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

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<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
Oldest Alumni of Tech	1	
Describes Tech	1	
Mining Operations	2	
Jobs	2,9	
No. 5 Tamarack Shaft	3	
Saftey hazards	3	
One-man drill	3	
Copper Strike	3,11	
How Names got changed	4	
Nationalities get along	4	
Mining Captains mainly Cornish descent	4,9	
Benefits given to Communities from Mines	5	
Personal History	5	
Company furnished Hospitalization and Doctors.	5	
World War I and the Mining Industry	6	
Hobbies and Spare time	6	
Lenght of Work Days	7	
Transportation	7	
First Automobile - 1914	7	
Politics	8	
Mines aid Education	8	
Religion	9	
Saloons	9	
Depression	9	
Life Accomplishments	9	
Geological Work	10	
Mines closed - could no longer negotiatel	10	
Tourism - Copper Country's Future	11	
Life Today for Mr. Hohl	11	
Tech's Change and Growth	12	

7/18/72

by first needed
Art: I think it's a real honor to talk to one of the oldest alumni of Michigan Tech.

One of the oldest!

Yes, you are just about the oldest, ~~and~~ I wonder if you could describe something of your first few days at Michigan Tech, when you came to the Copper Country from, I believe, ~~it was~~ Ohio, isn't that correct?

Chas. Yes

Art: What was it like to be a freshman at Tech in ~~when was it, in~~ 1898?

Chas. '98. ^{Yes} Ya. I didn't give much thought to being a freshman, I merely wanted to get going on my college work.

~~And, as I understand, you,~~ How old were you at that time?

18 years.

18. And what type of program did you enroll in?

I wanted to take up mining engineering. ~~And it~~ was largely because a class, former classmate of mine in Ohio had described Michigan Tech, ~~and his~~ description was very interesting and induced me to come to Houghton.

Recalling that first year, how did your progress go? ~~Did you, the class work went well and~~

Chas. Well, I was solely determined not to fail in any single subject that first year, ^[yo] that I didn't do anything but my college work. I didn't take part in any outside activities and confined ^{myself} entirely to college work.

Art: At that time were all the students of Tech, men?

Chas. Yes

Art: ~~Did you,~~ In those early years, did you work at all with a mining company as part of your summer work?

Chas. I didn't understand that.

Art: ~~Did you,~~ Were you ever employed by one of the local mining companies as part of your training or as a summer job?

Chas. No. For summer jobs I did work for Michigan College of Mines as it was then known; I instructed in surveying.

Art: As part of that work and part of your classwork

Chas. Yes

Art: ~~did you,~~ Did you go into the mines at that time?

Chas. Yes. At that time the freshmen students had periodic trips, like classes had periodic trips into various mines, oh, probably half-dozen mines, ~~and~~ that was the first time I had ever been underground.

Art: Can you remember the first time you went underground?

Chas. Yes

What was it like?

Chas. Oh, not what I had expected, ^{My} ~~it was~~ first trip ^[at] was the Atlantic Mine near Houghton, and they had some enormous oaken stokes underground that, surprisingly, stood without caving and that impressed me.

Art: Did you visit or talk with any of the miners when you went down?

Chas. No, very little. Usually those classes are about 15 or 20, ^(After twenty) and there wasn't much opportunity to talk to any individuals.

Can you describe briefly what the mining operation was like in that mine at that time? ~~What do~~ you have any recollections of how the mining was actually taking place?

Well, it was just about what I had expected. The miners simply drilled the holes where they wanted an opening and charged the holes with explosives and blew out the rock.

As simple as that!

^{Yes}
Ya.

OK. You mentioned that following your teaching or your instruction at Tech, you went to Pittsburgh.

I went to Pittsburgh after I graduated.

Art: How long were you there?

Chas. ^{Six} 6 months.

Art: ^{Six} 6 months. That was a/short time, ^{relatively} what

It was short because of my wife's homesickness. She wanted to come back to Houghton.

Oh, I see. So when you returned ~~then~~, what type of work did you take up?

I took up general engineering work and continued general engineering work, surveying, etc., and so forth in Houghton area for several years, and I didn't get a permanent job until 1906 ~~and~~ when I came to Tamarack as chief engineer of the big ^{log} ~~log~~ plants. Big included Tamarack, Osceola, Isle Royale, Ahmeek, Seneca, ~~oh~~, there were one or two other small ones.

