haven't got so much bedrooms but we had bedding...so we made room...pallets...so they slept the night here...I don't know how many was there and they slept the night, there, and they fed...Ma always fed...and I still...anyone come in here during...when I'm eating...regardless of what time it is...they come in and they haven't had a meal, I'll feed them...sometimes it's not good, but I'll share it.

I: There were a lot of customs like that. I recall, in some of my interviews, of men telling me about camps they had in the woods, hunting camps, and they would leave them unlocked, and years ago people would come in, make themselves at home, eat, clean up the place, wash the dishes, maybe chop a little wood, so that the next guy that came along would have things a little better or just as good.

R1: Oh, yeah...our hunting shack up there on the Sturgeon, we always had food, there...we had a note on the table, tacked near the table, where they could go under the floorboards and take out canned goods, what we had, and a note would be put, the name and the note on there, "thanks for the food, spent the night here", yeah, it was written down right on that...like a log.

I: Would there be reimbursement?

R1: No, no...well, how could he...he ain't going to make a special trip to bring that, there...it's just a good gesture...he thanked for it...we didn't even expect him to bring that food back...it wasn't much, just some subsistence, that it was...maybe a can of pork and beans or something like that...you couldn't have bread, just a can of pork and beans.

I: Well, that'd go good to a hungry man, wouldn't it?

R1: Oh, yeah...well, we had only once that they signed the log, there...stayed the night there, had some lunch there...you couldn't have no potatoes, couldn't have no...something in a can, that's all.

I: I also heard in the course of my interviews...and it was kind of in conjunction...a guy was talking about this borrowing section I have in the survey...mentioned that years ago when people would borrow something...if it were a tool, they would sharpen it up and oil it, and it would always come back better than it went out...and that then there seemed to be this great respect for property.

R2: That was before, but not anymore...that day has long gone...but I still...if I borrow somebody else's tool, it has to be as good or better condition when I bring it back...I still want that.

I: Were you taught that?

R1: In a way...you followed the practices of your parents.

Yes, I was...in a way...you followed that...I guess it was more or less pounded in your head.

Well, there was little exceptions to that...if your neighbor borrowed tools from you and brought them back in bad shape, you did the same back, though...you know, if you borrow a saw and it comes back with a kink in it, that saw is almost worthless...and they don't say nothing...well, you're going to borrow something from them, sometimes...and misfortune happens that you can't return it in the same condition as you borrowed it...well, you don't say nothing, neither...then when he mentions it, then you mention it, see...it becomes a topic of discussion right there...why did I do this and why did you do that...then the thing is ironed out...and that usually settles the case...but at the time, one broke that rule.

I: A slight historical question now somewhat related to cooperation...everyone has said years ago there was a lot more of it. Everybody has said that I should have been here 15 years ago. What has changed? I'm sure that in filling this out you've thought (about these ?) years ago.

Well, I think prosperity has hit.

R1: Well, I'll use another word--the need. You don't need outside help anymore like you used to...you have everything like that.

You see, your parents were collecting junk...and by the time you are...you've been collecting...well, like I'm 50 years old, I've been collecting for over 30 years...30 plus my parents...well, you have quite a bit of stuff like that...you really don't need to go and...you don't really need.

R1: No, there's no need anymore for that...you got machinery nowadays...that one man does, say, four, five man's work...where before one man, he just couldn't compete in the need...we'll say harvest and other chores like buildings, etc...well, with machinery you got today, everyone is capable of doing that...one man can do four man's work now.

R2: And like buildings, they're all built already by our parents...all we've had to get done. these fellows that are living here, most of them is only upkeep...it's upkeep.

That's right...but when they had to build them, see...well, you had to have help in the buildings...and probably needed some help in land tillage...you had only one horse, you borrowed a horse from the neighbor, or the neighbor come and offered the horse...and harvesting, the same thing...you pooled because of need...well, the same thing now, you don't need, you don't need the pooling, anymore...it's not needed.

Well, like the first binder they bought was...my dad, Uncle Joel and Andrew, they bought it together...in order to get the money there were three of them got together and bought it...they needed a binder so they bought it...three of them owned it.

I: That would bind the grain together so you could tie it?

Right...it was a binder, was a harvester for grain...and then when threshing would come, well, they needed a big crew, each one from house, they'd get one or two guys, when they were there, when grain was being threshed up there, well, you returned the favor.

And I was the only man paid

I: You ran one of these?

Oh, yeah...company thresher...company thresherman.

I: Who were the guys...in the Froberg area?

No, right here.

They had a company, the (Limestone Mountain Threshing Company?)

I: And where did that circulate?

Right here. It went up to Clayco...Sutinens and Turpeinens and Kyllonens.

I: How far this way toward Horoscope?

This way went up to Makelas...that's where it ended.

Turunens owned a share in that.

That's how far I threshed in Pelkie--Turunen's.

I: All that way with the Limestone Company?

Yeah, yeah...it went all down that road, the Pappen road...and then the Klemetti road... and this road all the way through.

I: Who was in that company?

R1: They were shareholders...I couldn't remember just about everyone, but...

I: (You were there?)..see if you can.

