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

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Hill, Gust E.
November 9, 1974

Elma Ranta

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SUBJECT: Recollections of Gust F. Hill

SOURCE: Gust F. Hill, Age 87 - November 9, 1974

COMMENTS:

Interviewer: Elma Kanta

I: Interviewing Gust Hill of Marquette, November 9, 1974.

K: Recollections of Gust T. Hill of Marquette, Michigan. The beginning of Marquette, Michigan, was the arrival near Ripley's Rock on July 6, 1849, of a group of enterprising men from the eastern states headed by Amos Harlow having received the news of the discovery of iron ore in Negaunee in 1845. They built crude homes, the pioneer wagon trail to Negaunee and a forge, the older method of smelting the ore. Using hardwood charcoal for fuel which was baked in stone or sawed kilns, the flat irregular-sized units of forged iron ore called booms and the operator of the forge was known as the bloomer. It is probably that an ancestor of Amelia Bloomer had acquired that occupational name like the smiths, caprenters, and so forth. At any rate, she shocked staid old Boston in 1896, riding her bicycle in public wearing the garb that now bears her family name. Forges and later blast furnaces were built in various parts of the Upper Peninsula as far flung as the mining area, Fayette and New Berry - wherever hardwood charcoal could be produced and ore transported to...in the case of Fayette, by ship. The blast furnace at Kipling near Gladstone was the first to utilize the smoke from the charcoal kilns by condensing it to a liquor and refining it to wood alcohol leaving a residue of acetate of lime and wood tar. These by-products were more profitable than the iron itself making the Kipling furnace more profitable than all its predecessors. This so enthused the owners, that they invisioned a new era of discoveries in the chemical field and planned the largest of all blast furnaces, one hundred and twenty-five tons per day, an adequate chemical plant and a research laboratory staffed by graduate chemists. This all looked very promising for Marquette as well as for the sponsors and would provide full-time jobs for upwards of three hundred men at the plant plus the materials and transportation areas. This project, however, needed a rail connection to its projected source of hard cordwood which was in Alger County. The D.S.S. & A., now Soo Line, officials tried by all means to prevent the passage of another railroad through the city as it would need to cross their tracks and inevitably in some cases be their rival. The city officials wanted the industry in Marquette, so they made a tentative deal with the furnace people to provide them a right-of-way from Holly Street to the south city limits paralleling the Lake Superior shore line. In return the furnace people would build the furnace in Marquette guaranteeing it to operate at least thirty years and not to be idled more than six months in any period. That promise was fulfilled. Marquette then had a council form a government that met in the evenings and two of the members were employees of the D.S.S. & A. When the matter was to