Art: That certainly was a very responsible position, ~~and~~ ^{In} those early days, what were some of the main concerns or problems that you faced in your work?

Chas. Well, most of them were problems in surveying. The underground surveying, for instance, ~~was~~ to prevent the openings from going on to the neighboring property.

Art: Were ~~you~~ ^{the} ~~mines~~ ^{mines} that you were in charge of, ~~were they~~ extremely deep? Were they very deep?

Oh, yes, ~~Tamarack was~~, No. 5 Tamarack Shaft was 5,008 feet deep at that time; that was a vertical shaft.

Art: So when the miners went down, they really did go down into the pit, didn't they?

Chas. Yes, they did, and the thing that impressed me most was the temperature change. The underground temperatures were practically constant and openings and increased as you went down, at about 75 feet the ground temperature remains constant the year-around here, then from that point on down, there's a constant, steady increase in temperature as you go down; the, in the Tamarack Mine, the bottom at that time was around 88 or 90 degrees temperature. That's the air temperature at that time and the rock temperature, drilling several feet into the rock and taking the temperature, the rock temperature was several degrees higher.

Art: So as the miners worked, it was quite warm for them, ~~to work~~. It was hot to work for the miners. (~~repeated question~~)

Chas. Hot, ^{yes} ~~ya~~, many of them worked without any shirt.

Art: In those early days, was mining particularly dangerous for these men?

Chas. Much more so than now. And the men then regarded it as dangerous.

What were some of the safety hazards that these men might have faced? ~~and~~ Besides heat?

Chas. Well, going back on ^{missed} ~~mythic~~ explosions, going back too soon, being caught on the delayed explosion, that was about the worst one.

~~Was there any significance to ~~that~~, I've tried to get a little background, I'm not an engineer, personally I'm not an engineer, you know, or that well versed in mining practice. But I've done a little bit of reading around the time of the copper strike, and just prior to that time, I believe, the one-man drill was instituted.~~ ^{It was}

^{Yes}
~~ya.~~

What sort of impression do you have about the one-man drill that used at that time? Was it an effective help in production?

Chas. I felt that the miners didn't act very wisely in opposing of the one-man drill. ~~They~~ Most of them probably opposed the one-man drill on the idea that it would decrease employment.

Oh, I see.

The one-man drill was very much lighter than the old drill; the old drill was heavy and required two men; the one-man drill could be operated by one man and was successfully operated.

Art: And it was used then in your mines, too?

Chas. ^{Yes}
~~ya.~~

Well, since I mentioned the strike, that's a question that I generally ask of everybody because the strike was a pretty important development in the life of the Copper Country; what recollections do you have of the strike? Is there anything in particular that stands out in your mind about it?

Only that it was a very unreasonable thing. ~~That~~^T there should have been some other way of settling it.

As you look back on the way things happened, do you have any idea about what should have been done? How could it have been ~~settled~~^{settled}, ~~to~~

Well, ~~that~~^P probably a committee of miners working ^(with) ~~with~~ some representatives of the company, to make changes wherever necessary or desirable.

Art: In other words, ~~with~~ arbitration or mediation, ~~of~~

Chas. ^{Yes} ~~Yes~~. ~~that~~ It was very unreasonable for the miners to continue with no change.

Art: Do you have any recollections of the mining employees themselves? They were kind of a mixed group, in terms of nationalities, weren't they?

Chas. Yes, ~~yes~~ they were. ~~One~~^{One} amusing incident was, ^{that} at that time records of the men were not kept very clearly, ~~and~~ for the many who applied for work, a new man - often times he had a very complicated name, ~~and~~ the timekeeper would say, you're name is Smith, ~~and~~ so he went under the name of Smith then. ~~And~~ that name was apparently adopted outside. (laughter)

So a lot of people had their names changed for practical reasons.

Chas. Now / that doesn't occur.

No, no. How did these different nationalities get along with each other? Did they work together fairly well?

Chas Very well

Art: Even though they spoke different languages?

Chas. ^{Yes} ~~Yes~~. They got along very nicely.

Art: Did they learn each other's language, or was it a matter, say, ^{of} the Croatian or the Finn learning English so he could manage? (repeat) ~~I said, did the Croatian and the Finn and the Swede learn English to manage or~~

Chas. They tried to as fast as they could.

