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

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Ina Karni
July 20, 1973

D. Ollila

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Father's Background	1-2	Lay Preacher
Lived in Sod House	3	
Plowing at 11 years Old	3	Good
Goes to Nursing School	4	
Finns Rediculed	5	
Lessons Learned from Church	6	
Strict Household	7	
Reading as Hobby	8-9	
Working Conditions in Mines	9	
Hard Times on the Farm	10	
Stability of Cook Community	11-12	
Political Activity	12-13	
Mixed Marriages	14	
Finnish Activities	15	
Family Sickness - Home Remedies	16-18	
Ministers Duties	20-21	
Socialism	21-22	
Mrs. Laapala	22-23	

Would you give me your name, your maiden name and your married name?

R Ina Niemi Karni

I Your national origin?

R Finnish

I Were you born in this country?

R Yes. In South Dakota

I What is your occupation?

R Housewife presently, but I nursed.

I You were a nurse? Here in the Cook Hospital?

R Yes, and then in North Dakota before that.

I How about the national origin of your husband?

R Finnish.

I Was he born in Finland?

R No, he was born in Sudan.

I Where did your parents come from in Finland

R

I When did your family arrive in this country.

R I think father came in 1899.

I Do you know any of the reasons why they came here?

R Well he told me that when he first heard about America when he was seven and he was going there because his father had died when he was two and a half. He heard that this was the ideal place to try to get work.

I Tell me a little bit about his background. Where did he go and what did he do for a living.

R Well he immigrated to _____ because all of the family had come before him. He had 3 brothers and one sister. They had already come but he was the last to immigrate with his mother and he was fifteen and a half years old. And he worked at whatever he could do that winter and then he went to Sparta and worked in the mines for one year.

I Sparta Wisconsin?

R No Minnesota. Then he went back to _____ and married and went back to South Dakota because he had a brother-in-law there who worked on the railroad. He also became a citizen of the United States on that trip. He lived there about a year and a half. In the meantime I was born and in 1905.

I You mentioned that he was also a lay preacher in Luthian group of the Heideman Church.

R Yes, he was.

I Do you know anything about him becoming a lay preacher. Did he tell you anything about how he became a minister?

R Well I think that he had been instilled in his faith through his family from the time he was a child. He was really never away from it. That's the only thing that I remember about it. I mean that he has never mentioned that he came into this consciousness later on in life after he was matured.

I Do you always remember him as a Luthian minister also?

R Yes, well I can remember him before he took the church because I'm the oldest. When he became active in the duties. It was about 1920 or 22 when he took over the church.

I Now that was the local church in Beldon North Dakota?

R Yes

I Did he also cover other areas, like a circuit preacher?

R Well very little, he used to go to Raleigh North Dakota and Rafael North Dakota but he really made no mission trips anywhere because he was a farmer and made his living farming.

I Okay we'll get back to the religion a little bit later, what about special hardships in Beldon North Dakota, do you recall any difficulties or life in Beldon or when he came to Kakato? CoKATO

R Well most of it was a hardship until we got on our feet I would say. I remember him telling us about the time when he was in Sparta and he had typhoid and he was ill from it and recovering a long time from it. That was a bad time for him. Then when he went on the homestead from South Dakota to North Dakota I imagine he had his difficulties in the early days.

I Did he build the homestead from scratch?

R Yes, I have his whole history down, I have the whole notebook of it.

I Did he start out in a sod house?

R Yes.

I That's right?

R Yes, not as such without a floor. It was a frame building but they all used sod. It was up to the windows and on the sides of the windows and it was warm in the winter. Protection against the wind and cool in the summer.

I Did your father become relatively prosperous as a farmer?

R Yes, yes he did. In fact my brother now owns the 2,000 acres. He bought father out.

I I see that's a fairly good sized farm isn't

R Yes.

I Mostly wheat?

R Mostly wheat. Barley and Oats also. Some cattle feed

I Now this is getting back to some of your personal history, this is a question that you may not be able to answer very well, but what do you consider to be the biggest accomplishment in your life?

