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

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Joseph Kezele
Willard Foreman
August 1, 1974

Wallace Anderson

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- I This was done August 1974 and is being done by Wallace Anderson with Probate Judge Joseph Kezelje of Mohawk and Willard Foreman the Keweenaw County Mine Inspector. We are presently at the site of the Clark Mine.
- I Willard what's a little bit about the history of this Clark Mine?
- R It was started in 1854 and went to 1910. It was operated by three different mining companies. C & H, Clark Mining Company and another mining company. But there was a fifteen year lapse inbetween there. There was 188,000 pounds of copper that came out of this mine.
- I What kind of copper was it?
- R It was stuck to it's fisher _____ It's noted for it's datolite and greenstone.
- I Well they must have had quite a haul. Where did it go to Copper Harbor?
- R I don't know where they had their mill. They could have had their mill back in there because there are more mines back in there. Then when they mined it and after they milled it they would have taken it over to Copper Harbor. They had to take it away to have it smelted.
- What was this big chimney for then?
- R For the boiler house.
- Oh, the boiler house. How high do you think that is up there anyways?
- R I don't know.
- If I could remember my Boy Scout Days I could take a stick and estimate it.
- R I'd say seventy-five feet
- I A good seventy-five feet hey? It's interesting how that was constructed
- R Look at that pilar up in there.
- I Yes, look at that pilar
- R That pilar was put up there to brace that chimney
- I We should get a good closeup picture of that.
- R It should also be noted of the narrowness of the stone that was used. In some instances it isn't any thicker than one inch. This is just about an inch and going up to about 4 inches. It's about five inches at the thickest point and it's built in a perfect circle.
- R I was talking to a guy from North Carolina who is a mason and he said he would never have the patience to start a thing like this.

R He said that's a masterpiece for anybody to start anything like that with such fine rock.

R Notice the trees that are growing out of the side of the rock. Along the sides and also out of the top.

You wonder where the seeds would get enough dirt to support them

R You bring that same tree home and put it in black earth and it would die.

I Probably

R It seems to be a white birch.

R I remember when we used to work in WPA days and these guys would talk about these little bar fights. My dad would say what the hell you doing fighting? He said any bloody thing they could get their hands on they would throw at you.

R Do you remember that old song I owe my soul to the company store?

I Ya, there's alot of truth to that. Of course that's not only true for this area.

R It was all over

I That's the way it was done.

R The mining company controlled the stores.

R My dad worked in the mine and in the summertime we moved to the farm and raised just enough vegetables and a few chickens and pigs just enough for winter food.

R The Star Exploration less than a mile south of the Clark property was worked from 1851 to 1858 and from 1864 to 1881. The total copper production from this source was 18,000 pounds. In addition to stoping on two tranverse fishers a copper bearing amygdaloid was opened for 150 feet east of one of the fishers. Two other fishers that contained copper were operated by surface pits. At the Copper Harbor exploration

I Well this building right here must have been the powder house?

R When we worked we worked for about \$25.00 a mnnth and worked our way up to \$75.00 a month. See I was on a salary and then a commission. But I wasn't working full time, only 3 days a week.

I Who were you working for?

R A meat market

- R In 1933 things started to pick up in the city. I was 22 years old and I asked my mother if I could quit and go to the city.
- I You know what I got paid when I went into the Army, \$21.00 a month.
- R That was considered good money then
- I Well, you know we had a good time.
- R Well I went in and got \$97.00 a month now they get \$284.00.
- I I got \$21.00 and you could buy a book of theater tickets for \$2.00 and you had your laundry and dry cleaning taken out of your pay. You could get a box of chips to buy your cigarettes with. This was all deducted from your pay before you got it. I used to get \$7.00 or \$8.00
- R You could also get off of K.P.
- I You could get someone to take your K.P. which meant getting up at 4:00 in the morning and working in the kitchen until ten or 11 o'clock at night for twenty-five cents. Fifty cents if they were doing it on a Saturday or a Sunday.
- I Look at these old miners what they were like. They used to buy everything from the company store and they had to buy their own dynamite.
- R That song I owe my soul to the company store was true.
- I Ya, they had to buy their own blasting power and everything.
- R You take here in this area. The J.P. ^{PETERMANN} ~~Pearson~~ Store, there was one in Phoenix here, one in Mohawk, one in Ahmeek. There was one in Kearsarge Allouez. There was one in every one of these town.
- I Now only that but if you didn't pay your bill you were out of a job.
- R Right and when you first went in there and bought something it would cost you almost as much as you made that month. Then they would go in the hole and owe the company.
- R One of the fellows one time got a check for eight cents. Then they would quit and go Mohawk Mining Company but you'd still have to pay the bill at the Ahmeek mining company.
- R Alot of those drift miners would run into hard luck. I was on the top level and they would ask me if I could go and steal them a box of powder.
- R If a cousin jack and a Finn got the same place the cousin jack got the better place.
- R Right.

