



Finnish
American
Historical
Archive
and Museum

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

(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

F.F.S.C.G.L.M.R. DIGITIZATION PROJECT 2010-2011

*(Funded in part by the Keweenaw National Historic Park Advisory
Commission / U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service)*

CONDITIONS FOR USE OF .PDF TRANSCRIPT:

Finlandia University, formerly Suomi College, holds the exclusive copyright to the entirety of its Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, including this .pdf transcript which is being presented online for research and academic purposes. Any utilization that does not fall under the United States standard of Fair Use (see U.S. Copyright Office or Library of Congress), including unauthorized re-publication, is a violation of Federal Law. For any other use, express written consent must be obtained from the Finnish American Historical Archive: archives@finlandia.edu.

PREFERRED FORMAT FOR CITATION / CREDIT:

"Maki, John", Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, Finlandia University, Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum.

Note: Should the Finnish American Archive be a resource for publication, please send a copy of the publication to the Archive:

Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum
Finlandia University
601 Quincy St.
Hancock, Michigan 49930 USA
906-487-7347 - fax: 906-487-7557

Mrs. Hugo Klemetti
July 22, 1973

Eero Ranta

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
Family History	1-2,5-6	
Transportation	2	
Electric Park	2	
Entertainment	2-3	Dances, Theatre, Picnics
Halls	3	
Worked at North Star Hall	4-5	Good Description
Worked for a Family - Leblein	5	
Could rent Horse and Buggies	5	

SUOMI COLLEGE LOCAL ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Finnish boarding houses and old Hancock

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. Hugo Klemetti

INTERVIEWER: Eero H. Ranta

SUBJECT: Finnish boarding houses and old Hancock

DATED: July 22, 1973

E: This is an interview with Mrs. Hugo Klemetti on Finnish boarding houses and old Hancock. For Suomi College oral history program. Mrs. Hugo Klemetti (Tyne Oja) was born in Quincy Hill location on June 13, 1890 and moved to Finland with her parents when she was nine years old. She returned alone to Hancock area nine years later and has lived in this area since. Interviewer Eero Ranta dated July 22, 1973 2.00 PM.

E: You were born around 1890s on Quincy Hill?

K: Yes, way up there in the back street, in a log cabin.

E: What were your parents doing?

K: Father was a miner and mother was at home and had many boarders.

E: Did you have any brother and sisters?

K: Just one brother and he died here

E: You went back to Finland with your parents? and how old were you then.

K: I was just a kid then about nine years old, I went to school in Finland and to confirmation school and then I was ready to work. Working at home with my dad farming. Two brothers were born there. And they are there in the same farm.

E: Then you decided to come back to this country?

K: I came all by myself, I was nine years in Finland I was eighteen when I came going on nineteen. This was 1911 or 1912, I just got here for the Christmas holidays, then.

E: Had the things changed during the time you were in Finland?

K: Not too bad, but some things started to change, but it started to change after I had been here for a little while, stikes and people didn't have work or this and that... all the young people left, there were loads of young people, because there was that North Star hall they used to come there in the evenings to read the papers the reading room was always packed full of young people. They left because there was no work, they disappeared after few years. There were so many girls working here from Finland and other countries, too, and they left also. Some families had about three maids working for them, in Houghton in east Houghton, all the Doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and some in Hancock, too.

E: What kinds of differenced you noticed when you came back from Finland, the streetcars were still running?

K: Streetcars were still running ... after few years they were stoped. Few cars came, but people had horses in East Houghton, Rices had horses... several others too.

E: The train were running then ?

K: Yes full blast.

E: If you wanted to go to Calumet, Ahmeek you could take the train?

K: Yes and you could go with the street car too, way up to Mowhawk

E: What was the 'electric park' ?

K: That was big hall there, dancing hall, the streetcar used to stop there, young people used to dance there almost every week end. There were a lot of doings for young people then, and they had picnics there and big doings there in the summer months

E: That was the entertainment for the young people?

K: That was in those days and then there was movies, in Hancock there was Orfium and there was Savoy when I first came

E: Then you had theater programs too?

K: Sometimes, but not that often Carridge was full blast sometimes they had dramas there. (näytöskappale)

E: These Finnish boarding houses 'poka talos' ?

K: There was several of them in Hancock of what I know upstairs of Lepistö & Co. there was one the boys ran that themselves, they had workers, there was Lepistö, Lohela Mustonen brothers and Klemetti and several others. It used to be quite a big place, people used to go there for dinners when they came to town.

E: This was upstairs of the Quality Food Market. ?

K: Yes that upstairs has been taken off now, and another was next door which used to be Kotila's hardware store before that time when I came here, but in later years they had for Ahjola this was run by the boys too.