R In my life?

I Yes.

R Plowing with two bottoms and five horses when I was 11 years old and my brothers could never plow until they were 16 years old. It was a necessity.

I Indeed it was.

R They had a John Deere day just opposite the hospital and I said I should go there.

What about your education, what schools did you attend?

R Well I always tell Mike I went through the 4th grade.

I The 4th grade, well how did you ever educate yourself to become a nurse then?

R Well actually I graduated from the 8th grade and there was no high school closer than Minot so consequently I couldn't go. We weren't so broke but there again the church was the nuisance.

I You mean opposed to education?

R No not as such but oh that was dangerous to send a young girl to Minot.

I Because you were going out into the world?

R Yes,

So how did you get your medical education?

R Well I did it after I was widowed here.

I You were a widow?

R

I You picked that up as a vocation that you had to learn because you needed a job.

R Yes. I had started nurses training but my mother was ill all the time. I just couldn't finish because I was needed to milk all those cows and all. So I had to give that up then later I became licensed by the state, in fact, in one of the first programs during the emergency during the war.

I Then you've been nursing at the Cook Hospital until it closed.

R Yes. At the old one for twenty-five years and then at the new one

I Do you have any special kinds of recollections about your teachers way back then. Fond recollections, were they good teachers, did they teach you English for example?

R Yes, but it's a strange thing, I can remember the first day of school and not knowing how to speak English. I'm sure I didn't know all of the second day but I have no recollection beyond that. I can remember sitting on the steps and we had big German fellows in school and they were grown up because there hadn't been any school. One of them said _____ and I thought they were talking about _____ and I thought well I've already learned that.

I You learned your English at school then?

R I didn't know a word of it and I was eight and a half.

I Do you remember how the nationality groups in Beldon got along with each other?

R Well that's foreign to me because I remember people talking how down traught the Finns were.

I You weren't down traught?

R No because we were such a small number and in school we were mixed, Germans and very few Finnish. In fact there was only another girl and myself the first couple of years until my sister came with me.

- I How did the Finn kids get along in Beldon?
- R Well they were average, there was none of this racial bit.
- I Well comparing Beldon and Cook and Virginia you mention down traught, do you think this is true in fact?
- R Well that's what my husbands sisters tell me that they had such a time in school.
- I Here in this area
- R In Sudan and this area. And so many people I've heard mention at the Finlandia meetings but it's all foreign to me because our area was so small. Maybe there was a closer kinship on the early days on the prarie.
- You hadto work together?
- R ies.
- I So the nationalities were pretty much equal?
- R Yes.
- I Why do you suppose the Finns were down traught, or why do you suppose the Finns were down traught, what does your husband say about this?
- R Well I don't know, but that's what his sisters tell me that they had such a bad time in school and they ridiculed.
- I I remember some of that in Ely and some of that in Virginia as well as Ishpeming. There was some putdown in terms of the Finns, the Swedes put the Finns down somewhat, and so did the Anglo Saxon types and yet I'm not so sure there was that much, there was some of it. Some of the putdown was because the Finnish involvement in radicalism. Are the Finns in this area labled as radicals?
- R Not in this area and not in large numbers. There was a nucleus^s of them when I first came here at Meadowbrooke^u and a few perhaps south of here but they were very few.
- I How about in Western Al^Ango? I've heard there were radical groups and Communist groups.
- R Well I've heard there were a few but actually this was so long ago that recently we've heard nothing.
- I This is past history then
- R Yes, it's past history.
- I So generally the Finns in this area, Cook, Virginia, and the farming areas were maybe alittle bit ahead of the game.

