
# Minnesota Works Progress Administration: Writers Project Research Notes.

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# WHERE THEY CAME FROM

Where the Finns first came from is a story lost in the mists of pagan Europe. It is a story hard to read, written only in broken pottery, stone and bronze implements, in the measurements of skull bones, and in similarities and differences of language. These fragmentary pages of history are scattered over much of Russia as well as Finland - and sometimes they contradict each other.

For a time anthropologists classified the Finns as Mongolian in origin, since some have round heads and slanted eyes, but that theory has now been largely rejected. Finns themselves have never regarded it with enthusiasm. Their language, classed by philologists as belonging to the Finno-Ugric group, gives them kinship to the Esthonians, the Magyars of Hungary and a number of smaller tribes scattered from Central Asia to the Baltic and Northwestern Russia. Burial mounds along the Volga River are believed to be the work of the early Finns.[1.]

The history is often confusing, but certain things seem more certain than others. One is that the Finns originally lived somewhere in Russia along the Volga, and that the gradual drying up of the steppes drove them west and north, until two of the Finnish tribes entered the forested lakeland which was to be their home.[2.] Of these two tribes, the Hamalaiset or Tavasts, making up a great majority of the population of the country, inhabit the southern and western parts of the Republic of Finland, while the Karjalaiset or Karelians,

1. Passim
2. Hardie Smith, Ethnic Origin of Finns Mss (no title) M. W. P., 1938.

live in the east and north, as well as in parts of Russia bordering on Finland. Perhaps hundreds of years elapsed before the Finnish tribes finally began to settle down in what resembled a fixed habitat. At its most recent stage, their European migration did not stop until hundreds of years after the beginning of the Christian era.[3.]

The land in which they settled was not one to nurture weaklings. Lakes covered almost an eighth of the country, and considerably more of the soil was swampy. The land area was densely forested, rivers were short and turbulent, the soil sandy and poor, while the land was strewn with boulders and outcroppings of the granite bedrock jutted through the thin surface soil. The winters were long and cold, and even in the summer there were sharp temperature changes, with always the possibility of frost. An austere land, it weeded out all who were not strong and able and left a sturdy race, well fitted when the time came to colonize the Minnesota Arrowhead region, where the rocks and soil, the lakes and the hard winters are so like those of the old country.[4.]

To their neighbors these people were known as Fenni or swampdwellers. In their own tongue the name of their land was Suomi, from suo, swamp, and maa, land, while the people were called Suomalaiset or dwellers in the swampland.[5.]

Among the lakes they underwent a gradual transition; from a nomadic and pastoral people, they became farmers with fixed dwellings. The forests supplied plenty of game and the lakes were full of fish, but the soil did not produce abundantly, even when fertilized with the ashes of forest fires.

The early Finn lived a semi-barbaric life; he did not have a written language, and contented himself with his hunting, fishing and planting, while

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3. John Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, (Hancock, Michigan, 1924) p. 23.
4. Passim
5. Wargelin, op. cit., p. 22.

the forces that marched and counter-marched over Europe passed him by in his out-of-the-way corner of the continent. Those who lived along the coast took to the sea and roved up and down the Baltic, preying as pirates on shipping and robbing the coastal towns. It was only with the coming of the Swedes that the horizon of the Finn broadened beyond his homeland and adjacent waters.[6.]

That happened in 1157. The Swedes had been caught up in the crusading spirit sweeping Europe; besides that, they were exasperated by the border raids of the Finns. Finally Erik IX of Sweden crossed the Gulf of Bothnia with an armed expedition, stopping offshore long enough to give the Finns the choice of fighting or becoming Christians. The Finns fought, and lost. They were baptized, and Erik entrusted their salvation to Henry, English-born Bishop of Upsala.[7.]

Henry was zealous but reckless. His enthusiasm in overthrowing the Finnish deities earned him the enmity of the people. The inevitable happened; Henry was assassinated. Out of martyrdom grew his acceptance as the patron saint of Finland, but missionary work declined after his death. It took two more Crusades during the next century, in 1249 and 1293, to finish converting the Finns to the Roman Catholic church and eliminate any possibility of successful proselyting by the Orthodox church of the Russians.[8.]

From that time the church of Finland was firmly bound with that of Sweden. When the Reformation came to the latter country, it came also to Finland. Sweden adopted the Lutheran faith for the entire nation, including Finland, in 1527. Today the nation is overwhelmingly Lutheran; 97 per cent belonging to that faith, while only 1.7 per cent are members of the Greek Orthodox church, and a negligible .02 per cent give allegiance to Roman Catholicism.[9.]

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6. Passim
7. Aleksi Lehtchen, Church of Finland (Helsinki, 1927); C. J. A. Oppermann, The English Missionaries in Sweden and Finland (New York, 1937) p. 199; et. al.

Underneath his Christian faith, however, the Finn feels a deep reverence for nature, and mingled with his Christian beliefs, there remain vestiges of primitive memories of the days when he was a pagan worshipping woodland deities.

The coming of the Swedes brought more than a religious revolution to the Finns. In Viipuri, at the head of the head of the Gulf of Finland, the Hanseatic League established its gateway to the interior of Russia, while Turku also served as one of the ports through which Russian trade flowed and in time came to be the market outlet for goods from the interior of Finland.[10]

The Swedish Helsings established themselves on the western, south-western and part of the southern coast of Finland, in colonies which extended about eighteen miles inland. They took over most of the mercantile interests of Finland, and have maintained their supremacy almost down to the present. Bitterness often has existed between Swedes and Finns, and divided them into two camps, the Svekomans of Swedish extraction, and the Fennomans who stem from the original Finns. The Svekomans, with their traditions of Swedish literary, social and political superiority, were constantly striving to dominate the Fennomans, who for their part clung just as stubbornly to the Finnish language and culture.[11]

Although the political power of the Svekomans in Finland persisted, the strength of the Swedish nation itself began to wane, until finally, after a series of wars between Russia and Sweden, Finland in 1809 became a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Internally this meant little change for the Finnish people, at least for several generations. Finland owed allegiance to the Czar of Russia, not as emperor, but only as Grand Duke of Finland. The nation had been promised autonomy when it allied itself with Russia, with the

8. Opperman, op. cit.; Wargelin, op. cit., p. 29.
9. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 9, 14th edition.
10. Hardie Smith, op. cit., p. 5.
11. H. Montague Donner, "The Young Finland and the National Spirit", Outlook Vol. 73 (Jan. 3, 1903) pp. 123-124.

privilege of having its own parliament, its own courts and laws, its own church and language. The Finns thought the change marked the beginning of a new era, but the reality fell short of the promise. There were alternating periods of Russian liberality and oppression, but it was only in 1863, during the reign of the enlightened Alexander II, that the Finns were given the full measure of the promised autonomy.[12]

In 1835 occurred one of those apparently minor events which can change the whole outlook and even the history of a nation. That year Dr. Elias Lonnrot published the first half of the 50 runes of the Kalevala, the epic of the Finnish people. Before that time it had existed only in scattered verses and fragments. Lonnrot traveled among the Karelian people of eastern Finland, living in peasant cabins, eating peasant food, and hearing the songs from the lips of the old runesingers. He collected the runes and organized them into the complete Kalevala epic. The effect on the nation was overwhelming. An awareness of themselves as a homogeneous people with a history and culture of their own swept over the Finns, a realization that they were folk with a background antedating the Swedish and Russian rule. The Kalevala probably did more to make the Finns nationality-conscious and to knit them into one people than almost any other event that has occurred in their history.[13]

American literature knows the Kalevala indirectly. Longfellow got his inspiration for "The Song of Hiawatha" directly from it; the metre of the two is exactly the same, and some of the adventures of Hiawatha were inspired by events in the lives of the Finnish heroes.[14]

Publication of the Kalevala brought about an immediate and remarkable gain in the Fennoman influence as a cultural factor in Finland. Previously,

12. "Finland's Poetry and Politics", Review of Reviews, Vol. 71, (Jan.-June, 1925), pp. 660-661.
13. Rene Puaux, "Finnish Literature", International Quarterly, Vol. VIII, pp. 108-112; Hermione Ramsden, "The Literature of Finland", The Living Age, 7th Series, Vol. SSv, No. 243 (1904), pp. 833-834, Newsweek, Vol. 5 (Mar. 9, 1935), p. 15, et. al.

Finnish literature had been a monopoly of the Swedish-Finns. Their poets, Runeberg, Cygnaeus, Topelius and others had been producing beautiful poetry, and, since the large universities at Helsingfors and Abo (Turku) taught only in Swedish, it appeared that the supremacy of the Swedish element would continue.[15] The Kalevala changed the complexion of the case.

The Swedish-Finns still retained their commercial and industrial dominance and continued to represent the aristocracy of the nation. However, their authority over literature and culture had been challenged. Intense rivalry between the Svekoman and Fennoman factions broke out, and there was much bitterness until the renewal of oppressive measures by the Russian government united the two groups. They gradually forgot their language differences and began to work together under the motto: "Two tongues, one thought."[16] The common peril and suffering of the new conflict which ended with the Russo-Finnish treaty of 1940 may have served to wipe out what little antagonism still remained.

The language a Finn speaks is no longer dependable evidence of his origin. Many who today speak Swedish are of Finnic nationality, while large numbers of those whose ancestors came from Sweden have adopted the Finnish tongue from their neighbors. Intermarriage, too, has served to wipe out many of the original differences. Today about one-tenth of the Finnish nation speaks Swedish, and both Finnish and Swedish are sanctioned as official languages. It is this duality of tongues which gives rise to the practice of having two names for many cities: Helsingfors and Helsinki, Viborg and Viipuri, Hangö and Hanko. Either form is correct.[17]

14. Eugene Van Cleef, "Finnish Poetry", The Scientific Monthly, Vol. 15 (July, 1922), p. 51.
15. "Finland's Poetry and Politics," Review of Reviews, Vol. 71 (Jan.-June 1925), p. 660.
16. Puaux, op. cit. 110.
17. Passim.

The period of comparative satisfaction with Muscovite rule ended rudely in the last quarter of the century. Alexander III, less liberal than his father, revoked many of the liberties that the Finns had enjoyed under Alexander II, perhaps taking his cue from the fact that his father in 1878, during the closing years of his reign, had imposed compulsory military service upon the Grand Duchy.[18]

One of the deepest hopes of the Finnish people in the union with Russia had been that it would mean the end of the wars which had laid waste so much of Finland. When the growing Swedish power was extending itself down the Baltic coast, there had been constant need for men, men to fight on a hundred fields and die for Swedish glory. Later, when Sweden's power was declining, Finland had to bear for her the brunt of the invading Russian armies until Finnish farms and cities were laid waste, and the country, already poor, was still further impoverished.

The farms of Finland, it is true, supplied a strong, sturdy people who could fight well and die without too much fuss. But after spending generations fighting Sweden's wars, they were not now disposed to fight for Russia. Many Finns left the country to avoid the obnoxious military service; it was during this period that emigration to the United States began to swell.[18]

It was not that the Finns were lacking in courage. The Finns have written their courage indelibly into the chronicles of national heroism. But continually marching off to other people's wars, wars in which they had no interest, instilled in them a deep hatred of warfare.[19] During the World War there were many Minnesota Finns who refused military service and were denounced as slackers. Finnish history helps to explain their refusal to fight without some better reason than the mere fact that everyone around them was marching.

18. "Finland's Earlier History," Literary Digest, Vol. 61 (June 28, 1919) p. 84.
19. Wargelin, op. cit., p. 41.

Nicholas II continued the peremptory policies of his predecessor. The two official tongues of the country, Finnish and Swedish, were replaced by Russian, which no one understood, as the official language, the Diet was abolished and the Finnish Lutheran church was subordinated to Greek Orthodoxy. As his Governor-General of Finland, Nicholas appointed the notorious Bobrikoff, who relentlessly pushed the policy of Russification, and the Finns soon came to know the hard-riding Cossacks with their whips.[20]

In 1899, under Nicholas II, the Finnish army was abolished completely,[21] and Finns were forced to serve in Russian regiments. Until then the Finnish soldier, no matter how distasteful he found army service, had served under his own officers, among soldiers who were also Finns and spoke his language. Now he was commanded by Russian officers and quartered with Russian soldiers whose tongue was strange.[22] Emigration increased sharply again, rising toward the peak it was to reach in two or three more years.

The Finns, stung to desperation by the Czar's legislation and the Cossack knouts, finally countered with the murder of Bobrikoff by a young Finnish patriot in 1904. The murmurings of discontent had grown into sullen rumble during the preceding years; the Unions, though outlawed, developed strength, and in 1905 a national strike and passive resistance nullified enforcement of the Czar's designs. Finnish protest was successful; with the end of the Russo-Japanese war there was a lessening of Russian pressure, the Diet was reorganized, and universal suffrage was adopted.[23]

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20. Eugene Van Cleef, "Emigration of the Finns", Outlook, Vol. 65 (May 5 - Aug. 25, 1900), p. 896; et. al.
21. Wargelin, op. cit., p. 41.
22. Eugene Van Cleef, "Finland - The Republic Farthest North; The Nation, Vol. 75 (July 17, 1902), p. 45, et. al.
23. Van Cleef, op. cit.; "Otto Vilmi, Early History of the Development of the Finnish Labor Movement" in Background of the Finnish Civil War, Arne Halonen, ed. (Superior).

But the respite was short-lived. Another period of friction with the Russian government began within the next few years, and continued until the World War and the collapse of imperial Russia gave Finland an opportunity to declare its independence in December, 1917. It proved at first an uneasy independence. There was a strong Socialist leaning among a large part of the Finnish people, and the Socialist group, seeing what appeared to be the dawning of a new era of equality and opportunity for the worker and peasant in Russia, attempted to ally Finland to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Aided by the Russian Bolsheviki, Finnish Communists created a revolution early in 1918. A short but bloody civil war was fought. The Finnish Whites, with the help of a German expeditionary force, won. Finland decided to become a kingdom, and a Hohenzollern prince was chosen ruler. But he never entered Finland to reign. Baron Mannerheim was appointed regent. German and Russian intrigue continued to stir up confusion, corruption and internal strife in the new nation.[24.]

Finland had been under foreign domination for centuries. Having attained nominal independence, the Finns now determined to make it real. Foreign elements gradually were rooted out, and on July 17, 1919 a republic was declared and Mannerheim stepped out of his regency. With the passing of a few years most of the animosity of the civil war was conciliated, and a genuine democracy came into control.[25.]

With such a history, there is little cause to worry about our Finnish immigrants failing to become democratic citizens in a democratic country. Even under the rule of despots they remained democratic, to such a degree that they were willing to fight for independence.

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24. Passim.
25. Passim.

## Suomi, the Swampland

History is most spectacular in the annals of kings and conquerors, but her feet are always firmly on the soil, for peoples fight more willingly for their homes than for all the dynasties. In seeking the history of a nation, one must search its soil and its cottages as well as the ruins of its king's court.

The land to which the Finns originally came was partially covered with heavy forests and lush grassy meadows. But it grew crops poorly. The same glacial action that had dug out and dammed up its uncounted thousands of lakes (one authority says "at least a quarter of a million") had also covered the ground with sand and gravel, strewing it with boulders, and in places laying bare the gneiss and granite bedrock. Almost 12 per cent of the area is lake, about 31 per cent swamp and peat land, with additional large tracts neither swampy nor dry. More than three-quarters of the land may be classified as "wet."[26.]

The forests, lakes and grass meadows provided an adequate source of food for the early Finns and their livestock, but as the population grew it became necessary to farm the land more intensively - and Suomi does not lend itself to intensive cultivation. The sandy soil supports excellent forest growth, but grain and other food crops have a hard time to grow.

Therefore, the practice of burn-beating arose, that prodigal use of the forests as fertilizer. The trees on a given area were felled and allowed to dry out two years. Then they were set on fire, and the flames cleared the land of both trees and underbrush. The flaky wood ashes made a rich fertilizer, and the soil then could support a fair growth of grain crops. After a

26. Eugene Van Cleef, "The Finn in America", The Geographical Review Monthly, Vol. 6 (Sept., 1918), p. 195.

few years, however, ther fertility of the land again was exhausted and the cattle were turned into the clearing to graze there for several years, while the forests gradually were allowed to reclaim the land again. When the trees had grown high, the land was once more ready to have the curious cycle of spoliation and production repeated.[27.]