I I've got a stack of newspapers published back in 1913.

R That was during strike time

I Right, and this was published by the Federation of Miners so you can see what side you were getting. So and so is a scab. So and so better watch because he was a bum and now he's working for the company so he's a scab. There's a whole column of this scab business.

R I'll tell you, the people looked down on these scabs.

I There's a number of articles and this guy was found with a bullet hole behind the ear.

R It's too bad because this is recorded history and the mining company's there's a helluva lot of Finns they just didn't want. But still this is history and the youth of today if they realized what the people had to go through they wouldn't feel the way they do.

R Right, as soon as they graduate they want to get out of here but if I could find work up here I'd rather live up here.

R Well for example the Italian Hall disaster, you can get them old timers talking about that and there's real hatred and the hatred is still there It's the children that were involved and it's been imbeded in them and still remember.

R Where is that?

I It's on Seventh Street, where the Eagles is.

R Is it still being used?

I Well the walls are still standing but the inside is all gutted out. You know where Murphy's is, well it's right across the street from there. Nobody has ever been able to prove one way or the other just exactly what happened.

R That's right. They feel it was a strike breaker who started the panic.

R It turned about to be world history.

I Don't talk about World History because I teach that too and it's dam interesting.

R Well I'll tell you one of the subjects that I liked was Arithmetic, today they call it mathematics. The second was History.

R That's the only bloody two that I got by on.

R What I liked the most was the colonial days in America. I wasn't too interested in European history but American history I liked and I got A's in that.

I What you should do and you don't have to take it for credit you can take it for yourself and it won't cost you an awful lot. It's called Oral History and it's going to be the same type of course that we've been doing this past summer. You go out of the area to these old timers and get their story. You put this on tape. If you're interested in local history this is the place to get it. Have you been listening to these programs that we've been having on Wednesday afternoons on WMPL.

R You mean Heritage Line?

I

R Well not too much but my wife has and she's been following them. That's called the Heritage line. This is where they've been talking about the bands and what not.

I Right.

R These bands they've been talking about, I've danced to most of these bands. On Wednesday night I would go to my boss and ask for fifteen cents and Thursday night ten cents and Friday night twenty-five cents and Saturday night fifty cents. That's all I got off of my check. The rest went on my bill and home. Because it ended up that during those years that's when the mines closed down and my brother and father were layed off. I was the only one working. That ten cents was enough for me to go to a dance on a Wednesday night or a Thursday night and then that fifty cents was enough for the Saturday night dance and Sunday night and then a little bit extra for the weekend.

I You'd be surprised how much history is just in the local area. I mean it's really interesting.

Who ran the street car before the Kingstrome?

R Was it Kivela?

R No Kivela ran it after.

R Now the Ahmeek Citgo gas station was the street car station. The street car track used to run on the north side of it. Then they were going to widen the road so they took the streetcar station and moved it on the other side of it.

I How many cars were there on Pine Street?

R One

R Two

R No there was what do you call that?

R A spur

R Right. That went to Albion and there was also another spur that went in front of the Hut and that went over to Kearsarge and the other one went in back of the Midway that way.