All right, we'll start from the Clayco country...now there was Henry Turpeinen and Sutin and Mike Kempainen...and then we'll have to skip, then, 'cause there was no one in between. Waisanen's...I never threshed at Waisanen's...they had their own...they were members but I never threshed there...then coming down, I never threshed at Matt Maki's, never threshed there...then coming down...once, I think I threshed at Esko's...and then we came to Matt Kempainen's and Lauri Kinnunen...then we came to Joel's...and then we came your place (Emil Kempainen's)...then went Henry's, Koskis and Makelas...then I usually turned around and came down...and took Mutkalas, Rosbergs, Hakalam, Honkanens, Andrew Kempainens and from there I backtracked and I take Hiltunen, Klemettis, and once I was to...he was not a member...Ed Harkonen...he was not a member, but I threshed there...and I threshed at Ellola's and he was not a member...and I backtracked from there and I went down that road, then...then I was at Jolgrens, they were members...Kokkos were members...Tauriainens, I threshed there...then Andrew Maki was a member...Lytikainen was a member...then was (Quincy) Antti...then across the road was John Maki...Marshall, that was Mollanen at that time... then from there I scooted over to Turpeinens...and Honkala...and who was that Honkala's neighbor...another Maki, Joe Maki's...(Quincy?) Antti...so that was this area.

I: You went through that in one fall...one day at a place, generally?

No, there was sometimes two day...I was over here two days one time...and not because of any breakdown, either...you had lot of grain that year.

I: Ever less than one day at one place?

Oh, yeah, oh yeah...see, there was the drought years was just going away when I threshed. some houses I'd be done in about three hours...three hours.

I: What years were these now, again?

R1: During the drought years... '31, '32, '33...

The grasshopper years...I don't know what the year it was, but the grasshoppers just went in and ...the nice grain...they just eat everything.

The height of the grasshopper year was, I think, was 1934... '33, '34, '35 were bad for grasshoppers...and dry...drought...that was the time Aura fires was on...

And that's when this here fire went through...over the old homesteads, that fire.

I: Oh, right up here at Charlie Waisanen's and also the old Pelto homestead?

R1: The grain was so light the bucket on the threshing machine was set to tip at 16 pounds... it overflowed because there was no weight there due to drought...

I: No moisture content in the grain?

(Side A of Tape II)

I: So that grain was so light?

So light that I'd have to set the weight...instead of dumping at 16 pounds, I had to dump at 11 and 12 pounds...and then the last year I threshed, it come only about half a bucket and it'd tip at 16 pounds...see, each house had to pay per bushel of threshing.

I: What was the rate?

Do you remember, I don't recall...2 cents?

Well, it was setting...so much...setting was...

Well, that was different, but if you had over 100 bushels, you could get a 100 bushels for your set...that was \$2.50, yeah...but later on it was \$5...when I drove the tractor in and set up the machine, it was first \$2.50, then it was \$5. But they could get a 100 bushels of threshing for that set price...they called that a set when you set up the machinery...anything over that, then, I think it was 2 cents a bushel.

I: I see, a flat rate for the set price and then...

R2: I think it was different oats...everyone was a different price.

They did have a rye...rye was more expensive but the rest was the same...the rye 'cause you threshed a lot of straw and you got very few bushels, so the company would go in the hole on rye...but all the rest were the same, yeah...and the company never did make money on rye...actually it was just a service...and peas were not threshed by the bushel...by the hour...hayseed by the hour.

I: What were the rates there by the hour?

I think it was \$2.50 an hour, I think it was...now that I wouldn't be 100 percent accurate on that...but peas was on the hour...and the hayseed was by the hour.

I: How much did those machines cost about in those days?

I think the last thresher was \$700.

R1: I think it was \$700 or \$750.

I: And how much were the shares?

R1: I think it'd be \$10, wouldn't it?

Yeah, and see, the first threshing company they bought...they didn't have enough shares...and what was there, anyway...some had to buy more shares and then, others wouldn't buy...

so then some bought...they had to buy so many to get it paid up.

Yeah, I know Hiltunen and your dad was in on that.

And Waisanen and, I think, Joel, and Andrew Kemppainen...and they had to fork over the rest of the money to pay off that...and so then when they had the meeting, they said, "A vote, a share"...that was voted.

But that's when a lot of them skipped out of there, though...they didn't think that was fair, see...well, we'll say...your dad had, say, 10 votes...Hiltunen had 10 votes...well, Joel had 10 votes...why, you had a corner of 30 votes...well, you could just about run the meeting.

I: At that point it became like a corporation, much different from a co-op...the more shares, the more say.

That was not a true, co-operative method, see...but this was to protect the one that put the most money in it...so it was a vote, a share.

Yeah, there was Waisanena, Dad...

I know Hiltunen was in it, too.

Dad was there, I know...because it was always voted who gets the job of thresher...and then when they had a meeting, they'd bring it up, well, you were...Lauri Kemppainen was one.

I was three years, thresherman.

Lauri Kemppainen was, Art Waisanen was...and I know Honkanen was once a helper, you had a helper, too, there, sometimes...

I: Was that considered a good job? Thresher?

R1: Not really.

I: Was it a one-man or two-men operation?

Well, sometimes...I was the last year alone. The first two years I was on, I had Eino Harkonen...big guy...and then I couldn't see having him there, see...so then I said next year I don't need a helper...I'll go alone...well, he didn't like that...but I did not need...well, what did I need to do with that man...I had to do all the set-up, I had to do everything myself...why have that man.

(?? wages)?

No, the company made a lot of money that last year I was in there, you see.

R2: Well, I know they had...some of them were mad because one would have one share...it took six guys...six shareholders there to...then one guy would tell it...I think six shares or was it seven shares was the most each one had.

I: There was a limit?

R2: No, the need. I don't care how much they had to pay out...the others would not donate or so their share...put in money to...they say we're not going to put there.

R1: See, this was like a mutual company...do you understand the difference between mutual?

R2: So, then, see, these...there was quite a few...Dad was one of them...and I know Waisanen's...

I think Sutinens were in on that, too.

Yeah, there was only a few...then they divided what had to be paid and they gave each a share. So then, if I'm not mistaken, was it six or seven shares was the most...I know Dad had what there was...and then there was some they wanted to get in on it and in order to get in, you had to get in the good terms with the big shareholders.

I: Because they had the vote whether or not you could come in?