downtraught

- R Well later on the younger members got an education because there was an highschool in our town. Transportation and everything became easier but me being the oldest, it was the hardest for me especially in 1910.
- I Well did your father speak against the _____ and that sort of thing or a preacher should not have an education, he should preach by the spirit.
- R No. not particularly I never heard him mention that. Except in the sermons they mentioned the _____ but I don't think they meant the sermons, they meant the people in high places.
- I Do you know how much education your father had?
- R He didn't have much education. In Finland he had gone to school very little.
- A few grades and that sort of thing.
- R Yes.
- I You described him then as self educated?
- R
- I Did you recognize him as a fairly well educated man?
- R Yes, I did, but I couldn't appreciate him because the church stopped us from doing everything until I got older but it's amazing that he still tilled the fields and every Sunday the sermon was ready. He was a very eloquent speaker and his three brothers and his sister if there had been women's lib she would have outdone the four brothers.
- I Would you say you learned a great deal of wisdom from your church, that this wisdom is still a part of your life today?
- R Oh yes
- I Such as? What for example would you consider to be important in the wisdom that you've gotten from your church and parents?
- R Well I have put it to good use dealing with my fellow man everyday
- I You mean loving your fellow man and being concerned for him and that sort of thing.?
- R Yes.
- I What about the practice of personal confession? You mentioned before that you feel this was quite important and you were able to use this in your hospital work, do you feel personal confession to be important yet today?

- R Well yes, if you are troubled with things that you don't get any comfort from I think that it serves a very good purpose.
- I A person needs peace, he needs to make peace with his brother and God and so on.
- R Yes. And actually as I've mentioned before you might have wronged these parties and they are no longer available to ask their pardon you will have to do the next best thing.
- I Yes, certainly. Were there many things that you reacted against from your heritage? Let's say the strictness for example, did you react against the strictness?
- R Well yes. But it was amusing in the last few years when father visited here he said what in the diggins were we so _____ for anyways and he said I'll be darned if I know.
- I I see he had mellowed a bit.
- R Yes. A great deal.
- I Was your home strict?
- R Well yes
- I You mean you couldn't do the sort of things that other kids did like go to dances and that sort of thing?
- R No, no we couldn't. But we managed to make a getaway sometime
- I I would take it that much of the strictness or a strong sense of morality has remained with you.
- R For instance, my sisters became card sharks, but that was taboo. I don't even want to be present in the room when someone is playing cards because I'm so leary of the game that I don't know one card from another today.
- I Cards are the plaything of the devil then right
- R Yes. They sure sold that idea well but it was one of the little things
- I What kind of newspapers did you read when you were younger and what kind do you read today?
- R Well about all we had was the _____
- I Which was the midwestern paper which was the most popular newspaper.
- R

And you read the _____ faithfully I take it?

R Yes. I used to send the neighborhood news to it when I was sixteen years old.

I Is that right? Did you read an English paper when you were 16?

R No, we didn't read an English paper and this was the awful thing, mother had the firm belief that she had a right, and I didn't dare borrow a book from anybody and I was just sick because I couldn't read. I didn't dare borrow it because she thought it was her duty to throw it in the stove unless it contained scripture.

I Is that right, your mother was a very strict ~~Lusthadian~~ *Lusthadian* then?

R She was different than father. Some of the homesteaders would read the English newspapers and I had the longest neck around because they used to put the newspapers on the ceiling to keep them clean and I used to try to read the adds and things.

I What books did you read when you were young, the Bible I suppose, did you read any of Lusthadius?

R No the folks didn't use the, what is it called?

I _____

R No, we didn't even have it

I Dad's sermons came from the Bible then right?

R Yes.

I Do you read alot today in reaction to the fact that you didn't have alot of reading when you were young?

R Oh yes

I What sorts of things do you like to read now?

R Well I'll tell you my latest is Doctor Gade from Virginia, have you ever been acquainted with him?

R Oh yes. The first day they were twenty-five cents and the second day they were ten cents and I bought them all.

I You read then what the average person would read in Cook then, the local newspaper, the Mesabe Daily news then.

R Yes. I buy the newspaper once in a while.

I Is reading one of your favorites hobbies then?