- R Then just on the other side of the Midway it crossed and hit the spur bank. Then it came down to Allouez and when it hit the streetcar station at Allouez just before it got to Effingers gas station it turned and went right by your house.
- I Sure the street goes right through my lot
- R That's right.
- R Then there were three brides, one in Albion, one in Wolverine and one in Mohawk.
- R The one in Mohawk was in back of Mike Stefanich's house
- R Right.
- R The second one was where?
- R Back of Wolverine somewhere wasn't it?
- R No there was only two
- R I thought there were three.
- R No Albion and Mohawk, that's it. When there was a hockey game in Mohawk we didn't have the money to get up there so we'd wait until the street car started and we'd jump and grab onto the outside of the street car and bum a ride. But one of the conductors called Nardi, the dirty bugger would wait until we got into the middle of the tressle and stop the car. Then we'd have a helluva a time and then sometimes they would reverse it and chase us. So we got smart, when we got to the curve just before they turned to the trussle we'd pull the trolley off the wire and jumped off.
- I Well they were only allowed a certain speed
- R That's right. And if that trolley got off the wire then they had no juice and couldn't go.
- I I was talking to _____ and he has a helluva a history of the street car because he worked it and he's still interested today. But you'd be surprised how much history there is.
- R I remember we were going to Calumet and the kids that used to go to high school that I chummed around with they'd hitchhike so they could save those tickets and then they could use those tickets at night time to get to Calumet.
- R Oh ya
- R I remember this one time Nardi said to me when did you go to highschool? I said last year. He said ya, it sounded like last year. We were coming from a hockey game one night and that bloody Jim put that limburger cheese on those hot radiators. Oh did that stink.

- R Almost everyone of those conductors made money. They would either collect a five cent fare or a ten cent or a fifteen cent all the way to Calumet. They would collect a fifteen cent fare and turn around and click the five cent fare. That money was pocketed at the end of the day. If he had about twenty-five fifteen cent fares that he rang up five that was \$2.50 he could put in his pocket.
- I Well Ray was making forty some dollar a month. I forget whathe said he was making but that was really good pay at that time. It was real good pay and he was happy with the job. It was all run by a little power outfit in Hancock.
- R Let's see the Upper Traction Company.
- I They had their own little power in Hancock. And you take it must have been a job going down Lake Linden Hill.
- R The big car barn was located in Florida location.
- R That's where they had the old bus station too
- R Right but that was the car barn first, the bus station came after
- I Yes, and they used to have a great big amusement park up there by Boston called the Electric Park.
- R The Electric Park and the otherone was the Crestview but that was the Keweenaw Central. And there was a treat for their annual picnic before the school closed for summer went to the Electric Park.
- I Right. Got on the street car and brought their lunches and went out to the Electric Park which was a big amusement park.
- R And that used to be the fancy place to go dancing when we were kids to go in the Electric Park that was something.
- R Do you remember the Hungarian Park, right where the dump is now. You talk about uniformed men, they had their own flag. They had a big band the Hungarian Band.
- I They had some of the biggest bands in the country. They used to go to competition down in Milwaukee.
- R When the Calumet Theater was in it's prime Sousa came here from New York
- I Right.
- R Who?
- R John Phillip Sousa from New York.
- I You know marches and all those things

- R Glen Miller was tops in his days but Sousa was tops in his
- I Before Glen Miller?
- R Oh yes. This was real marching band music and concerts like
- I Any stage star that played on the New York stage and was good at all played here back in those days.
- R Weren't they talking a couple of years ago about tearing it down?
- I Yes, but now it's a historical sight.
- R Who did they give it to Tech?
- I No they gave it to a non profit organization.
- R How about in the winter time when they have the shows there?
- I It's just the non-profit organization. They found the old plans from before and they are redecorating it. Have you ever been in it since they done work it's in the same condition that it was many years ago. It's really beautiful in there.
- R They claim there's the best acoustics of anywhere in there.
- R The Kerredge theater was a beautiful theater.
- I It burned down. You'd be interested in this program.
- R Well, I think that's why I became interested in this abstract. I remember one time in Ealge River, I ran across this title and it was for the wagonmaker's shack.
- I If you want some interesting history just go over to the Eagle River arrest book which goes back to 1874.
- R It runs farther than that
- I Well the one I saw ran from 1874 until 1959 until they cut it out.
- R It was started in 1861.
- I Well you start to read that and of course I've seen similar books from other parts of the country where the people did these similar things. It tells the person who was arrested and where he was born, where his parents were born and there's a column in there about his habits, good, bad or what have you, what he was arrested for and his disposition and whether he could read or write and all the rest. Just to read those would give you one helluva a picture of what went on in this country. You just can't believe it. They were sentencing people to Jackson Prison back in those days. Some of the sentences that were given out for the different crimes and the different crimes that were committed then.