be voted on, the council met at 10 p.m. ostensibly because one member could not arrive sooner. All except the two D.S.S. & A. men voted in favor of the deal, so the contract was signed, the furnace and chemical plant were built and started operation in May, 1903, with promising hopes. The first derivatives of the acetate were acetone, a solvent, and acetic acid, both of which were successes for many years and spurred the owners to further action and expansion. In the making of acetic acid, a quantity of sulphuric acid was needed to disintegrate the acetate, the product resembling dry yeast. Sulphuric acid then cost \$20 a ton, so it was theorized that iron poridas, iron ore with a very high sulphur content, could be imported, the sulphur made into acid and their iron content into pig iron. This sounded logical but too much sulphur remained in the ore making the iron too brittle. The plant did operate for several years for the acid although the ore was useless waste. Then the market price of sulphuric acid was reduced making the plant unprofitable. The acetic acid venture was still profitable, so it was decided to produce anhydrous acetic acid also for which a new building was erected and expensive equipment installed. After operating a relatively short time, it became obsolete because of other new processes. Many products were experimented with even such as kidney pills and chloroform from hardwood smoke; but chemical technology was advancing so rapidly that nothing seemed stable. In 1916 at huge cost, the retort-oven method of producing charcoal was constructed and the kiln method was abandoned. But the death (?) to Pioneer No. 2 came in April, 1931, when coke-iron quality was perfected to meet all requirements. Huge stockpiles of pig iron was on hand that took several years to dispose of and probably at coke-iron prices which was cheaper. So ended the pig-iron industry in the Upper Peninsula. Pig iron refers to shape, not quality. The charcoal and chemical plant struggled on for a few hopeless years. Then an energetic young chemist from the East volunteered to put the plant on a paying basis if given full authority. The owners having no better alternative agreed, so E. T. Olson became manager. The rabbit in his hat was activated charcoal, a hardwood charcoal pulverized and baked electrically in enclosed cylinders to remove all vestiges of tar making it suitable for filtering purposes. It was used for some time by sugar refineries but again was superseded by other products and the charcoal industry finally petered down to bagging it for campers and picnickers on too small a volume for profit. So the plant now, 1974, is the habitation of bats, ghosts and memories and the bone of contention for self-appointed directors of other people's property. Several other blast furnaces have operated in and near Marquette in the past. The earliest in the city was in the area now bounded by Washington Street, Front Street, Baraga Avenue and Third Street. Grace furnace stood about where Marquette Coal Company dock now is. The Carp furnace built in 1874 stood at the mouth of Carp River. The Chocolate furnace built in 1860 was at Harvey. A forge operated in Collinsville in the area of Marquette's No. 1 Hydroelectric Plant and a blast furnace operated at Forestville so long that they cut the hardwood timber all the way to Sugarloaf Mountain. That furnace stood exactly where the south end of the County Road Bridge now rests. In the early 1920's the Jones Longear experimental furnace of peculiar design was built at the Powdermill Location consisting of a horizontal steel tube of about sixty feet in length and about seven feet in diameter lined with fire brick, open at both ends and mounted on wheel rollers so that one end was considerably higher than the other.

The ore and sawmill slabs were fed into the upper end and the shell was slowly revolved by an electric motor so calculated that when the charge reached the lower end the ore would be smelted and the fuel consumed. Natural drafts sufficed for combustion. The iron it produced was of the finest quality but only intoken quantities so it was classed as a failure. Recollections of Gust T. Hill.

- I: Now you worked for this industry and what type of work did you do and how long were you working there.
- R: I started as a pipe fitters helper on September 20th, 1908, and I left there...no, I was fired there in April, 1938. I started as a pipe fitters helper and later I did pipe fitting myself, still later I operated crane for several years and operated locomotive for about twenty-two years. That's where I was fired from.
- I: Now how many people of Finnish descent were working there at the time that you worked there?
- R: At least a half of the crew were Finns
- I: Now about, in numbers, how many of them were Finns?
- R: I'd say over a hundred...between a hundred and a hundred and fifty. They were all bunched together there.
- I: And that's one of the reasons why quite a few of the Finnish people lived in that section of Marquette.
- R: Oh yes, yes. Many came from other places like myself, I came from Chatham and many others did likewise and it was this furnace that attracted us because there was usually work for everybody.
- I: And so that was one of the largest industries in Marquette
- R: It was without question the largest.
- I: Now what types of work did the people of Finnish descent do at this industry?
- R: They did all the heavy work.
- I: They did all the heavy work.
- R: They unloaded all the cordwood from the cars into the kilns, piled it up inside the kilns and others handled the pig iron from the cast house. They were all Finns...nobody else could stand that kind of work. And various yard work, so called, common labor, and they'd do all kinds of work. Shovel snow in the wintertime and do other work loading bags of acetate and so on in the summer. And a few of us got into more specialized work, like myself; but there wasn't enough of that for everybody and most of these Finns weren't much used to the English language yet, so they couldn't do other kinds of work. They were

satisfied with the heavy work.

I: That they had a

R: That's one of our faults.

I: They had quite a bit of the heavy work in the industries around here.

R: Oh yes.

I: Now, can you recall anything about the wages?

R: Wages when I started, common laborer...

I: That was what year?

R: In 1908, was a dollar and seventy cents a day.

I: And how many hours?

R: Ah...ten hours. Shift jobs, however, so-called where you have night and day shifts, those were twelve hours each.

I: And how much did they get for twelve hours of work in 1908 then?
weren't

R: They ~~were~~ much better than the yard wages, very little better.

I: About a dollar seventy then.

R: No one on those jobs unless they were specialized skilled work got any more than a dollar ninety. All wages were small then.

