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

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Interview with Mrs. Eva Koopikka
October 11, 1976
interviewed by Helen Armstrong

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I: To begin with, would you like to tell me what your name is, and how old you are, and if you're married, when you got married, and how many children you have.

K: Well, my name is Eva Koopikka; would you like to know my middle name? My mother was rather proud, because she gave us names of all the queens and stuff--so it's Eva Juliana, Koski was my maiden name, Koopikka, and I'm sixty years old and we have three children, three girls, three daughters, I should say. Oh, and, we've been married, will be coming up forty-four years. We were really young! (Laughter)

I: Were both of your parents Finnish?

K: Yes, we were the first American born of Finnish parents. So that is the reason why, when we went to Finland, they thought that we were born there, the way we spoke. But I said, definitely not, that we were first American born of Finnish parents.

I: Where were both of your parents from?

K: Uh, my mother was from Someropitäjä, now around the Turku area. What was it Gus? Mumela? Mumela. That's where she was born. And my father was from Turvapäitäjä, and that was in ? today.

I: And that's near Tampere?

K: Not far from Tampere. Forty kilometers from Tampere.

I: What did they do, was your father a farmer?

K: Oh, I imagine. I imagine that's what they were. Because it seems that when they came to America, that he was sort of jack-of-all-trades. You know my dad worked in the mines, and he also farmed, and he did a lot of this basket weaving and I remember different little things, like when he would make wood for the stove and the furnace. Well, he'd always, every June he would bring those sapling trees and we'd have that, in June, for that Juhannus, that Lehtimäija, what they would say. So it seemed that they did everything. And my mother was a cook in the North Seas in her younger days. And even I think when she was first married, because that's where she met her second husband. See, her first husband died in Finland, and my older sister would be about 74 or 75. Mother had two children, in Finland, the one with her Osvik, he was a Swede, and then now, her name was Aina-Wilhemina Osvik. And then my sister was Taini-Wilhemina. Then, now she remarried, Akarna, and mother came here and she had four children then, with the one that was born in Finland. And then when he died, my mother was forty-one when I was born, she said she married my dad. So I'm the only Koski. But the name was, when I went to Finland I found out, Leppäkoski.

I: Now, how old was your mother then when she came over?

K: I would say in her early twenties. Now, I have no, uh, other than from the Suku Selvitus, but you look at them so many times, that's where you can find out when they came. But really, I found out from my mother just where she was born. I would like to go further on with that and write to Finland and find out when she married and where she left, because I had heard that she left from Finland from Oulu, which is quite far, you know, from Turku. And when we were in Turku visiting my cousin and her daughter, I'll tell you, it just made me just tearful, she pulled out this little rocking chair that was my sister's --handmade rocking chair--and she said, "Eva, your mother gave me this in remembrance of the children when she left Finland." Oh, and a different cousin said wouldn't you have loved it, liked to have had it? I said that I would never dare ask her for it, because they'll probably send it through her family, her daughter and her daughter's daughter, and like that. In this picture here (points to picture)--that's the picture in that Vammala, uh, Kirkon herra virastos where we found the ledgers (with information about her father's family), and uh, I guess..uh..

I: Tell me a little bit about yourself..did you go to school?

K: Yes, I went just through the ninth grade. I just left school right there. In the...see we would go through the ninth grade here in our own little public school, and then, we would go to Calumet High School. We started in the tenth grade.

I: So you grew up here? (in Kiersarge)

K: Yes, oh this is my family home. This is where I was born and our children were born too. And some of my brothers and sisters. So, it's quite a thing for our children, you know, the brown house is really home to them. Everybody calls it the brown house.

Okay. Now, did you speak Finnish when you were growing up?

K: Yes, my mother, well, I think I was fortunate enough to know more English when I went to school, because my older sister uh, you know those days, you would go through high school, and then go on to teaching. She was 18 years old when I was born. She was actually like a mother to me. She was 18 years old and then, (interruption with the phone)

I: Okay, we were talking about Finnish, you learned English from your sister?

K: Now I think that I was fortunate, you know, because she taught German, I mean Germans that came here, she was teaching them English in this school, so I was fortunate to know more English than my brothers and sisters did when they went to school.

I: But you spoke Finnish at home?