Frost is the great enemy of the Finnish farmer, and one against which it is hard to fight. During any month of the growing season there is always the possibility that the peasant will wake some morning to find his crops blackened by freezing. And when the rye and barley freezes, he faces another winter of pittura, bread made of bark and pounded straw, with only enough flour to hold it together. The sky of Finland is cloudy, sometimes half the days of the year; the grain ripens slowly when deprived of the weak rays of the northern sun; and when the crops are even slightly retarded there is danger of frost. The farmer plants his grain on the tops and sides of hills where the wind can sweep over it and drive away the frost, but he gets a poor yield on this sterile land while the richer soil of the bottomland expends it fertility on meadow growth.[28.]

More land is given over to hay than to any other crop - 43 per cent of all the farmed land. Haying, like all other farming in Finland, is more difficult than in the United States. After the hay is cut, it is draped on the waist-high drying racks that are a part of every hay meadow in Finland, so that it will shed water and cure without mildewing. Rye was introduced by the Swedes in the thirteenth century; the Kalevala sings of its coming. Rye today forms the Finnish staff of life, covering 11 per cent of the farmed land.

27. Hardie Smith, "The Land of the Finns", Mss. MWP 1938, p. 8.
28. Ibid, pp. 3, 4, 8.

Oats, used for feeding the stock, is grown on 19 per cent of the cultivated land, and barley on 5 per cent. Barley was the grain brought by the aboriginal Finns; in the north it is heavily relied on because it is most resistant to the always threatening frosts. Fields of wheat are almost a stranger to the Finnish landscape; it is a crop only recently introduced, and only one-half of one per cent of the arable land knows the spiked wheat plant. Many Finns who settled in Minnesota at a time when it could boast of mile after mile of waving wheatfields had never known the taste of white bread, and recall that the loaves first seemed to them a sort of cake. Potatoes are also an important crop. The Finnish farmer raises a few other vegetables, and in some places flax for its fiber. These are the crops of Finland, and although the northern republic is an agricultural nation, it does not yield enough food for its own people. Food must be imported, since the crops which the farmer raises are consumed almost entirely on his own farm.[29.]

The bulk of his cash income is from cattle and, in the north, reindeer. In southern Finland the farmer raises the distinctive Finnish breed of cattle, a variety bred almost entirely for its milk-producing qualities and seldom used for meat. The Finnish cow is a heavy butterfat producer, supplying the butter which is almost the only important export of the farm. In the north the reindeer is raised for its meat as well as for milk.[30.]

The Finnish farmer likes to build his farm on the side of a hill by a lake if possible, of the logs which are so plentiful. The first building put up on a new farm is the sauna or bath-house, which marks the home of the

29. Ibid, p. 8.
30. Ibid, p. 9, 10.

Finn no matter in what land he may live. He stays in it until the house is finished. Usually there are many buildings: the house, the sauna, a granary or two, the livestock barn, sometimes a small hut for guests, and odds and ends of sheds, and scattered through the hay meadows, several hay barns, with their sides characteristically sloping inward toward the bottom, with wide chinks to insure free drying of the hay. The granary may contain a fireplace without a chimney since the grain often must be dried by artificial heat before it can be threshed.[31] The sauna and the slope-sided barn are signs of the Finnish settler in Minnesota, especially in the Arrowhead.

This is the Finnish farm, usually less than sixty acres. These little tracts are the livelihood of two-thirds of the people; at the time of the great migrations to this country as many as eleven-twelfths of the people were gaining their bread from the farms.[32] But even when it is worked with so much labor, the soil of Finland is a poor provider, and the farmer usually has to turn somewhere else to make up the difference between a bare, hungry subsistence and a moderately comfortable living. During the long northland winters, when the swamps and lakes are frozen over, he can often hire out to a lumbering crew for a season's work in the woods.[33]

It is in its timber resources that the economic future of the nation seems to lie. There are miles upon miles of splendid pine, spruce and birch, which, with a wise program of reforestation, can be made to last indefinitely. Over half the wood cut is burned in the country for fuel. Even the railroads fire their locomotives with it, because coal is scarce. Another tenth is

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31. Ibid, p. 7.
32. "Emigration of the Finns", p. 895.
33. Hardie Smith, "The Land of the Finns", Mss., p. 12.

shipped out as timber, and a quarter is processed in the factories and exported as plywood, woodpulp, cardboard and wood specialties.[34.]

However, there is none of that indiscriminate and senseless cutting which despoiled the fine forests of Minnesota and most of our other states. Government regulation is strict, and began at a surprisingly early date. Even in the Middle Ages there was a heavy demand for the forests of Finland, and the first law curtailing their use was passed in 1600, setting an annual limit of 10,000 logs for every sawmill, and establishing a cutting season, at the end of which the saws were sealed to prevent evasion of the law. Burn-beating was prohibited almost a hundred years ago. Today there are laws that protect the forests and insure that they will always be maintained. Actually, the annual cut is far below the limit set by the government to insure perpetual replenishment, and the forest grows at a faster rate than it is cut down. Over 38 per cent of the timber land is owned by the government, which competes directly with private business in its timber cutting operations.[35.]

There was a time when the making of wood tar was very important, and it still remains one of the most picturesque industries of Finland, from the burning of the logs in earthen kilns to the reckless ride of the tar-boats, piled high with barrels, down the swirling streams. Some forest areas were stripped almost bare by the tar-makers, whose product went to the ship chandlers of Europe. With the coming of the steel ship and the discovery of coal tar the industry went into a decline, although it still exists, and some wood tar still passes across the borders.[36.]

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34. Ibid, p. 13.
35. Ibid, p. 12.
36. Ibid, p. 13.

The Finns fish the seas off their shores; they make part of their own textiles in large modern factories; they have established steamship lines that reach out over the seas of the earth, and they do some mining. But most of these industries are part of a Finland that few of the Finns in Minnesota have ever seen. These broadenings of the base of Finnish economy are a recent development, which was barely getting under way at the time the Finns were migrating in large numbers to America, and did not become important until after the nation had escaped for the first time from the stultifying influence of a backward Russia.

The Minnesota Finns are almost as wellknown for their cooperatives as for their saunas. These cooperatives are in part the outgrowth of isolation in the back reaches of the Arrowhead where cooperation was a necessity to survival, and in part of habits whose roots are in Finland.

The cooperative movement in Finland which was really established in 1899 although it had been tried several times in the previous forty years, extends into general merchandise stores, dairies, restaurants, groceries, bakeries, rural banks, agricultural machine-buying societies, peat moss societies, wholesale houses and export firms dealing in agricultural goods. They are ideally organized; Elanto, for instance, a retail distributor with business chiefly in Helsinki, owns bakeries, drug stores, shoe stores, cafes and restaurants, a department store, a delivery fleet, a brewery, and sausage and jam factories. Valio, the pride of the Finnish cooperative movement, a producers' organization, handles 85 per cent of the total Finnish export of butter.

37. Ibid, p. 18.

These cooperatives have their following mainly among the people of moderate means,[38] the majority of them farmers. In 1938 there were more than 6,000 registered cooperatives, with a total membership of more than 800,000. They transact about 25 per cent of the retail trade, and 60 per cent of the wholesale trade of the country.[39]

The Finns are not a city-dwelling people. In 1920 only 16 per cent lived in cities. Helsinki, the capital and largest city, is about the size of St. Paul, with a population somewhat under 300,000.[40] So when they came to America the Finns settled largely in the rural areas; the same qualities that made them cling to the soil in Finland drew them to the land here, away from the crowded cities.

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38. Ibid, p. 18.
39. World Almanac, 1939, p. 228.
40. Hardie Smith, "The Land of the Finns", Mss., p. 17.

## Why the Finns Emigrated

For many reasons, then, Finland was a land where the margin between comfort and hunger was a narrow one, with nature always threatening to wipe out that margin. A frost when the rye was heading out, or a wet and cloudy summer, and there would ensue another winter of trying to stave off famine with straw-and-bark bread. And the Russian oppressors, almost as harsh as the weather, made life in the home country unbearable for many a proud Finn.

The Finns are not entirely newcomers to America. At the time Sweden was attempting to build a colonial empire along the Delaware River, there were Finns among the Swedish colonists. There still exist in New Jersey one or two place names going back to the Finns of New Sweden. It was not a large immigration, and most of the Finns came as slaves or indentured servants to the Swedish overlords. They lost their identity as Finns, their customs and language being swallowed up in the great Americanizing influences that swept over them long before the Revolution. There are Finns who are known as such in New Jersey today, but they are distinct from that migrant group of the 1600's.[41]

Finnish immigration into the New World ended then, and did not begin again for almost two centuries. Between 1830-1850 a large number of Finnish colonists went to Alaska, where they became fishermen, hunters and foresters, and achieved some degree of prosperity. In its truest sense this was not an emigration to a new country, since both Finland and Alaska were parts of the Russian Empire.[42]

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41. The Swedes and Finns in New Jersey, American Guide Series, Federal Writers' Project, WPA, New Jersey (1938).
42. Maurice R. Davie, World Immigration (MacMillan, N. Y., 1936) p. 141; et al.

When the will-o'-the-wisp of quick riches in the California gold rush called men from the nations of the world to the West Coast in 1849, they came from the fields and forests of Finland with as much reckless hope as from elsewhere. Probably they suffered as much disappointment, too, and when the glow faded, some returned to Finland, while others scattered over the country. There is nothing permanent in such immigration, and what little mark the Finns may have made on our nation at that time has long since disappeared.[43]

Then, too, during the middle of the 19th century there was a small but constant infiltration of Finnish sailors who landed at our ports, deserted their ships, and entered into American life, leaving little record of themselves beyond the fact that they came. Many of them deserted from Russian ships during the Crimean war in 1855.[44]

None of the first minor migrations touched Minnesota, mainly because there was really no Minnesota to touch. There were then only a few trading posts, an army fort and, toward the end of the period, the beginnings of settlement and territorial government. But even while Minnesota was still a frontier state, the first stirrings of immigration from Europe were already under way.

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43. Ibid.
44. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, p. 52.

# MINNESOTA THRESHOLDS

Minnesota in 1864 was still lusty with young statehood. The frontier was ever in retreat, with expanding commerce dogging its heels; ox-carts creaked down the Pembina Trail with their loads of furs from the north; steamboats pushed their way through the shoals and bars of the larger streams and stages ran between the few important towns, while the first locomotive in the state was already rattling along a hundred miles of track.

St. Paul was growing almost visibly, Minneapolis and St. Anthony throve as neighboring villages, and busy living centered in the bawdy, roistering lumber towns, like Stillwater on the St. Croix.

The Sioux uprising was only two summers past. Indians roamed most of the state. On the table-flat Red River Valley the last herds of buffalo in Minnesota grazed, and mile after mile of rich prairie stretched open to the horizon, its tall grass mirroring each passing breeze.

But the opening of the land was going on at an increasing rate under the settlers' ax and plow-share. The ox-drawn breaking-plow sheared off the roots of the prairie grass, and turned the shining black underside of the sod to the sky in unbroken strips. . . .

This was the Minnesota to which the pioneer Finnish immigrants came in 1864.

The first Finnish immigration was unimpressive in size, and almost unnoticed among the great Scandinavian wave surging into the state. In fact, these Finns were called Norwegians in the records. They all came from northern Norway, where most of them had been living for a score or more of years.

The America fever struck the southern part of Norway first, and took almost a decade to spread to the fisher-folk of the north. When it did reach them, it affected Norwegian and Norwegian-Finn alike, and both came across in the same ships, with the Finns greatly outnumbered.[1.]

That summer of 1864 there were four small groups of Finns bound for Minnesota. All of them followed more or less the same route; after reaching Chicago they went by railroad to the Mississippi River, then boarded river steamers for Red Wing, where they halted long enough to ask the way and to gather their energies for the final stage of the journey to the new frontier.

In the first party to arrive were three men with families: Pere (Peter) Lahti, Matti Niemi and Antti Rovainen. Two others were single, Mikko Heikka and a fifth whose name is spelled variously Budas, Nulus and Pudas. Almost a man in his own right, Niemi's oldest son, Matti Nieme Jr., was eighteen or nineteen years old. The children were Nikolai Niemi, aged 10, Ida Juhanna Rovainen, ?, Kalle Niemi, only a few weeks old, and Maria Johanna Niemi, 16, who later married Mikko Heikka. Of these children, the first-named two are now, three-quarters of a century later, the only survivors of that first small group of immigrants.[2.]

Following closely those earliest comers was another group, a family of five and two single men; the married Matti Tiiperi, as well as his two bachelor companions, died in the cholera plague at Red Wing.[3.] Still a third

1. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 25-27,38
2. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 25, 132, 136; interviews with Nicholas Johnston (Nikolai Niemi), Ida J. Rovainen, et. al.
3. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 25, 143, Interview with J. E. Mattson (Tiiperi) of Cokato.

party had just left Vadso (Vesisari to the Finns) in Norway: Elias Peltopera, Esaias Kujala and Matti Maata,[4] of whom Peltopera and Maata reappear in the Cokato histories.

That same year, 1864, many Norwegian-Finnish miners were brought to Michigan from Altens and Kaafjord to work in the copper mines. These were the first Finns in Michigan. What later happened to them is unrecorded, except that a number are supposed to have joined the United States army during the Civil war, drifting after the war into Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri, where their identity was lost.[5] No doubt most of them wrote their histories in ax strokes and plow furrows, records that do not carry names. The Michigan copper country (Kuparisaari or "Copper-Island" to the Finns) is important in the history of the Finns of Minnesota. For many of the immigrants it was only a stopping place; after a few paydays, they moved on to the Minnesota settlements to buy land with their wages from the mines.

St. Peter in Nicollet County was the destination of the first party of Finns to arrive in Minnesota. The village sprawled along the Minnesota River, rough, unfinished, but busy, a typical frontier town. Its houses were nearly all slab or log, its streets alternately dust and mud. New settlers came on every boat that pushed its nose into the St. Peter landing, and on the ox-carts that creaked across country from the Mississippi River towns. St. Peter was a gateway to the new lands. As he climbed from the valley to the bluffs, the settler found himself at the threshold of the prairie, with grasslands stretching out to the rim of the sky, the beginning of the plains that reaches westward for hundreds of miles.

Arriving in St. Peter, the Finns stopped for a time with Norwegian friends who had preceded them, long enough to look around and get their bearings.

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4. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 25
5. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 65-73, 26.

That first summer the men hired out as farm hands, earning what money they could before taking their own claims.[6.]

The first Finnish birth in Minnesota occurred that same winter. John Abraham, son of Antti and Maria Rovainen, was born February 24, 1865. Hale and hearty at the age of 75, John Abraham Rovainen was recently interviewed at his home in Minneapolis. It is not surprising that his most vivid recollections are of the privations of his fatherless boyhood.[6a.] Of this we shall say more later.

Because they had lived in Norway long enough to learn Norwegian, the struggle of these earliest Finns with the English language was much easier than that of later immigrants who came directly from Finland. They had comparatively little difficulty making themselves understood in a region where one or another of the Scandianvian tongues was spoken in farm after farm out to the thin fringe of settlement on the west. Matti Niemi began his Americanization by changing his name to Matt Johnston, and his eldest son did likewise. His son Nilolai became Nicholas, and Kalle became Charles.

While the other men were working on the farms, Pere Lahti and Matt Johnston (Niemi) Jr. enlisted in the Union Army. Most of the patriots of St. Peter were too busy with the job of opening a new country to have time to fight in the Civil War. By the law of that time a drafted man could hire a substitute for military duty, and thus vicariously give his last full ounce of devotion. Loyal citizens of St. Peter even floated a bond issue to provide for the hiring of substitutes. Matt Johnston Jr. and Pere Lahti enlisted in the army in the fall of 1864: Johnston in Company A of the First Minnesota Infantry, Lahti in the First Minnesota Heavy Artillery. Neither saw actual service;[7.] both were in training in Chattanooga, Tennessee when peace came.

6. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 133.
6a. Interview with J. A. Rovainen, 254 Humboldt Ave. No., Minneapolis Nov. 20, 1939 - A. J. Sprang.

Free land was already growing scarce in the middle sixties, unless one went far to the west. Along the Minnesota River most of the prairie had been claimed, but the wooded river bottom lands were left and could still be homesteaded during and after 1864. From a Norwegian minister named Peterson the newcomers learned that there was still land to be secured in Birch Cooley and Camp Townships, near Fort Ridgley.[8] The Sioux, in 1862, had massacred many of the settlers in this region and devastated their homes; many more had fled and did not care to come back.