Yeah, well, we'll say that the territory was limited or the amount of threshing a machine could do...well, all right, you don't want to take another man that's 10 miles out of the way, he'd be a liability in their assets...you wouldn't want to go maybe 10 miles out there 'cause he wanted to join the company...and I can understand that...they were thinking of their own grain, you know...they didn't want too many in there.

I: And so you needed it in a small area because the grain had to be threshed within a short period of time?

That's right...so they didn't want to expand too big of an area...the need wasn't there.

I: You have to thresh when it's dry, right...and just like you make hay when the sun shines, you thresh your butt off when the sun shines and you get as much done as you can, right?

If the company's too big, one machine can not handle it.

I: What was about the limit in those days (?in numbering ?)

R1: Well, when I counted it, that's it.

I: You could not handle more?

R1: No, then you start going into the rainy season in the fall.

I: Could it even have been a little smaller in those days? Was that pushing it?

No, this was just right...if it was smaller, well, then you'd have a machine not working. This was just about right...you worked just about all you could handle.

I: When did you generally start threshing?

Right away when the grain was ready.

Yeah...when they're all (whining?) for the first threshing. Now there was a ruling on that...the ruling on that went this way. We'll say that we started in the Clayco country first...we ended up at Matt Hiltunen's or Eilola's last. Then the next year it started there first, and ended there last.

I: So the guys who had the most shares didn't always (get the first one?)

No, it didn't make any difference...it's where they ended last last year, they got it first the next year.

I: (? Half back?)

R1: Right...you reverse the, let's say, the journey.

I: Each person, then, would pay according to the set fee and the increments for the numbers of bushels over?

R1: Yeah, over a hundred.

I: He paid to the company and what would be done with that money?

That went to paying the wages of the thresherman, the fuel, the oil, maintenance costs, breakdown cost, and then the money went into the company fund.

I: What would happen with the company fund?

There was so little left over...that you might say...if I remember right, the last year I threshed I think they had \$180 cash left over, the last year I threshed...somewhere in that area.

Well, then, I think that if they had money I guess the next year they dropped the threshing price.

No, it was not a profit business.

It was just to pay the expenses.

I: And what about for non-members, was it your decision?

I did thresh...it was not my decision. When I threshed...I think it was Eilola was not a member...I had to get permission from Joel who was the president.

But they had the meeting once up here at the summer kitchen...and they brought it up to that non-members, are they going to vote to allow...well, then they were decided at the meeting, if they had time and it was on the way...then it was O.K. but they were not going to go any place else.

I: Generally members first...did the others pay a little higher rate?

R1: No, it was the same set and so much a bushel...but when I was on, I had to ask Joel...he was the president...and I asked Joel when I threshed Eilola...I asked Joel whether it'd be all right if I threshed Eilola...and I think Joel come to see your dad on that.

Dad was the treasurer.

Yeah, I think he come to see your dad 'cause Joel then gave me permission, I could thresh 'cause it was a small set...and I threshed there.

Dad was the treasurer...who was the secretary?

(Eirilanti?)

Oh, I think they all of them had to agree.

R1: No, Joel's word was all I needed.

R2: Yeah, but I mean it was...Joel probably went and seen the other guys.

R1: Well, he went just to see your dad, that's what I...'cause I was waiting when he walked here and I was at Joel's all the while...and he walked here and got permission from your dad that it was all right to thresh that one house...now do you know that there was another house there that wanted the threshing machine and I didn't go there...'cause I didn't have permission...Riipis...I couldn't go to Riipis.

I: How come you didn't get permission? Couldn't permission be given?

R1: Well, let's say the season more or less justifies that...we'll say the season is on the beginning end...we have shareholders waiting for the threshing machine...a non-shareholder is

taking up the time so they didn't want to jeopardize their fortune against their fortune... I didn't go to Riipi's...I didn't get there for one time.

I: There were other threshing companies...there was one in Pelkie.

Yeah, the Pine Creek

I: I thought it was called the Pelkie Threshing Company. There was also one in Pine Creek.

Never knew of the Pelkie Threshing Company, never knew of it.

Ei Pelto had a thresher.

That was his own machine...no company.

Tulikangas had a thresher.

I: There was one out in Hamar.

That was Tulikangas...that was private, see?

I: There was a Bohmier, too, who did it around the Grist Mill area. But they all ran about the same way as did this one?

There was one in Nisula, too...Klo...

R1: There was another one, too...Varline...Varline was a private outfit that went threshing.

I: Did the private outfits charge about the same price or did they try to undercut?

R1: No, it was about the same...about the same. Ei Pelto traveled all over, though...he was all over...Keweenaw Bay and...and he threshed around Baraga, there...see, Varline, they quit it.

R2: Turunen had a thresher, too...Andrew.

That wasn't really a big money-making operation, was it? The machine cost so much and the expenses...

No, it was not as such...and so cheap, that bushel.

I: And the farmers didn't have that much money to pay, right?

And then they didn't have big acreages, that's where you make the money.

I: Well, tell me a little about it. What was it like? From what I hear, that was really something.

That was a big deal...that was a big deal, that harvest.

I: You tell me about it. What was it like?

Well, I can tell you I ate chicken for two weeks straight, every doggone bloody meal. That's the best meal you can give a man is a chicken dinner and I ate chicken till I was so sick and tired I didn't want to see a chicken.

I: You ate good in those days, didn't you?

I ate high on the hog, let's say it.

Well, everything was the best in threshing days.

You'd come dirty...they had white linen on the tables...the table was loaded so it was sagging...coffee every ten minutes, fifteen minutes...they'd hold the cup, you know, come for coffee...running in and out for coffee...that was a big event.

I: That was something for the women, too. I heard that they would start cooking way ahead of time to be prepared for this.