K: Oh yes. My mother tried to take a stab at speaking English, I don't think she, uh, never wanted anybody to know that whoever came to the door, that she didn't understand. Those days used to come a lot of door to door salesmen. And she always got along with everyone. I think she was just that proud, because we often laugh at some of the things she said. Like she said, "oh I so shallisfied..satisfied, you know. So she made her stab at English. But she never did go and take her citizenship. My father did, so she probably, became, I think at that time if the husband was, well then the wife was too, you know. But my dad did and he spoke quite well, quite well, in their broken style.

I: Did you ever speak English at home with them or was it always Finnish?

K: I would say, partly, maybe as we got...see I was fourteen when my mother died, so I imagine by then it was half and half, sort of. You know, because you would come from school, but as I said many people wondered how you could keep it up, because my mother died, but then...well we did have neighbors here...but then we were gone from here about seventeen years. I said, I think, it was the thing I never wanted to forget it. That I think if you want to, you don't really forget it. Well, someone said, you did have the Finnish-American society in Milwaukee, but it isn't that, you just meet once a month, and you kind of spoke Finnish just as a fad or for fun, you know, but really it just seems to come back. We didn't do no special brushing up before we went to Finland either, it just came.

I: Does your husband speak Finnish?

K: Yes.

I: Do you ever speak Finnish with him?

K: Yes, every once in awhile we do. And I write Finnish. I correspond to Finland. I write Finnish and they said they understood my Finnish very well, which I was happy to hear, because sometimes I have trouble with the double letters, you know.

: Let's see, we already talked about your family, why don't we go on to...well, when you were growing up, uh, and you spoke Finnish at home, did your parents carry out a lot of Finnish customs, like at Christmas time,...

K: Oh yes. Yes help yourself (motions to her excellent nisua)
We had the Kaleva Hall here, right behind here. We were fortunate enough, and of course we had to go to Sunday School and as they got through Sunday School, the older ones had to go back there and teach Sunday school. So my sister and I, we all had our stab

at teaching Sunday school. The when we were married, I taught there and the kids went, and we had really lovely Christmas programs. Every Christmas, we had...

Mr. Koopikka: Not her, me. My confirmation was in Finnish. Not English like you guys.

K: I guess I was luckier. But anyway, we had a big Christmas program. Part of that Christmas were, well before all in Finnish, and then course in the later years as the Finns thined out, then we had them in English. But, uh, a very, very nice Sunday School program there. And my dad after mother died... oh there's another one there, that's uh...

Mr. K: You ought to taste that one there. That's sugar plum, it's real good. (brings out some jam)

K: Anyway, you know, we always had a Santa Claus, you know, joulupukki.

I: Wait, I have a question, did joulupukki come to give you the presents himself, or...

K: Yes, at the Hall, at the Kaleva..

I: But at your house?

K: Well, at our house, I'll tell you how it was when he came. Some years we did have a joulupukki here, couple years when our children were smaller. But he would always, as long as I remember, my sister started this, that because we lived so close here, he was always here first, so he had been here while we were at the Kaleva Hall giving our concert, our Christmas program. Do you know, that Kaleva Hall, people you know that would go from here to Detroit, they made sure they came home for Christmas to be here; it was such a treat! It was just a joy, you know, to see all those who came home for Christmas and it was a big thing. And do you know then, the next morning, when I was little and our kids too, we would go from one relative to the other to see what Santa Claus brought them or joulupukki brought them. And it was most of the time Gus' brother-in-law was the Santa Claus. And it got to be, oh that's Uncle Pete. But oh, that was, oh that Christmas, but then of course, my sister remembers but I don't, they used to walk from here to Calumet to go to church at six o'clock in the morning, on Christmas morning. But now, we have it Christmas Eve, which I like, I think it's nice, that we don't have it now, because our children are all grown and we don't have a Sunday school, then of course, they have the Sunday school in the church now, and in the church they wouldn't have the joulupukki, like we used to have. Although in this was our Sunday school, this was also the Kaleva Hall. This is also where years ago they melted the led and Gus Tommina, he was the ring-dinger for the big doings, you know the fortune teller. Oh, they really had big times in that Kaleva Hall.

