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

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Johnson, Lempi
October 2, 1974

Michael M. Loukinen

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Subject Matter: Pelkie Church History - Kyro Parish

Respondent: Lempi Johnson

Comments:

Pastors of the Parish:

David Samanen	1 year	1925 - 1926	died Jan. 12, 1927
Emil Tervo	6½ years	1927 - 1933	
Aarne Juntunen	5 years	1934 - 1939	
Arvo Korhonen	5 years	1939 - 1945	
Vilho Hanninen	2 years	1945 - 1947	
Frans Koski	6 years	1947 - 1953	
John Junttila	3 years	1954 - 1957	
Lauri Pikkusaari	6 years	1958 - 1964	
Edward Groop	6 years	1964 - 1969	
Keith Nelson	3 years	1970 - 1973	
James Peters		1974 -	

First pastors to serve are: J. K. Nikander, president of Suomi College, Otto Stadius, John Wargelin, K. Mannerkorpi, Raphael Hartman, Victor Kumsisto, Matti Pesonen, John Saarinen and Anton Korhonen.

Parsonage ready 1927.

First confirmation class confirmed August 1918: (J. K. Nikander, pastor)

Amanda Haara	Lyyli Mantila	Louis Maki
Mary Haara	Lempi Friisvall	Edward Ruuspakka
Elizabeth Harkonen	John Haro	Leonard Hakala
Esther Halonen	Eino Harkonen	Vilho Kemppainen
Milga Tervo		

- I: One of the first pastors to serve was J. K. Nikander who was president of Suomi College. Do you recall him coming out here?
- R: Yes, he's been over many times...and many of his services.
- I: Do you have any estimate of when it was that he and these other visiting pastors were coming out here? You mentioned that they came approximately once a month by train so it must have been after 1901 because the Mineral Range came through here in 1901.
- R: The congregation was organized in 1905 and this starts from that, the history of the church, January 1, 1905.
- I: You have here David Samanen started in 1925 through 1926 so you have from 1905 to roughly 1925. During that period did these visiting pastors come here?
- R: Yes...we had visiting pastors.
- I: And how long would they stay when they would come? Would they stay for a week or...

R: Oh, no it was just a weekend...would have come Saturday and then left Monday.

I: Oh, they'd come Saturday and would they have sauna?

R: Of course.

I: Where would they stay around here?

R: The church, at different members' homes...the homes of different members.

I: And you recall Nikander staying at your home?

R: Yes.

I: How old were you at the time?

R: I wasn't even born at the first when he came.

I: And Otto Stadius and John Wargelin?

R: Otto Stadius came from Mass, he was a pastor at Mass City.

I: Was he a native from the area or was he originally from Finland?

R: He was a resident pastor of Mass, he must have come from Finland.

I: And John Wargelin, Senior, of course he was from the Hancock.

R: He was from Suomi College, he came from Suomi College.

I: And Victor Kuusisto?

R: He was a pastor at Mass.

I: And Matti Pesonen?

R: He was the pastor of the Hancock congregation.

I: And John Saarinen?

R: He was a Mass pastor.

I: And Anton Korhonen?

R: The Mass pastors served the congregation from 1914 to would it be close to 1918 or something like that...or anyway Saarinen came very often from Mass.

I: What is the exact name of the church in Mass that they were affiliated with?

R: It must have been Mass Finnish Evangelical that time.

I: Yeah, it seems reasonable now that you think about it because the railroad went right to Mass so it was very convenient for them to come out here.

R: Yes, yes.

I: O. K., so these people would come out once a month...were the services always in Finnish?

R:

I: No English at the time?

R: No English till was it during Hanninen's time.

I: I see...what effect did you think this had on the church not having a pastor in residence in here all the time...was that hard for the church? In 1925 then you got your first resident pastor here...a David Samanen who was here for one year, evidently he left in 1926.

R: He passed away...he was sick about two months with cancer of the liver and he passed away in January of 1927, January 12.