E: wasn't that red?

K: Yes, they belong to the communist, and the KK hall was right in the corner in the Franklin street and that was the big place there were a lot of doings there there was all kinds of doings.

E: Was that Finnish run?

K: Yes, that was Finnish beautiful big hall and everything there was dancing and restaurant downstairs had very good business, this was when I came, but there came a time when it started to go and there was that newspaper in one part of that building ' Työmies ' they moved to Duluth.

E: And after they left was the building vacant

K: Yes it was vacant for a while, I don't why they let that go like that, it was torn down like that it was beautiful hall and a lot of room, big down stairs where the kitchens were and restaurant and that came to cost quite a bit for that workers and...

E: How was it paid for?

K: Even before they started to build it, people bought shares, but I don't know what happened then after the strike everything started to go down hill.

E: You had just come here a couple years before the strike?

K: I was working for the big North Star hall when the strike started, I cannot remember the year.

E: 1913 some time ?

K: Yes I think so

E: How was it here during the strike. ?

K: Well, it was a hard time for the strikers they didn't have any money to live, many of those young men whom I came to know, they didn't have any money for food even, many a night we asked the boys to come to help us to clean the North Star hall there. We made a big pot of stew and we bought some bread with our own money and we had a good feast. There was always two girls running the hall for temperance society.

E: Where was this North Star hall?

K: It was there where this Venace cafe used to be, that's the building. There was a big hall and cafe where we served coffee and pies and sandwiches and things like that. It wasn't a restaurant and there was a swimming pool down stairs and there was couple saunas and bath tubs in sauna and dressing rooms. You had to have a bath before you went to swimming, that was the law in those days and a lot of people came those days.

E: Was that like a boarding house, too?

K: No, no there was only us two girls there working for the temperance society. They owned the building they had bought it from the Christian young people, Christian boys they used to run it before, but I cannot remember that, but I heard so. They used to have that swimming pool downstairs, but the Finns build the saunas there. That was a beautiful building. There is a nice swimming pool down stairs. That building belongs to Garters now.

E: There was a hall for entertainment?

K: There was a big hall there and there was a lot of things and Hancock High School didn't have a basketball gym so they rented that from the North Star and played basketball there, I don't remember how many nights a week, but it was a full lot of noise.

E: And then you had meetings there and..?

K: We had meetings and all kinds of gatherings...

E: Dances and

K: They were not allowed to dance there, because it belonged to temperance society, they had (sitä rinkitanssia) folk dancing they sang themselves like in Finland.

E: You served coffee and...?

K: We served coffee and pies, sandwiches, but not any big meal, there was only two of us.

E: And how long did you work there?

K: I cannot remember now, two years or so, I have some old cards dated 1917 for that address. My friends used send me cards after they left this area. And then there hasn't been hardly nothing.

E: After that closed you went to work for these...

K: I worked for Libleins for seven years, Ed was just born, when I went to work there. I traveled a lots with them. I took care of the childred.

E: You traveled to Florida and

K: Florida and California, many trips we made, and to Chicago and Milwaukee with Mrs. Liblein, she was a very nice person.

E: You took the train to Chicago and.

K: We went with train and sometimes with the car they had cars already at Libleins when I worked there, but very few places had cars, even in east Houghton. Wieders had one when I worked there, they had a meat whole sale. I worked there several months before I went to North Star hall. So many people had horses in those days, even the ladies used to handle the horses

E: Wasn't there a place where you could rent horses?

K: Oh yes, O'Neils barn on Teccucco street, just up from that drugstore. Big barn, they had many horses, boys used to rent horse and a buggy and took the girls out on the joy ride on the week ends. At my home we had a horse when we lived in Ryple before I went to Finland with my folks.

E: You were born on the Quincy hill and then your parents moved to Ryple?

K: I think I was about four years old when we moved to Ryple. My father bought the old Slatry house, I think all the Slatry boys were born in that house, those that used to run that Ryple store, now that's their children that run the Slatry store in east Houghton. There was a lot of working in Ryple in those days, there were foundries and on there was a lot of working places. Our neighbours were Doubs and Carols and they had someking of big business in Houghton side Carol's foundry or something like that.

E: Was your father still working in the mine?

K: He used to work at Quincy at that time, but first he worked at the Franklin mine. There he got the terrible trouble with his feet, then he started to figure to get back to Finland and he was cured over there. He could hardly walk when we left here. My father must have worked about twenty years in those mines, he was very young when he came and he came alone first he was working at Obenoff doing some wood work and they used to pay them fifty cent a day.

E: Were your parent married in Finland?

K: Yes, and my mother and little Johnny came few year later?