I: Now they did have a job year around though

R: Yes, that was one thing about it, it was year around steady work.

I: And was it six days a week?

R: Yes, and in some cases seven days a week.

I: Day in and day out, not a Sunday off? Now, did you get vacations, paid vacations?

R: Vacations were unheard of then. We never dreamed of hearing of vacations then. That was only for office workers.

I: Now again about the people that...that so many of the Finnish people worked there. Can you recall anything else about the place? How long did it actually...you said that you left there in 1938,

R: Yes

I: But how long did the industry actually last even if it went from one stage to another?

R: Well, the plant shut down completely when...sometime in the 1940's

but I don't remember the exact year. I wasn't there anymore, so I wasn't interested.

- I: yes, and then what did they do? Did some other industry buy them out?
- R: No other industry came in there and hasn't yet, for that matter. It was sold and stayed there idle for some years and then Sam Cahodas bought it for salvage purposes and there's been a quite a squabble about that lately. So-called environmentalists want Cohodas to level everything down to ground level and plant flowers in there for them. And I can't see that no how. Many of the buildings are very sound in structure, brick buildings and some have steel frames besides. So, they're good buildings for many lifetimes if they could get any other industry to come in there and take them over; but I think that...I don't know... but I think that Sam has something like that in mind. That that's why he isn't in any hurry about tearing down those buildings. He did tear down a steel-frame buildings and wood-frame buildings and utilized the proceeds of those for other purposes or sold them, but the brick buildings, they're all still standing...not all, one brick building has been taken down too. And I can't see where it's anybody else's business to try to compel him. They're even trying by law suits to run the city now according to their own views. I agree, it would be nice enough if it was leveled down, but it doesn't hurt anybody there and it's fenced in so nobody has any business going in there although some people have broken the fence down several times. So, I'm perfectly willing, as far as I'm concerned...I look upon it as a shrine after working and putting in thirty years of my life there.
- I: Now, would you name them in order from the time that you started working there or if you can from times before, the name of the industry... how it changed.
- R: There were several names used at different times, but it's Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company that built the furnace in the first place, and the chemical plant and all that. Then there was an Iron Cliffs Company on some letterheads, but I've never heard that used around here. And I guess there was some other name that I can't recall anymore. My eighty-seven years has erased a lot of this from my memory.
- I: Oh, your memory is very good. Now they had Cliff Dow then, when did they have the name Cliff Dow?
- R: That's when Dow Chemical Company bought an interest in it. That was while they were still operating the charcoal industry. I would say about 1940.
- I: And then Cliff Dow stayed in until about when?
- R: I don't remember...sometime in the 1940's, but I don't remember. About 1945 or so, something like that.
- I: And then what name did they take after that?
- R: That was Cliffs Dow then after Dow bought an interest in it from the Cleveland Cliffs.

- I: And that's when they were making the charcoal for outdoor fireplaces and so on.
- R: Yeah
- I: And then people from other sections of the United States would find it in their stores made in Marquette. Now what year did they quit making the charcoal for fireplaces and outdoor fireplaces?
- R: Well, that's the last thing that shut down, but I can't remember. It's in the 1940's...probably about 1945, somewhere in there; but I'm not sure about that.

Now, in the history of Marquette, do you recall anything about the section where the Marquette Tourist Park is now?

- R: There was a powder mill located there owned by the E. I. DuPont Powder Company.

Was it there in 1908 when you..

- R: It was there and it was still operating in 1908 when I came; but it didn't operate very long after that...a few years. They had several explosions there and at one time in one explosion the whole building was shattered and six men died in that explosion. They had had explosions before that where a smaller number of men had lost their lives, so it was a very dangerous place to work in; and very few people cared to work there. I haven't heard of any Kinns having worked there at all

- I: But they made powder, gun powder? Is that what they made?

- R: Dynamite

- I: Dynamite...so they didn't exist very many years after you came to Marquette.

- R: No

- I: And so it became the Tourist Park. Do you remember in that section they had a Marquette County Fair Grounds...do you remember anything about that? About going to the fair?