- R Well yes, I try to read a certain amount every day.
- I Okay, we've talked about the jobs you've held, what about the wages here in Cook. In your earliest days when you were nursing, now that would have been right during and after the second world war.
- R Well I was working for this Doctor Hein for these private hospitals. He believed in paying very good wages. Sometimes we would work around the clock but we were paid by the hour and the wages were good. Compared to when they opened the community hospital. He was telling me they were going to start some of the aids at eighty-seven cents an hour. I didn't believe it and he didn't go along with it although he was the mayor and he said when you pay people so poorly you will have nothing but disgruntled people and that's what they've had ever since. Of course the wages are up now because the union has come in.
- Tell me something about wages and working conditions of your husband? Mike has told me that he worked in the mines and did various jobs and also helped run a store but how about the conditions in the mines in the early days in Sudan for example?
- R Well he worked in Sudan in the early days before he got drafted into the service and World War I. He worked under those conditions but fortunately not long enough because his father died when Mr. Karni was six of silicosis before the sprinkler systems in the mines. He worked two or three years in the mines and then after that he mostly worked in the stores here and in Orr. Then went out west and worked for the Veterans Administration out there.
- I Do you know if he was involved in any of the strikes? Of course he didn't work in the mines very long so he wasn't involved.
- R No, he wasn't because he there was a shortage of men and then when the war came on he was drafted when his number came up and never went into the mines again.
- I Tell me something about the depression days back in the thirties, what do you recall about the hard times?
- R Well one of the things was we moved here during the depression
- I To Cook?
- R Yes, and the man I was married to owned land here five miles from Cook It had been a family name homestead and the _____ bought it from the Pernos. We had started to move because of the drought. If the winds hadn't been so hard you could still see the drill marks at the end of July.
- I Is that the reason you moved to Cook?
- R That's the reason we moved.

R We had about a hundred head of cattle so we got ready to ship them and that's when the market just crashed on everything. Nobody believes me but we shipped a car load of cattle and we got \$103 for a car load of cattle.

I For a hundred cattle?

R Well I think it was about ninety.

I Is that right. A little over a dollar a head.

R Hundred and three dollars. We had five horses and we sold them and some of them were 5 and six years old and we sold them for \$4.00. We had one horse that was a very well trained horse and a man bought a sheep ranch and needed that kind of horse so that one we got \$25 for but that was a highly trained cattle pony that you don't have to use the reins for. The horse knows everything about herding them up.

You sold everything you had in Beldon except household goods?

R No, we got an immigrant car and there are regulations that you can have so much. So we brought two horses, 8 milk cows, and we brought the chickens and the turkeys and the farm machinery and the household goods all in that immigrant car.

I I see. This was a railroad car then?

R Yes, on the Great Northern.

I I see, then you moved to that homestead and farmed there how long?

R We moved to Cook.

I Oh yes.

R It wasn't a homestead, it had been bought

I How long did you farm the place here in Cook?

R Well we came in 27 and in 35 Mr. Hauta dropped dead so that's about all the farming. Then I lived there six and a half years before I married Mr. Karni and farmed by myself as much as it was and watered the cattle through a hole in the ice.

I Is that right.

R I always disclaim rheumatism because I used to chop the ice by hand and by the time I got through I used to have the imprint of my knees in the ice and it melted it.

I Sure. You just barely made a living there then, there never were any luxuries.

R Well I never kept any books but I have never been anywhere but on the farm. My in-laws asked me to move to Virginia but it was Depression and women weren't getting jobs in any big numbers. I was afraid to leave the farm. I thought we'd starve and we practically starved on it.

R I was reluctant to leave

I This again was during Depression times when everyone had it tough too

R It was the aftermath because it was at it's peak when we came here and then my husband had a school bus route because he had been a crippled veteran. So then we faired a little better than many people around us.

I Because you had the job

R Yes.

He wasn't on WPA then?

R No.

I Lamppi of course in this area is very famous for developing the St. Louis County school system.

R Yes.

I Which is wellknown throughout the world I believe. Did you know Lamppi?

R Yes, I helped him and I was on his campaigns

I That's right, they had to run for that

R Yes, and I learned the Finnish trend, once the Finns get tired of somebody that person has to go. I told everybody that he's not going to make it this time because that was the end.