Peter Lahti -- he had anglicized the Pere to Peter - was one of the first to go to the furtinkonttri, or fort country, as the Finns called the region around Fort Ridgley. He filed his claim in St. Peter, and late in the summer of 1865 left for Franklin with his wife Johanna and their children. He built a cabin and a cattle shelter on his land, and that same fall Matt Johnston Sr. also came and stayed at Lahti's home before moving to his own land in Camp Township.[9] Another Finn arrived that summer, Matti Bogema, who brought his family; he had reached America from Norway a year after the first Finns but settled at Franklin the same year as they.[10] The village of Franklin was not laid out for some time, but soon after it was established in the northeast corner of Birch Cooley Township it became the center of the Finnish community.

We cannot trace with positive assurance the other two members of that first party, Mikko Heikka very likely filed his claim also in the fall of 1865 since he was one of the first settlers in the Franklin community. Of that other mysterious and name-heavy person, Solomon Budas (Nulus, Pudas), we know nothing. Dim rumor and hearsay speak of an Erick Nulus, a single

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7. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 133; Franklin Curtiss-Wedge and others, History of Renville County, (Chicago, 1916) 335, 336.
8. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 132.
9. Interview with Nicholas Johnston, Franklin, 1938
10. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 140; Interview with Isaac Bogema, Minneapolis, 1938.

laboring man who is said to have died at Franklin in the early 1870's, but there are no supporting records. Possibly this was he. The first name is different, but in the absence of other claimants, may we not, perhaps, grant him one more name as a parting gift? A man may die unpropertied yet full of honor, if he leaves a good name to go down in the books. And truly Solomon-Erick Nulus-Budas-Pudas left many.

With a Minnesota winter drawing on, cabins had to be built, and shelters for the settlers' cows. Ida Juhanna, daughter of Antti Rovainen, recalls some of the events of that first autumn 76 years ago; since she was only two years old at the time, they must be very dim memories, probably pieced out unconsciously with stories she has heard. Antti Rovainen worked on his claim, making a home while his family stayed at Fort Ridgley a dozen or so miles away. Both woods and prairie supplied the material for his cabin, for the Franklin settlement was on the fringe where river woods thinned out into the grasslands of the plain. He built his cabin of logs, roofing it over with prairie sod to form a crude shelter in which his family lived for many years. For his single cow he made a shed by driving stakes in a double row, about a foot apart around the space to be enclosed, and packing hay and refuse between the two rows of stakes to form the walls of the shelter. Some of the upright stakes were crotched and carried roof poles, on which rested a roof of branches, hay and rushes. It was the sort of cattle shelter which the Finns call a runsu navetta.[11] Both cabin and cowshed were crude, but so was the unsettled land. Refinements could come later.

The other settlers were also busy, building their cabins and cattle sheds and chinking them against the wind and snow, laying in wild hay and cutting cordwood to burn during the long winter. The bright, warm days of

11. Interview with Ida Juhanna Rovainen (Mrs. Erik Isakka), Minneapolis, 1938.

Indian Summer gave way to the grey skies of November, then snow came, and life settled down to the limits of cabin walls and the beaten paths to cow stable and wood pile. Evenings were long; the open fire burned at one end of the room, and under the door at the other the storm sifted a white spin-drift of snow. The howl of the wolf was a common sound and in the morning there were tracks of deer around the door.

Late that winter, on February 17, 1866, a baby boy was born to the wife of Matti Bogema.[12] The child, named Isaac, was the first Finnish baby born in Franklin, the second born in Minnesota. This was the first case for Maria, the wife of Antti Rovainen and a midwife by profession, the first Minnesota-born having been her own son, John Abraham.[13]

The Finnish settlement at Franklin was a fairly close-knit little community. Matt Johnston Sr. homesteaded in Camp Township, Section 5-112-33; his son, Matt Johnston Jr.'s claim was in Section 20-112-33, Camp Township, two miles away; Peter Lahti settled in Birch Cooley Township, Section 12-112-34;[14] and Matti Bogema had his claim on Section 1-112-34 in Birch Cooley Township, although he later sold that claim and moved farther away from town.[15] Mikko Heikka had not taken his homestead yet; in fact he worked only as a farmhand and trapper until 1872.[16] Nor has there been found the record of Antti Rovainen's claim.[17] But all the settlers lived within a mile or two of each other. Even so, the women were cast down in spirit over the rudeness of the land, and the lack of churches and neighbors, matters which, as Ida Juhanna Rovainen puts it, "gave rise to much crying and complaint and many tears among the women."

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12. Isaac Bogema
13. Interview with John Abraham Rovainen, Minneapolis, 1938.
14. Minnesota Historical Records Survey
15. Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County, P. 1291.
16. Isaac Bogema
17. Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County, 339.

When spring came, the work of breaking the land began in earnest. Arms grew tired holding the heavy plow in the ground, and legs wearied of plodding over the turned earth behind the oxen. The seed was broadcast by hand, taken from a sack at the wrist and flung over the black earth with a wide sweep of the arm. Acre after acre was thus sown to wheat, a grain none of the Finns had known in the old country; here, it was the great cash crop. For their own use they grew oats and another grain that was strange to them, corn.[18] The prairies furnished wild hay in abundance; it was cut and stacked by hand, and a firebreak plowed around the stack to protect it against prairie fires.

The first crop was harvested in the fall of 1866. It was reaped with a scythe, and threshed by placing the stalks in a circle with the heads pointing in, then leading oxen over it to trample the kernels loose from the heads. The winnowing was done by hand in the wind, and the grain needed for household use was ground in a little kitchen coffee grinder.[19]

The district where the Finns had settled was not in itself an in hospitable one. Part woods, part prairie, it provided them with the wood and lumber they needed, with plenty of open land, wanting only the plow to make it ready for planting.

Along the bottomlands there were large thickets of wild red plums; gathering these was one of the rare recreations of the community. The woods were full of wild grapes, the prairies covered with wild strawberry plants.

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18. John Abraham Rovainen
19. Ida Juhanna Rovainen Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II 134

Little of this fruit was canned, because the cost of sugar was high, but wine and grape juice were put up in large quanties.[20]

Meat, too, was already there, though the settlers seldom went hunting; gunpowder and guns were too expensive for that. Wild ducks and prairie chickens were snared for food. And the muskrats that were trapped served a twofold end: the pelts were sold and provided a much-needed source of revenue, while the meat was used for food. Early settlers recall muskrat meat as a staple dish. One winter the white swallows were so numerous they became a nuisance. Thousands of them were caught in snares, and for weeks they were the principal food on immigrant tables. The swallows were small birds, about a tubful being required to make a meal for five or six persons, but nothing could be overlooked which offered an opportunity to save money.[21.]

Besides muskrats, the settlers trapped foxes, mink, weasels and otter in large numbers.[22.] At times the country seemed over-run with skunks. Peter Lahti hunted for years on the north side of Bird Island Lake some fifteen miles to the north, and Mikko Heikka made his living during the winters for a number of years by trapping.[23.] It was an important source of revenue in a country where ready money was so seldom seen.

As the land became settled and cultivated the native fruit and berries and wild animals grew scarcer, but by the time they became scarce the urgent need for them had passed.

Farming was primitive, in the beginning and remained so for years. The first breaking plow was pulled by oxen, and for a long time there was no other fraft animal. The ox was used both in the field work and as a means of travel.[25.] Horses were hardly seen the first fifteen years or more.

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20. John Abraham Rovainen
21. " " "
22. " " "
23. Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County, 335, 339.
25. John A. Rovainen

More Finns came to Minnesota in 1865, nearly all of them landing at Red Wing before either striking out across country by ox-cart or taking a steamboat up the river to the frontier. Red Wing was a tragic stopping place; cholera raged there during those early summers and many of the Finns died. Among those who pushed on to the Franklin settlement in the summer of 1866 were Antti Anderson (Koivuniemi), the ill-fated Gus Friska (Kustaa Sukki), Olli Niemi, possibly a Peter Klemetti, and a few others.[26] By now there were also Finnish settlements at Cokato in Wright County and at Holmes City in Douglas County, and Finns were going from Red Wing to all three localities. Most of them still came from Norway, crossing northern Norway on skis, by dog team, on foot, or in any other way that was handy, to take ship from a Norwegian port.[27] But as stories of the new country spread to friends and relatives, more and more from Finalnd itself and from the Finnish areas on the Swedish side of the Tornio River.

In 1867 Antti Rovainen died, leaving his wife with a half-finished homestead and two children. Maria went ahead with the breaking of the land. A resourceful woman of indomitable will, she soon had two yoke of oxen on her land.[28] She continued to work the claim until she gained legal title to it.

Maria Rovainen had learned to read in Norway, and became known among the settlers for her interest in books. She not only taught her own children to read, but was entrusted with the teaching of the other Finnish children. For texts she used religious books, the only available works in the Finnish language. Starting with the Bible and the Katekismus, she rounded out the youngsters' education with a thorough course in Martin Luther's works. All this she did in addition to managing her farm and carrying on her profession of midwife.[29]

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26. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 132, 136, 138
27. " " " , Vol. II, 18, 28.
28. John A. Rovainen, Ida J. Rovainen.
29. Ida J. Rovainen

After a few years of widowhood, Maria married again. Her second husband was Gus Friska (Kustaa Sukki), whose first wife, Briita, and five children had died of the Cholera in Red Wing.[30] Three of his surviving children had been adopted by other families, a girl had continued in school, and one boy, who was deaf and dumb, came to live with his father and stepmother, but ran away after a time and was never heard of again. Friska, when he appeared in Franklin, arrived in unusual style. He drove a horse, and almost unheard of luxury among the Finnish settlers, and rode in a wagon whose wheels were blocks cut from a log, perhaps two feet high and a full foot thick.

But Gus Friska's sands were running low, and he was to lose his own life as tragically as he had lost his first wife and children. In May 1872, his wife's claim having been sold, he left with his stepson, John Abraham Rovainen, for Dakota Territory, where he was joined, in September of the same year, by his wife and the other children. During the winter Friska returned to Franklin to collect some money still due from the sale of the homstead. On the return trip to Dakota he was lost in a blizzard and no trace of him was ever found.[31]

Once again Mother Rovainen-Friska, born Maria Matleena Helppi, was left a widow, but now with two more children, one born after her husband's death. In 1874 she returned with the family to Franklin, where shortly afterward she married Andrew Anderson (Antti Koivuniemi), and by him had two more children, one of whom died. Anderson's death in 1912 left her thrice-widowed; two years later she herself died.[32]

30. John and Ida Rovainen; Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 149
31. John A. Rovainen, Ida J. Rovainen.
32. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 135; John and Ida Rovainen.

If this full-lived record were not enough to stamp her an unusual woman, Maria Rovainen was also reputed to have mystic powers. Impending death, it is said, made itself known to her through signs and dreams, and she could "fence in" a grazing cow merely by walking a circle around it in the morning when she put it out; in the evening it would still be browsing within the charmed enclosure.[33]

The early Finns were in earnestabout their lore of wizardy and witchcraft. There were others of the Franklin community who claimed to have supernatural powers. Nils Alarick Olson (Folkki), who came to Franklin in 1870 after four years in Cokato, could, so say some who knew him, keep prairie fires from touching a haystack by walking a circle around it. When the fire reached his tracks it died out.[34] One John Wittikko was supposed to have even more intimate command of occult forces. He cured animals with charms he had learned from long study of the Bible. When a neighbor would come to ask Wittikko to do a piece of work, he would find John with his tools all packed, ready to go. And he, like Maria Rovainen could foretell death. One day Wittikko arrived at the home of Nicholas Johnston covered with perspiration, caused, so he said, by having had to fight his way through thousands of little people who were thronging across the road. These little folk, he explained were going to the cemetery, and their migration foretold the death of a child. Not long afterward a child in the neighborhood did die. These and other stories are told of Wittikko.[35] The old gods of the Kalevala did not wholly die with the coming of Christianity, nor with the Finns' migration across an alien sea.

The memory of the first Finnish child, John Abraham Rovainen, who was born in St. Peter in 1865, bridges the gap between pioneer days and the present. Naturally, he remembers nothing of the very first years, but his recollections

33. Ida J. Rovainen.
34. Ida J. Rovainen.
35. Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County,

do go back to a time when the region was still new and most of the land was uncleared brush or unbroken prairie.

Rovainen was ten years old at the time the first Finnish minister came to Franklin in 1875. Cokato by then had outstripped Franklin as a Finnish center, and had a substantial Finnish Lutheran congregation. Jacob Wuollet (Vuollet) of Cokato conducted the first service, assisted by Isak Barberg and Johan P. Marttala. The latter afterwards became minister at Franklin, moving there to farm in 1875; he worked the land during the week, and preached on Sunday. The communicants at that first service were Matt Johnston Sr., Matt Johnston Jr. and his wife, Mikko Hekka, Mrs. Marjaleena Anderson, Mrs. John Wuoppola, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Johnson, and the Lahti and Bogema families.[36.]

The visits of the minister during these first years were few and far between. On each trip he was "put up" by some member of the community, and a collection was taken to pay him. With a congregation as small and poor as this one was, such collections must have been pitifully meager. The minister's chief dependence for support and livelihood was upon his congregation at Cokato.[37.]

But in the 1860's, even before the coming of the first minister, revival meetings were being held in family homes. The first record of communicants shows that 18 women and 22 men went to communion in 1872.[38.] Later, visiting ministers came to town to hold revival series which lasted a week, and sometimes even longer.[39.]

The first settlers were all, or almost all, members of the Apostolic Lutheran church, followers of the doctrine of Laestadius. This was the dominant

36. Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County, 336.
37. John A. Rovainen.
38. Minnesota Historical Records Survey, Renville County.
39. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 135

religious creed in the northern provinces of Finland, as well as among the Finns in Norway and Sweden. One of the early settlers was Angeliga Charlotta Jokela, nee Laestadius, daughter of the founder of the Laestadian doctrine, who with her husband came to Franklin about 1880. She was a strict follower of her father's precepts, and corrected the other settlers when they misinterpreted them.[40]

The ministers, following the practice of the Apostolic church, were laymen. They farmed during the week, and changed from overalls to frock coat on Sunday. Following Marttala, John O. Isaacson came to Franklin in 1878, after having lived five years in Cokato. Isaac W. Rovainen - like Isaacson, he was born in Sweden - came to this country in 1886, and after mining two years in Michigan and five years in the Black Hills, he moved to Franklin. From 1902 until his death in 1915 Rovainen acted as elder and reader in the Apostolic church.[41] The church building had been erected three or four years after the coming of the first minister. It was a crude structure; all the members of the community had assisted in its building.[42]

Time and opportunity for recreation were rare in Franklin, and the settlers depended on the church for relaxation as well as salvation. Revival meetings were a release for their emotions, a welcome change from endless work. But these Finnish settlers were strict in their tenets, and merry-making was a sin.

John Abraham Rovainen was eighteen years old before there was any large community gathering. That was in 1883, on July 4. From his account, it was a typical Fourth of July celebration with speeches and patriotic

40. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 138.
41. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 135, 137, 140; Curtiss-Wedge, History of Renville County, 335, 343.
42. John A. Rovainen.

exercises and a picnic dinner afterwards, followed by an afternoon of visiting and comparing crops and ideas.[43] The Finns by then were becoming Americanized. After such a day, we can imagine them yoking the oxen or harnessing the horses again, and rattling back over the prairie, to milk the cows and feed the chickens and get to bed early. The hay on the west forty is dry, and a lost day must be made up. Blow out the lamp, and go outside to take another look at the farm. Somewhere across the field a dog is barking after a rabbit. The frogs are croaking in the slough. Tomorrow there will be work again. . . .

The fortunes of the pioneers fluctuated with business cycles, and with the caprices of nature. In 1874 a plague of locusts descended on Renville County and the southwestern part of the state. The voracious insects remained until 1877, doing enormous damage each season. Crops were scanty, when there were any at all; land and possessions were mortgaged, and savings for the purchase of land, stock and machinery were used up.