I: Tell me, particularly when you were growing up, did you have dinner on Christmas Eve and go to the sauna....

utefisk K: Oh yes, yes.. I'll tell you that Christmas Eve was always that -ludafisk, always and another thing that I remember that is really funny, I really never liked it then, even ludafisk, Now Gus likes it better than I do and I still make it for him, so that he has it. Do you know this roselli, mother used to call it (?) (beet-herring salad). Every Saturday like I'm here, I'd have to peel those koripäälsisi potuja (?) (potatoes with the jackets on) and those beets and dice them, then mother would add the fish and the onions. Now she didn't put everything in like the recipe tells--carrots, and apples, and like that, mother just put the silakka (herring) and the beet and vinegar and oil..and potato. I've just learned to like it since we've been in Milwaukee at the Finnish American Society, when we had the dinners there and typical Finnish foods. But always on Christmas Day then we had kalkuna, uh, ..chicken.. Not the turkey like we have today. Mother's own raised chicken, she would do two or three of them depending on the size. And always laanttulaatikko, that's the rutabaga casserole and snow pudding. My mother used to make snow pudding with that cranberry juice and then farina --and the cranberry juice. And my brother used to go out with that egg beater and a wooden spoon and beat it in the snow bank. And of course, mash potatoes and carrots. It seemed like we always had our own vilia from our garden. And my mother was a great baker of the molasses bread. Ya. And she, well she made all of her own bread. I don't ever remember having store bought bread.

I: Did she make rye bread?

K: Oh yes, and I still make that bread, in fact, I have some right here. You'll have to try some. I just made some, uh...I've had this in here a couple of days. It depends, sometimes I'll put a little more molasses in it than other times. But my mother was baking this bread believe it, you know we had a wood stove here. Now she would make them round, round loaves. And then always set them, I think, in pans. She was baking that bread the night she took sick, she was so sick and had to be taken to the hospital and she died the next day. And I remember I came home from school and I had to finish baking this bread for her. Have some more of that. I like that, it's not what you would say "airy". I was very pleased this morning when we were getting ready for the big ethnic bake sale for the hospital and the lady told me, you know, "I've tasted the best nisua I've tasted at the Juhannus that you had in the park this June." And I said, "well that was my nisua." Try that. And I wonder if you would like a little piece of sausage. I'll bet you didn't even have lunch. We might even have a few little cucumbers here. I have some tomatoes here, would like a tomato? These are from our garden. Pick out any one you want, and I'll rinse it for you

I: Tell me, what other foods do you remember your mother cooking?
And you still cook too.

K: Well the pirakka, that is something that has really stayed with me and mother also made cabbage rolls. But do you know what she would call them? She called them kultoma, which I think is kind of a Swedish. Then she would make, was it breaded veal or was it, no, steak with bacon in it. She'd call that salska ?? linga (?). See,...

I: But if she's from that area

K: Around there, in fact, I'll tell you, my cousin, told me, "Eva, when I went to school, Turku, I was the only Finn among all those Swedes." This is smoked sausage, I always cook it a little bit.

I: Did you ever have blood pancakes?

K: Yes, rostuja, that stuff that was baked in the oven that looked like chocolate cake. And then the other one when the cow freshened that juustoa, uuni justoa, that mother would make with the milk when the cow freshened. That we had a lot of and of course the juustoa too. Mother made a lot of pannu kakku, and you know, my mother's recipe was a little thicker, it was heavier than what this friend of mine Anna Tusla. I told you how I went there and I said, "Anna, you know, you really make good pannukakku. I like it better than the one my mother makes. Do you have the recipe?" And she said that she didn't have it, and I told her let's put the recipe together. And I have passed that recipe around, and everybody loves it. Man is it good...it's more custardy see, it's not too heavy. But mother used to make her pannukakku real thick, usually you don't see it that thick. I do like it when it's about like so. My mother's was really quite thin. So there, yeah, rosuja, you know, I still don't, you know I don't know if I would know how to make it. I remember eating it, but I never made it. Do you know how they used to have it? They had their own cows and they slaughtered them in the fall and then they made...they even made blood sausage out of them. I remember Mother making blood sausage. And even the other sausage. It was a big deal. When the man was coming to butcher, that was a big deal. So there are all these things. I always remember my father..you know the farm he had...all the wood that was made. At first we didn't have a furnace. We had a big coal stove in the living room and the pipes went right through into the dining room. And the same way upstairs in that last bedroom. There was one of those block stoves. And you could put big long blocks in there. Well, Dad used to make ranka puu from the woods. And then there were piles and piles. And the circle saw used to come and they cut 'em all...the side to cut for him. I remember when it was thrashing time, when they...mother used to have to cook these big meals, because the men were coming for thrashing and you have to feed them.