- R: Marquette County Fair Grounds stood where...that area now belongs to the Northern Michigan College...University rather. Still college to me. Northern Michigan University, the west end of that used to be the fair grounds; and there's Marquette City and County...I don't know that they had any fair grounds elsewhere at that time. They used to have their Marquette Fair there. Earlier the first Marquette Fair Grounds was north of Fair Avenue. That's where Fair Avenue gets its name where the Palestra was taken down from, that was the Marquette Fair Grounds.

Oh, where the Northern Michigan university football field is

- R: Football field is now, yes.

- I: And the new athletic building is going up.
- K: But later, that seems to have gotten too small for them for some reason for some purposes. So then they acquired this old farm along Night Street and had that for many years.
- I: Do you recall anything special from the Fair Grounds or were you interested in going each year?
- K: Well, everybody had to go to the fair in the fall, I like others. Later it became so common place that I quit going; and they'd give little prizes for the largest vegetables and flowers and the best cattle and so on, that were judged to be the best.
- I: And the Finnish people took their things there.
- K: The Finns didn't seem to be so much into it, a few took some of their products there and more than anything else, the Finnish women took their biscuits over there and sometime they got prizes for them too; but the men, they didn't seem to be so interested. They had nothing to show for themselves.
- I: But the women would bring some of their handicrafts
- K: Yes they did too, come to think of it
- I: Their knitting, crocheting and so on.
- K: Yes, and I guess there was more of that work going on then than there is nowadays. So nowadays women are seeking better jobs than needlework
- I: But everyone felt at that time that they had to go at least one day to the fair.
- K: Oh yes, yeah, had to see what was there
- I: And see their friends when they'd walk around and so on
- K:
- I: Now, Finnish people are always interested in fishing and what about fishing in the Marquette area?
- K: Oh, a few individuals had personal nets that they fished for their own use, but there were no Finnish commercial fishermen. But there were a number of Swedish fishermen. I remember shortly after I started to drive locomotive, they were looking for a fireman for the locomotive and they didn't want to pay a man's wages, they wanted to pay a little less, so they asked a young fellow that was working there in the wintertime, a young Swede. He was then probably about seventeen years old or something like that. They asked him if he wanted to fire the switch engine. He says, "Naw, that isn't money enough for me... I'm going fishing." And he did and later when he grew up...grew older I should say and was able to, he bought a fish boat and nets and went into commercial fishing and he probably ten times as much as he

would have firing the locomotive. But most of the fishermen were Swedes or Norweigians and so far as I know there haven't been very many Norweigians here, but there have been a number of Swedes and they almost had a monopoly on the fishing. They used to have...there was as many as two steam tugs working out of Marquette and several gasoline launches... good-sized boats...and they would go way out as much as ten miles from here to set their nets and they used to catch a lot of fish and they shipped them away to other places, Chicago and other large cities, what they couldn't sell in Marquette. And they didn't care much about selling in Marquette. It seems they got better prices down below than they did here. They had competition here where down below they didn't have it, so that accounts for it. But the fishing industry...now at that time, by the way, there was a fellow, Frank Johnson, he had a net that he used to catch so many herring that he peddled them around for a penny a piece.

I: Was Frank Johnson Finnish?

R: Yeah, Frank Johnson, he was Finnish. He sold them for a penny a piece.

I: What was Frank Johnson's regular work?

R: He handled pig iron...took the pig iron out of the cast house and trucked it out to the loading docks...very husky man.

I: So he was someone that had worked there from the turn of the century at that time.

R: I guess he started with the furnace to begin with.

I: So he was there in 1908 when you went to work.

R: He had been there for a number of years and he had built his own home by that time and lived in it. And there were some other Finns had nets too, but I didn't see anyone going house to house peddling those like he did. He was pretty well off in the end too, so maybe it paid off.

I: He had been a hard worker...

R: Hard work at the furnace...

I: And these ten and twelve hour days and maybe he could stretch his pennies pretty well.

R: Yeah, oh yes, he was known for that. Later he bought a farm, some old farm at Skandia and that's where he died eventually. One of his daughters is still living there, I believe.

I: Now, were the Finnish people anxious to buy their own homes or build their own homes after they came into Marquette?