The locusts came during that period like a dark blizzard filling the air. When they fed they covered the ground two or three inches deep and the chewing of countless jaws grew into an incredible din. They left little or nothing, even pitchfork handles of hard hickory often being chewed into a roughness that left them useless. The plague was so serious that the state took a hand. Bounties were placed on locusts, and a dozen different devices used to kill them. Finally, after covering the corner of the state again in 1877, they rose into the air for some mysterious reason, and roared out of Minnesota, leaving no eggs and vanished as suddenly as they had appeared.[44]

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43. John A. Rovainen.
44. William W. Folwell, A History of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1926) Vol. III Chap. IV, 93ff. (map opposite p. 106)

John Abraham Rovainen was fifteen years old before his second stepfather, in 1880, bought a horse. It was one of the earliest in the community, although his first stepfather, Gus Friska, had come to Franklin with a horse a dozen years or so before. At the same time the family had some sixty head of sheep and a herd of twenty-five cattle, besides a few chickens. In addition to their grain and livestock, they also raised potatoes and vegetables such as rutabagas, turnips and pumpkins. Eggs could be traded at the town stores for ten cents a dozen, and a pound of butter exchanged for ten to fifteen cents worth of merchandise.[45]

Horses speeded life up a little. Before that, a trip to town had been a tedious thing. One fall after harvest, John Abraham Rovainen recalls, he drove thirty miles to New Ulm by ox-cart with a load of twelve sacks of wheat and a dozen ten-pound bags of wool. He left Franklin at three in the morning; it took until nine at night to make the trip. He transacted his business in New Ulm by lamplight, selling the wheat at 25 cents a sack and the wool for 25 cents a pound. Then, after making his purchases, he went to bed for a few hours, starting back the next morning at three o'clock.[46]

All these are stories of a pioneer day which has passed. The log-and-sod cabins have become modern farm houses, the runsu navetta of poles and straw has given way to the large dairy barn, the ox has disappeared and the horse in its turn has given over the road to automobile and truck and is being pushed off the fields by the tractor. The Franklin community has today become so thoroughly American that it is seldom thought of as a Finnish region. One of the two survivors of that first group to come over in 1864, Nicholas Johnston, son of Matt Johnston Sr., still lives on the orginal homestead.

45. John Abraham Rovainen.
46. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 133.

The other, Ida Juhanna Rovainen, lives in Minneapolis.

All the rest of those first comers, and most of those who followed them, have long since gone. About them there is this to record: Finns came to settle the land; Americans are buried in it.

## Cholera On The Mississippi

The Mississippi River was the great channel of commerce and immigration into the new territory. Railroads were few and roads little more than trails. For this reason, most of the first immigrants to Minnesota came to the sound of churning paddle-wheels and the mellow echo of steamer whistles from the river bluffs. Red Wing, spreading over the river flats, was the first stopping place of many of these river-borne newcomers. If they did not find work and settle there permanently, they at least tarried a while before going on to other parts of the state. There was still land near Red Wing which could be homesteaded. Germans and Scandinavians stopped there, and when the northern Norwegians came, the Finns who were their neighbors came with them.

Red Wing was a bustling river town, attractive to homeseekers - except for one thing. It suffered periodic scourges of cholera, sudden, deadly and ever-present during the summer months. The disease seemed to follow the river, moving up from the south each spring to bring the infection which lined the steamboat lane with communities of delirious men and women: New Orleans, Vicksburg, St. Louis, Quincy, Burlington, Winona, Red Wing.[48]

First mention of cholera in Red Wing occurs in the records of 1853, and the disease did not finally disappear until 15 years later. After reaching its height in 1866, it was finally wiped out in 1868, largely through the energetic efforts of the town to stop its spread. An isolation ward was built on an island near the town, and all stricken persons on steamboats were landed there. The cholera ward, it is said was nearly always filled with patients; the dead were carried away and buried at night.[49]

48. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 143.
49. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 144.

The second small party of Finns to come to Minnesota, Matti Tiiperi with his wife and three children, and two single men, stopped at Red Wing. The three men and Tiiperi's 15-year-old son went to work in the woods, but the cholera reached them even there, and they were brought back to town and placed on the isolation island. Tiiperi, his son and one of the other two men died there. The third man escaped from the island one night, and nothing more was ever heard of him.[50] It may be that he wandered through the woods until he came to some homestead or settlement and there took on a new identity; the greater probability, though, is that he either drowned in the river or, reaching the bank, wandered off into the woods to die. Another Finn, who also escaped from the island, had better fortune. Antti Anderson (Kauvosaari), who came in 1866, fled from the island ward and hid on a St. Paul-bound river boat. About a week later his father found him in a hospital in that city, recovered and ready for discharge.[51]

Mrs. Tiiperi, at her husband's death, was left alone with two children, completely destitute in a foreign land. To make her plight still worse, another child was born to her three months after her husband's death. But citizens of the town came to her aid. Her three-year-old boy, John, was taken into a Swedish orphanage, and Mrs. Tiiperi worked at day labor while her twelve-year-old daughter took care of the newborn baby.[52]

By this time more Finns had arrived in Red Wing. One of them, Matti Maata, eventually married the widow of Matti Tiiperi and moved with her to the Cokato settlement.[54]

50. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 143.
51. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 179.
52. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 143; Interview with J. E. Mattson (John Tiiperi of Tiberg) of Cokato.
54. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 143; J. E. Mattson

In 1866, when the plague reached its peak, many Finnish immigrants died - miserable, lonely deaths among strangers, in the strange new country to which they had sailed with so much optimism. No one knows how many died, for a number of them had taken Swedish names, but it is estimated that at least twenty-five lost their lives during the plague. These names alone have come to us: Matti Tiiperi, and his 15-year-old son; Kaisa Esko; Briita, wife of Kustaa Sukki (Gus Friska) and five of her children; two brothers, Aapo and Isak Lamberg; Pekka Humalisto and his wife; one unnamed family of three Finnish people; Mikko Kauriranta; Sofia, daughter of Erkki Haaba; and a Finnish man by the name of Matti.[55.]

It was Gus Friska, the husband of Briita, who subsequently moved to Franklin and married the widow of Antti Rovainen, later losing his life in a blizzard;[56.] it was a surviving daughter of his, Albertina, who became the wife of Matt Johnston Jr.[57.] Of the death of the "man named Matti," it is a curious fact that his sole reason for being remembered is that in dying he gave the cholera to another Finn, Johan Piippo, who was to be one of the first settlers in the Holmes City community.

Work remained plentiful and easy for the immigrants to get, but the rows of cholera graves on the hillside threw a deep dread over the Finns who stopped in Red Wing. Gradually all of them moved out, heading across the half-wild forests and prairies for Franklin, Cokato and Holmes City, and Red Wing lost its Finnish population. When the town was finally able to stamp out cholera in 1868, only a handful of Finns remained. In the years

~~54. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 143; J. F. Mattson~~
55. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 145; John and Ida Rovainen.
56. Pages 11 and 12, this Mss.
57. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 137

immediately following 1866 some halted there briefly, but none stayed. In 1914, when Solomon Ilmonen, working on his Finnish history, came to Red Wing, he could find only one person of Finnish nationality in the town, Mrs. Maria Johnson, maiden named Maria Katerina Esko, who had married a Swede and had so completely forgotten her native tongue that an interview was possible only in English.[58]

So ended one of the most tragic chapters of the Finnish settlement of Minnesota. Those unmarked mounds along the Mississippi cover many a buried hope.

58. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 145.

## In The Big Woods - Cokato

West of the Twin Cities there was originally a great belt of hardwood forest, extending from the bend of the Minnesota River near Mankato on the south to a line on the north more than a hundred miles beyond Minneapolis. In places it was 40 miles and more wide. The Indians called this forest the "Big Woods," and the name was early adopted by the white settlers. It was a region of sugar maples, basswood, red and green ash, butternut and burr oak, white elm and some slippery elm, and a dense undergrowth of shrubs and flowers.[59] Today most of this beautiful woods is gone, but in 1865 it covered those parts of Wright and Meeker Counties where today is the large Cokato Finnish settlement.

The Finns were not the pioneers of Cokato. Cokato Township, was orginally settled in 1856,[60] and by the time the Finnish vanguard arrived in 1865 there were a number of white residents, many of them Scandinavians and Irish.

Elias Peltoperä, with Esaias Kujala and Matti Määttä, landed at Red Wing in 1864 and, refusing attempts to enlist them in the Union Army, went to work in the woods cutting cordwood for the river boats. The next spring three friends of Peltoperä, Matias Kärjenaho, Olof Westerberg and Johan Viinikka arrived in Red Wing. Soon after, Peltoperä, with his three comrades, started out to find homesteads.[61] They stopped first in Minneapolis,

59. Federal Writers' Project, Minnesota, A State Guide, (New York, 1938) 17.
60. Warren Upham, Minnesota Geographic Names, Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul, 1920), 587.
61. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 25, 27.

where they heard about free lands a short distance to the west. The story goes that a Finnish girl, working for a Minneapolis family, overheard that there was good government land still open about 50 miles beyond the city. She carried the story to the Finnish family where Peltoperä and his friends were visiting.[62] So the four men headed for these lands in the Big Woods around Midsummer Day (June 24), 1865.[63]

For the first few miles they had a road to follow, but it soon gave way to trails leading through thick woods. Steadily the cabins of homesteaders thinned out, until the travelers seemed quite alone in the wilderness. Near the end of what day they reached the shore of a large lake, probably Howard Lake. It had been a long trip - would have been, even over good roads - of some 40 miles, and Viinikka, 57 years old, was unable to go any farther. His feet were bleeding and, while he and Peltoperä build a fire and camped, Kärjenaho and Westerberg went on in what daylight was left.[64] It was during the season of the longest days, and the sun set tardily.

Kärjenaho and Westerberg found a clearing a little farther on, the homestead of a Swede, and stopped there for the night. Viinikka and Peltoperä caught up with them early the next morning. None of the Swedes had time to act as guide, but they told the Finns of a lake a half-day's journey to the northwestward, with tracts still open for homesteading on its northern and western shores.[65] They were directed to a man named Rustad living on the north shore of the lake, who would help them find the free lands.[66]

62. Interview with August Tryke (Tryyki), Cokato, 1940.
63. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 147.
64. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 147.
65. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 147.
66. Interview with Thorwal Rustad, Cokato, 1940

The Finnish party arrived at this lake, Cokato Lake, to find Rustad gathering wild honey. He was too busy to go with them, but gave them directions for finding available land. The four men located their claims on Section 10 of Cokato Township, at that time called Moores Prairie Township. Each took 80 acres: Kärjenaho the W½ of SW¼; Peltoperä, E½ of SW¼; Westerberg, W½ of SE¼; and Viinikka, S½ of NE¼.[67] That first summer they did not stop to clear the land; pioneering, even where building material and much of the food is furnished by nature, requires money and they had almost none. After filing their claims at the Carver land office southwest of Minneapolis, they went to Minneapolis to work. Both Viinikka and Westerberg wrote enthusiastic letters to their friends in the old country, letters of the sort which in those days were sure to attract more settlers.[68]

The following spring, 1866, the four men returned to their homesteads, where each built his log house and started chopping away the hardwood trees to make a farm. The two married men, Westerberg and Viinikka, brought their families to live on the homesteads. It was an ironical circumstance that the first field cleared and planted by a Finn in the Cokato region, a small plot where Peltoperä had chopped down the trees and planted potatoes, proved later to be on another's land. In the unmarked woods he had crossed the southern limits of his claim, and cleared a small plot of land just across the line from his own.[69]

Both Peltoperä and Kärjenaho, who changed his name to Abrahamson, later sold their homestead rights and moved on. Abrahamson (Kärjenaho) took up new land in Dassel Township in Meeker County, a few miles to the

67. Vernon G. Barberg, Finnish Settlement in Wright County Mss., Cokato.
68. A condensed version has been published in Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 148; Barberg, Finnish Settlement.
69. V. Barberg, Finnish Settlement; Interview with Isaac A. Barberg, Cokato.

west, where his descendants still live, Peltoperä left the region entirely for one of the western states.[70] It was Abrahamson's boast for years that he had been the first Finn to enter the Cokato region, since he had walked a little in front of the others when they arrived.[71]

More Finns arrived in 1866 and took land three miles west of Cokato Lake: Isak Barberg (Barba or Parpa), and Isak Branström, both of whom were married, Nels Selvälä and his fiancee, and Adam Ongamo, who was single.[72] The four men took land on Section 18 in Cokato Township: Branström, W½ of SW¼; Barberg, E½ of SW¼; Sevälä, W½ of SE¼; and Ongamo, E½ of SE¼. Like the first four, they stopped only long enough to stake their claims, then went elsewhere to work.

The next spring Branström and his wife returned to Finland, while Selvälä, who had married during the winter, together with Ongamo and Barberg and his wife and child, returned to their homesteads. On Ongamo's land they built a cabin, where they all stayed until the next spring.[74] One other Finn, Antti Sepponen (Anderson), with his wife and a new-born baby, is supposed to have stayed during the spring in the community cabin, which the settlers called Union House. It must have been very crowded, since the cabin was only 12 feet by 14, and 10 feet high at the eaves.[75]

A daughter was born to Mrs. Selvälä on September 2, 1867, while they were still living in the community house. The child, christened Ida Karoliina Selvälä, was the first Finnish child born in the Cokato settlement.[76]

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70. Isaac A. Barberg.
71. Ludvig Bajari.
72. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 148; V. Barberg, Finnish Settlement; et. al.
73. Barberg, Finnish Settlement.
74. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 149; Barberg, Finnish Settlement; Isaac A. Barberg; et. al.
75. Isaac A. Barberg.

During that first year these men worked mightily, clearing land and building their own cabins. In the spring of 1868 Selvälä and his wife and child moved to their cabin, while Barberg and his family went to a three-room cabin which had been built on his land during the winter. This latter dwelling, now changed somewhat, and finished with boards inside and out, is still being used by the son and grandchildren of Isak Barberg.[77.]

At first the immigrant stream was slow. During the two following years, 1868-1869, only a few Finns came to Cokato: Matti Piipo and Matti Määtä - who had married the widow of Matti Tiiperi - arrived from Red Wing, Johan Marttala, Antti Sepponen and Karl Pyrrö from Michigan copper region, and possibly one other man. By the end of 1869 twelve families and two single men had settled in Cokato.[78.]

It was in 1869 that the first railroad, the St. Paul and Pacific, one of the forerunners of the Great Northern, was built three or four miles south of the Finnish settlements, and the village of Cokato was founded.[79.] Settlement boomed, as always when a railroad reaches good farming country. The next year a strong movement of Finns, mainly from the Copper country of Michigan, set in.[80.] Most of these had worked as miners, but only as a temporary means of livelihood. Their ultimate aim had ever been to obtain a piece of land of their own, and when the opportunity came, they grasped it.

76. Records of the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of Cokato, in the possession of Isaac A. Barberg.
77. V. Barberg, Finnish Settlement.
78. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 149.
79. Upham, Minnesota Names, 587.
80. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, 149.

Between 1870 and 1875 some 50 Finnish families came to Cokato. The next year a peak was reached, when at least twenty-five families moved in and settled on the land. By the end of the decade, Cokato was the lead-in Finnish settlement in the country.[81.]

Many of these new arrivals did not take land of their own at once. There was a curious? system, probably a survival of the ~~torparii~~ torppari system of Finland, by which newcomers rented patches of land from the older settlers, and lived there until they could manage to buy farms of their own. During the 1870's there were, at one time, as many as twenty-three homes in a single square mile which included most of Section 18. The owners of the land leased out small plots of 2 to 3 acres, and the tenants farmed on these.[82.]

As the Cokato settlement overflowed Cokato Township, Finnish settlers began claiming land around French Lake to the north and at Kingston in Meeker County, where homestead areas still remained open. Even where government land was all taken, the railroads and lumber companies were offering traces at ten dollars an acre, sometimes even as low as five, with ten years usually given in which to pay.[83.]

The region of Finnish settlement known as the Cokato Community is much larger than either the present town of Cokato or Cokato Township. It includes a strip about thirty miles wide by fifty miles long, taking in parts of both Wright and Meeker Counties. Besides land adjoining the village of Cokato, it also includes the country around French Lake, Kingston, Dassel, Knapp, Albion, Annandale and Howard Lake.[84.]

81. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 150.
82. Isaac A. Barberg.
83. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 151.
84. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 146; V. Barberg, Finnish Settlement.