I: They had like a team...

K: Yes, and it went from one house to the next house and that

and Father had our own flour made, our own rye flour, used to go to Michelson's mill down in the valley. There's a lot of real nice things when you start to think of all these memories, you know. So we had our own flour. Did you like that bread?

I:UMMM, Tell me a little about the life that your mother led raising her children...describe the hardships you think she may have had compared to...

K:Oh yes, I really could. I'll tell you. First, my mother had fourteen boarders in this house,

I:You're kidding!!

K:Yes, fourteen boarders. And when you think of it, how did they ever sleep. Well they slept in shifts, you know. When one gang went to work, the other gang slept. So the upstairs was all with the boarders. They used this too. And the downstairs used to have benches all around, in fact they were filled with dirt. I think not more than five years before my mother died the foundation was put on this house and they were torn out. But there were benches all around the sides, and in front of that was the biggest table there and then mother had her sink over there and a stove and she did all her cooking down there. And she had a girl that would come and help her. Also they would help her with the clothes. You know the water had to be all hauled in. Gus remembers that when they hauled the water, when that tank used to come in. And it was even hauled with a wagon, for washing the dishes, I mean the clothes. I think that my mother had a one minute washing mashine until maybe a couple of years before she died. So that's only what...there wasn't a radio, or anything. The washing machine was the only thing she knew. And my sister was working and she's the one that bought mother that washing machine. But uh, just imagine. And she had cows in the barn, and two horses always, and at least three cows, and chickens, and a pig, and a garden, a big vegetable garden where the apple trees are over here. In fact those apple trees are my mother's own planting. You know we think, aren't they getting so old, perhaps we should take them down, but I don't have the heart to take them down. I think they were brought from the woods, well maybe they were bought. There's a lilac tree even that I moved over there, and that too, I baby it because it was mother's. And we used to have in here steps going to the upstairs...I said that if mother were to come back, she wouldn't know the old home anymore. But it's still the original house.

I:Let's see...did your mother weave?

K:No, but she crocheted. In fact there are some hangers that I have in the dining room that are holding a tray up, they are my mother's crocheting. That's about the only thing that I have somehow or another saved. I don't know...it's funny when I think of it, how did they ever have time, because the day was so taken up with jobs and chores, you know. But I do remember, oh often, on a Saturday, or you know, that she would be that

that she would take a nap on the couch for a little while. She probably needed that, you know, to perk themselves up. You know, you had to milk the cows in the morning and of course at night. And another thing I remember as I got older, when my older sister moved away and my other sister and I had the bedroom up here. It used to drive me crazy when my father would read until way, way into the night the Valvoja the Finnish newspaper. He would read the romaani, that was the love story. He would go on and on and on in that monotone voice and you could never fall asleep because you were listening to it. They would stay up quite late in fact. He would read to her...

I: Did she know how to read?

K: Yes, oh yes, she read, but she would always either sit up or she would have some handwork. She knitted too, knitted and crocheted. When you think back, ~~they didn't really have~~ very much time for that. They didn't belong to any clubs, but they did have you know, like the Kaleva, there and I don't recall that my mother ever belonged, but she probably didn't have the time. But there were others. But they visited a lot more ... he wants you to eat some of his apples.. aren't they good? We have to trim them so they'll grow bigger.

I: Well, did you learn, well when did you start your interest in weaving?

K: Really in Milwaukee after we belonged to the Finnish-American Society... I learned first at our cultural exhibit at the Folk Fair. We all learned and we all had to take part and work at it. So then I got to hankering and I thought oh I'd love to make one. Mrs. Nivula had made one. I used her loom and it was a rickety loom. I tell you, I had a lot of trouble; I had to keep it straight. Oh...but it came out okay. But then I felt I did a good job last year on that backstrap loom, that primitive loom. Because I was able to...and this one too I think will work out fine because it's firm. See I put my strings double on the edge. And that Finnish yarn--I would never attempt to make one unless I had the Finnish string to put, you know, my base and to weave through. You never have string break, never. It just keeps the...you could hack it real hard and it doesn't break. I found that out too, cause we did have American string on some of it in Milwaukee, and oh, it was just terrible. It would break and have to tie it up again.