- I You'd find an awful lot of insanity.
- R Oh yes.
- I And in the next column his habits, good. And not only that you'd find sometimes those guys were thrown in jail and had to pay their room and board while they were in jail.
- R My father used to tell me about that old house of prostitution down in Tamarack Mills.
- R Oh yes, you mean where the old Brewery?
- R Yes, some were two bits, some were fifty cents and some seventy-five cents. My dad used to tell me that they would hit the horse on the rump and he would head right back to Calumet.
- R That horse knew right where to go.
- I There used to be alot of houses in Calumet.
- R Yes, but this was a special one in Tamarack Water Works
- R Ninth Street from the old Mineral Range Depot down to _____ that was the block.
- I They had Japanese girls, Chinese girls, blacks, Indians, you name it and it was there.
- R One night we were in that Pete's and that was in that bloody area there too. We no sooner got out of there and the Federal agents came in there and raided the place. We never got caught in there.
- I Where was that?
- R It was on Seventh Street across from where the Buick Garage is there
- R Oh, that was the one that started with a P.
- R Right, that's what it was, Pete Pauch's. I was only about 18 at the time.
- R It's surprising how many guys got sent away for federal offenses.
- R Who were those two little brothers that used to live in Central?
- R Oh those were the _____ boys
- R One of them walked into the Central Dam and drowned himself. They were a little bit off. They used to work on WPA with us.
- R They would never hurt anybody but they were retarded a little bit and he just walked out to the Central Dam and drowned himself.

R _____, nobody seems to know too much about her.

R Wasn't there a big article in the paper last year about her?

I I don't know.

R Yes, I think so

I How old was she about? When she froze to death?

R I don't know

I What year was that?

R In the twenties. In the early twenties.

I They had some awful strange characters, of course they still have a few around here now.

R I had a grandmother who wanted into the cut and the Indians found her two weeks later in the canal. She lived on blueberries. Then the Indians drowned when they loaded them down with gifts and that and they went across the canal. My grandfather had a blacksmith's shop down there.

I When was that?

R I guess 1860's or then. That whole block on Pine Street, he owned that whole block. They're buried in the old Centennial cemetery.

I There's a tremendous amount of history and heritage that's never been tapped. What we'd like to do with this program is put this stuff together and start publishing it. A quarterly magazine with articles just about this area and some of the pictures and these types of things.

R Did you ever see that picture of the Cliff?

R I don't know

R I remember seeing the Cliff in the twenties. I remember the train hauling coal down here.

R Do you remember a man called Johnny Weiss?

R Ya, he worked down here and got his leg cut off.

R That's right, and young Joe was mining captain in Kingston when it shut down. Do you remember Uno _____?

R I've heard of that name.

R He was 18 years old and he was working down here in the Phoenix mines and he got killed down here.

- R Remember _____ when he got blown through that building right across the post office. Up on top of the bluff.
- R Up on the crusher
- R No, no, there's two mines, up there. One's an air shaft and ones a mine and they had a building over this and planks over this mine. There were boards over the top of this and they stood over these and they got blown out of there.
- R From that methane gas
- R I don't know from what but there were two of them that got blown through the top of the building.
- R Talk about names, I remember a man when I worked in Fulton and I was ashamed to write his name down. When I got back I asked this guy what's this man's name and he said that's Joe _____. Do you remember him?
- I Joe Systerick.
- R Is that what his name was?
- R That's Mrs. Rosenberg's brother
- R Well probably because he lived right next door
- R He was coming home from work from Centennial and you know where Compella's place is,
- R
- R Well he got killed right there.
- R Joe Shit was his name and that was Mrs. Rosenberg's brother.
- R Ya, talk about the names.
- R Want another.
- R No, that's enough for me.
- I It's wonderful to go out and talk to the old timers, you just can't picture things the way they were.
- R The sad part of it, the old timers I knew knew alot of history thirty years ago.
- I This program should have been on thirty years ago
- R Well there were these two Hungarians and they sawed that bloody cow's head off alive and they got sixty days for it.