In 1879 Isak Barberg, who was something of a historian and statistician, took a census of Finns in the Cokato Community. The origianl copy of the census is an interesting document, written in ink on large sheets of writing paper. The name of each settler is set down, and opposite the names in neatly ruled columns are specified the number of acres of cultivated and uncultivated land, the number of cattle, oxen and horses, and similar information. The portion dealing with French Lake is in a different hand-writing; apparently Barberg had someone more familiar with this part of the settlement do the work for him there. The entire document is in Finnish.

Barberg found that there were 450 persons in the community. He listed the names of 80 settlers, who with their families represented 400 persons established on the land; the other 50 had no lands of their own. The settlers owned 1500 acres of cultivated land, 4000 acres of woods and uncleared land, 56 horses, 126 oxen and 231 cows. The total value of all property was reckoned at $150,000.

Appended to the census is a page of short items:

"The first residents were Olof Westerberg and Johan Viinikka, and after them Isak Barberg, Nels Selvälä, Adam Ongamo. [Peltopera and Karjenaho, who also came with Westerberg and Viinikka, later sold their claims and moved, so they were not counted as residents by Barberg.]

"The first Finnish people took land in 1866.

"The land is mostly woodland that could be cleared with hard work, and there are also some fishwaters but these are not so abundant.

"The people living in our midst are mostly Swedish.

"There is very little unclaimed land left in Cokato.

"The distance to the nearest railroad and town from the nearest residence is two English miles, and from the farthest residence is seven English miles.

"There is one Finnish church and several Swedish churches. There are several English schools, one for every square mile.

"We have several reapers among the Finnish people, and three steam threshing machines which cost about $1600, and some over $2000.

"Oats, corn and potatoes, and also many other crops have not been taken into account in this report; of these crops some have more and some less under cultivation. Some have grown hundreds of bushels."

The following, like the part of the census dealing with French Lake, is not in Barberg's handwriting:

"In French Lake Township there is still unclaimed land, which is partly railroad land being sold at $5 an acre cash and $7 on terms; school lands are available at $7 an acre and on 20-year terms. The land is timber-covered but is good crop land, where live new Finnish settlers. And in the vicinity live American-French and Irish. These Finnish settlers live a distance of 8 English miles from Cokato railroad station. And here also are to be found fishwaters, namely French Lake and Crow River." 85.

This, the Domesday Book of the Cokato Finns, was the first census of Finns to be taken anywhere in the United States. It is a picture in words and figures of a pioneer community where families were large, horses and cattle scarce, and the land still largely unopened.

But these are the bare statistics of settlement. The details are more real and human. Almost every acre which was planted had to be first laboriously cleared with the grub-axe, and each building which went up was hewn from the woods. Logs were used, with occasional rough boards. The sod hut of the prairies, even the sod roof of the Franklin community, were about here, for the earth of the Big Woods lacked the maze of grass roots to tie it together into a tough sod.

In order that they might have money to live on, it was necessary for the men to work at something besides clearing the land. Many cut cordwood in the winter, and hauled it to the railroad to exchange for flour and other staples. It was not very remunerative labor - cordwood brought only a dollar

85. The original census document is in the possession of Isaac A. Barberg, son of Isak Barberg who took the census. The translations of items from the census were made freely by Vernon G. Barberg, grnadson of the enumerator.

a cord. In the spring, when crops were planted, the men hired out as laborers in the brickyards of Minneapolis, on the railroad, or even in the copper mines of far away Michigan. Wives and children remained at home, doing the work of the farm and often harvesting the grain in the fall, until cold and snow closed the brickyards and ended railroad construction for the year.[86] Isak Barberg, who was a tailor by trade, worked in a tailor shop in Minneapolis during the winter, and during harvest went to the western prairies beyond the Big Woods near Greenleaf in Meeker County. In the fall, when the work was done, each of the Finnish men would buy a sack of flour and carry it on his shoulder all the way back to the settlement.[87]

The actual task of clearing the land was extremely disheartening. The trees, most of them oak, elm or other hard wood, had first to be cut down, and then the stumps had to be grubbed out with axe and grub-hoe. Frequently an entire day was spent on a single stump.[88] At first there were no draft animals and shovels and grub-hoes were employed to turn the ground for planting.[89] Later oxen and cows were used. One of the first Finnish settlers in French Lake Township tells of pulling a cultivator to break the ground while his wife held the handles and guided the implement.[90]

86. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, P. 152.
87. Isaac A. Barberg
88. Interview with Mrs. Mathias Mattala, Cokato, 1939.
89. Thorwal Rustad.
90. Ludvig Bajari.

Living conditions were rude, cabins far from roomy. It was not unusual for more than one family to live together, as in the communal house on Adam Ongamo's land. Often two or three families lived in a single room until a cabin could be provided for each. The story is told of two young couples who not only shared the single room of a small log cabin, but also slept together on the same bed, four of them lying crosswise with a big wooden chest under their feet. One night one of the women got up and went to the home of a neighbor woman, and there gave birth to a baby. Then, after the infant had been bathed and wrapped in a blanket, she returned home, awakened her husband, and proudly showed him the child. She had not wanted to wake the men, she explained; they had worked hard all day and needed their sleep.[91] Another old settler relates how, on her arrival, she and her husband had stayed with another couple until they could build their own log cabin, a two-room structure, 14 by 20 feet. During the breaking of the land they sometimes had as many as 16 men staying there. The men, she says, were not "particular" in those days; they scattered a little more hay or straw on the floor and slept on that.[92]

To obtaining needed supplies from town was always a serious problem. There were no proper roads through the woods, and almost no animals. The bringing home of flour seems to have concerned them especially, since most of the pioneers recall in their reminiscences that a man thought nothing of carrying a hundred-pound sack of flour on his shoulder from Minneapolis, 50 miles away, or from Greenleaf to the west where some of the men worked in the harvest. Eventually the Finns heard of a mill much nearer, at East Kingston.

91. Interview with Mrs. Marie Nikka, Cokato, 1940.
92. Interview with Mrs. Mathias Mattala, Cokato, 1939.

Selvälä and Barberg, tired of carrying single sacks of flour so far, made a raft at East Kingston on one of their trips there, bought a number of sacks, and floated down Eagle Creek to the Crow River, then down the Crow to a point in French Lake Township from which there was only a short overland haul.[93]

Sometimes the experiences of the settlers were startling. One of the first settlers, John Marttala, who filed a homestead in Section 10 in 1867 or 1868, built his little log house over a flat rock in the ground in order that it might be used for a fireplace. Awakened one night by a strange sound on the floor, Marttala lit a match - to find the floor full of crawling, angry rattlesnakes. The reptiles had been hibernating under the rock, and had been awakened and forced out by the heat of the fire. Marttala and his wife spent a very uneasy night, protected, temporarily at least, by their covers of deer-skin, which kept the snakes from crawling across the bunk. Since there was only one door, and that beyond the hissing carpet of reptiles, the couple were trapped until daylight, when a passing hunter discovered their predicament.[94] He sawed an opening in the side of the wall through which they escaped.

Isak Barberg's son died in 1868, the first death in the Cokato community. Afterwards, death was no stranger, and there were several tragedies in the community. Barberg lost his five-year-old daughter, Hilda, in a fire which destroyed his cowshed and all but one of his cattle in 1877; three years later two more members of his family perished in a small-pox epidemic that took the lives of several others among the Finns. The young wife of Nels Selvala died in 1873, leaving him with three small children; a young boy was dragged to death by oxen.[95] The pioneer community had more than its share of heart-break.

93. Isaac A. Barberg.
94. Interview with Erick Karjalahti, Cokato, 1940.
95. Isaac A. Barberg.

In September of 1871 the region was swept by a timber fire, a rare occurrence in hardwood forests. After one day of destruction the haystacks and grain of many of the settlers - and "even the dwellings of two Swedes," as an earlier historian puts it - were destroyed. The fire appeared to die down toward nightfall, but the next morning, with a freshening wind, it started anew. At the home of one settler frantic efforts w with shovels, grub-hoes and water buckets were necessary to save the cabin in which were a woman and her new-born baby. The conflagration was finally put under control and the village saved, but it meant another winter of hardship for all and many of the settlers had to start anew from nothing the next spring.[97]

The grasshopper plagues, which struck the Franklin community for several successive years, reached as far as Wright County only in 1877.[98] Then it caused such complete devastation that the settlers lost not only their grain but their hay as well.[99] Various devices were employed to get rid of the pests; one that frequently is mentioned by early settlers was pulling a sheet of iron or a canvas strip covered with coal tar through the young grain to trap the hoppers in the sticky coating.[100] In the autumn of the year, as has been told before, the entire swarm took wing to the west, without apparent reason and without leaving eggs.[101]

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~~96.--Isaac A. Barberg.~~

97. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 153 (the quotation is from this page); Isaac A. Barberg; Erick Karjalahti.
98. Folwell, History of Minnesota, Vol. III (map opposite P. 106).
99. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 153.
100. Isaac A. Barberg; Mrs. Mathias Mattala.
101 Folwell, History of Minnesota, Vol. III, 110.

There was the full quality of heroism in the labors of the pioneer Finnish farmers. Besides the clearing of the land and often the turning over of the ground with shovel and grub-hoe, harvesting demanded formidable effort. At first, as in the Franklin settlement, the settlers cut the grain with scythes and threshed it with flails or led oxen over it to trample out the heads. Later there were threshing machines powered by oxen, and still later a few steam threshing machines. One old pioneer woman recalls their first harvest in 1877. It was impossible to get a threshing machine to their field, so they carried all the grain on their backs to a neighbor's, where it was threshed in an ox-driven machine. Having no sacks, she got out her four sheets and the grain was threshed on them. Then it was put in tubs and carried home again! That first harvest yielded 96 bushels of wheat.[102.]

For a time there was bad blood between the Finns and some of the earlier Irish settlers. An Irishman by the name of Cochrane had built a mill at the outlet to Cokato Lake, and the dam backed up the water, flooding the lowlands of the Finns. One Finn, a man named Pajari (or Bajari), who had settled in the district around 1875, heard that mercury poured above a dam would eat a hole in it, and so wash away the structure. He wrote to a friend in the copper country, and had several pounds of the metal sent to him. One night the Finns went to the dam and dumped the quicksilver into the water. Of course, nothing happened. Next a number of them started to dig a ditch around the dam. Cochrane surprised them with a gang of Irishmen, and in a furious battle the Finns were badly beaten and led to town by Cochrane to be locked up. A Finn who had taken no part in the battle demanded that a doctor be called to dress the wounds of his countrymen. Cochrane refused.

102. Mrs. Mathias Mattala.

There followed a brief display of guns with Cochrane being the slower of the two, and he decided that a doctor could be called. Then the Finns were jailed and put under $6000 bail. Though the sum set was a great deal of money for such poor people, it was finally raised, and the Finns freed. However, the Finns later sued Cochrane, and won by law what they had been unable to accomplish by force.[103] The dam was torn down, and Cochrane's Mill disappeared.

In many ways the lot of the women was harder than that of the men. It was a standing joke among the Finns that the only time a Finn took his wife to town was when he needed her signature to a mortgage on his farm. One woman, who came through Minneapolis in 1876 on the way to Cokato, did not see the city again for another 25 years, although Cokato is only 50 miles away.[104]

There was little time or inclination for amusements. The Finns were very religious, and frowned on dancing, while the husking, quilting and other "bees" which are usually associated with a pioneer community were unknown. The only recreation was visiting or going to church.[105]

Of the first religious services in the Cokato community there are no positive records, but they are known to have been held in Adam ongamo's house in 1868.[106] The first Cokato Apostolic congregation was organized in 1870, under the name Cokaton Suomalainen Seurakunta (Literally: Cokato Finnish Congregation).[107] It is probable that this is the first Finnish congregation organized in America, although it is impossible to tell, because of the nebulous difference between the informal and formal organization of many congregations.

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103. Ludvig Bajari.
104. Mrs. Mathias Mattala.
105. Mrs. Mathias Mattala.
106. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 154; V. Barberg, Finnish Settlement.
107. Vernon G. Barberg, verified from the early church records.

The first church of the Cokato Finnish Congregation was built in 1 1876, on land donated for the purpose by the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. The construction was a community enterprise. Huge logs were hauled in during the winter months by ox teams, to be used for the foundation timbers and sills. The building itself was made of boards, although all the houses of the settlers were of logs. It was a rectangular structure, 24 by 40 feet, plain and unpretentious. Later an addition was built, but in time the building became so shaky that it rocked in a hard wind until the chandeliers swayed, and it was finally razed to be replaced with the present building.[108.]

Isak Barberg acted as layman preacher until his death in 1883, and after him the itinerant Antti Vitikkohuhta, who had settled in Cokato about 1870. Vitikkohuhta, nicknamed Brandas Antti, was an interesting character. Before coming to Cokato he had stopped in the Michigan copper country, and then in Holmes City, where he had been active in organizing services for worship.[109.] One day - to cite an amusing episode - one of his neighbors, hearing Vitikkohuhta shouting, had gone over to his farm to hear the reason for the noise. He found Vitikkohuhta in the midst of sorghum pressing, swearing and beating the ox which drove the press by walking around and around in a circle. The animal was standing with its feet spread to brace itself, unmoved by the preacher's anger. The neighbor, stepping in front of the ox, found only the whites of its eyes showing. The animal had become so dizzy from treading its circular course that it had "fainted." When he pointed this out to Vitikkohuhta, the latter was co conscience-smitten that he threw his arms around the ox's neck, begging its forgiveness.[110.]

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108. Vernon G. Barberg; Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 156; Mrs. Mathias Mattala.
109. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 155, 173.
110. Ludvig Bajari.

The first confirmation class was held in 1879, with Johan Takkinen, a layman preacher conducting.[111] There were seventeen confirmants.

There were no schools. In the homes, parents tried to attend to their children's education, but there was little time for it in the press of constant work, and, morover, many of the parents could not read. The Finnish language was the only one used; it was years before there were any schools with instruction in English. For a while, lukukinkerit - annual reading examinations held by the minister - were conducted. The examination served to stimulate interest in reading, since small prizes were distributed, and a certain prestige went with success. The first of these kinkerit was held in Cokato on July 4, 1878, under the direction of J. Takkinen, with 41 families taking part. Another was held the next year, with 51 families. The questions were religious in nature, testing the participants' knowledge of Christianity. After these first two kinkerit, many more were held in Cokato, but attendance was less than had been hoped for, and the examinations soon lost their significance.[112] The strong magnetism of America made itself felt early on Finnish ways.

The growth of the Cokato settlement continued, although it soon yielded to New York Mills as the largest Finnish agricultural settlement. In 1900, Oskar Snapp made another census of the Finns around Cokato. Their number had increased to 1,727, and they now owned 16,095 acred of land.

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111. Isaac A. Barberg. He has a copy of Takkinen's record, made by his father, Isak Barberg.
112. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 155.

The farms were mainly from 80 to 160 acres in size, although a few were only 40 acres, and the largest, that of Jacob Ojanperä, covered a full 300 acres.[113] So had the Finnish settlement grown since the census of Isak Barberg.

Cokato has left its pioneer beginning far behind. Today it is a region of prosperous farms and wide fields, where formerly the Big Woods reached for miles. But it has not lost its pioneer spirit of cooperation. The country is dotted with cooperative creameries and elevators, and Cokato has its Finnish Mutual Fire Insurance Company and its Farmers' Mercantile Association. More of these later.

One can still walk down the streets of Cokato village behind men - and children too - who speak the Finnish language; there are frequent Finnish films at the motion picture theatre; and the sauna is still a vital necessity to the people. But although they remain Finnish, they belong to a far different community from the one set up in 1865 by Elias Peltoperä and his three friends.

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113. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 151.

## "I'll Take This Land By The Lake."

The third of the three settlements to be started in less than that many years was near Holmes City in Douglas County. It always remained a small settlement, receiving little Finnish immigration after the first years, but even today it remains distinctly Finnish, and its people still cling to the Finnish language.

The story of the Holmes City community cannot be told without also telling the story of Johan Piippo. Neither is complete without the other.