R1: But they all cooked the best in the house--chicken.

R2: That was the prime...if you had a chicken dinner, that was the best.

R1: The best...and I was sick of chicken...I couldn't stand...and then I went to Makela's. I didn't get chicken, you know what I got there...stew, beef stew, I enjoyed it, beef stew. Chicken? Every house!

I: I understand that the kids really thought that was something.

Oh, yeah, you had to shoo the kids from the belt...that was my job...see that the kids don't go in the belt.

I: That was driving the tractor...it was a tractor-driven thing?

Oh, yeah...they liked to fool around the belts.

I: Stick sticks in there?

No, get their nose too close...and pretty soon maybe have a hand in there...Oh, I used to shoo them kids away, you know.

I: I heard that the kids would stand out and watch dad and watch that straw pile (??)?

Yeah, and that blowing thin, you know...blow the straw out there, you know.

I: Then someone was stacking it in a pile, right?

R1: No, they'd let 'er go.

R2: Well some...we had a storage...

Well, there, yeah...your dad was always out there...why...how come Denia wasn't there?

I was too small.

Yeah, they used to blow it into a building.

I: The kids would be able to stay home from school on that day (and the neighbor kids)?

Well, no, not always...if you were big enough to change sacks, that was your job...same thing with bags...see, the thresher would dump and you had so many (cats?) I think it was, and how many dumps...

R1: Well, they used to put three and four dumps (??) that was pretty (packed in?) full.

R2: Sometimes, we'd fill the bag right full so that when a guy...(big guy?...then got a (??) for that...then sometimes we'd carry them and then other times we'd use the horse...jump...sometimes you'd have to be running.

R1: You bet, especially when you had to put upstairs of the granary.

Oh, boy, I know...we had to run like the dickens with the...there was three guys carrying the grain and you got to be running.

Oh, when the grain was good I'll tell you that thing used to produce...thump, thump, thump, you know...the biggest set I had was 1,200 or 1,300 bushels at one set...that was Sutinen's, that was the biggest set I had...and the longest set I had was for Turunen...I threshed for three days, straight...all hayseed...boy, did he get the alfalfa...you know, alfalfa, it's a technique to know to thresh alfalfa...it's that the seed is inside of a pod like a ram's horn, it's crooked...and you had to set it so you'd run it two times through...and you couldn't feed it heavy...and the concaves I had to shut it so tight that it grind it...the hay came through ground...and then I pass it through two times...but look at the price you got for hayseed, you know...and alfalfa...boy, did he get a lot of alfalfa...I think it was, must be around 2 or 3,000 pounds...that's the longest set I had...and with threshing back of that Pelkie School, there...there was no school them days, yet...we threshed there.. noon time we'd go up to the house, there, to eat...and then come back...coffee was brought in big urns over there, yeah.

I: I heard that that was one of the days that the woman of the house would shine...that was when her reputation...

I think they tried to outdo everyone...I know up our place they had lemon meringue pie.

R1: Well, I had plenty of that, too...I don't eat lemon pie today, nope.

I: But there was this little element of competition on the part of the women?

R2: Oh, yeah, I think so...not that I could remember, but I think there was because they tried to outdo the next-door neighbor.

You know, it's a funny thing...like the other threshermen used to stay night yet at the house, but I didn't do that...I always went home, see...well, Linda would come and get me with that Model-T Ford, you know...and bring me in the morning...the first thing I'd come into the...say, I'd come into your yard in the morning...first thing I had to go in and have a cup of coffee, that was a must...then you went out there and you gassed up the equipment and the guys start pulling in...coffee again, and then you started it up.

It went till noon, then...the thresher didn't stop but you could (??).

'Cause they spelled each others on the different jobs...that man wasn't stuck so that he couldn't move from there...they'd spell each others off on different jobs...like they didn't like to feed the machine...throw it on the conveyor...well, that guy pooped out...so that was usually spelled off.

I: You said the men would work here and the thresher would go over and one guy would drop off and another guy would come on. And you said that some days the thresher would be in one place...you mentioned at the Turunen's it was three days and in other places it wouldn't have even taken a whole day...was there any grumbling ever as to how long...

Well, let's put it this way...it adjusted on itself...Turunen had his own crew...when I threshed there...it was all his own crew...see, on alfalfa it's not like grain...alfalfa, they had it already housed, you know...it was already housed...so all he had to have was three men feeding the elevator...and he had his own boy, Reino, was taking the alfalfa...and Matt wasn't doing hardly nothing...so he didn't need a crew...he had his own men.

Like out here, it was...you adjusted how much grain you had, well, if you had lot less grain than we had, well, maybe you shipped two guys there and they only shipped one...they figured it out that it balanced off.

I: Oh, according to the amount of grain...it wasn't according to the number of days or time?

No, but if the house had enough to man their own crew, nobody came there and they didn't go anywhere else, neither...then if you needed a crew, you had to hire it...like Henry, he didn't have a big enough crew...he only had two boys, I guess...Henry Turpeinen, see, he had...Ahti was too young, yet...Willard and somebody else was the only one that was home... oh, the one that's in Detroit, now.

R2: Arvo, he's dead.

R1: Yeah, Arvo and Willard were the only boys he had...and himself...that's three man...that wasn't enough...so he had to hire other men...Sutinen had their own gang...they had nobody there...and all the rest they swapped, you know...but Honkanen was in tough shape...he had one boy, just.

Alvin...he had two, Arnold and Alvin...Arnold was gone.

Yeah, but Arnold was gone, there was only Alvin...no, Arnold wasn't gone, he was there, yeah, he was there.

I: The bees worked the same way...there weren't bees everywhere except when there was real need, right? Can you recall any bees?