I: I'm curious to know, well, obviously, making your ryijy rugs has been influenced by your Finnish background. Do you think that also your choice of colors and choice of design is also influenced...

K: I think so. I think because I took up painting..that was the

first thing I did. I took an adult class, I went there and my teacher told me, his name was Karl Bigner, "My word," he said, "I gave you one lesson and you've gone hog wild." So I've painted a hundred paintings and I started when I was 51, but I'm a little slower now. I did most of my painting my first years. But since we've been back I've only painted a couple a year. I've been so busy with other things. Unless somebody has asked me to make a painting. But I think that first..I love color, I love the clouds, they impress me. They do something to me. And nature, and trees, and somebody told me that I knew they were your paintings because I know you and you're a person who loves nature. He told us, when we started painting, observe everything. And I think I just about pierced through a tree. I like to paint thick, I like a lot of texture and I use my fingers a lot to get like a three dimensional effect to it. And I love red. I'm not that crazy about orange. I like it when it's used with red, blending from red to orange. But not the orange alone. And greens are something. I love the green of the spring. And I love the colors of the fall. So I think that...and then, now, uh...Mr. Nivula told me I could make my own pattern. I haven't made a pattern on paper. I just design it as I go along. But the one I made last fall, I did use, I put a slide on my little projector and I would glance at it every once in awhile so that I would still keep in form of that there. But I didn't put anything, mark anything on the string. And I was very pleased with it. So like I say, this is my third rug I'm making and there's something about it that draws you to it. It's impossible to explain it. Like I said, before I could do six rows in a day, but now with my knees as bad as they are, I'll do one, but sometime I'll go up there twice a day and do a row. But even that one row, I feel that if I keep at it, I'll get it made. You have to have that Finnish Sisu! You don't give up. It must be my Finnish sisu that tells me to keep going. Really, if you baby yourself it isn't good.

I: Well, a row a day.

K: I hope to have it done by spring. I hope some of my grandchildren will want to learn. I have a feeling that Julie will be the type. She's very artistic, but she still hasn't...she's done other things. It just has to come upon you, about this ryijy. Now it's fascinating, to make even like I told you, like a table cloth on this loom. Well I said sure you could. But it just doesn't send me. I know you have to be, you know, right there on the ball and you've got to mark your pattern. This is so carefree, it's just like going to play ball out in the field. That's how much I enjoy it. It relaxes me. It never makes me feel like I have to get this done. I just enjoy, if I have that hour, if I don't have it, I leave it. I still think this is much more relaxing than sewing.

I: Now I know you have this book on Finnish Folk Art and we looked at the pictures of the ryijys in there. Do you, I mean, ever even maybe dream of doing something after a very typical Finnish style or the geometric designs?

K: Yeah, well you know I thought that maybe the next one I make I'll do it with more color. See, these were yarns that I was using that were left over from the one I did with yarns from Finland. I use these dark colors that were in the grays-- dark brown and black, those colors, in this original one that I made. The one Debbie took too was kind of similar to that first one. I'm adding more color now. But I would like to make kind of a wild one--get into my reds, get into my other colors. So maybe I will get into something that...now I don't like kind of square things or diamond shape...I like more..so..you know that's angled off, or triangles or something like that. I'll tell you what I thought I'd do on this one, but I'm not sure, I'll see how I come along with it. I left my string on the end long enough. You know most of those you see have the fringe. So I would probably make a fringe on it. I'll see. I do have a leaving of about an inch, so if I tie them and then maybe counter tie two of them and make some kind of design, 'cause that's the way you see them...they'll have quite long fringes even if they're a tiny little ryijy. Most homes we went to had the ryijys on their wall, regardless if they were poor or you felt that they were well off. I think that the younger generation in Finland, they were...you couldn't say they were poor. They all seemed to...they all had summer homes and they lived in these condominiums. And they all had very lovely homes and nice furniture.

Part II

I: We'll continue with side two. Now let me ask you now about your other crafts. Now you do crochet and knitting, right?

K: Yes, I've done both. Years ago when the children were small, I knitted all their stockings, mittens and sweaters. Even for the grandchildren. And it's since we were in Milwaukee, I uh... then it got so my...I just...my fingers...I just got tired of knitting. I would say about maybe nine or ten years ago.