R: They were, as soon as they got enough money to make the down payment on it, they mostly they tried to acquire a home of their own. The company, ClevelandCliffs Iron Company, had fifteen houses...duplex houses. In other words, room for thirty employees; but that was no where near enough

for all the men that worked at the furnace, so many rented homes elsewhere and the rents were considerably higher than they were in the company houses; so many tried to acquire their own homes as soon as they could, I myself amongst others. I had worked there four years and by that time I had saved a little bit, so it was enough for a down payment anyway and I had a house built on Presque Isle Avenue and I lived in it until my first wife died and my second wife had a home of her own, so she wanted to live in that one. It was a more modern and nicer home, and we rented my home out for some little time and later I sold it. I had such a run of bad tenants, that I got disgusted with them and I sold the place too cheap.

I: But some of the Finnish people lived in what they called "company homes" that Cliff Dow had.

R: Company houses...the furnace had...Cleveland Cliffs owned the houses and rented them out, six dollars a month for a one-family side of the house.

I: Now these homes, then, how many rooms did they have in them?

R: Five rooms

I: Five rooms...was there a basement?

R: No basement

I: Was it furnace heated?

R: No furnace...oh, no one had furnaces. Even those that owned their own homes. We used to use a base burner or coal stove. A base burner is probably a foreign language to you now. It's a stove that you poured the hard coal in through the top...opened the cover and poured the coal in through the top into a reservoir and from there it was automatically fed into the fire as fast as it burned; and it had isen glass on the doors which allowed a good deal of heat to radiate from the stove and you could also see the fire at all times while it was going. And all you had to do was pour a bucket of coal in there once a day and take the ashes out from the bottom. So it was pertnear like a furnace and you could heattwo rooms nicely with it. And the kitchen stove used to have to heat the other two. One was cold.

I: Well, I really don't know much about it. I was born into a house with a furnace and an electric stove. Now, could you tell me something about this...about what year did you get a furnace into your house that you had built in 1912.

R: It was 1917 when we got the furnace in and thehouse was built in 1912

I: So, how did you heat it before that...before 1917?

R: With this base burner...coal stove. We hadit in the dining room with a register right over it so that one bedroom would heat upstairs with it very nicely and kept us quite comfortable and the kitchen stove heated the kitchen and thehallway. There was no artificial heat in the living

room, but there was an archway from the dining room into the living room which allowed enough warm air to circulate around.

I: You said that you had gotten your furnace in 1917, what type of a furnace was this then?

R: Warm air...we used to call it hot air.

I: So you had either the hot water or the hot air, was that it?

R: Yeah

I: What type of fuel did you use?

R: Wood...hard wood blocks at first, but they could burn coal in it as well. What kind of coal was that that we used to burn now...I forget. It was a coal that was a cross between hard and soft coal but I don't remember what the trade name for it was...so long since I've used any. Can't think of it. But you could burn any kind...you could even burn soft coal in it, but that was too dirty. It'd form regular strings of soot would hang in the smoke pipe and you'd have to clean it out every now and then, so most people burned either hard coal or this other coal, whatever it was which didn't smoke so much and didn't produce the strings of soot in the smoke pipe and the chimney.

I: Someone else that talked about it on the tape told me that they had used what was called pochantis (?) coal.

R: That's it, that's it yeah.

I: That they used about an egg-sized pochantis coal.

R: Yeah, there were three sizes, pea coal and nut coal and egg coal, and all the same thing except for size. This pea coal was used mostly in stokers where ram would force either a screw or a ram would force the coal into the furnace while nut coal was used in these base burners. It was about the size of walnuts, that's where it got its name. And that would automatically feed down as fast as it would burn. And egg coal was usually shoveled into a larger furnace with a scoop.

I: Now, was it about 1917 or about that time that most of the Finnish people that had homes tried to get central heating?

R: Well, Frank Johnson and Matt Luuimag and a few others at what we used to call the swamp, had their own homes then when I came to Marquette in 1908; but others began to acquire them shortly after that. Each one reached the point where they thought they could afford it, and hardly anybody could afford to pay the full price for a home right away, but they'd buy them on the installment plan and I only had a few hundred dollars saved by the time we started buying our home; but my creditors were good and trusted me until I got it...gradually paid it. Took me, oh about three years more to pay the balance of it; but homes didn't cost then what they do now either.