I: Oh, so he wasn't here much at all then?

R: No, no.

I: Where was he from?

R: He came from Minnesota, I don't remember from....

I: Did he have a family here at the time?

R: Yes, there was a wife and two sons and a daughter and he's buried in Eben, his home town.

I: Did they live right here in the parsonage at that time?

R: No, no, the parsonage wasn't built, it was started during his time.

I: Where did they live at first?

R: They lived at Laamanen's house, where Andrew Laamanen now lives.

I: Who was living there at the time?

R: It was vacant.

I: It was a vacant house...O. K....and then...

R: And he passed away there at the home.

I: Oh, right at the home...was he here long enough to become very much involved in the church, with the church work in the community, or was he ill most of the time?

R: He was ill only two months...and he had a large parish 'cause we had six congregations...there was Askel, Tapiola, Elo, Kyrö, Nisula, Alston to serve.

I: And they didn't have automobiles at the time...

R: And poor roads, poor roads.

I: That man must have spent most of his time on the road,...

R: Could be.

I: ...now that I think of it...then we have Emil Tervo who was here for about six and a half years, he came here in 1927 and was here up to 1933 right during the latter part of the Depression...how old was Tervo?

R: He came here when he was ordained to the ministry.

I: Relatively young man then.

R:

I: About in his early 30s?

R: Around 30.

I: I forgot to ask you about how old this Samanen was.

R: He was 49 when he passed away.

I: Tervo, then, was a real young man to come into a place like this and it looks like he was here for as long as any of them. Where was he from?

R: His home is Ironwood, from Ironwood, but then he came from after ordination he came here...and he served for some time before he was married...he was single when he came.

I: Oh, he was married here?

R: No, his wife was from Iron Belt, Wisconsin, and they were married there.

I: And by now they were living in the parsonage.

R:

I: Did they have, raise a family here?

R: Yes, there was two daughters born here.

I: Now we'll start with Emil Tervo because he was here longer. What kind of parish setup was there at the time? Was this still the six-parish?

R: Yes.

I: Would you repeat again when that six-parish thing changed to the three-parish, would you have an idea of when that occurred...they didn't have a church in Askel, you say, nor in Tapiola.

R: No, the services were at the school house.

I: Do you recall now approximately when the six-parish center shifted and how it shifted?

R: No.

I: When the Alston mill closed what happened then?

R: The congregation, well, it could be that they couldn't make it so they joined with the Nisula church and the church was left for the Nisula parish and the Nisula parish sold the church then.

I: At St. Henry's?

R: The Alston church was sold to L'Anse, it was a small church.

I: What kind of duties did Emil Tervo perform? You said there was a sermon, was it now once a week? In the Kyro church?

R: No, it wasn't every week because of the many churches he couldn't be...

I: And we haven't established just how many churches were at that time.

R: Maybe it could have been just once a month even...but then they had like weekly services too sometime.

I: In the evening?

R: Evening.

I: ...there would be meetings...did he teach confirmation school?

R: Yes, yes.

I: And when did that generally start, I mean what month?

R: They did have a session after services...after a service, and then in the spring they'd have a week or two of school like steady.

I: After public school was closed?

R: Must have been...or even Easter vacation, too, if there was time at Easter.

I: Would he do this?

R: Yes, it was always up to the pastor.

I: What did the pastor's wife do at the time...the pastor's wife has always been a very important part of it all...in those days it was so far different.

R: They did direct the choir and teach in Sunday School...of course they all had young children, too, that they couldn't be too active and participate in every church affair.