Piippo was not a newcomer from Europe when he arrived in Minnesota. From Finland he had gone to Norway during the winter of 1861-62, crossing through Lapland on snowshoes to the city of Hammerfest. Conditions in Finland had been hard, with famine brought on by four years of poor crops. Hammerfest offered him work and food; for four summers he worked there to earn enough money to take him to the United States, and then made the tedious voyage by sailing ship, arriving in New York and pushing on up the Great Lakes to the copper country of Michigan.[114]

When Piippo arrived in Calumet he had 17 English pounds in his pocket, hardly enough to buy and equip a farm. He worked in Calumet as a barrel-maker until he had saved more money; then in 1866 he left Michigan behind, went down to St. Louis, Missouri, and up the Mississippi to Red Wing.[115]

Red Wing in those years was the ominous village of cholera, with its pest island and burials at night. But among the colony of Finns in the river town there was at least companionship, and always ready work. Piippo went into the woods with the wood-choppers supplying cordwood to the steamboats.

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114. Interview with C. J. Piippo, son of Johan Piippo, Holmes City, 1939.
115. C. J. Piippo.

It was in this same lumber camp that the "man named Matti" of the records had been stricken with the cholera. When the cholera attacked anyone, there was little that could be done, except to make the sick person comfortable and let nature take its course. So Piippo waited by the bedside of Matti. The latter, in his final agony, tried to get up, and Piippo hurried to help him. He received the fetid breath of Matti's death gasp in his face.[116]

Within a few hours Piippo was blinded, stricken with the cholera. What happened then is a story which has two versions. That of the Finnish minister and traveler, Solomon Ilmonen, is the more fanciful: Piippo, sightless was led to the shop of a German apothecary, where the druggist compounded an ointment so effective that, applied to his eyes, it restored his sight in an hour.[117] Piippo's son tells a different story. Johan Piippo was something of a medical man in his own right, well acquainted with home remedies, and now, sick as he was, he prescribed for himself. He sent a friend, August Peteri, after a quart of rum and asafetida; he mixed and tossed off this mighty and potent draught, and in a few days had recovered completely - from the potion as well as the disease.

Other Finns, leaving Red Wing, had gone to Franklin, Cokato, or Minneapolis, but Johan Piippo had a bolder vision. Organizing a party, he struck out for more distant lands. Later, describing his experiences for the Finnish newspaper, Uusi Kotimaa (New Homeland); he wrote:

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116. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 145; C. J. Piipo.
117. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 145.
118. C. J. Piippo.

"Having heard that in the wilderness we can get land free we planned to go and seek it. In the fall of 1866 we, P. E. Julin, Isak Johanson (Jaakonantti), August Peteri and the writer, left. We arrived at St. Cloud and selected our land from the map; we did not know where it was. To the land we had selected, a Yankee left to bring us with an ox-team; the trip was as slow as a louse in tar. It lasted more than a week. There was rain and sleet storms; the trip was eighty miles. After arriving at our destination we found out that it was Holmes City in Douglas County. We were single men except Julin, who had a wife and four children; they were carried by the ox-team. We made a shack in five days and made a fireplace of rocks." 119.

From Alexandria on, their trip had been especially difficult; creeks and lakes, hills and woods made it a strenuous journey over trailless land. On Saturday night the party stopped at the homestead of a settler near Piippo's claim, most of them camping in the yard after as many as possible had crowded into the shack. The next day they helped the settler fit windows in his cabin, windows which had come from St. Cloud on the same ox-cart with them. 120.

Most of the party stopped at the cabin for a week, but Peter Eric Julin spent the entire winter there with his family. Julin gave the others permission to build a shack on his claim and to spend the winter there. After building this shack as their communal winter residence, the men then passed the winter at the slower work of building each his own cabin on his own claim. 121.

Johan Piippo's newspaper story goes on to tell of some of his early experience:

"The following spring I turned the soil over with a mattock to make a field and then sowed a bushel of wheat, which the bluebirds ate, so that I did not get but the stalks and the birds ate them too.

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119. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 183, quotes this material from Uusi Kotimaa.
120. C. J. Piippo.
121. C. J. Piippo.

> The second summer I got a one-acre of cultivated field on which I planted potatoes and tobacco. The third winter I got enough from wolf pelts so that I could buy a team of oxen and a cow; but the following spring a grave misfortune befell me. We were at an American neighbor's, building a house, and upon our return home, everything was in ashes. Nothing was left but an axe, try-square and ragged clothes. I built my home anew, but a year later again my wheat shed and 30 bushels of grain was burnt. Since then I have been more successful and pray to God that I can, in peace, get along until my ending days." 122.

The land which they had picked merely by pointing to a part of the land map where the country was dotted with lakes was much nearer to a Finn's heart then that in either of the other two communities. The countryside was rolling, and their homesteads lay in the midst of a maze of lakes, surrounded by forest. There was much to remind them of their native Finland.

Alexandria was the nearest town. In the winter they skiied in, and when summer came they followed a chain of lakes and creeks by boat to Lake Cowdry, walking from that point the mile or so into town. For supplies they depended on the stage from St. Cloud, but when it did come in, staples were so high they could afford few of them. Flour cost $18 a barrel and pork was 25 cents a pound, but there was no need to buy meat. Flour, salt and coffee were the only foods on the "must" list; the rest they could find in the lakes and forests. Deer, elk, grouse, prairie chicken and partridge, and fish from the lakes, were served on their tables. Muskrat, mink, otter, wolves and foxes gave them an extra income from trapping. The first year of the settlement several buffalo were seen. 123. Tobacco was highly prized.

Piippo's first cabin stood on the site of the present Finnish Lutheran Cemetery, the churchyard of the Holmes City Jariven Suomalainen Kiukko. He was deeply impressed with the land on which he had settled and with the government

122. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 184.
123. C. J. Piippo.

which had given it to him, and he wrote urgent letters to friends back in Europe. Two of them, John Matson Lehto and Matt Jacobson, saved enough money to buy tickets to America, and arrived in New York with only the address "Johan Piippo, Moe Township, U. S. America" to guide them to him. New York to Minnesota - it must have seemed only a jaunt to these two Finns, for they started out walking. And reached Piippo's homestead in two months! Another pair of friends, Ole Hammer and Anton Holling, with whom he had come over and whom he had bade goodby in New York expecting never to see them again, took up claims within six miles of Piippo's home. He met them there, an event of the purest coincidence, for neither had known the other was there.[124.]

At first Piippo made most of his living by his traps and earned the reputation of being one of the best trappers and hunters in the country. In one trapping, it is told, he caught 125 muskrats; another time he shot nine elk out of a herd of more than a hundred.[125.]

Once when his gunpowder got wet on a trip to Lake Traverse some forty-five miles away, Piippo came very near to losing his life. At that time wet gunpowder was a calamity; it might mean starvation. There were no settlers' homes to stop at in that part of the state, and no trading posts to supply either gunpowder or food. The weather stayed cold and stormy, but Piippo did catch one racoon. Half of it he ate on the spot, crouching beside a fire; the rest he salted down with his useless gunpowder, which contained enough saltpetre to preserve the meat, and ate that on his trip home.[126.]

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124. C. J. Piippo
125. C. J. Piippo
126. C. J. Piippo

Piippo's gun produced food for his neighbors as well as for himself. His first pair of socks was a gift from the grateful wife of a settler whom he had supplied with meat. On another occasion he made a collection of money to save from starvation the family of another settler who had lived for six weeks on burned corn-meal mush alone. Piippo helped the unfortunate homesteader buy supplies with the cash, carried them home for him, then went out and shot a deer for the family's meat supply. His reward was a pair of knit mittens from the settler's wife.[127]

When Piippo's house burned, it was a hard blow to him. Most of the little property he had acquired during two years was lost and he had to go back to the beginning, this time without money. He had only two years' claim on his land, which amounted to little more than nothing when land was so cheap and so many settlers abandoned their claims long before the completion of the required five years of development. After much persuasion a hardware merchant in Alexandria was induced to accept a mortgage on the claim in return for a scythe and handle, and the agreement was finally drawn up: J. P. Cowing, mortgagee, Johan Piippo, mortgagor; one scythe and handle in return for a lien on 160 acres of land![128]

The unusual Piippo also continued to exercise his knowledge of medicine. In Finland an uncle, a country doctor, had taught him something of the use of drugs, and he frequently used his training among the settlers of Moe Township. His familiarity with herbs was limited mainly to those of the old country, and he wrote letters asking Finns who planned to come to this country to bring over medicinal plants with them.[129]

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127. C. J. Piippo
128. C. J. Piippo
129. C. J. Piippo

At first the Indians who roamed the woods kept the settlers in a state of fear, but they never caused any real disturbances.[130]

The Douglas County settlement grew, but not rapidly. In 1883 a census was taken by a local correspondent of the Uusi Kotimaa. He found there were 133 Finns in the community. They were estimated to number somewhere around 700 in 1923. The settlement has prospered; there are extensive fields and large modern dairy farms. The Finns have two churches of their own, and well-developed community relationships.[131]

It remains a thoroughly Finnish settlement, with the Finnish language still widely spoken and read. The countryside has changed the people have not.

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130. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 185.
131. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. II, 185, 186.

The principal steamship companies to sell tickets which would deliver the immigrants directly to Duluth or St. Paul. As an inducement, land exploration tickets were sold with the provision that, if the purchaser bought land from the company to the extent of 40 acres within 60 days after buying his ticket, the cost of the ticket was credited on his land purchase, while he was also entitled to free transportation over the road for himself and his family on the way to settle his new lands.[3] The Northern Pacific, in addition, built "reception houses" at Duluth, Brainerd and Glyndon in 1872, in order to accommodate settlers while they were searching for farms.[4]

The railroad even used the immigrants themselves as publicity agents. As early as January 13, 1874 a Minneapolis newspaper carried this item:

> "A large number of Finlanders are quartered in the Brainerd Reception House. They were brought over by the Allen Line of steamships, whose agent accompanied them to Minnesota, remaining several weeks in order that he might know for himself their impressions of the country. They are all satisfied and have joined in a certificate to that effect. This party represents a large number who will follow in the spring. They have determined to settle on the Northern Pacific, and their leading men are now hunting a proper location. Becker County, though, will probably secure them. Meantime they have comfortable quarters in the Brainerd Reception House without charge, except for the bare cost of provisions."[5]

A skeptic might question the evidential value of a "certificate" of satisfaction executed by settlers who were unfamiliar with the language in which it was written and who had not even seen the farms with which they were "satisfied." But that was not the day of the skeptic; in the new west of the 1870's, everybody was a promoter.

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3. James B. Hedges, "Colonization of the Northern Pacific Railroad," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Dec. 1926), 315, 318.
4. Harold F. Peterson, Railroads and the Settlement of Minnesota (unpublished M. A. thesis) U. of Minn. Library, (1927).
5. Minneapolis Tribune, Jan. 13, 1874, p. 3, col. 4.

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The efforts of the colonization department of the Northern Pacific bore early fruit. Immigrants from a number of the European countries responded to the promise of the new world. In June 1873, the Finns joined the transatlantic movement, when a party of 230 adults started for Minnesota, the famous "Swanberg group," whose story comes a little later. In July another party of "240 adults and a large number of children" embarked for this state.[6] Many Finns stopped at Brainerd, working on the railroad until it was completed, then going into other work, principally in the lumber industries. It was from Brainerd that the first Finnish settlers of New York Mills came.

6. Hedges, Colonization, 323.

Antti and Elsa Puupera with their seven-year-old daughter Anna, and Tuomas Autio with his wife Maria, who was Puupera's sister, set sail for America in the early spring of 1873. Eight weeks after leaving their homes, they landed in Duluth and, after several months, came to Brainerd to find work. The next year both of the families moved to New York Mills.[7.] This, simply recorded in names and dates, is the brief history of the Finnish pioneers of the settlement which later grew to be the largest agricultural colony of Finns in the New World.

New York Mills in 1874 was little more than a sawmill with a store or two nearby. It had received its pretentious name from the sawmill which had been set up by men from New York. Autio and Puupera lived in New York Mills and worked in the mills there and at Detroit Lakes, but they somehow found time to go into the wilderness about four miles south of the village and take homestead claims.[8.]

The settlement lay in the midst of a region of forest, where the balsam, pine and other coniferous trees began to give way to the narrow western belt of hardwoods. With its brooks, lakes and natural meadows, the region reminded the Finns of their own country.

It was in these surroundings that Autio and Puupera staked their claims, and came to live the next year, 1875. Autio, who by now had two children, was the first by a few weeks to live on his own homestead.[9.]

This settlement repeated the general theme of the first three: hardships, endless back-breaking toil and courage. We have some record

7. Julia Tumberg, Pioneer Life in Newton Township MS., Library of Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minn. (1930) (A translation of this paper was published in Finnish in Uusi Kotimaa (New York Mills), May 6, 1930)
8. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol 2, 192; Tumberg, Pioneer Life.
9. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.

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of life on the Puupera Homestead. When the family first moved in, the cabin was only partly finished, a structure of logs hewn on four sides, with the cracks chinked with moss. The floor and roof boards were bought from the sawmill, a luxury the other three settlements had not been able to offer their first settlers. The windows were made by hand. The cabin had two rooms, completely furnished with Puupera's own handiwork: tables, chairs, beds, spoons, ladles, shovels, pails, churns, many of the pieces put together without nails. Puupera built his first wagon almost entirely of wood; even the wheels were large wooden disks. His sleigh likewise was the product of his resourceful hands.

The family produced nearly all its own food on the farm, and after several years, when some sheep had been acquired, most of its clothing as well. The women sheared the sheep, washed and carded the wool, spun it into yarn, knitted mittens, stockings and sweaters, and wove it into cloth on their own loom. The loom, too, had been made by hand, with certain parts brought from Finland. Mrs. Puupera had also brought her wool cards and spinning wheel from the old country, but there was little else that was not made on the spot. As for the men, they fashioned their own fishnets and tanned their own leather for mittens, shoes, harness and other leather articles.[10]

The first crop was potatoes, grown on a piece of ground Autio and Puupera together had cleared and planted before they moved onto their claims. The yield was poor.[11]

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10. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.
11. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.
12. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.

The Finnish pioneers of New York Mills experienced the same hardships as those in the other settlements. Land was cleared with the axe and stumps removed with the mattock. Hay was cut on the wild meadows along the Leaf River two miles south of the homestead. The cattle roamed the unfenced woods, and at times were lost for days, while those searching for them often themselves became lost. Oxen, as elsewhere, were the only draft animals for a number of years; Mrs. Puupera bought their first yoke with money she earned doing housework in Brainerd.[12]

One other settler, a Norwegian named Nils Oppegaard, had moved to this neighborhood when the two Finns did, and took land bordering theirs, but their only neighbors, save for him, were the Indians. The women at first were afraid of the red men, but in time they became good friends. The Indians lived in the region only during the winter; in the spring they would move on to other camping grounds to return the following fall. But in a few years, with the coming of more white people, they migrated northward and did not return.[13]

Inevitably, one of the first buildings constructed by these Finns was a sauna, which also served as a general utility building. When grain was harvested, it was dried in the sauna on shelves built close to the ceiling.[14] This practice of drying grain indoors was commonly followed in all the early Finnish settlements of Minnesota. Evidently the newcomers could not realize at first that here the climate was so different from that of damp Finland that grain could be dried out-of-doors in the sun.

After it had dried, the grain was threshed in the sauna, hand labor and the flail being used. After the straw was carried away, the grain and chaff were swept into a pile at one side of the hut. Seated beside the pile,

13. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.
14. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.
15. Tumberg, Pioneer Life.

the threshers threw handfuls of it at the opposite wall. The light chaff dropped out, while the grain and heavier bits of straw reached the opposite wall. Then the grain was winnowed out in a box to remove the final bits of straw. The cutting of the grain, of course, was also done by hand, with scythe and cradle.[15.]

Other Finnish settlers soon followed the Puupera and Autio families. Several families came in 1876 and 1877. In the latter year one of the newcomers was Israel Hagel, an Apostolic minister from the copper country of Michigan. Hagel held his first services in the home of Antti Puupera in 1877, with some eight or ten people present; all but one family among the settlers belonged to the Apostolic church. After a time Hagel gave over his duties to John Mursu, who was the actual minister from 1880 until his death in 1911, when Hagel once more took the pulpit. At the time of his retirement a few years ago, Hagel's congregation had increased from that first handful to almost a thousand persons.[16.]

Within a year or two settlers began to arrive in increasing numbers, from the copper country and directly from Finland; two or three even came from the Finnish settlement at Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio, during those first few years. By 1879 there were almost 40 families; a decade later a careful estimate placed the total at 200 families numbering about 1,000 persons.[17.]