I You mean that Lamppi was thrown out then?

R Yes, he was defeated and I knew he was going to be defeated in that second election.

I Why. Salmi followed him then?

R Yes. He had a Finnish business manager, Jack Revel but I just stayed loyal to the boss. I told Mr. Salmi I'm sorry but you're going to need people like me when it comes your next election time.

I What do you predict for the Cook area say within the next ten years, do you think Cook is here to stay, is it a stable community, will there always be people living here because of tourism and the mines nearby and so on?

R Well it's hard to say but we had a very wonderful fellow here at the bank and people were opposing the building of the hospital. He said I'm glad they did build it because it was about to die on the vine. Meaning Cook.

- I Meaning Cook was about to die on the vine?
- R Yes. He said that and stalled it for a while because it got employment.
- I Do alot of people from Cook work in the mines?
- R Yes, some of the commute from Linden Grove which is about ten miles west clear to Babbot every day.
- I The other industry in this area then is tourism
- R And still some logging but not on a large scale because it's been logged over.
- I I'd like to know a little bit about your political activities, I won't ask you about your party, but when do you recall was the first time you voted in the United States?
- R I just can't remember who I would have voted for when I became 21.
- I You started voting right away and were active in politics?
- R Yes.
- I How about local politics, you mentioned you worked with the County Superintendent to get him elected were you interested in other political doings?
- R Well I helped the Commissioners in their campaign anybody who had a good cause.
- I Who runs the local town here?
- R Well I've been urged to run for the council. I decided our old doctor was here too long and I induced a teacher who was principal at Orr to run and it was really a mistake because the boys spent all the money and it wasn't any good.
- I So you backed the wrong guy hey?
- R Well they won, and they got in.
- I So you really have kept your hands in local affairs in the community.
- R Yes, I have. When I came here I realized that the cast system, or if you were just struggling you were a Democrat. I had never noticed that and my father was a Republican from the first day he voted until the day he died but I became a Democrat.
- I Did you become kind of liberal in your politics then?
- R I don't know what you mean

- I Well for example did you feel that the New Deal was a good piece of new legislature?
- R Yes. I'll tell you why because I also have had that unfortunate experience that before the era of FDR we found ourselves penniless with no assurity for the banks. Father lost his money and I lost mine. As a result I had this girl and when my husband was killed she lost the money for her education and had to get it the hard way.
- I So you believe in the liberal kind of social legislation that helps the masses of people?
- R Yes, yes I do
- I How about being involved in medical things, do you think we ought to have a national plan of health insurance of some sort, you don't have to answer that if you don't want to.
- R No, but I'm beginning to find out that Medicare is no good
- I Medicare is no good.
- R No because it leave no protection for like my husband, if the doctor can't show any utilization after 14 days, they can stay a year if they are in body casts and somethings going to take along time but if they find they can't do much more for this manor woman they'll have to go to the nursing home and they don't pay the nursing home.
- I So you would favor a better health national insurance plan?
- R Well yes, if it could be improved.
- I What about Cook as a community, would you say Cook is a stable peaceful community with respect for law and this sort of thing? Or has Cook had the reputation as being a wild kind of community?
- R No, I don't believe it has. Except now when the Village is broke they can't afford a good marshall and the youngsters tear around but they do that everywhere else too.
- I Kids here aren't any different than kids anywhere else?
- R No. They're first introduction to automobiles is speed. They have to try that.
- I What about Finns having the reputation as being spotlighters of deers, do they still do that?
- R Yes I think they are in court more oftenthan not
- I That's the biggest crime in Cook.
- R Yes, well I've had so much experience because my sister worked in the drug and the druggist was the judge. They got such horrible fines and they needed the meat, it was really unfair.

I That's right.

R Even for netting fish.

I That's right, which a Finn does just because he's a Finn. Okay, this category has to do with social life and social change in the area. In Cook now, have there been an awful lot of mixed marriages? Finn marrying a Slovenian?

R Oh yes. I mean they don't draw the line.