- I: Incidentally, where did you go to confirmation school here...from which one of these...
- R: Anton Korhonen, he came from Mass and every time he came like in the fall he'd start after the services we had confirmation...and then the two weeks... I was confirmed then on Good Friday, 1923.
- I: Can you recall your confirmation school...describe a little about what it was like then, I'm sure it's changed so much.
- R: We were here in the church basement.
- I: How many of them...
- R: We were 15.
- I: A class of 15...do you recall any of the people in your class?
- R: I remember every one of them.
- I: Who was in it.....then in 1934 there was Aarne Juntunen who was here for five years until 1939. Where was Juntunen from?
- R: He came from the seminary, too, after ordination, and his home is from Mohawk.
- I: Oh, he was more of a local person then...where is the seminary, are there many branches...
- R: Suomi College.
- I: How old was Juntunen when he came here...about...just was he an older man or younger man?
- R: Around his 30s would think coming from school.
- I: What kind of a man was he just as a person...just a description of him, did he like fishing, hunting, was he a tall man, short man...
- R: Was rather tall, his wife was tall...the wife was from Wakefield...but as for fishing I don't know...if they had time for...
- I: I'm just asking...pastors are also persons...what kind of a man was he?
- R: I'd say a good preacher.
- I: He was a very good preacher...what do you remember about him when he was pastor, does anything stand out in your mind that...
- R: Just now all of a sudden can't think...there might have been very nice programs even...the whole parish would have picnics together or gatherings together.
- I: Did he start that?

- R: I wouldn't know, it was Reverend Arvo Korhonen who was the main...to get the parsonage park cleaned and had the picnics there...but we had picnics at our own place, at our park, before even the parsonage was done, very many picnics by the river...by the bridge.
- I: On Sunday afternoons after church?
- R: It was a whole day affair...the service was kept at the park.
- I: Oh, they don't do it like that now.
- R: And we had a stove there and made lunch.
- I: Do you recall, can you describe one of the picnics, what they used to be like when they were over there.
- R: Well, very lot of people...horses, few cars...lot of children.
- I: Yeah, they had very large families at that time as compared to now.
- R: Yes...then we had a speaker platform...put up higher where the Sunday School children would sing and give program...many of the children.
- I: This was a permanent platform that was there all the time?
- R: Well, several years.
- I: Anything else you recall about those...anything more about...what was Mrs. Juntunen like?
- R: I'm very poor at describing people.
- I: Then there was Arvo Korhonen who was here for five years, he came in 1939 to 1945. Where was Mr. Korhonen from?
- R: He came from Oulu, Wisconsin...he was an older man...he had the family already, there was four girls.
- I: What do you recall of his stay here?
- R: I think all the people liked him very much...she was a good choir director, very active, I think more active maybe because the girls even were older already that she wasn't needed at home so much, very active in church work...and then the parsonage park was fixed and the, started the annual picnics, parish picnics at the parsonage park during his time.
- I: Can you remember the first picnic if you shut your eyes and think...
- R: Well, I remember several, I don't know which was the first one.
- I: Must have been right around 1940 when this started...was it much of a job to clean up the park there?

- R: It wasn't as big, it's been smaller, it's been enlarged gradually.
- I: I've seen a picture of a wedding that was in the parsonage. Was it the custom to hold weddings outside at times?
- R: I wouldn't recall an outside wedding there...but the weddings always were at the parsonage...they've been at the parsonage since or up to something the '30 when the first wedding in the church was.
- I: Up to 1930...that means from approximately 1905 then through 1930.
- R: Or many before we...there was a regular pastor they'd go Hancock to be for the wedding, Hancock.
- I: Were any services ever held outside at the parsonage park?
- R: Yes, yes, there always was like a morning service and then afternoon program.
- I: So you followed the same pattern that you started over here on the river by your farm.
- R: Yes, yes.
- I: Is there anything else you remember about Korhonen.....then came Hanninen.
- R: Korhonen went to Trout Creek from here...Hamminen came from New York...Harlem, New York.
- I: Oh, right from Harlem, that seems like an odd place for a pastor in the Upper Peninsula to come from...he was here two years.
- R: He was before he came here he was a summer school teacher...anyway two years, two summers.
- I: Teaching in confirmation?
- R: No, summer school...that he knew the parish.
- I: How old was he about when he came...did he come straight from the seminary?
- R: No, no, he had been nine years in New York.
- I: Oh, so he was somewhat of an older man, at least he...
- R: Must have been in 40s.
- I: And this was in 1945 through 1947...as I understand it this was kind of a turning point in the history, at least from the point of language.
- R: Yes, and then when Hanninen came here our soldier boys were coming home... they put a very big homecoming or...what would you call it...welcome home for the soldier boys at our church...that was a very big affair.
- I: I imagine so!