Art: As they could. Were most of the, ~~I suppose they were called~~ shift bosses ^{or mining captains} weren't they?

~~Chas. Shift bosses? or mining captains.~~

Art: ~~Were they mainly~~^{of} of Cornish descent then?

Chas. Oh yes, most of them were at that time.

Art: Because ~~they had had~~ what? They had had more experience in mining, [?]

Chas. Well, they came across from Cornwall, England, ^T their parents were miners and they were anxious to continue the same line of work, they were not very anxious to learn anything else.

Art: ^{Were} ~~Did~~ the mines in which you were employed, ~~were they~~ part of C&H?

No. Not at that time, because it was an entirely separate organization

Art: Oh, I see. Did I understand that C&H had ~~different~~ different programs for their workers like they had a gymnasium, I believe, they had company houses,

~~Chas. company houses, ye~~

Art: Was this a practice also of the mines in which you were employed?

~~Chas. was it what?~~

~~Art:~~ Was this also done by your mines, by the company that you represented?

Chas. Oh, yes. All the companies did about the same thing in regard to renting their houses. Most of the miners ~~were~~ lived in company houses.

~~Did the~~ Do you have any recollections of your company ~~giving~~ giving land or leasing land to churches, or schools or some other ~~organizations~~ (organizations)?

Chas They were very cooperative in that respect. They would lease the land for any church or welfare organization.

Art: What was the reason for this? Was it for improvement of the community?

Because of improvement of community, ~~ye~~ ^{yes}

Art: So there was a pretty good spirit of cooperation at that point?

Chas. ~~ye~~ ^{ye}

Art: Let me turn to a little different type of question. When you were ~~in the employ~~ ^{at} at that time, you and your wife were already married, were you not? ~~That's right.~~
Where did you live?

Chas. I lived in a company house, company furnished the house and charged a very, very reasonable rent, the rent was very low.

If you ever had any kind of problem as far as illness or sickness would go, what would you do?

Chas. In my case the hospital was across the street from where I lived and the company furnished hospitalization and doctor, ~~course~~

Art: Do you remember any of those early doctors?

~~Chas. Yes, the names of them?~~

~~Art: Ye.~~

Chas. Well, there was Dr. Gregg, ~~in case~~ at Tamarack, and Dr. Lovin, and Rhodi, ~~at~~

Art: They were in the company employ then, ~~and~~

Chas. The company employed them and the company collected. When I first came with Tamarack, they collected a dollar a month per family. And that covered the physician and hospital.

That's quite a bit different than it is today, isn't it?

Chas. I should say so, and the next step was to raise the collection from \$1 to \$2 a month.

When did that take place, do you recall?

Chas. I don't recall just when that was

EvArt: Well, we talked a little bit about the copper strike. What happened during World War I to the mining industry here? Was there any significant change that you recall?

Chas. Yes, as I remember it, there were restrictions placed on freedom of employees to go about the properties. Apparently the company was afraid of damage being done. Only a few days ago I ran across a badge that I had to wear, my picture was in the badge and that was for identification purposes so that an outsider couldn't go freely about the properties.

Art: How about the production of copper? Did it increase during World War I significantly because of the war.

Yes it did, the copper became scarce and construction increased, ^{but} and how about after the war.

After the war things slowed down very much

Art: And how did people weather those hard times? What did people do when that happened, were you able to stick it out here? ~~during those~~

Chas. ~~How I'm not~~

Well, I'm interested in ^{two} things: how did that slow-down affect you personally and how did it affect other families in the area?

Chas. It didn't affect me personally because I was on a fixed salary. ~~And~~ But it did affect some foremen; some foremen were discharged, I don't know of any case of natural reduction of salary.

I'm interested in finding out where some of the people went to when they had to move from the area, because some of them were laid off, I'm assuming.

I can't tell you much about that because I didn't follow them.

How did the copper production compared with, say, the iron ranges, like the Gogebic and Menominee, ~~and~~

Chas. I don't know. I don't remember now whether they both increased at the same time, or both decreased at the same time. I don't know whether that was true or not.

Art: Let me ask you now a little different type of question, I've been talking to you pretty much about mining and your involvement in that. What did you and your wife and family do in your spare time? What were you active in? What did you do?