I Finns don't marry Finns too much anymore.

R No.

I How do you feel about that?

R Well I think it's a fine thing.

I It doesn't bother you because they're americans and cultured too.

R Yes.

I How come there are so many saloons in this northern part of the country In Virginia it's covered and I remember in Ely we had something like 50 saloons. How do you explain the presence of saloon life in the area?

R Well I don't know because it's foreign to me because North Dakota's laws have always been different on liquor. It was dry when the rest of the states werent. It had it's own state regulations and it still does. The municipality has to have 2,000 inhabitants and they can have one license. We donthave roadside taverns, they're are no country taverns. We just don't have them because they're laws prohibit them.

I Do you think now looking back at your experience as a nurse that alcohol is perhaps the number one problem up in this area? I've heard this said by doctors in the area that alcohol is a real problem up here. Would you think that this is true?

R No, I really won't commit myself on that. Once in a while there have been accidents where some youngster perhaps having had too much beer for the first time.

I It's not any worse than anywhere else

R No. I don't think it's worse than anywhere else.

I Saloon life of course is very much a part of the iron range back in the early days where the young men for example who had no place to go they would go to the tavern and it seemed that alcohol was a problem among the Finnish immigrants but it seems that the temperence societies have done alot of work.

R Well I am conscious of the fact everybody is drinking whether in what degree and it seems that there isn't much other place to go. I know they invited the old firemen to a dinner at the Mecha and there's also a liquor place there.

R They had a live orchestra but the younger ones sat all night drinking and I said Mr. Karni danced two times but you're all too dead for us we're going.

I What did you do for activity here in Cook then?

R Well there was alot of historical activity when that was still going and when we were gathering the material for Finns in Minnesota. I helped Reverend Erkkila make the towns and solicit for adds. We had dances and different kinds of social life. It was different twenty-five years ago than it is now. All it is now is everybody drinks except those that don't want anything to do with liquor goes to the taverns.

I Being a second generation I gather you spent some of your time with Finnish organizations and some with local groups with civic groups and local groups.

R Yes.

I So you lived in both worlds?

R Yes. Then I had alot to do with the Auxiliaries of the VFW also.

I Okay, how do you feel about being a Finn then are you proud of being a Finnthen?

R Well yes and proportionately I think they have done as well as any groups of people.

I Would you describe yourself as _____?

R Yes I would.

I You would honor the Kaleva and go to the _____ and that sort of thing. This is part of your life too?

R Yes. I'm not too familiar with the Kaleva other than knowing about it, I'm not a member of the lodge.

I But Finnish activities in general, you're interested in them

R Yes, I'm interested in them

I You have very positive feelings then towards that.

R Yes

I I also gather that you have mostly positive feelings about your background in the church too.

R Yes. I think my father's biggest feat was he preached the sermon for 35 years every Sunday other than when he was away. He was never ill.

I He preached for free then?

R Yes. That was his duty to preach.

I This was a labor of love then in so many ways

R Yes. In fact the congregation was so small that they couldn't afford to pay anyone so they just did it. The man who succeeded him when he got old, he wasn't paid either.

I So in your youth it was the sermon by your father that was really the big event.

R Yes it was

How about other events when you think back in Cook like were these important as festival events?

R Yes they were but I had to even forego my best friends funeral because I was never off that nursing job, only my allotted vacation. I never had any leave of absence, just the allotted vacation. Later on in years I had a month and I went to California but when they had the festivals, the younger ones would go and the older ones with more sense they had to stay. It was something that had to be done and we couldn't close to accomodate pleasure.

I So you kept your nose to the grindstone, that's for sure.

R Yes.

I Now I have a few questions that I'm very much interested in and these have to do with medicine. I'd like you to think back to your childhood in Beldon, what did your family do when somebody became sick?

R Well as far back as I can remember we were twelve miles from a doctor and I can remember the doctor coming to the house and I wasn't six years old and that was my first acquaintance with the doctor.

I The doctors came to the homes then back in those days.

R Yes.

I Were they pretty good doctors then?