Well, I can't recall, but I do remember that when they were siding this house...and they had...were putting the siding on this house and one of the first rolls, the scaffolding broke and they all came down and there was this Matt...Henry, Joel, Dad, Matt and Emil Scott were putting the roof and they all came down...and it was...now, it was about 40, 50 years later, I was working in L'Anse and there was this guy, my partner...well, I told my name was Kemppainen...and he started asking me do you know about those Kemppainens... that a dozen Kemppainens fell off the roof and some more got left out there...I said it happened up our place but there wasn't so many Kemppainens...there was five that was doing the work and they came down...and one was Emil Scott...and it happened here.

I: Why are there no longer so many bees?

Well, the need isn't there anymore.

I: The houses are built...but houses are still being built here.

Well, things have changed. It's a money problem.

Well, let's say the quality of the workmanship on building a house today, you just don't have everybody work on your house no more...but the tradesmen have changed a little bit, too...before they used to...everybody was able to work just as good as the other one...but there was not this real delicate woodwork at that time...now it's different altogether.

Well, they used to use the broadaxes.

Yeah, and your trim was not bought, you made your own trim on the house, you hand dressed it...you didn't go and buy material to buy the house, you made the material to build the house...so it's the quality of the workman now, and what you're going to do...you wouldn't want a man that don't know any carpentry to come and work on your house...he'd butcher up everything that he did, you wouldn't want that...I can't see any other reason.

I: You mentioned something about money, too.

R2: Money, I think it was that because everybody is working out now...they have to make a living...and it's nothing like before years.

R1: Yeah, they were maybe working at home, just, and now they're working out...you wouldn't want to take man from his job to come and help you out.

I: Oh, that's the problem...before they were available.

R2: They were home...they were farming, well, they had time on their hands...well, now, even if I need real help, I'll call (just a little while?)...them down...somebody...that if they're available they'll come and give me a hand.

I: That's my big thing on this survey. One of the reasons why there is less cooperation, it seems to me, is people are now working out. When you're working out, for one thing, you don't have complete control of your time...you've got to put in that eight hours. You can't stop right in the middle and say, "Oh, foreman, I've got to go and help Denia now, see you later". He'd say, "Wait a second!"

R2: You can't do it anymore...you have to be eight hours there or whatever the shift is and you stay there.

I: Another reason that I was told, and you may agree with this, is that now, if you have people working and someone gets hurt, there's a good chance that you end up with a lawsuit.

R2: That's right...let's say things have changed.

R1: Well, they've changed and they've adjusted to the time, more than anything else. The time has changed so people have adjusted to the change of the time, that's all that is, you can't change that...our horizons are further now, and our responsibilities have changed further on than what it used to be...we used to be in an area of, say, a few miles...well, our horizons are at least ten times farther than they used to be...we used to go to Pelkie maybe once a week and now we don't think nothing of going maybe once a week to town... Hancock, Houghton, maybe to Ishpeming, even...it don't mean nothing anymore...horizons have changed.

R2: Well, before if they'd go to work, most was walking distance...now they drive...and if they went to town, it was a two-day trip by train...and now they travel to work in town every day.

I: But like when these men fell off the scaffold, there was no thought at the time about lawsuit and to try to get the owner into court and milk him for what they can get.

R2: No...the only one that got hurt was my dad...the rest...the scaffolding came this way and then they fell off...nothing fell off (??)..I guess they had seen them up at Henry's... our neighbors, they seen that the guys are coming down...and they all came down.

I: But like in those days there wouldn't have thought of (??).

R2: No, they didn't believe in suing or courts.

R1: No, that was done like a slander against your own (reputation)...you know if I got hurt helping him...why, I'd be, let's say a bad man, if I sued him for it.

I: Would it have even almost been regarded as a sin?

R1: Well, let's say yes.

I: As kind of a different form of...

(Side B of Tape II)

I: We were talking about "tois kielineen".

R2: "Tois kielineen"...how to be alert...my mother...the last one...she had a old sewing machine it was all already gone and then this peddler, Singer sewing machine dealer, came to sell

and she wanted to...and we had a used sewing machine...and she wanted...was it \$15 for it... well, Ma wanted all the attachments for it that time...he said, "I'll send the attachments for you"...so then our machine all of \$5 for it...plus \$15 cash...she said, "I'll send you the attachments"...and Ma said, "That's O.K...I'll hold back \$5 out of that \$15...when I get the attachments, I'll give you the \$5." Well, when he found out that, he said, "You could have that other machine." Ma said, "That's already done...you could have it, just throw it anyplace you want, but I'll keep that \$5"...so he said, "Well, I'll go look in my car. Maybe I have all the attachments"...well, he came back and he had all the attachments so Ma gave that \$5...but if she would have given that \$15 that would have gone but she got her attachments, not that she needed them...she's never used them, like that, but she wanted all the attachments to the Singer sewing machine.

I: She was on the alert to him, though.

R2: She was right away alert...and then I said, darn it, that they may think that they're dumb... but boy, no wonder that how right away they're one step ahead of these...I would have taken a guy's word that, "I'll send them"...but she wouldn't.

I: You know "tois kielinen" means other tongue or other language. Whenever someone would come in speaking English years ago, people in the house would say to one another, "tois kielinen", and immediately they'd be on the alert because so many people at the time were swindled by these English-speaking persons and it was strangers, for the most part, that were English-speaking persons, and it was usually some sort of a peddler or a wheeler-dealer that was making his rounds through the area that they were talking about, right?

R2: Well, it seemed that there was a very lot of that swindling and stealing...and the minute that they only said "tois kielinen" they were on the alert...and the other word they said, well, "You're a crook" and I'll be darned if I'm going to be taken. That's what it amounted to...and like there when Mother said, "Well, that's O.K., when you bring the machine I'll give the rest," well...