R: Most of the boys were home already then.

I: Can you describe this affair?

R: It was a dinner and then a program...I don't remember the program too much but...

I: Did many of the boys die in service? I mean was that like a...

R:I can't remember...of the congregation.

I: I just thought there might have been a mass mourning but evidently not...how did the gradual transition of the English language start...how was it introduced?

R: Like the Luther League and confirmation and Sunday School books...they had to be gotten new ones, the English books, the confirmation...

I: The teaching of the children then was done in English?

R:

I: Prior to that time that was always in Finnish too?

R:

I: It's kind of a sudden change...were there any sermons given in English by Hanninen?

R: Oh, yes, yes.

I: Were all the sermons in English?

R: No, no, we still have some Finn today even.

I: I mean, were most of them in Finn? How did they handle the translation, that's what I'm asking.....then the shift to the English language wasn't all at once, evidently every other Sunday or so it would be in English and then the following Sunday in Finnish...did this upset the older people at the time?

R: Oh, it must have.

I: Do you recall anything, you were already an adult, how the old folks used to regard this?

R: Well, maybe many of the first settlers they were so old, many had passed away even...that it could be some of them knew some English, could understand it.

I: 'Cause I've heard from my own parents and from many others that when they hear a sermon in English they just don't get as much out of it as in Finnish because they learned their Christianity in Finnish and somehow it's not the same, something is lost.

R: It's true, it's true, and the hymns, too...the hymns meant much more, the Finnish hymns.

I: When you learned them...where did Hanninen go after this?

R: He took time...he took like a retirement or sick leave when he left from here.

I: Oh, he was ill?

R: And where did he...Ohio, I think he went to Fairport, to Ohio, for a rest period.

I: Do you recall where he went after that, have you ever heard.....I forgot to ask where all of the other pastors have gone so we'll go back to Emil Tervo. Do you recall where he went from here?

R: Eveleth, Minnesota.

I: And Juntunen?

R: I wouldn't remember.

I: And you mentioned where Korhonen went...now we're up to Frans Koski, he was here six years...again a bit longer...1947 right through the 50s to 1953...through the Korean War. Where was Frans Koski from?

R: I wouldn't remember...did he come from Calumet or...

I: He was more of a local person as you recall?

R: No, no, but that he had Calumet parish.

I: Do you recall where he was born?

R: Finland.

I: Oh, he was from Finland.

R: Yes, and he was ordained at Suomi College...he was with a Finnish Seamen's Mission in California for a long time...and then after that he came to Suomi College to take up pastor's job or study to be a pastor.

I: Evidently he was an older man, then.

R: Yes, yes.

I: Did he have a family?

R: Yes, there was one daughter...the daughter was married then to our local boy, Philip Wuori.

I: What do you recall during his stay here.....how was Frans Koski's wife during his stay here.

R: He had a younger wife than he was...and Frans Koski passed away here...he had been away already for several years but he came back to live at Jokela's house and he passed away in Pelkie, he's buried in our Pelkie cemetery.