R Yes, and it's amazing the doctor who came to see my father then is alert and still going strong and he just retired from practice. He was one year older than father and he's now 92. He came to father's funeral and he said I came because I knew all the children would be here and I wanted to see you all.

I Your father just died last summer wasn't it?

R Yes. He was buried on midsummer

I Did he have a good old fashioned Lusthadian funeral then?

- R Yes, he did, actually on a very large scale. Mike was going to Finland then.
- I Yes, Mike told me about the funeral.
- R Yes, then the girls asked Mike to write the history for the paper. Before it got too old to print so he did it on the plane going down.
- I Do you recall the use of home remedies like the Finns often used, in your own home in Beldon?
- R Yes, I do very unfortunately according to today's standards. I remember we had to gargle with kerosene which contained tar and I don't know what.
- I Yes, it was just good for your right? If you had a sore throat you had to use kerosene.
- R Yes. And that pine tar, we'd put it in milk and just like taking iron vitamin. You'd belch it for weeks and all the rest of the summer we'd be belching this pine tar.
- I These were remedies that came from the old country?
- R Yes.
- I But your people also believed in regular medicine?
- R Oh yes, if we got sick we always had the doctor.
- I How about life insurance, did you have any life insurance?
- R
- I What about the practice of midwifery in Beldon, was the prevalent?
- R Yes,
- I Do you remember any of the midwives?
- R I started at 14 to learn and I assisted with those deliveries, I was an old hand at that.
- I So you were a midwife?
- R No but I was with my aunt who was Finland trained and I used to go and help her and speak the English to them.
- I That was your first taste of medicine that led you to the Cook Hospital.
- R I have a hateful recollection of one family and it was their ninth child and the man was reading the labor paper unconcerned and I just wanted to kick him.

I He figured it was the woman's business.

R Yes. Talking about the illnesses, not the remedies, children did die of diphtheria and the aftermath of whooping cough and all these contagious diseases and nobody knew anything about isolation. I used to ride the wagons with all of them and was just fortunate that I never caught it.

I What about other diseases out there?

R I have only known one person in my entire life that had TB in North Dakota.

I Is that right

R This man had been in Canada and undergone a tragic near drowning experience and he came to North Dakota to die at his aunt's place. That was like the plague, nobody dared go near there.

I It was very common in this area though.

R Yes

I Although by the time, well during the second World War there was still quite a bit of TB in this area, did you come in contact with it.

R Well not so much other people but the Indian children.

I Indian children.

R Indian children and the Indians but mostly the children.

I I remember back in the forties, especially in northern Michigan it was very common, some of the old miners would contract TB possibly because of their mining experience.

R But quite a few, when we moved here my husband told me we had neighbors and he didn't know them too well and when we moved here we hadn't kept up and we found out she had died of TB and there was no woman here then.

I By the time you started nursing was silicosis still common? In the miners?

R No, I have only one firsthand experience because my husband was called to testify at a court trial in Duluth for a fellow that worked in the same place in the mine in Sudan and he later died and they were trying to prove this case. Naturally the United States Steel was fighting it.

I So it had pretty well passed away with the new safety equipment, you mentioned the sprinkling system.

R Well that was responsible for the dust and it wasn't just dust, it was little steel dust.

I It would ruin the lungs then. So by the time you were nursing the major health problems in this area were pretty well taken care of?