I: Is that why to this day...that you were saying that if I started speaking Finn, Suomalainen, right away that that would really break the ice?

R2: I think so, too...I noticed...well, I travel in Canada some and you didn't have anything... and you just...like they wouldn't talk to you at all...but I was pretty sure...I was in a restaurant...that he was Finnish...see, I could understand the Finnish language and I could see the Finnish brogue...and all I did was...I was sitting in the restaurant and the guy was sitting next to me...and all I said...I didn't tell, "Are you a Finnlander?" I would say Suomalainen...are you Finnish...no...Suomalainen...an old-time Finn will not call another one Finn...he'd say Suomalainen...Suomi is really the...Suomalainen...right away that broke the ice...and he started talking.

I: Without mentioning any names now, I think I can think of a real-estate man who buys and sells land around here and does quite well. I think one of the reasons that he does so well is that he goes to these farmers who are not aware of current prices and he starts speaking to them in Suomalainen and uses that technique to pass himself off as honest and gets their land for a cheap price and then turns around and sells it for a rather high price. We need not mention any names, but do you think that that's how that particular person operates?

R2: Well, I know him personally...and he's very shrewd, and he probably offers...the old people, they don't realize the value and how the property has gone up...and when he offers, they figure, a good price so they sell...I know of some he had gone to ask to sell, that what are you doing, why don't you sell...and they said, "I'll never sell to you."

I: His reputation around here is quite shot now, I think.

R2: I don't know...I won't say...but this person...I'll never sell...well, what are you going to do with it...we're going to let it for our grandchildren...nieces and nephews...so what are you going to do. It is one of those things...

He used to peddle out here a lot...(Kenton?)...started right after the First War...they called him Armelo and he was a Mr. Shipman...Shoeman...he changed his name to Shoeman 'cause he didn't think the Finns could pronounce it right...they called him Shitman, Shitman.

I: His name was Shipman?

Shipman, Shipman...I don't know his first name...but anyway when they call him...then somebody wrote on his name S-h-i-t-man, Shitman...well, then he changed his name to Shoeman, Mr. Shoeman...and he used to come and he bought all the chickens, calves, cows, and he didn't at first have a license to peddle...peddler's license...and then (I won't mention this name) he had a store and he wanted to stop it...and he stopped it for not having a license and he had to get a license...he wasn't peddling for awhile and then he came up our way and Ma asked him how come he was stopped by that guy for peddling...and he used to buy...well, potatoes, and you name it, farm products, he'd buy it and you'd get some cash and a lot of it in barter...and he used to have a slip...like up our place even he had a slip of paper...what he sold for you...and if you owed him money it was down in there and if he had credit, it was down there and how much credit you got...and you kept it...he didn't keep it...then the next time he'd come and he'd say, well, where's that slip, and I know Ma...it was in the other cupboard...he'd come and produce that slip and there it was added on...his bookkeeping was right there. He used to stay up our place a very lots...and then he brought and Ma would say, "Bring me something good"...and like they were used to...hauling logs...and my dad...used to have these sheepskin coats...Ma said, "I want a good sheepskin coat from him." He said, "That's expensive, it'll cost about \$6.50"... "I don't care, I want a good sheepskin coat." We still got it.

I: He would mark that down and he'd go on traveling and when he ran into one...?

No, he brought it from...he had all these clothing dealers, Jews, amongst themselves...and where he got it, I don't know. But he brought it and we still got it...the neighbor bought one from the store and in one year it went...it was all shot...but this one...I think we still got it...if I looked around I think I could find it now...it has been torn.

I: But this guy was honest and he was respected?

R2: Some...I heard some say they accused him of stealing...from our place, no. He stayed up our place, in fact, the back room was his room...but he'd come...sometimes he'd come in the evenings and he'd go...he didn't ask...he came and he paid always for his room and he was very...he was a Orthodox Jew, he would not eat anything made with lard or pork...and so he'd come and buy stuff and I think most all these people, a lot of them respected this Jew... he peddled and he dealt honestly...as far as we were concerned, honestly...there is few that I heard that he deceived...they claimed he stole...and he bought in them bags but then he'd take...he wanted the good bags and then I guess Ma seen him that he took the torn ones, too...the torn ones free...and then Dad was asking where was all the rest of the bags... well, I guess he must have taken them.

I: Burlap bags?

Yeah, so much a bag...and he used to get chickens and I remember that one time he killed eleven calves right here...in fact, they would hit on the head and cut them and they were running all around and us kids were running after holding onto the calves' tails so they wouldn't go and then he just take the guts out and drop them there...and there was eleven piles of guts out there, had (hauled? them all)...I guess he gave us a dime or what he gave for us to haul the guts away...another time he...I don't know, he was in such a rush so he killed a calf up our place, he threw it...dropped the guts...and the calf was still kicking when he threw it in his pickup and away he went...he went up to Joel's, the calf was gone.

I: It ran away?

No, it was still...I think it was...or did he take the guts, I can't remember which it was,

but anyway it kicked and it dropped off the back of the truck and (left it there?)... happened to be in school and our grage on the road so then our neighbors Earl and Bonnie (??) they shipped them back out here and they were dragging along with one blood streak all the way to Joel's down the road.

I: There were a lot of peddlers that came around like that? It wasn't uncommon?

R2: Well, he was a steady...and then there was a fish peddler, Wuorus, and he used to come and peddle us fish...he had a first Model-T and he'd blow his horn.

I: How do you spell that name?

R2: W-o-u-r-o-s.

Tapiola area?

R2: No, it was in Snake River Hill...just before you (??) there's a hill and some on the right it says Wayne's Store...do you know where Wayne's Store is...down from there on the flat there's that house...he was over 90 years old when he died.

But he would peddle lake trout?