- I: Oh, he liked it so much here he wanted to come back and live.
- R: Yes, he wanted to come back here...she's living in Marshall now.
- I: And you say in Jokela's house...is that Jokela's house in..
- R: Where Jokela's live now...Sulo.
- I: Would you recall anything kind of unique to his stay here...what he introduced
How did he handle the problem of the two languages now being introduced?
- R: We had during his time we had to have somebody from Hancock come and speak the
English language, English services.
- I: Because he spoke only Finnish?
- R: Yes...she did help...she spoke at like programs she would keep, she would speak
in English...
- I: Do you recall her name?
- R: ...she was a very good help to her...Leah Koski.
- I: Leah...do you recall Hanninen's wife's name?
- R: Martha [?] from Fairport.
- I: And Arvo Korhonen's wife's name?
- R: Mayme Mattson from Virginia, Minnesota.
- I: And Aarne Juntunen's wife's name?
- R: Miriam [?] Sissala, Wakefield.
- I: And Emil Tervo's wife's name?
- R: Bertha Lilja from Iron Belt, Wisconsin.
- I: And David Samanen's wife's name? Well, you were almost perfect there, that's
pretty good...so was this again every other week you'd get a speaker, Finnish
speaker, from Hancock?
- R: During whose time?
- I: During Koski's time.
- R: Koski spoke the Finn...we had some seminarian or somebody from Hancock maybe
once a month.
- I: Would attendance decline when these outsiders from the seminary...
- R: No, no.

I: So the older people or the persons who were older people at the time could understand enough English to get something out of that.

R:

I: Then there was John Junttila who was here for three years from 1954 to 1957... where was Junttila from.....do you recall his wife's name?

R: I cannot recall. (DH: She was Julia Walikainen from South Range.)

I: Junttila came from South Range and evidently his wife came also. About how old of a man was he when he came?

R: No, I don't think Junttila was from the seminary but can't recall from where he came. (DH: Reedley, California)

I: So he had had some previous parish and so he was probably middle-aged or older man...did he have a family?

R: Yes, there's two daughters and a son.

I: How did he handle the language or how was the language difference handled?

R: He was very good in both languages, very good...very good with both.

I: That must have helped with that particular problem...

R: Yes.

I: ...as far as integrating the church...was he handling three parishes at the time?

R: Yes, it's been three, I'm sure...19...what was it...

I: Well, he was here during 1954 and 1957.

R: Yes, it's been three already then.

I: Was it three during Hanninen's?

R: I doubt.

I: During Koski's six years? So it's somewhere in that area then...we narrowed it down...what do you recall about Junttila's days here, he was here three years.

SIDE TWO

R: He went to L'Anse, L'Anse parish.

I: And then there was Lauri Pikkusaari who was here for six years from 1958 to 1964. Where was he from?

R: He came from Copper Cliff, Canada.

I: Was he born in Canada there?

R: No, he was ordained to the ministry in Finland and he came to Canada in 1938.

I: Do you recall his wife's name?

R: Olga Pikkusaari.

I: And she was from...

R: Finland.

I: They were married then when they came here?

R: Yes.

I: Could he speak English?

R: Yes.

I: So he would handle the both of the Finnish and English sermon?

R: Not as good as the former, the one before, Junttila.

I: He had more problems in English since he was from Finland, yes.

R: Yes.

I: What do you recall about the church during his stay here?

R: Well, I think very many people liked him because of his coming from Finland, that his services were very deep and...

I: Very Finnish.

R: Very Finnish...that something brought back Finland to them.

I: That's very good...can you amplify that or expound on that...like what was it that he contributed specifically...I see what you mean by going in deeper but can you, like, give an example?

R: He liked to visit at homes very much and especially with the older people kept prayers for the older people...he was very good at this that he'd go to visit homes...and she went with him always, they'd sing and...

I: At the homes?

R: At the homes...they were very active in this kind of visit, like deaconess work.

I: That always has been a part of the pastor's job here, right?

R: Yes...and she was very active in the work of the church, too...she was a choir director, very active with the Guild...Pastor Pikkusaari is buried here in our

cemetery...he went from here to Ogema, Wisconsin, and was there only a year when he died during a heart surgery.

I: And he wanted to be buried back here?

R: Yes...their son was buried here and he's in our cemetery, too.