I: It's hard with your arthritis

K: Yes, but with ...I've still done crocheting. I've done a lot of hats and stuff. Now, and uh...my crochet and my knitting were actually things I did when the children were smaller. And before I started my painting. When I started my painting I was 51 and that's nine years ago. And then, I took up sculpture work and I also did ...I took up a course for a whole year in military. So I did a lot of...I have 25 hats up there that I didn't even show you. All from feather to straw. We hope hats will come back again. I still wear my hats to church.

I: How about your mother, did she knit and crochet?

K: Yes, she knit and crochted.

I: Did you learn from her?

K: No, not really. No I didn't learn from my mother because I wasn't

interested. And I was only 14 when Mother died. I learned from a friend of my sister-in-laws. We had a little club and we learned to knit from there and from there on I learned from the book.

I: How about embroidery, did your mother do that?

K: Oh that, that I did when I was a little girl. Now my sister the one that was like a mother to us, well, she would always buy us the floss and the hoops. Oh yes. I'll bet I don't have a thing of my own. I don't think I have anything I made when I was a kid, which is kind of a shame.

I: Do you embroider anymore at all?

K: No I don't, other than the wall hanging with the yarn, which is like stitchery. I've made several of those and those too I've designed myself. I used up, in fact that one that I made...in the dining room...I used up left over yarns I had.

I: How about your daughters, do they do any

K: Now, Louise is quite interested, now when we go and visit we make hats together. But today, if she had a chance to get into things more, but they're so busy with everything. Her husband is a doctor and they're on the go all the time. Her home displays her artistic talent and she's very good at it. It looks so homey and cozy. Debbie, the granddaughter has much more talent. I'm not so sure now about the other little ones, because we've been away from them for awhile. Now Kay, she is quite artistic too. She weaves like I do. She also likes to redo old furniture. There's something that each one of them picked up, but maybe someday when I go from here, they...you know, of course like a lot of these things...well I did do them while they were growing. Well even knitting, I don't think Sandra ever picked up knitting needles where her daughter did. And Louise's children have picked up needles, but I don't think she's done it. But Kay has knitted. So it's funny, it's either the grandkids or your children. They all cook. They are all, they all enjoy cooking.

I: I forgot to ask when we were talking about cooking. You obviously..well, you cook your nisua and I know you cook a lot of Finnish things still, ...

K: Oh yes, yes. Always. We always have homebread like this and always nisua in the freezer. I have it frozen, like when you were coming, I take out a piece of it. So we always have nisua in the house.

I: How about other things, like...pannukakku. Do you make things like kesäkeittö?

K: Yes, that is more like in the summer. When you have the fresh carrots. Although, those carrots we grow, they're just like.. the only thing is, you'd have to use frozen peas. But that's real good. I'll tell you another thing that I remember my mother made: now I don't know what, she always called them tōppi. They're like a dumpling, but they're sweet and they're made into milk, something like kesä keittö. Oh did I used to

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like those! They were not a fluffy dumpling, they were heavy, kind of those thicker dumplings and they had eggs in them. They were sweetened and the milk was sweetened. When Mother has that for lunch when I would walk home from school...oh, I was never the happiest kid in the world. Oh another thing was cabbage roll, she made such good cabbage rolls. I was so happy when we had cabbage rolls, because the next day we had them for our lunch. In the winter we packed our lunch to Kiersarge school and then we'd warm them on the radiator! Another thing I remember real well, is that we had a lot of stew. It was like sekakeitto... you know, it would have...Mother used to put turnip, but you know I don't always put turnip, I just use the carrots and the peas and celery and parsley, and stuff, like that, but Mother used mostly carrots and turnips and cabbage and potatoes. And always a little beef. I still make mine, well I usually pick up a little chuck roast. I always remember the pancakes my mother made, lättyjä. Oh they were good...with strawberries. And that was our dessert. Another thing I remember, Mother made a lot of meatloaf. Lihalattikko. And then that salmon. Years ago when Mother was living, we didn't use that canned salmon like people use today. It was that salted salmon that they bought special. Another thing I remember my mother making was maitopottuja. Milk, potatoes, and peppers. Would you call it potato soup? It had the whole peppers in it. Oh that was good. And she made another thing, that was pork sausage on that same order. Like a soup. Oh and I think of all the fat that was on top of it. When you think of what we ate in those days! No wonder, no wonder there are so many veins that are plugged up. My mother made a lot of pasties, you know, which was American, but she made a lot of them. I still say that in Finland they have something along that order, it's lihapirrakka. They put very little potato in it. I think a pastie is good if it has a lot of meat in it. Some people don't put as much, they'll put more potato in it. Did you have that pirakka in Finland that was just open like this and was just rice?