Chas. Well, small groups, different groups and the women used to play bridge, and the men had different things that they did; nothing very important.

Art: What personal hobbies did you have in those days? ^{Did you} Hunt and fish or were you pretty tied up in your work?

Chas. ~~When~~ When I first came to Tamarack, the hours were long so there wasn't much time

outside of working time.

When you say long hours, how many hours a day does that amount to?

Well, I worked until 6 o'clock, I remember that very clearly

And you started work about--

~~Well,~~ the men started work about 7

So that was a long day. Did you work Saturdays, too, or did you have Saturday and Sunday off?

Chas. No, I worked Saturdays. There wasn't any work on Sunday unless it was necessary.

Art: So when Sunday came along, what did you do for rest and recreation?

Chas. It's pretty hard to recall now what I did do

Maybe you mowed the lawn. (laughter)

Chas. There was no automobiles in those days.

Art: How did people get around in those days. Was there a street car?

Chas. Well, the superintendent, foremen of the mining companies were supplied with horses by the companies, horse and buggy, ~~and that horse had to have a large barn,~~ ^{they had to have a large barn to take care of the horse} when the superintendent or foreman wanted ~~had~~ had to make a trip, where he needed a horse, ~~when~~ he simply phoned the barn, and the barn man would supply him with a horse and buggy.

Art: ~~How did you yourself get about--~~ Did you ride a horse occasionally, too? ~~then or--~~

Chas. Whenever I needed a horse I got one from the company barn, and if unavailable at the company barn, I'd get one over at the livery stable over ⁱⁿ town.

Art: Well, that's most interesting, it sounds like the old frontier days, you know, you had to ride a horse.

Chas. Well, I never rode a horse, I always had a buggy.

Art: I see, you rode with a buggy.

Do you remember when you got your first automobile? When did you get your first car?

Chas. In ~~1910~~ I think it was 1914. ~~And there were only about~~ ^{and} there were only about ~~one~~ a couple dozen cars in the Calumet area then. But they increased in number very rapidly after that.

Art: Was it

Chas. My first car was a Ford. ~~and~~ ^{on} incidentally that Ford, the tire pressures were 70 or 80 pounds and very hard, ~~and~~ ^{and} a tire was good for only about 4 or 5 thousand miles.

Art: How much did it cost you for a brand new tire in those days?

Chas. That I don't recall now

Art: And the roads, I suppose, were pretty rough, too, weren't they?

Chas. Very rough, ^{Yes}. ~~And~~ ^{And} the speed limit as I remember was 35 to 40 miles per hour

Looking back at a little ^{different} facet of community life, did you ever run for any political office?

Chas. No.

Art: Were you active in politics in any way?

Chas. Other than just being a Republican, no.

~~Art: I see. And~~

Chas. ✓ I was a delegate to a county convention for just one year

~~I see. Is there,~~ Do you have any recollections of local politics in those early days?

Chas. No.

Were the mining company captains pretty active in politics?

Yes, most of them were Republican,

~~and~~ ✓ Were they supervisors and in charge of some of the important positions?

Chas. Supervisors?

Art: ~~Yes~~ ✓, were they township supervisors and

Chas. The organization was not so very different from what it is now

Art: In terms of the public schools in those days, do you have any remembrances about them?
constant

Chas. Only that there was a/effort on the part--usually that was under the control of the mining companies, ~~and~~ they usually tried to do what they could to improve education. They were very good in that respect.

I'm sure part of that was through taxes, of course. The mining company provided much of the tax base for the schools, didn't it?

Yes,

Did the companies bring in school teachers?

Chas. They didn't. ~~the~~ companies didn't take much interest as long as the teachers were carefully selected and competent, the company didn't interfere.

How about the sports program of the schools? ~~Do you have any memories about that?~~

Chas. There was very little doing in that line.

~~Art: Yes, I~~

~~Chas. There was very little in that line.~~

~~Art: You mean, that there was very little sports activity?~~

~~Chas. Yes.~~

~~I see. OK.~~

~~Let me move on to a little different type of question now.~~ Do you

Re have any recollections of church life or any ministers? Do any stand out in your mind?

Chas Most of the Cornishmen were Methodist. ~~And~~ they were very strict in regard to church life, ~~they~~ usually attended church very religiously especially on Sundays

Were they pretty strict, too, about their personal behavior like smoking and drinking and that type of thing?