In 1881 a man who is mentioned in every account of the history of New York Mills came to the settlement. He was Olli Pajari, who later changed his name to Olaf Pary. Pajari lost no time getting settled; the first day in New York Mills he opened his packing cases and began to sell goods.

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16. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 194; Tumberg, Pioneer Life; Msiraivaajien Muisto ("Remembrance of the Pioneers," a booklet commemorating the 75th anniversary of Finnish settlement in Minnesota) New York Mills (1939), p. 13.
17. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 194, 195.

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Most of the Finnish pioneers of that community speak of Olaf Pary in their reminiscences. They bought their supplies at his store, worked for him, sold him their produce, used his big brick store as a meeting place, and when they were in trouble, went to him for help. He aided many of them, even with gifts as substantial as a much needed calf. At one time four hundred men were said to be in his employ.[18.]

None of the three earlier settlements has ever been able to support a Finnish-language newspaper, but in 1884 the Uusi Kotimaa (New Homeland) was moved from Minneapolis to New York Mills by its editor, August Nylund Sr. Copies of the paper, mailed back to friends in Finland and in the copper country, were influential in increasing immigration to New York Mills. In 1888 Nylund again moved his paper, this time to Astoria, Oregon, where a large Finnish colony had settled. Only the name of the Uusi Kotimaa went with him; the plant was sold to J. W. Lahde, who established a weekly paper in New York Mills, the Amerikan Suometar (American-Finn). When the Uusi Kotimaa was moved back again after a few years, the two were combined and issued for a time as a tri-weekly paper, but later, on account of insufficient support, it again became a weekly. The Uusi Kotimaa continued publication until less than a decade ago, when it was succeeded by the Minnesotan Uutiset which still exists.[19.]

Up to the year 1882 most of the Finns of New York Mills had settled on the south side of the Northern Pacific railroad line. In that year they began to move to the north where land was more plentiful, first northeast to the Paddock Township region,,then spreading from there into parts of Wadena, Becker and Hubbard Counties.

18. "Excerpts from the History of Wadena County," Uusi Kotmaa, June 6,1929, p. 5; Horace H. Russell, "The Finnish Farmer in America," Agricultural History, Vol. 3 (April, 1937)
19. Russell, "Finnish Farmer;" Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2,199; "History of New York Mills" Uusi Kotimaa, Oct.12, 1923, 3.

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In the Paddock region the pioneer story was retold, the only difference being that the vicissitudes here were even more severe than elsewhere. New York Mills was the only railroad station in the area and settlers, often living 25 miles or more from the village, had to walk the whole distance through the woods to their claims, carrying their possessions and supplies on their backs.

Lydia Laine, nee Tiittoi, the daughter of one of the early settlers near Runeberg Town Post Office in Becker County, recalls these hardships. When she came to New York Mills she was only six, but she had to walk with her family 25 miles through the woods, following deer trails most of the way. The family fortune at this time consisted of one 50-pound sack of flour, an axe and 25 cents. The cabin they built had one room and a single window, and the earth was the floor. The first year, Lydia, although a mere child, worked with her father in the woods and snared rabbits for meat while her father was trapping deer. Neighbors offered them some help, and gave them a hen and a rooster, while from Olaf Pary they had the gift of a calf. Until it grew up they had no cow.[20]

Their first medium of exchange was rabbit, which they traded for sugar, coffee and other staples. After the first grain harvest they had their own 'coffee' - made from oven-roasted wheat, oats, or barley. Their land was turned over with hand-made shovels and cultivated with hand-made hoes, the cut grain was raked together with hand-made rakes.[21.]

The first mail was brought to Runeberg Town from New York Mills by a woman, Mrs. Maunu, who carried the mailbag on her back. Later, when some semblance of a road had been chopped through the woods, she covered the route on horseback.[22.]

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20. Interview with Lydia Laine (nee Tiittoi)
21. Lydia Laine.
22. Lydia Laine.

Blueberries were a source of some income. Lydia recalls that her family sold most of their blueberries to the Indians because they paid a much higher price than the whites would, and paid it in cash. It was usually the only real money the settlers saw all year. The feeling between the Finns and the Indians was friendly, and nothing ever occurred to mar that relationship.[23]

When the first school was established in the Runeberg settlement and a teacher hired, one thing was completely overlooked. The teacher spoke only English, the children only Finnish. So that first term they sat day after day, doing little or nothing. Afterwards, all teachers were Finns and the children were taught in Finnish. Lydia did not learn to speak English until she went to Calumet in later years.[24]

With the building of the Great Northern Railway from Wadena through Park Rapids, the villages of Menahga and Sebeka grew up as Finnish communities. At the same time, settlers in the Paddock and Runeberg settlements were brought much closer to a railroad line. Some of the Finns pushed northward to Wolf Lake, where they named a village after Lönnrot, the collector of the Kalevala, and along the Northern Pacific line toward Detroit Lakes as far as Frazee.[25]

Before roads were built, settlers had to exercise their own ingenuity in transporting their goods. One of them once bought a grindstone. It was too heavy to carry on his back, and there was no vehicle to use, so he made a wheelbarrow using the stone as a wheel, and loaded it with provisions. It was a laborious trip back home through 20 miles of roadless woods, but labor was still a cheap commodity in those days.[26]

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23. Lydia Laine.
24. Lydia Laine.
25. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 191.
26. "History of New York Mills" (3rd installment, Dec. 31, 1923) 2.

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Roads were finally chopped through the wilderness, but they were often impassable. For stretches they was nothing but nothing but corduroy - small logs laid across the road to provide a footing in the mud - and teams and wagon frequently bogged down.[27]

Alohg the road between New York Mills and Paddock, about midway, there lived a Finnish settler who did much to make the trip less arduous. John Tolppi was a friend to every passer-by, with a meal and hot coffee for the man and feed and water for the oxen. The settlers in that rude country knew spells of deep discouragement, and Tolppi took it upon himself to cheer them up. His house was an overnight stopping place between the two villages; after supper he often read the Finnish papers to his guests, gave them advice, pointed out how fortunate they were to be able to live where most of their food came to them without cost, and then, after a good breakfast the next morning, sent them on their way again.[28]

The New York Mills community, with all its surrounding towns and farms, has changed greatly since the opening of the land. The area is served by excellent roads as well as railways, paving has taken the place of the deer trails, automobiles have replaced the shoulder pack and the ox, the forest has largely fallen away before the axe and the mattock, but there are still many who remember those days when life was so much more difficult.

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27. "History of New York Mills," (2nd installment, Oct. 19, 1923) 3.
28. "History of New York Mills," (2nd installment, Oct. 19, 1923) 3.

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In northern Minnesota, from the Arrowhead country and the Iron Ranges and extending in ragged fringes toward the western border of the state, is the great region of Finnish settlement. This area of settlement is amorphous and scattered; sometimes the Finns live in isolated groups, at other points they share a city or region with others of the numerous European nationalities which have settled in the mining country of Minnesota.

The physical features of the region differ greatly from those of other Minnesota Finnish settlements. The land is rugged and covered with pine, tamarack, or cut-over stumpland; the soil is poor and sandy and in most places strewn with a litter of rocks and boulders, while lakes and swamps cover a large part of the country. The winters are hard and long, the summers cool. In short, it is a region remarkably like Finland itself. Some, in fact, have guessed that it was this very similarity that brought so many Finns to the area. It is an attractive theory but a hard one to prove, inasmuch as the first Finns came to other parts of the state where there was slight similarity to Finland; only when cheap land elsewhere was gone did they begin to move into the poor northern country. Here, too, they found ready employment, since the iron mines and lumber camps were running full blast at the time they were coming into the state.

Duluth was the gateway into the region. When, in 1855, the Sault Ste. Marie Canal was completed, Lake Superior was connected with the rest of the Great Lakes for ship traffic, and the enormously rich copper and iron mines of northern Michigan were brought into production. Miners were needs, and they were brought in, Cornishmen at first, and Irish and Swedes, but in 1864,

the same year the first party of Finns came to St. Peter, a large group of Norwegian- Finns were recruited to work in the copper mines. According to one account all these Finns, with the exception of two, were immediately recruited into the Union Army, and settled in Nebraska after the war.[29] Whether this is true or not, those first Michigan Finns did set a path and a pattern for future Finnish immigration. Others followed them until the region of the copper mines, called by the Finns Kuparisaari (Copper Island), became predominantly Finnish, and the state of Michigan came to have more Finns than any other state.

Those were boom times. Copper continued to be torn from the ground while iron was discovered in rage after range, the Marquette and the Menominee and the Gogebic, each new discovery extending farther westward across the northern peninsula and into Wisconsin. Workers followed the chain of discovery and exploitation, Finns along with the rest.

Then in 1870 the railroad was extended from St. Paul to Duluth, and the next year a line was built from Duluth to Barnesville on the western boundary of the State,[30] making Duluth a gateway for immigrant travel into the western lands. At this time the ruthless slashing off of the rich forest growth in northern Minnesota was at its height. How many Finns went into the lumber camps we do not know; however many there may have been, they were not permanent settlers, only transient laborers in a passing industry.

It was in 1884 that the first iron mine in Minnesota, at Soudan on the Vermilion Range, was opened. Four years later the next mine on the Vermilion was opened at Ely. Then, in 1890 and 1891, the famous seven Merritt brothers made their discoveries of deposits of iron ore on the unbelievably rich Mesabi Range. The ore lay far back in the wilderness but the Merritts

29. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 65 ff.
30. Folwell, History of Minnesota, Vol. III, 60, 61.

built their own railroad to get it out, and at the end of 1892 the first trainload of the soft, heavy, earth-like ore went down to Duluth. That was the beginning of that endless dredging which left the Mesabi a desolation of enormous open pits and waste dumps, and sent the red ore flowing down the Great Lakes to be smelted in Pittsburgh and made into steel rails and bridge girders, iron beds and thumbtacks. Then in 1911 the Cuyuna Range to the southwest was opened, and ore from its underground mines moved down to the Lakes.[31] It was this tremendous labor of digging out the iron from the three ranges which gave ready work to so many of the Finns until they could afford to buy or homestead some piece of rocky land.

But all this is looking ahead. As early as 1868, the first northern Minnesota Finns had arrived in Duluth.[31 A.] /Ilmonen - Finns in Duluth in 1868/ By 1870 others were drifting in to take work in the Minnesota lumber camps, but immigration in numbers really started in 1873 with the coming of the first large party of immigrants directly from Finland. This was the Swanberg group. The Northern Pacific Railway had been circulating advertisements and circulars in Finland since 1870 and immigration agents of the steamship and railroad companies had been active there.[32.] Peter Swanberg (Haapa), an agent of the Allan Line, was supposed to have had an agreement with an employment office at Duluth to recruit several hundred Finns and Swedes for railroad construction work on the Minnesota-Dakota border territory, but there is reason to believe that the Northern Pacific did not sanction such an arrangement since their correspondence indicates that they considered the party a group of settlers.

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31. Folwell, History of Minnesota, Vol. IV, 8-23.
31A. Amerikan Suomalaisen Historia, Solomon Ilmonen, p 222.
32. Letter from J. P. Tusten, immigration agent in Europe, to Frederick Billings, chairman of Northern Pacific Land Committee, N. P. Ry. Como Record Building, St. Paul, Foreign Agents Letters Book No. 4, New York Box No. 7.

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> "Your esteemed favor of the 25th June /1873/ announcing the embarkation of about 230 adults for Duluth via Quebec is at hand. I am glad to learn of the shipment of this number of so good a class of immigrants and hope that they will all settle on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad. I have ordered Mr. Holloway our agent at Quebec to receive them and afford them the best of facilities for their inland journey and have notified Captain Ward of the Central and Pacific line of steamers to have a boat with plenty of room for their accommodation meet them at Sarnia and forward them to Duluth where they will be met by our agents and properly attended to . . . .[33]"

Swanberg and his party set out from Haaparanta, Sweden?, in June, arrived at Hull, England, crossed England by train to Liverpool, and left Liverpool July 3 for Quebec.[34] There were difficulties along the way. Their steamer, the Scandinavian, was delayed by fog. Then, when the Scandinavian interpreter of the Northern Pacific arrived in Quebec to meet the party, he found that they spoke only Finnish, a language with which he could not cope. The ship's interpreter, therefore, was sent along with them. Swanberg himself spoke no English. But the party finally got under way, "227 adults, 28 children and 9 infts. - 264 souls in all . . . ."[35]

They reached Duluth on July 24th, and stopped over night, expecting next day to entrain for a construction job near Fargo, Dakota Territory. But rumors began to be whispered about. Work in the west was dangerous; Indians were molesting the workers and one man had already been killed. There was much button-holing by Finns already in Duluth, and low-voiced conversations lasting far into the night. Next day when Swanberg tried to organize the party to continue on to the Dakota Territory, they refused.

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33. Letter: G. B. Hibbard, Supt. of Immigration to Karl Mollersvard, agent in Scandinavia, on file in N. P. Ry. Como Record Room, St.Paul, Foreign Agents Impression Book No.1, New York Box No. 7.
34. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol.2, 33.
35. Letter in N. P. Ry. Como Record Room: Holloway to Hibbard, July 17, 1873; Foreign Emigration Book.

Swanberg, his profits vanishing, became heated. So did the Finns. Someone pushed Swanberg; the man he stumbled against pushed him back, and in a moment Swanberg was being shoved around by the crowd. The police rescued him, and when the claims and counter-claims were sorted out, it was apparent that Swanberg had no claim on the Finns. They had paid their own passage over, and since Swanberg had no written contract or agreement, their ultimate destination was their own concern.[36.]

Many members of the party went back to Hancock, Michigan, others scattered to the lumber camps or to the harvest fields farther west. Swanberg himself, after a couple of months returned to Haaparanta, Sweden.[37.] This was the rather spectacular beginning of large-scale immigration from Finland. Scores of other ships with tens of thousands of Finnish immigrants followed the Swanberg party. At first many of them went across the state to New York Mills and the three older settlements as long as there was cheap land, but when the red ore began to come out of the iron mines in unending trainloads, more and more of them spread out across the Arrowhead to labor in the mines and lumber camps, and eventually to acquire their own few acres.

As to most of these northern towns, it is impossible to set the date when the first Finns came. Whenever mines were opened, villages grew up around them and boomed with the sudden influx of workers. Some of the newcomers were Finns, but just as many may have been Swedes or Montenegrins or Serbs or any other of more than a score of nationalities. The mining towns were not Finnish in the same sense as Franklin or Cokato; they were Finnish only in that a considerable fraction of their extraordinarily cosmopolitan population was of that nationality. There was no reason for remembering the names of these Finns; they only did the giants' labor of

36. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 35.
37. Ilmonen, Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia, Vol. 2, 35

taking out the red ore.

It was thus that the mass of Minnesota Finns came to center in this northern section. Around the turn of the century, as the Finns began to find life almost intolerable, under the oppression of Nicholas II and his Governor-General Bobrikoff, emigration increased by several hundred percent, reaching a peak in 1902, when over 23,000 came to the United States.[38] By that time the rocky northern country was the only remaining Minnesota area in which foreigners without money could still take land of their own. This fact, together with the work offered by iron mines and lumber camps, brought practically all the later arrivals to this part of the state.

The Finnish farmer brought a new scheme of living to the iron country. He worked in the mines during the greater part of the summer, but on the edge of town he had his few acres, with a cow, some poultry and a little truck garden. It helped him to spread his wages over the winter months when there was no work in the mines, and it satisfied his inborn yearning for his own bit of land. Other nationalities, seeing how well the plan worked out, quickly adopted it for themselves.

The Finn is, as has been said, only one of many immigrant groups in the iron country. The mining companies, with their constant demand for cheap labor, recruited Europeans from a score of different countries. The Finn has as his neighbors Norwegians, Swedes, English, Irish, Germans, Poles, French, Austrians, Hungarians, Swiss, Syrians, Rumanians, Danes, Serbs, Welsh, Bulgarians and Montenegrins.[39] Nevertheless, the Finns remain the most important racial group in much of the Range country.

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38. See Chapter I.
39. Minnesota, A State Guide, Fed. Writers' Project, 76.

change to Slovenian
add Croatian

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As they gave up mining for farming, the Finns gradually moved to the surrounding land. Some moved eastward into the point of the Arrowhead, some went farther north, and a large number moved over almost to the western borders of the state, where there are considerable communities centering in Middle River and Plummer.