R2: Yeah, regular trout...and he'd come and well, there's everybody bought fish from him and you could always depend on him (such a day?)...and he was real fussy...lot of times he was drunk...and he used to have a tendency with the scales...he had one of these scales...and then he'd put his thumb and put a little extra on it.

I: A little extra weight?

R2: Yeah, hold it and press down on it...Ma would always watch him...for Ma he'd have to hold that...he couldn't put his thumb...when he put his thumb there, Ma said, in Finnish, "Kyllä taasen Wuorus' peukaloa punnittale"...Wuorus is weighing his thumb...that he was weighing his thumb and take it out of there...and he used to...then Ma would...was a steady customer... Ma would say what kind of a fish she wants for next time...and she wanted either yellow or red...and you couldn't sell her an old fish...nosirree, boy, she knew her fish...the way she'd...if she was even suspicious of a fish, she'd take and open up the gills...look at the gills...if it started to get light on the fish (gills)...it has to be red all the way through, no fading of the color...if it was fading, that fish was old.

I: But a lot of people bought fish from this man?

R2: Oh, yeah, just about all.

I: Do you remember his first name?

R2: No, I can't.

I: When did he come around the area?

R2: Well, he quit, was it...(??)...belonged to somebody else and they had given...when they were from old Finland...they gave bawling out for being a little drunk...so he got kind of provoked on there and he wouldn't go sell any fish for them...and then Mrs. Ruona asked, "Does Wuorus come here?" I said, "Yeah". "Well, tell him to come to Pelkie...Pelkie ladies want fish, too." So then next time he came over to sell fish, Ma said, "Mrs. Ruona and they sent greetings to you...stop in to see them, they want fish." So Wuorus said, "O ko neki emänät halua kallaa"...the Pelkie ladies want fish...so he wouldn't go there that time, but he went the following (week?)...and another time happened that this Olson was peddling fish and Ma was waiting for Wuorus come and he didn't come so she bought them...Wuorus came right after and Ma said, "Oh, my God, I just bought from Olson, I can't take any"...and then he wouldn't come, it was a long time...and Ma would see him come and she'd go with this pen

to get fish and he'd only step on the gas and go...finally he came and stopped in to sell us some fish and Ma said she'd shake your ears for not bringing fish so he laughed and Ma had gave coffee...but from then on Ma never made that mistake...when Wuorus came, regardless if she had bought fish from others she'd buy some from him just to let...she bought...and I don't think she ever missed a...because she knew if she doesn't buy once we won't get anymore. ...they went to the market and well, they'd go straight to the store to (haul?)...but then when they came back they all had time to visit.

I: That was a regular thing every time they would make a trip to Pelkie?

R2: I think they did...Mother used to stop visit (??) Turpeinen and all that...but then they were saying when the car times came they didn't have time to visit anymore.

I: They noticed that in their time? Why would that be?

R2: I don't know...that's what they were wondering that before we used to...when we went to Pelkie we had all the time in the world to visit and we were traveling with a horse and buggies and now when we travel with a car we don't have time to visit our neighbor (when we go shop?) when we go Pelkie that's all we have time...what happened, I don't know.

I: Maybe in those days you took a whole day to go to Pelkie...or a part of it...you'd say well, we're going to Pelkie today, and you'd sort of cancel off that whole day in terms of the other work you had to do.

R2: I don't know...the women used to go to the store.

I: Oh, that was the woman's job?

R2: Lot of times the woman's job...I know up our place Mother always went to the store...Dad never went.

Was he in the woods?

R2: Yeah...or then he was home, he wouldn't...well, I tell you...this is a true happening...would you believe a woman going to buy her husband glasses...eye glasses.

And he didn't have a prescription?

R2: Well, they had prescriptions but they used to buy in a drugstore...well, I tell you, up here Dad had a pair...there was (Keskiskalle?)...he used to come and peddle watches...he had glasses...he had...you name, whatever it is...he'd peddle, watches, glasses and I don't know what, trinkets...and they'd try his glasses on...well, they bought...real glasses...no prescription glasses...they didn't use glasses otherwise but to read...one time Dad was trying...he needed glasses...he was trying...and then the peddler said, "Try my glasses"...so then he said, "Well, I can see pretty good with these"...O.K. so he sold his own glasses...well, then, Ma had a pair of glasses, Dad had a pair of glasses...well, Dad had a tendency of putting the glasses with the glass on the table, like this, and it dropped it in the center where you couldn't see them...so every time Ma wanted to read, where was her glasses...Dad's head, Dad was reading...Ma would say, "Again you got my glasses...get your own glasses"...well, Dad said, "Well, you got time...when you go town, go get me a pair of glasses"...so we went to town there, and Ma went to the drugstore and seen...there was a whole bunch of different kind of glasses...well, Ma went to where the men's glasses were, the woman's glasses were in a different room...so then the girl clerk came and, "Those are men's glasses, they're not woman's...see, here are the woman's glasses"...Ma said, "That's all right. I'm buying glasses for my husband"...and she bought glasses for my dad...then the clerk started laughing...that's the first time they ever seen somebody else go buy glasses.

I: Would your mother take eggs and butter in to town and exchange them for the groceries?

R2: To Pelkie, yeah.

I: Generally the women did that, right?

R2: Most of them.

I: They made the butter because the men were usually working in the field or in the woods?

R2: Yeah, the men weren't lazy...they figured that's a woman's job...and the woman used to take care of...before, olden times, they used to take care of the cows and all that.

I: Women ran the farm, the operation here?

Woman ran the household, put it that way...most of them...up here the law was from Ma.

I: The finances of the household, too?

She (had?) everything.

I: That's generally the way it was here, too, right? The women ran the finances?

Yeah, that's the way it is...I think that was the only time that druggist ever sold glasses for somebody else...I thought that was pretty good, too, that she bought the glasses for Dad...see, they both had same...