I: Oh yes. Riisipirakka.

K: Did you like it?

I: Yeah. We used to eat those almost everyday. We used to eat the riisipirakka and then the just plain ones. Without rice. We used to put them in the oven and heat them up, then put butter on them.

K: It's unbelievable. The Finns eat a lot of rice. My mother had a lot of vegetables. Some of the neighbor kids didn't like carrots and they didn't like cabbage, but we had a lot. And beans, all that stuff. I'll tell you another thing I remember. Oh if I were home right now to have these. Peas...puolukka. Mother would cook those pea pods just like they were and then we put them in a bowl with butter on them and then we'd just zing them through our teeth...oh gosh were they ever good!! And I remember the garden we had here. We always had those puolukkas.

I: Something else I want to ask you. How about mushrooms. Did your mother ever pick mushrooms?

K: Not that I remember, but sieni...sieni soup we had in Finland. We couldn't get over how much they had in that mushroom soup. Now I don't ever remember my mother picking mushrooms, but we learned to pick them, my husband and I through an Italian fellow. Now I think I've forgotten; I don't think I dare pick 'em.

I: This is something very interesting to me, because I know the Finns pick mushrooms in the Fall. Everyone is out on the weekends. I read that people don't do it here.

K: Well you know the Italian people here pick them, in fact our son-in-law's parents pick them. Now I don't know, it may be in the last few years it may have gone out. But we had several places...and it was very good. We laughed, our son-in-law said they were so fresh that he even tasted the sand. But they were really curly. (in Finland)

I: Do you ever remember your mother talking about eating them in Finland? I'm wondering why they didn't do it over here.

K: That's what I can't figure...and another thing is those puolukka, you know those cranberries and lingonberries. Now it's different than what they have here. My mother always had cranberries from the store. Even here you can pick them, but you got to pick 'em raw before the frost hits 'em. But I don't know, Gus did your father ever pick lingonberries? Because I've heard of a fella who went from here and he was in the Oulu area with his relatives. They picked...he just enjoyed it, because they went out and picked lingonberries by the water pail.

I: (To Mr. Koopikka) How about mushrooms..did your parents ever talk about picking mushrooms?

Mr. K: Not my parents, but we did

I: I know, she told me

Some discussion here pursued about eating mushrooms

K: There's a berry there like we seen in Alaska. It's yellow and red.

I: Yeah, what do they call those? They make a liquer out of them

K: Mesi marja. And clou^dberries. 'Cause we had cloudberry icecream in northern Finland for desert at our hotel. We also ate whale.

I: Did you get any reindeer too?

K: Oh yes. Was that good too. In Norway.

I: In the home I lived in we would have smoked reindeer sliced in real small pieces. Ummm, was it good. A real delicacy.

I: When you were growing up, did you go to the doctor, or did your mother have her own things she did when you had a cold?

K: Yes, she did have a lot of her own things that she did when we, you know, had a cold. But then of course, the men were working in the mines and we did have the doctor often. I remember running there for aspirin tablets and cough medicine. But otherwise, she took, uh, we were home...we still wonder to this day. My brother and I had something...we often wonder what it was, my sister and I. My brother and I, neither one of us could walk. We don't know what it was we had. And yet my mother took care of us and I remember her exercising our toes. She would exercise our toes.

You wouldn't have had polio?

K: We wonder, we wonder.

I: How long ago was this?

K: Oh gosh, well I must have been maybe eight years old. Arnie was in eighth grade and he would walk to school, but he would drag his leg. So it was funny. Those days they didn't know what people had I guess. When we had scarlet fever we were quarantined. I remember that. And chicken pox. My sister had to go live somewhere else because she was teaching school. I remember my brother Uno played cornet...what did we do for entertainment, you know, so Uno was playing the cornet. He was going around tooting and all of us were going around marching behind him and my sister came and she'd stand out there talking to us through an open window. And she was just hollering at us, "why are you running around and jumping around when you should be in bed resting." She was the greatest one for you should have your rest. But these are some things...well, now our children too, they had everything...chicken pox, etc., and we took care of them at home. But we had the company doctor.