I: But you didn't get the wages then either.

R: No, no we didn't get the wages either

I: And many of the people built their own homes did they not?

R: Well, I didn't build my own except I built the foundation myself; but the house, the carpenter work, I had a carpenter to do that. I could hire a carpenter then for the same rate I was getting operating crane then. So, it didn't pay me to build it myself to begin with and I didn't know how.

I: And there were quite a few Finnish people that were carpenters.

R: Yes

I: Did you have a Finnish carpenter make your house?

R: There were some Finnish carpenters here at the time.

So most of the Finnish people had their own homes and so on.

R: Yeah

Now I was talking to someone from Negaunee and someone from Ishpeming and they said that they could have cows within city limits for quite awhile.

R: They had what?

I: Cows

R: Cows...we had cows and the last one we got was in 1923. We had it for about three years, so it was 1926 when we got rid of ours; and the cow barn...and later we got chickens in the barn...both the cow barn and chicken fencing is still standing.

I: Now, was there any law within Marquette that you could not have a cow? When did that come in?

R: We didn't have any such law but we did have a dog catcher and he also impounded cows that strayed into the city. I know I had to go and buy my cow out of the city pound at one time...cost two dollars to get the cow out of there and the pound master was Tim Hurley. You probably remember the name.

I: No

R: He lived on Fourth Street somewhere inbetween Crescent and Frostbit on the east side of Fourth Street. That's where the city pound was. They'd impound the dogs and the cows that strayed into people's yards and very few people in town had fences around, but on the outskirts of town, cows were so prevalent then that we all had fences around our lots.

I: Now, could you at that time, have a cow any place within the city of Marquette?

There was no restriction that I know of except that when the cows wandered into other people's yards, then they would report it to the police and the police would come and lead the cow into the pound and we had to pay to get them out of there.

I: Now, where did you bring your cow for the day then...when you took them out of your barn?

R: Out west of...in the area where the high school is now, west of town. Hansen was the name of the farmer. He had about eighty acres of land there at that time. It extended all the way to Right Street and we paid him...later then...it was too much bother then looking for your cow all over town, so later we hired Frank Johnson's son, the oldest boy...he was then about thirteen, we hired him and we all paid him a dollar a month and he took about thirty cows every morning out to Hansen's farm and in the evening he brought them back home; and so that was kind of a cheap way of getting our milk then, in the summer it was. In the winter, of course, we had to feed the cow in the barn.

I: Where did you get enough grass?

R: On the farm, on Hansen's farm, there was enough grass there.

I: But in the wintertime in your own barn?

Oh, the hay?

Yes, that's right.

Oh there were dealers here in town that handled hay. There were a lot of horses then in town too. Well, when I came to Marquette there were only three cars in Marquette and all of the hauling and delivery was done by horses and so there were many dealers that handled hay. There was (?) handled all kinds of feed in south Marquette and Spear handled the feed and hay and some other groceries did. They'd have a large shed in the backyard of their store.

I: When they brought your groceries they'd bring your hay too?

R: Yeah...yeah! When the Co-op was built...started, I don't remember what year that was, somewhere around 1916 I believe, they built a huge storage shed in the back of the store and that was sold later when the Co-op kind of petered out there for awhile...we sold that storage house because we didn't need it anymore. We didn't buy stuff in such large quantities that we had to store it elsewhere. So that building was torn down then.

I: So in North Marquette quite a few of the people had cows...oh World War I time?

R: I believe there were about thirty people had cows. I think this Johnson boy had thirty cows that he was taking out...most people only had one cow. That's all we ever had at one time.

I: Did you milk it or did your wife?

R: My wife did most of the milking. I did milk it some of the time if she wasn't feeling well; but my wife did the milking.

I: Did you have a name for your cow?

R: I don't recall that there were any names.

I: But it's kind of hard to believe that during World War I time, they could have cows walk down the streets of Marquette.

R: Well, it happened.

I: Now, you spoke slightly of the Co-op and the Co-operative movement. What could you tell me about the Co-operative movement in Marquette since 1908?