I: Kind of vision, right?

R2: Yeah, in fact, Dad saw better with my mother's glasses than his own...so he had always to wear Mother's glasses on his head.

I: ...the groceries and doing the shopping even years ago?

Yeah, they used to...the only one that was...my uncle Joel's wife...well, Joel used to...but outside of the others, most of them they went.

I: I just had some idea that years ago Pelkie was just strictly a logging town and there were just men hauling logs and there was never a woman around there.

That I can't remember...I was a little kid...that time, I didn't go Pelkie, but when I was enough to be a chauffeur for Ma at Pelkie, I took her shopping...

I: And the women would be raising the big families, doing the barn work? What about the kids, what kind of chores did they have to do, then?

R2: Well, some had to haul in the wood...some had to pump the water...some, the older ones, they had to milk...the youngest ones had to carry wood...and then (??)....(ain't got no hardwood?).

I: How old were the kids before they went into the barn, generally?

I started milking when I was seven years old...got to get the cows...we had to go...there were free because there was no pastures...they were all free...we used to always (up there?) because you could have the cows on the road...there was no cars there then...and we'd leave them out there for pasture...but then I remember years ago...around '35, that's when they became law that you had to have the cows in the pasture...that had to be.

That must have been quite a job in those days to find the cows, sometimes?

You bet they were...and when they sent you to get the cows, you'd better get them home. because there were no excuses.

I: The hazel switch?

I don't know...I never did get it...I always brought the cows home...well, if you didn't find them, you went again...you knew darned well you had to...

I: Tell Elaine about that hazel switch.

Oh, well, if you were naughty, you had to go get your own switch.

I had to get my own switch before. Didn't you ever have to get your own switch?

I: No, I would usually go home and they were already with the belt...didn't have a chance.

Where were you born?

I2: Asheville, North Carolina.

Oh...well, we had hazelnut...there was a first-year growth, it'd be about that long and probably about that thick at the stem.

I: You mean at the stem it was almost 1/2 inch in diameter?

R2: No, (??)...it was about that long...like one shoot...you could see that it had started half way down...buds were...and there weren't any leaves...and that's what we had to get...and that was really flexible...and you got that...you didn't get it on your clothes on...strictly (down?).

I: In the woodshed?

R2: Yeah.

I: And if you didn't get the right switch the first time...

R2: You got a licking for that, too.

I: You had to go back and get another one and that had to pass inspection, and you got a licking for not getting a good one, right?

You got another spanking...we made sure...that we got the right one (??)

I: What kinds of things would you get a whipping for?

R2: Well, I got a licking for swearing, smoking was another one...if we were naughty and disobedient...all I remember is when I was a little child, I was climbing the ladders...and the first step...I don't know how high it was, but I had a hard time getting...I got on the first step and I lost my balance and fell...and I must have swore pretty much...I must have heard somebody swearing so I let out a few choice words and Ma was...had the window open (..) are you swearing like that...(??)...well, most of the time there was always a switch right in the corner of the...there was a nail...

I: Right on the corner of the door?

R2: Yeah, there handy.

I: Did she come out with switch in hand?

R2: Yes, she came and I got a paddling...(??) pants down...I sure don't want you to swear again...and I didn't...(I was a pretty young man and I didn't swear?)...I still don't most of the time swear.

I: And when you were smoking?

R2: Well, I went...first time with my brother Lealie...we smoked behind the woodshed and I think

we smoked (cedar boughs?)...I smoked that, I came in...my mother took us down into the woodshed and gave us a tanning...one had to watch while the other one got it...and you couldn't say anything...if you said anything or cried or that you got a licking for that, too...you had to watch while the other one...well, then, we got a pretty good one that time and Ma said, "Remember now (??)...that the next time you smoke it'll be twice as hard." So, I don't know how long I'd gone but our Uncle Joel's boys and there was Andrew Kemppainen's boys...and three other brothers! kids...we got together and we were up... Joel's boys...and Dad had Peerless, he had a big can of Peerless...so they took some Peerless from Dad and we took some catalogues from the toilet and we went into the woods... and we scouted around...I was one of the scouts and I was looking...the rest of the crew was hiding behind the stumps and there was this balsam...we were watching...we went around in a circle and they said nobody can see me there so went there and smoked Peerless there. I remember we came, walked in...I don't know where...Ma was watching from here...and we walked in...and no sooner we got in...I don't think we got farther than right there...a couple steps...and down in the woodshed we went...and we got it...first we got...I can't remember what switches we got but we got stripped...we went down to the original...summer-time we only had overalls...shirt and overalls, no stockings, no shoes... (down came the pants?).....and I remember now the third time (??)..

I: And you never did again?

R2: Well, I used to (??) Ma said, "I don't care"...well, I said that that doesn't bother, that I won't (see them?) for weeks...and after Ma died, they asked me, "You don't smoke?"...I said I don't want to wake up Ma from the grave...well, I didn't hear that...we never did get (slap?)...Ma said...she only said...when told you had a job to do, you do it...there was no second chance...it was a snap of the fingers and you knew darned well that there was no...double-time, run...and if you didn't, you got a licking...

I: On the spot...they don't do that today, though.

R2: I remember years ago there was a...we had a whole bunch of visitors...and we were playing in the yard...and I don't know what we were playing...(??) Ma hollered.... we didn't hear her...so then the visitors knew that Ma had (??) ...and wondered what's going to happen now...(so Ma didn't go for that?)...got to the door....(??) Hope you have partridges...everyone of us ran into the woodshed and we ran into the house with an armload of wood...well, in fact, I remember when people started laughing...when five of us coming in and running...they started laughing...(just like a bunch of partridges?) ...Mother made out like (other partridges are coming in...little ones to the cat?...)?