- R Yes. Nothing more than the usual surgery, a sudden cesarean.
- I Okay, this section here has to do with religion and assorted things that have to do with religion and we've already touched on this quite a bit but do you belong to a local church or do you still belong to a church in Beldon?
- R No, I don't belong in Beldon but I contribute to a church that is here but it's been disbanded. I go to Virginia.
- I You still go to the Virginia Church
- R Yes.
- I That's the one on second street?
- R Yes.
- I Who are some of your favorite preachers?
- R Well there's a fellow from New York Mills and his name is Wilson.
- I Yes, I know George Wilson. There's an Oscar Wilson and a George Wilson
- R George is the one who comes from New York Mills. He comes to North Dakota. Also father has two cousins, whose names are Davidson from Kettle River.
- I Yes. I heard of the Davidson's, Ralph.
- R Yes, Ralph, came to bury father. I sometimes hear Mr. Anderson
- I Is he still preaching?
- R That's something I really don't understand.
- I Well I think he left his church and ran this radio ministry which some of the people in the Luthadian church disapproved of because it was too worldly.
- R Would you like to hear my father's version when I went home one fall, we were going to town and I said you can send a donation now and hear Mr. Anderson, over the radio. His acquaintance with the ministry was about the most hardwhip case in Finland when he said that the ministers had to attend these topics. To get a few cents to go on the preaching missions with. Now that they've made it so handy, all they have to do is talk into the mike, I'm not donating a penny. He was just a young boy but he remembered those fellows.
- I From Finland.
- R
- I That's very interesting, I've never heard of that before

R You haven't?

I

R Well they make this big pit and it has to simmer like a barbecue to get the pitch.

I They used that to seal boats and that.

R Yes, but that was his answer.

I He came out of the area that used to manufacture that pine tar then?

R Yes.

I He learned his Luthadianism then mostly in the old country?

R Oh yes, because his mother was very devout, and the entire family and he just stayed with it all the time.

I Did he ever mention any _____? Teachers, that influenced his life.

R No, not really, I really can't recall, not in Finland certainly. They just attended the state church there and everybody was baptized and went to church. I don't think it was a must but you had to support it because it was a state church in Finland.

I Most of the religious life then was the in Sela's.

R Yes

I Tell me some of the recollections you have about the church in Beldon? You mentioned your father's sermons, was _____ a big thing in your life?

R Well yes, and then father always conducted those classes in the summer

I Did you reach the _____ yourself?

R Yes.

I Then your father confirmed you?

R No, he didn't confirm me, he wasn't in the ministry when I was confirmed.

I I see he went into the ministry later then

R Yes.

I Did you have a building in Beldon?

R No

R They came to Beldon in 1911.

I What do you think of the socialist movement, having come in contact with them and knowing them and looking back on it all, in this area and Virginia, what do you think about socialists? Do you have deep feelings about this or do you look upon it as kind of a phase in Finnish life?

R Well I think the socialist could have been an ideal state except that they did away with god them later on.

I You approached them on a philisophical, theological basis then, they were materialists?

R Yes. I think all these things that they were proposing for the good of the greatest number was wrong.

I But otherwise you don't look upon them with bad feelings, there were some positive feelings in the socialist groups.

R Yes.

I Do you think they helped the Finns in America?

R I think so.

I It wasn't totally a bad thing then?

R No, I don't think so.

I Now one of the well known families in the area is the Laakala family who founded the Unitarian church in Alungo and I believe they were active in the Church in Virginia also and I understand you knew them very well. I'd like you to give me whatever information you can about them.

R Well really it is quite vague about him because he was dead before I was born but I was well acquainted with Mrs. Laapala.

I How would you characterize her as a person?

R Well it would really take alot of description, but a most unusual woman and in her service to the community through the years and under the hardship of raising a family when the husband had died so early in life. I especially knew her when she was ill the best. Because I had to go and give her a shot every day. She did have a different philosophy for living. She was the most uncomplaining, you couldn't ever tell from any of her features or looking at her until the day she just died that she was in pain. She wanted nothing for the pain. I didn't know that she had a terminal illness but he asked me to give her a permanent in the fall. I had never done it but I was testing the curl and she told me then but I didn't catch on. She said you really don't have to bake it, it will do for what I want it for.

- R I felt bad because this was in November and she died about the 2-th of December.
- I Would you characterize her as a very devout woman then?
- R Yes, I would.
- I Did her Unitarianism bother you?
- R No, it didn't.
- I You could think of her as a fellow Christian in spite of the fact that she didn't have the same doctrine as you.
- R Yes. I certainly do
- I Would you say she conducted a great spiritual work for the Finns of this area?
- R Yes, she did.