I: If you ever had an upset stomach, did you have any special thing your mother gave you?

K: What I remember is essence of peppermint. Hot water with a few drops of essence of peppermint for a stomachache.

I: Anything for colds at all?

K: Only cough medicine

Mr. K: Tar water. Tar water up on top of the stove. Mother would take a couple of drops of tar and put it in very hot water and make us drink that. If you ever want to drink anything that will make your nose turn in the air..drink hot tar water.

K: When Mother was here, we used to have the Ralli (?) ointment. We had the Ralli ointment man come around, you know, Ralli's products. Well, she always bought a big can of that. And she always rubbed that on our chest. And always had a piece of wool on your chest. And I'll tell you what I remember most is that bath we had in our ordinary...we had a wooden tub and we took a bath here in kitchen.

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I: You didn't have a sauna?

K: No sauna, no bathroom. We had a public sauna. I remember going with my mother to a sawu sauna (smoke sauna). Our girls used to go there too, but they preferred the tub here at home.

I: Tell me, do you have any other sort of vivid memories of the good times or the hard times or any proverbs or tall tales or anything...

K: Oh my father was a great story teller. He used to tell us about Christmas in Finland. How they would bring the hay into the tupa, and that was really a big thing. They celebrated Christmas...he used to tell us about the hardtack they'd make. They'd dry it up on the ceilings, you know. But I think in my younger days, I don't think in my days money was so important. What we did was tobagan and skate. There was no radio or ... and you spent very little time inside. I remember my older sister bought a lot of stories for me. Then after we were married...that was the worst part of life, with the depression. But I don't know we had sewing clubs and we met and we seemed to be able to make some goodies. We'd have coffee and goodies and people visited a lot more than they do today. And I think more than they had good times.

Mr. K: We spent three-fourths of our time as kids and teenagers on the rock pile and hills. Today you don't see a kid out there. All he looks for is five bucks from his folks...can I have the car tonight?

Interlude here while we had more tea and n kileip  and discussed eating marmelade in Dinland.

I: I know something else I wanted to ask you. When you were growing up, did you read a lot of Finnish books?

K: No, not really. No Finnish books at all. We did go to Sunday school in Finnish. We read the AApinen, Kakkesmus and the Historia book. All three of them.

I: I know a lot of people--perhaps younger than you are--don't know how to read Finnish, but they can speak it.

K: Well, I think that my Finnish writing came more in my older years. You know I could read it, but to write it...well I think maybe in the past ten years or so.

: Well the hard thing is learning to speak it

K: Oh yes. Really it's easy, although people find it hard. Because you pronounce every letter and as long as you know your alphabet. When you have those double letters...like Koopikka.

Here Mrs. Koopikka talked about the drunks in Finland and the difference between the Finnish language in Finland and America.

Nisua (Finnish coffee bread)

2 C milk scalded and cooled
 1/4 lb. butter or oleo melted
 in milk
 1-2 yeast cakes dissolved in water
 2 eggs beaten
 1 1/2 tbl salt
 1 C sugar
 7 cardamon seeds peeled and crushed
 6-8 C flour

Let rise twice its bulk
 Divide dough into 6 parts
 Braid loaf with 3 pieces
 (makes two loaves)

Bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour

Note: Mrs. Koopikka's nisua is a bit less "airy" than many which are baked in this area.

Rieska

2 C white flour
 1 C barley flour
 2 tsp baking powder
 1/2 tsp salt
 1 C buttermilk (or more)
 4 tsp oleo

Mix flours and oleo- also baking powder and salt
 Fold in the buttermilk
 Roll out and prick with a fork
 Bake 400 degrees for 25 min.
 Makes 2 rieskas

Pannukakku

4 eggs beaten well
 1/4 C sugar
 1/4 tsp salt
 1 1/3 C flour
 lastly 1 qt. milk

Mix and beat well
 Melt 1 stick oleo in 13x9 pan
 pour dough into pan after oleo is melted
 Bake 45 min. at 400 degrees to start,
 reduce to 375-350.
 Sprinkle with sugar when baked or eat with jam
 on top.

Note: This recipe is more like custard than many others.