Yes, either very good or else very bad. (laughter Very little in-between.

I've been told that there were quite a few saloons or taverns in those early days

Yes, there were many.

Art: Was that a big problem for the community?

Chas It didn't seem to be, no. No more than at the present time.

Art: ~~What about the~~ What about some of the Finns, the Finlanders? What recollections do you have about them? Did you have any kind of contact with them?

Chas. Very little, other than was necessary in for to keep the work going.

Were there any Finns who were ~~was~~ foremen or were they mostly all ~~was~~ miners and trammers, and--

Chas. Most of the mining captains were Cornish. There were a few Finns in lower positions.

I suppose the bulk of them, then, were regular laborers, and--

Chas. Y~~e~~.

Art: ~~Q~~ I'd like to turn to a period of time that's been often called one of the hardest times in American life. What was the depression like here in the Copper Country? Do you have any recollections? Were they really as hard as they have been made out to be?

Chas. Well, I ~~don't~~ can't compare it to outside work because from 1906 on to the present time, ~~when~~ I've been connected only with the Copper Country.

Art: But, ~~I~~ was it pretty tough for the people in the Copper Country during the '30's?

Chas. ~~Tough?~~

Art. ~~Yes~~

no

Chas. Oh, /I wouldn't say that they were tough at any time.

~~Q~~ Let me ask you this ~~As~~ you look back at your life and it's been a very long and full life, what would you say has been your biggest accomplishment? What one thing or things that you've done or said, sort of stands out in your mind as very important?

Chas. Well, there hasn't been anything that really stands out very sharply, I started in Tamarack as chief engineer of the Bislaucan mines, I named some of those mines previously and I worked as a mining engineer until about ~~about 1912~~, about 1912 and from that time on I worked as a geologist. It was around 1912, little later, that Calumet & Hecla bought up these other mines and consolidated them with their own operation, ~~and~~ Of course they didn't want to maintain two engineering offices so the Bigelow office was closed, and that engineering work was taken care of by C&H office then, and

In my own case, the general manager offered me the job of organizing a geological department. Up to that time there had been no geological department, and so I spent the next 6 or 8 years getting together geological information regarding the district. And then about 1920, Calumet & Hecla instituted a very intensive geological survey of the district. They brought in 6 or 8 very high ranking geologists from Harvard University and conducted a very intensive survey, geological survey of the district for several years. That resulted in 2 of the geologists who went with the U.S. Geological Survey being assigned the duty of writing a report based on the work that was being done by Calumet & Hecla. And that report was published and was a very good report.

And you cooperated on the report?

Chas. ~~I copy--yes.~~

Art: ~~No, I mean--did you work on the report too?~~

Chas. Yes

Art: ~~I see.~~

Chas. ~~I did.~~

So that's been one of your major accomplishments then that project

Chas. Yes

Did you ~~and you~~ remain as the geologist until you retired?

Chas. Yes

Were there any special problems that you encountered in the mining industry, say, in the later years?

Chas. Later years you mean?

Like say the '40's or the '50's, how did your geological work differ, say, from the '20's?

Chas. The graduate who was in charge, ~~he~~ came from Harvard, and I remember that ~~under~~ ~~and~~ when we were underground, several times he made the remark "we'll lick this thing very quickly," that is, the solution of how the copper was deposited and how we could discover those deposits of copper, and he was very certain that that would be accomplished but it was not accomplished, the end of that work came; well, it really never ended, but it went along without our knowing just how the copper came into the district and how it was deposited, why it was deposited in certain places and not elsewhere ~~and not~~ ~~elsewhere~~ where conditions seemed to be about the same.

As we trace development of the copper industry to the present time, how would you assess the present situation? Is the major reason why we're not in operation, is it due to production costs, or labor problems or lack of technology?

Chas. Labor problems. It was labor difficulties that closed the mines here at Calumet, and the local union heads, every time they got together with Company representatives, they had added new demands and finally got to the point where the company simply would ~~not~~ no longer ~~would~~ negotiate and announced that they were closing.

Art: So again we have the problem of arbitration that existed years ago, too?

Chas. ^{Yes} ~~Yes, ya.~~ The higher ~~authorities,~~ the union authorities that ~~elsewhere~~ thought that

these local authorities were taking a very unreasonable stand ^{and} opposed the local union heads in their demands, and their demands were very much greater than ~~the union~~, they demanded many things that White Pine, for instance, was not paying.