I: He must have developed very strong roots here while he was here, he was here six years which was generally the longest time they were here...and he got along very well with the older people.

R: Oh, yes...she is living now in Toronto, she has a daughter in Toronto, too.

I: Then there was Edward Groop...he was also here six years, a very long time... 1964 through 1970. (DH: through 1969) Where was Pastor Groop from?

He came from the seminary, too...he came from the Pacific Lutheran Seminary, California...Berkeley.

I: He was a very young man?

R: Yes.

I: And how did he deal with the language problem?

R: He liked to visit with the Finnish people and liked to learn the language but... at a few funerals he did read a few verses from the Bible in Finnish...he learned that much.

I: So he tried...

R: He tried.

I: ...to do what he could but he wasn't, shall we say, competent or fluent in Finnish, by any means.

R: No, no.

What happened to the Finnish-speaking congregation members at the time?

R: Well, that time we had and still have Reverend Halinen coming to our parish... and during Groop's time we had once a month service in each of these three churches rotating like once here, then the next time would be Nisula and then the following Elo.

I: And Halinen would carry this on...where is he from?

R: He's in Hancock...he's with the Lutheran Social Services, as pastor.

I: I mean was he born in Finland or was he born in the Copper Country?

R: He was born in Finland and ordained to the ministry in Finland.

- I: I see...and Pastor Groop's wife was the former Margaret Leinonen from Annandale, Minnesota...was she involved in participating in the work of the church?
- R: Oh, yes...and when they came here they had three sons, they had one son born here.
- I: And from here Pastor Groop went to Newberry, right?
- R:
- I: Now we'll go from specific pastors to the Guild, the Women's Guild...can you recall when this was started? It was started by Mrs. Hanninen.
- R: Pastor Hanninen's wife...more as a Mission Circle at first.
- I: And what were the activities and purposes at the time?
- R: We were to help mission fields...course most of it was for the church, too...like money that we'd help the church in money.
- I: Raise money.
- R: Held meetings once a month...we'd have Bible study and business meeting.
- I: That started, then, around 1945-46?
- R:
- I: And do you recall were there many members when it first started?
- R: I'd say around 20.
- I: Was she the, shall we call, the leader or did she preside over this.
- R: Yes, she would be like a chairman.
- I: What language was spoken in the..
- R: It was English.
- I: Has it always been English?
- R: Yes.
- I: What sorts of things do you recall doing in the Guild...I'm just trying to get an elaboration of the Guild...so the older members of the Guild or those who were there when it first started as you recall were Laina Pelto, yourself Lempi Johnson, and Esther Wuori. How has the Guild changed through the years...everything changes, it seems.
- R: Well, I think our programs are still much the same starting with prayer, Bible study and a business meeting and coffee after.

I: And they've always been generally once a month.

R: Yes, yes.

I: And now it's on the fourth Tuesday...you mentioned something about cottage services...can you describe what a cottage service is...they're held at home, you say?

R: They're held at homes...Pastor would be there...we'd sing, sing an awful lot... the home that had the service they would arrange for program, ask different people to come with program, readings, songs, duets...

I: Was this just the women of the Guild or was this everyone?

R: It was everyone, everyone, young and old, everyone.

I: Would the entire congregation come?

R: Well, anyway the location where the service would be the neighbors around there would very much attend.

I: But the entire congregation didn't come...

R: Well, not everyone, no.

I: ...because they couldn't fit. When was this started as you recall...this, how do you say it in "suomen kieli" (Finnish)?

R: Kotihartaus.

I: When was this started, during whose.....so this started off more as a Ladies' Aid Society, probably the beginnings of what afterwards turned out to be the Guild?

R: Yes, and the Ladies' Aid was started in 1915 already...and they met maybe even twice after every two weeks at first...they were quite active...and then...

I: And this started around Tervo's time here and you say this thing stopped somewhere around...