- R They tied the cows by the front legs and sawed their heads off with a crosscut saw.
- R How about down in Fulton when they shot a pig with a 22. See you used to kill a pig and then put it in a wooden trough and cover it with scalding water and then spread rosin around and then you'd have to go in there with your bear hands and that rosin and scalding water would pull that hair off that pig.
- R Oh ya I remember that
- R I just got married that year and this kid slept over and said pa said he wants you 7:00 in the morning. The wife said what does he want you for and he said to help to kill a pig. I went there 7:00 in the morning and went home the next morning and the wife said where were you and I said killing the pig. You had to kill the pig, clean it, help to make the sausage.
- R This was a custom in the fall of the year he had a knife about that long and the only thing he used that for was slitting the pig. When I started working for him I had to go and help him. We'd dump the pig and I'd have to hold an ear and one front leg and he'd hold a bottom leg and then he'd stick him. Besides that I had to hold a pan to catch the blood because you use the blood to make blood sausage. Before we finished with that pig outside getting all the hair and everything off the liver was being fried and before we left there we were eating fried liver. That was a custom.
- I There's alot of things that you think you wouldn't eat but they're real good.
- R Well there was a man a Fin who when you killed a cow he'd take that goass of blood and hold it up to the sun and drink it and then tell you how good of meat you had. He lived to be 84 years old drinking blood all his life.
- R The way you kill a cow is someone would hold the horns and someone else would come with a sledge hammer and hit it on the head. That would drop it and then someone would cut the throat.
- I I've seen that in the stockyards in Chicago. Each cow as they came down they would wrap a chain around their legs and there was a big blackman there and they would string them up and as they came down he'd whack them a goodone. Right between the eyes with a sledge hammer. The next guy would slit the throat and bleed it. That's the way they were killed in a packing company.
- R That was production.
- I Right
- R Well these bloody codfish would come into Fulton because that was the biggest depot around this area.

- R They used to come in like bales of hay. It was a codfish cut in half and wrapped just like in a bale of hay. They'd heave them off of the cars onto the platform and then all the dogs would come and they'd water them down.
- R There was a train station in Houghton and one in Ahmeek.
- R
- R I had an appendicitis attack when we lived in that house by and they put me on a bloody sleigh and pulled me to Fulton.
- R Ya, I think your'e house is still there and Loukinen's I think Frank is still living down there. These people that I'm talking about there grandson is the sheriff there now.
- R Ia.
- R Oh, that's Bill Loukinen.
- R Right.
- I They had some of the weirdest cures for diseases that you ever heard of.
- R Do you remember Doctor Burton.
- R Well how about Doctor King.
- R Well Doctor Burton used to come to the house and before he'd even see the patient he'd have to spit in your stove. I asked him one time what is a good medicine and he said there's only two good medicines, whiskey and Baking Soda. He lived to be 94.
- R He was right then.
- R His daughter married the Governor of Arizone
- R Do you remember Doc O'Neil used to be out Seneca?
- R What was his name?
- R Doc O'Neil?
- R Oh yes.
- R Do you remember Matt _____ . He was a character. He made a bet that he could climb the Ahmeek flagpole feet first.
- R I thought it was the Mohawk flagpole.
- R No Ahmeek.
- R Well he climbed the Mohawk one too.

- R Well this was when I saw him in the Ahmeek flagpole. He went and he climbed that flagpole up backwards, feet first. He pushed himself up with his hands.
- R Then they asked him to paint the Mohawk flagpole and he said sure and he went up and came down head first.
- R It was a sorry thing when they took those down. Of course they had to take them down when they started building the school.
- R Well us kids used to line up, three or four of us and he'd be upstairs of that log house and he'd shoot the apples off of our heads. I think he was in the carnival at one time.