R: Well, it started not very long after that. I don't remember the year it started, but I would think it was around 1910 or so. They bought out Kooivisto, Matt Kooivisto, he had a store nearly across the street from the post office on the south side of Washington Street. The Co-op bought his store and they operated from there for a few years. And the Finnish people, they were kind of great for going into that kind of a thing. They figured that the store owners, store keepers were robbing them and they could do better by having their own store. Sort of a socialistic movement in effect if not in theory; and so quite a few Finns pitched in right away and bought stock in it. I didn't for a long time; but later then when the Co-op store was moved out north, it was on the corner of Center Street and Presque Isle Avenue. They bought out a Jew there, Abraham Rind...they bought him out and enlarged the place a good deal and had quite a business there. They had...most of the Finns bought shares in it and I didn't for quite awhile and then they kept pressing me into it too and I learned later then after I got in, what the reason was. There was nobody there that spoke English to speak of. What English they spoke was broken and none of them could write letters, English letters, you know, and that was why they wanted me in there. So, I was dumb and I went and the first thing they made me a Secretary and I held that job for quite a few years. And later I got disgusted and left it and quite; but then a fellow named Dan Rowan...he used to be an insurance agent so you probably remember the name...he was tricked into buying a few shares and they made him the Secretary which was better.

I: But was the co-operative movement very successful in Marquette as it was in many other areas?

R: I wouldn't say it was at all. It drew a lot of dissention. A few that had a hand in operating it and in working there and so on, they were blamed for helping themselves which I don't know if they did or didn't and it's none of my business. But there were some of the best of friends became the bitterest of enemies through that movement. So, on the whole, I don't think it that it really amounted to anything as far as that goes. The only thing about it was that out there in north Marquette we had a store close to where all the biggest concentrations

of rinns lived so it was a neighborhood store and it had that advantage. And as far as saving anything in the purchase of goods, I don't know that there was any saving to speak of. But it seemed to flourish for a little while to the point where they could have...put in a creamery and they had a milk delivery system then which they had two drivers delivering milk. They had that much business and the farmers from as far away as Skandia, yes and even farther, I guess they got milk from as far as Sundell, because later my youngest boy...younger boy, he was picking up milk from Sundell and the road from there all the way to Marquette then. That dairy business probably did as good or better than the store did; but margin of profit was down so low that I don't think that it really helped much to have that Co-Op there. They're still operating as far as that goes; but nobody's getting anything out of it. I had shares in it for forty years and I never got a cent of rebate.

I: That there was a certain segment that worked in it, it was not as successful as the Co-op movement was in many other areas.

K: I don't know. I was secretary for quite awhile there, several years, and that way I was in contact with accounting department enough, but I never found anything that I could discredit. I never found any shortages that amounted to anything, so the only way they could have lost anything was that the manager and the clerks could have taken some stuff to their homes that we knew nothing about; but as far as showing up on the figures was concerned, it never showed up. One of the managers, the last manager, and by the way, he's there again now...he went away from here for many years but now he's back there again...he was short quite a bit...I forget how much it was now...it was a matter of a few hundred dollars that he was short on one six-month period, and we checked over his accounts and couldn't find a thing wrong with the accounts, they tallied. So, we figured then that the only way that could have happened was that he took a lot of merchandise out for himself that was never booked and so we passed a ruling then that...I was on the Board at the time too...we passed a ruling then that none of the employees including the manager was allowed to take anything out of the store by themselves. The manager had to buy the stuff from the clerk in the store and the clerk had to buy the stuff from the manager. But he lived upstairs of the store and he had a key to the store and he could have been in, up and down a hundred times for all we knew.

I: So you feel that the Co-operative movement was not a success in Marquette.

K: It was not a success and never had been. No one has ever got any dividends on their investment. That's what we bought stock for.

I: Yes, and the general idea of the cooperative movement...it really worked that it was just a handy store in the north Marquette area.

K: Just a handy neighborhood store, that's all it amounted to.

I: That's too bad

K: And people had what they thought was a satisfaction of buying from their own store. To me, it doesn't mean a thing.

I: Now, I want to thank you for all the information that you have given me on this particular...

R: They're only my opinions.

That's what we want; but I want to thank you for them.

you are very welcome.

That was Gust Hill of Marquette and/is ^{this} Elma Ranta, interviewer