R: Would it be Junttila's or Pikku...we still had it with Pikkusaari, yes, yes... it must be when Groop...

I: When Groop came around the early 1960s or mid-1960s, around 1964 it began to stop.

R: Yes.

I: What was the purpose of it? Of doing this?

R: Would it be like for fellowship and then to help support the church, too...we had coffee and we had a free-will offering...never a collection but donation for coffee.

- I: I can see where this would really enhance fellowship by combining it more with the warmth and the visiting of the home.
- R: And for a time we had our church membership divided like eight groups and once a month one of these groups would have a program service at the church where the group, there was about seven to ten members in each group, they'd provide the program and the coffee for that evening...they were well-liked...we still miss them now.
- I: When was this started? What did you call this, was there a name for this?
- R: They were group programs...the ones at church.
- I: When was this started...about during...so this started around Arvo Korhonen's period, approximately 1937, we're not certain of the date, and when did this seem to stop or fade out of the practice of the church?
- R: I think it would be when Groop has come...and many of the program, it was quite a bit...many of the older ladies they'd read in Finn, the program was much in Finn, and then for a while it was that there was much of both...but when the younger ones then, the English-speaking ones, should have taken over I think it died with that.
- I: So this practice of what we might call the group program was very much tied to the older tradition and the Finnish language and it seems that the more adults or this was carried on more by the older people and when Groop came several things stopped...the cottage services kind of stopped and this program stopped...were the cottage services generally in Finnish also?
- R: Yes, yes.
- I: So those came to an abrupt halt probably because Groop simply couldn't handle the language.
- R: Well, I don't know, it could be that we had very many older women who were very good readers from different religious papers, periodicals...very good readers and would it be that they just got too old to give the program and the younger ones didn't like to do it, to give a program...I don't know.
- I: Why did the younger ones not seem to.
- R: I wouldn't know why we don't have it.
- I: Did they have a Luther League at that time?
- R: Yes, the Luther Leagues had their own programs, too.
- I: When did the Luther League start?
- R: Well, the very beginning of the Luther League, or it was called the Young People's Christian Association, was started already in 1914...but then the name to Luther League has been...it could be already with Emil Tervo's time that the Luther League name was taken over...and then this English even taken with it.

- I: The group program was called by the Finnish name "Ryhma Juhla"...it was quite a thing to see at the time...the older women of the church were very skilled at reading, they were very knowledgeable and they enjoyed this opportunity to witness, to show their faith...this is not done by the young people now and by several of the older members of the church it is felt that something very good and very nice and very important to the work of the church has stopped...evidently it was stopped because the older women who practiced it were simply getting too old to perform their roles in it and at the same time Pastor Groop was not familiar with the Finnish language...O. K., in this Ryhma Juhla, the literal translation of it is group festival, or group celebration. How were these groups divided or what was the basis?
- R: The congregation, like different localities.
- I: What localities were there as you recall?
- R: Well, there was Papen, Papen people, Palkie, Poplar country, and then the first Kyro group, Hamar road, Grist Mill road, Froberg.
- I: Was there a Pine Creek one or were they in Poplar country?
- R: They were with the Poplar...Pine Creek.
- I: Were there any more to your knowledge?
- R: They were more like Apostolic around that area...Pine Creek.
- I: So it was the neighborhood coming together, putting on, planning a program, and putting on the performance, if we want to call it that, the readings...
- R: Program and coffee.
- I: For the entire congregation...and this was generally held on a...
- R: Sunday evening.
- I: Can you describe the kind of program, what would be involved generally in such a program?
- R: The pastor was there of course always and if we had a choir the choir would sing.
- I: I mean what sequence of things would take place?
- R: Well, first we'd have singing, several songs, prayer, and then the different readings, whatever readings and songs, there could be musical numbers, especially of the younger...piano solos and maybe if they could play some kind of instrument, end with a prayer and song...and then the coffee.
- I: Pikkusaari had a heart condition...he had it already when he came here...and what else?