Art: ~~Like~~ what specifically, ~~now~~, what were some of these things? I don't know that much about it, that's why I'm asking.

Chas. Well, I'm not familiar with the labor end of it either. It's just what I absorbed from time to time.

Mi Art: From your vantage point, what will it take to start the mines going again? Do you think that's a possibility?

Chas. ~~The same~~ but since then ~~if~~ ^A number of things have been done to try to get them going again ^{by} new organizations but they haven't succeeded in accomplishing anything.

Art: From a geological perspective there's still copper there, right?

Chas. Oh, yes. I ~~have~~ personally ^I think there's still copper deposits in the district. But we don't know how to find them.

Art: And not only finding them; how to mine it, I suppose, in an efficient manner.

~~Well, there's~~ ^{fairly} there's some ^{weak} deposits that possibly could be mined if we had better methods.

Art: Do you think that the future of the Copper Country hinges upon the mines being re-opened, or do you see some other possibility?

Chas. It doesn't look that way; it looks as though the tourist industry is starting to replace it.

Art: Do you think that ~~is~~ the hope of the Copper Country ^{would} be tourism?

Chas. At the present time, it seems to be

Do you think that's the feeling of most of the local citizens?

Chas. I think so.

Well, that certainly would boost the economy, ^{wouldn't it}, if we could get more tourism going.

Chas. That strike was a very unreasonable thing. And it is due to very incompetent heads heading the union. And you probably realize how many of the members of the union would follow these union leaders regardless of what the demands were; they didn't do any thinking for themselves

Art: Yes, I ^{suppose} ~~suppose~~ that's been one of the major problems. Let me close with just ^{two} more questions: How does a man of 93 years of age look at life today? What are your feelings about life in general? In other words, what's your philosophy of life now? ^{if} you can put it in a few words?

Chas. Well, I'd like to live a few years more

~~Well~~; ^{evidently} you enjoy life a great deal

Chas. I do.

What type of activity are you involved in now, in your retirement years?

Chas. Well, I stay home most of the time now but I enjoy it just the same.

Art: ~~OK and then~~ finally, what sort of impressions do you have about a project such as this, to go out and talk to older persons about their memories, what type of feeling do you have about that?

~~Chas. didn't quite get the drift of that question~~

~~Oh. What is your impression about this project which seeks to go around and talk to older people about their recollections?~~

Chas. Oh Well, I don't know whether that will accomplish much or not

Art: Well, I think that's a fair assessment. We'll have to wait until it's finished before we see what we get.

Chas. Ya?

Is there anything that you can think of that maybe we should have talked about?

Chas. No, I think that covers it pretty well

Art: I think we'll close now. We covered your mining quite a bit; I didn't ask you too much about Tech. I should have asked you a little bit more. Do you still keep in contact with Tech quite a bit?

No. No I don't.

~~Art: Tech is really~~

Chas. But other graduates of Tech here in the Copper Country do keep in touch with Tech but in my case, myself, I haven't.

Art: ~~Tech has almost emerged as the~~--Tech has become almost a major industry in the area, hasn't it?

Chas. Yes, yes,

~~Art: And remarkable progress~~

Chas. ~~But~~ when I entered Tech there were only 2 buildings on the campus and both of those buildings are gone; what is on the campus now is new.

~~Art: Well, good, I think we'll~~

(end

Suomi salutes the people who make this area great

	Mother	Father
	a. <i>Bergbacker</i>	a. <i>Wan</i>
	b. <i>Ohio</i>	b.
	c.	c.

Father	
a. <i>Hohl</i>	
b. <i>Germany</i>	
c. <i>Baker not in your dog named, real state</i>	

Mother
a.
b.
c.

Charles Hohl 93
Name of person

- entered teach in 1898
without diploma
- come to teach because a
classmate was with him

Father	Mother
a. <i>Charles</i>	a.
b. <i>Instructor at Tech</i>	b. <i>Caline</i>
c. <i>3 years</i>	c.

Child
a:
b:
c.

Child
a: *Hohl*
b: *Peterson*
c: *Argueen from*

Child
a. *Walford Ben*
b.
c.

Child
a:
b:
c.

Child
a:
b:
c.