Duluth, where the first Finns in the region stopped, still has a large Finnish population. Next to the combined Scandinavians, they make up the largest foreign-born group in that city. After working successively in the woods and in the mines, they settled in Duluth where they now predominate among the longshoremen and stevedores.[40] The present Finnish residents of Duluth are mostly from later immigrations. They have, the last two decades, settled in the city in such great numbers that it will not be long before they reach an even ten thousand people. Moreover many Finns live in the vicinity of Duluth at the iron-ore mines, on farms and in the woods. Jokingly, Duluth is called the 'Finnish Headquarters City of America.' Appropriately enough, too, for the Finns, in every case, consider Duluth as the American Finns' most important commercial cultural center, with its newspapers, book publishers and dealers, Finnish lawyers, doctors, vice-consul, many business establishments and so forth.[40A]

In 1877 four Finnish families staked out their homestead claims in Carlton County, at a place later called Esko's Corner, some ten miles west of Duluth. The land was rugged and rocky, much like that of Finland, and the settlers retained many of the practices they had followed in Europe.

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40. Arrowhead Guide MS., Minnesota Writers' Project.
40A. Amerikan Suomalaisen Historia, Vol. 11, p. 223, Solomon Ilmonen.

They cleared the land by burn-beating, chopping down trees and then setting fire to them. Of the stumps that were left, they chopped out the small ones and planted around the large. The stumps and boulders made it impossible to plow the land, so they worked it by hand. The first crop was rye; the ash-fertilized land yielded well, and from that first crop they got a twelve-fold return from their seed.[41.]

But growing the rye and harvesting it was only half the story. The settlers were still miles from the nearest grist mill, and their roads, if they could be called that, were unbelievably poor, mere trails hacked through the trees with the stumps and rocks left in the road. The only vehicles which could traverse them without shaking to pieces were primitive wooden sledges, ox-drawn. Even then it was frequently necessary for the driver to pry the sledge from stumps or rocks on which it had caught. It was impossible to haul rye to a mill over that kind of road.[42.]

The settlers held a meeting, and decided to build their own mill. For a site they chose a location on Erick Palkin's place where there was a falls in the river. They divided themselves into groups, one to put up the building, another to split the shingles - even their shingles had to be made by hand - and others to look for the millstone. These latter travelled miles looking for a proper stone, and finally discovered one near the Thomson road.[43.]

They split the rock without accident, and then they had to find a way to transport the heavy slab over the poor trails. By the time they got it to the mill site the building was almost finished. In mounting the stone and installing the machinery even the metal work had to be done by the settlers, who had no smithy and few tools. Somehow they managed it, the mill was

41. Interview with John Mattinen, Cloquet, Minnesota, 1938.
42. John Mattinen.
43. John Mattinen.

finished, and with the water-wheel running, the first rye flour came out from between the creaking stones.[44]

This was the first Finnish cooperative venture in the Arrowhead, the forerunner of many which have made the Finns famous throughout the Northwest. The mill, though it has been unused for many years, still stands, quiet now, sinking into ruin, but yet a milestone of Finnish progress in Thomson Township.

It would be impossible to give the history of each of the Finnish communities in the northern part of the state. In the mining towns, as a matter of fact, the Finns have no story distinctly their own; it is one with that of a dozen other nationalities in the opening of the ore pockets. And in the forests and stumpland, where they made farms, it is a repetition of the story of the hardest kind of pioneering, because in this part of Minnesota even the clearing of the land did not give them fertile acres. Pioneer conditions prevail today through much of the section.

The Kettle-River-Automba settlement in Carlton County had a history typical of this pine-land country. The first settlers came about fifty years ago, a recent date compared to the first settlements, but with problems that were fully as difficult. All the first settlers were homesteaders in a region of virgin wilderness. The nearest village and trading post, Moose Lake, was 8 miles from the closest of them, while those at the other limit of the settlement had to travel as much as 30 miles to get there, along difficult trails through the woods, crossing the rivers on rafts.[45]

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44. John Mattinen.
45. John Manni, "Pioneer Life in Carlton County," The Barnum /Minn./ Herald, June 24, 1937

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The settlers had to depend for the most part upon their own ingenuity to supply their wants. They sawed their own lumber and singles, and made their homes of logs. A spinning wheel and wool cards were an indispensable part of every household's equipment, for the women spun their own yarn and knitted or wove most of the clothing for their families. One of the farmers had been a tanner by trade; he prepared leather from which several of the settlers made their own footwear, old-country shoe-pacs which even the women wore. Hay and what little grain they could grow was cut by hand with a scythe, and threshed with hand flails. Game was abundant; and the state's game laws were overlooked here in the wilderness where deer were shot for good and not for sport. Occasionally a bear would kill some of their cattle, and wolves roamed in packs; They found abundant food in the forest and did not molest the humans, although sometimes a pack of them would follow a man in the dark. During the winter many of the men worked in the woods, cutting logs and ties which were floated down the rivers in the spring.[46.]

The people were religious, but with none of the sectarian differences of so many other localities. When a church was built in 1898-1900 it was constructed of white pine logs, and the shingles were made on the premises. There were no pastors; laymen usually conducted the services, baptized the children and buried the dead.[47.]

The nearest doctor was at Carlton, 30 or more miles away, and it was necessary for the settlers themselves to take care of injuries and illnesses which would have meant the calling of a physician in a more settled community. One of the settlers, a Matt Leppanen, even took care of fractures

46. Manni, "Pioneer Life."
47. Manni, "Pioneer Life."

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and dislocations, and did it so skillfully that when the doctor finally came, there was often nothing he could suggest to improve the treatment. Leppänen also practised blood-letting, which the physician probably did not commend so highly as his bone-setting, and he treated sick cows and horses. As for dentistry, there were two men who took care of the settlers' aching teeth. One of these was Abram Wickmnn, who was also something of a jeweler, repairing clocks and watches when he wasn't farming; the other was Henry Mannula who lived in Moose Lake village and was a blacksmith. Their treatment for an aching tooth was simple and direct; they pulled it. And both of them practiced dentistry for the same reason. They were the only men in the settlement who had tongs! 48.

A graded road built in 1901 brought wagons, buggies, threshing machines and other accoutrements of modern farming, and when the Soo Line went through in 1909, the pioneering era was ended for the settlement. 49.

Conditions were even harder for many of the other settlers, especially where a single family made its home in the wilderness. The wife of one settler near Bassett Lake north of Duluth lived there more than a year before she received a call from her nearest neighbor. The neighbor woman dared chance it only after a trail had been blazed between the two homesteads to save her from getting lost in the woods. Even then she had to wade through swamplands where the water came up to her shoulders. 50. A visit was more than a mere gesture in such country.

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48. Manni, "Pioneer Life."
49. Manni, "Pioneer Life."
50. Kramaan Oras, a memorial number for Brimson-Fairbanks-Bassett and Toimi Pioneer Day, June 19, 1938.

It is in the northern part of the state that the Finns have brought cooperatives to their fullest development. For one thing, they are a poorer people than those in other parts of the state, but the spirit of cooperation and interdependence is also fostered by the fact that they live in isolated communities. But more later about their cooperatives.

It is in the north, too, that the old-world manners and customs have persisted more strongly than elsewhere. Here, again, their comparative isolation from people of other nationalities is no doubt a factor, but an additional influence lies in the fact that they are more recent arrivals in this country. Even in the mining towns with their heterogeneous populations the Finns incline to hold themselves aloof. In many respects they are more stubbornly resistent to Americanization than other immigrant groups, although the influence of American life and culture is weaning them slowly from the old-country ways. This is well illustrated in the churches. At first services were conducted exclusively in the Finnish language; then the practice developed of holding English services once a month or so, and these became more and more frequent until today in many of the churches the Finnish tongue is scarcely ever used. Finns in considerable numbers are leaving their Lutheran sects to become Methodists, Unitarians or members of other faiths. Especially in the mining towns, where Finnish children go to school with Poles, Swedes, Yankees, English, Serbs and a dozen other nationalities, it is inevitable that the more pronounced sort of Finnish provincialism should disappear and gradually be forgotten.

But it is a very gradual process. Some communities, such as that on the Embarrass River where only two non-Finns live, will take a long time to lose their distinctively Finnish stamp unless some unforeseen development

occurs to hasten the change. In this, as in many similar communities, even the appearance of the land and the farms holds remarkably to the old country pattern. There is the same rugged land strewn with rocks and interlaced with lakes and streams, there are the same pine forests, the ever-present log sauna, the characteristic haybarns with their sides sloping inward at the bottom and the odd 'gumdrop'-shaped haystacks.

But even among a people as tenacious of their own culture as the Finns, these folk habits will in time disappear; some will be lost, others woven over into the pattern of American life. And, any gratification that may accompany this ultimate triumph of American culture is bound to be mingled with regrets over the passing of a picturesque way of life.

# CULTURE, CUSTOMS, CREEDS, CUISINE

The United States is a huge and dynamic nation. Some say it has no indigenous culture. Be that as it may, few will deny that there is a stream of American group consciousness which has been powerful enough to sweep together half a hundred nationalities, speaking almost as many different tongues, into one united nation.

The immigrant generation, settling in little homogeneous colonies, resists for a time the pull of Americanization. It has been trained to a different cultural pattern; it has roots so deep that they cannot suddenly be torn up and replanted in new ground. Then, the first native-born generation is buffeted by conflicting forces; this is the country of its birth and, while it is exposed to American ways at numberless points, at home it still is held to the old-world viewpoint and language. Grandchildren of immigrants, though, usually have become indistinguishable in manners and thought from other Americans.

It is not so with the Finns. In Minnesota, one finds even fifth-generation Finns speaking fluent Finnish--somewhat corrupted, perhaps, with an English word here and there, but still the mother tongue. Moreover, they continue to "think Finnish", holding a deep reverence for the little northern nation that neither they nor their parents--sometimes not their grandparents nor even their great-grandparents--have ever seen.

This conflicts with p. 112

It is no easy matter for the Finn to learn English. The German immigrant has little trouble learning to say "Good day" instead of "Guten Tag", the Frenchman to count "one, two, three" for "un, deux, trois". With the Finn,

it is a different matter. English and Finnish do not spring from a common stem, and there is not the slightest similarity between the two. Phonetics imposes problems as difficult as those of syntax. The Finnish alphabet has no letters b, c, f, g, q, w and x, although b, f and g stand at the beginning of a few words of foreign origin, and the letter d, although in the Finnish alphabet, is never used at the beginning of words except in the case of foreign derivatives. The Finnish p is a sort of compromise between the English p and b, and often the Finn coming to this country changes the p in his name to b. Sounds like 'wh', 'th', 'sh' and 'ch' are entirely lacking in Finnish. Irregular English spelling and pronunciation offer special difficulties. The Finnish language is entirely phonetic.[1] These difficulties are not insurmountable, but they do make it hard for the Finn to learn English, after he has lost the flexibility of childhood.

Now, this explanation is valid as accounting for the language problems of Minnesota immigrants from Finland who have had no previous contact with English. But why should their children and grandchildren, too, cling so tenaciously to the Finnish tongue? One theory is that the Finns, more generally than others, settled in communities of their own people, and in areas of the state in which they were isolated from non-Finnish groups. The children of the immigrants learned English, it is true, but the language they spoke as children was Finnish, and even after they learned English they continued to use the first tongue at home and in all their dealings with older Finns.

But isolation is not the whole story. There are still some singular facts for which it cannot account. It is contradicted, for example, in communities like Cokato. Here, where Swedes, Irish and other nationalities

Such are a poor choice here. Four of them Finns, and fewer still spoke Gaelic.

1. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 103-105; Severi Alanne, Finnish-English Dictionary, (Superior, Wis., 1919)

live in the same localities with Finns, and where all, Finns the same as the others, speak good English in their outside dealings, one can go into a Finnish home in the evening and hear nothing but Finnish spoken. One may walk down the street behind children four generations removed from the old country, who use English all day at their school work, and overhear them talking to each other in Finnish. They are truly bilingual.

It is difficult to account for this tenacity, except as a manifestation of the intense pride of the people in everything Finnish. It is not necessity but affection that makes them keep the language and pass it on in turn to their children. Of course, this is not universally the case. One meets young Finns who knew the language when they were children but have since dropped it; occasionally, one will confess that he was ashamed of being derided as a "foreigner." But, compared to other nationality groups in Minnesota, the Finns hold with extreme persistence to the mother tongue.

Gradually, American culture is inundating the Finnish ways; the radio and automobile have brought formerly isolated communities into contact with the rest of the world, and even in the evening Finnish homes cannot quite close themselves off from the American language. Distinctly Finnish customs will disappear in time, even though in many communities that time still seems a long way off. Indeed, with the Russian war American Finns have felt a resurgence of pride in the motherland, and the gallant stand of their small country against overwhelming odds has awakened in them a national consciousness of a Finland that was perhaps in danger of becoming a hazy legend.

## Something About The Sauna

The sauna is the symbol of the Finn. The stranger who knows nothing else about the people has usually heard something of their steam bath. It is an instiutuion that marks the Finnish people wherever they may go. It is not merely a way of keeping clean; it is also an agent for curing their ills--at least it is so regarded among the older Finns.

The sauna goes back into the prehistory of Finland, into the days of which they sing in the Kalevala:

"Wainomoinen heats the bathrooms,
Heats the blocks of healing limestone
With the magic wood of the Northland,
Gathered by the sacred river;
Water brings in covered buckets
From the cataracts and whirlpool;
Brooms he brings, enwrapped in ermine,
Well the bath the healer cleanses,
Softens well the brooms of birch-wood;
Then a honey-heat he wakens,
Fills the rooms with healing vapors,
From the virtues of the pebbles
Glowing in the heat of magic,
Thus he speaks in supplication:
"Come, O Ukko, to my rescue,
God of mercy, lend thy presence,
Give these vapor-baths new virtues,
Grant to them the powers of healing
And restore my dying people." [Rune 45][2]

The sauna is a small building, perhaps ten by sixteen feet, and in northern Minnesota is usually built of logs. It is divided into two parts, the steam room, and the drying and dressing room. The steam room has its fireplace--at one time it was open and the smoke as well as steam was allowed to stay in the building but today a steel oil drum with a smoke pipe is very popular.

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2. J. M. Crawford's translation.

Is this copyrighted?

On a bath day the fireplace is piled around with rocks which are thoroughly heated.[3] When the bathers are ready to use the sauna, they throw cold water on the hot stones, filling the room with a dense, half-condensed steam. The bathers lie on benches and shelves which run around the steam room, the hardier ones on the top shelf where the heat is greatest, the others nearer the floor. At the same time the bathers slap themselves with switches of cedar or birch, fanning the hot air against the body; this opens the pores, makes the bather perspire even more freely, and leaves his skin a bright, glowing pink.[4]

After the steaming and perspiring, often lasting more than an hour, the bather soaps himself, takes a warm rinse and then a cool or cold splash. Sometimes, when the bathhouse is built on the shore of a lake or stream, a plunge into the water is the proper finishing touch, while in the winter some robust souls even take a roll in the snow, naked.[5]

Bathing in the sauna is often a social affair. At times the town cousins and the neighbors, who do not have a sauna of their own, come out to visit and bathe. They go into the building in a body, first all the men, then all the women. Each group, after the bath, may spend a sociable hour in the drying room, talking, playing cards and just lounging about.[6]

The Finnish steam bath does more than merely cleanse the body; the heat and the profuse perspiration seem to have a healthful effect. The skin of a Finnish person is almost always clear and glowing as a result of the steam bath, and the sauna is given much of the credit for his sturdy health

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3. Vernon G. Barberg, 1939; Conrad Bercovici, On New Shores, 117, Eugene Van Cleef, "The Finn in America", American Geographic Review, 6:210 (Sept. 1918)
4. Vernon G. Barberg, 1939; Van Cleef, Finn in America, 211; et. al.
5. Vernon G. Barberg, 1939; Van Cleef, Finn in America, 211.
6. Vernon G. Barberg, 1939; Van Cleef, Finn in America, 211.

and vigor. But there may be a darker side. Even babies are sometimes taken into the sauna,[7] and this practice has been blamed for high infant mortality among Finns.

Strictly speaking, the word sauna is only a noun, the name of the bathhouse. Americans who use it as a verb, "to sauna", are in effect saying "to bathhouse." The Finnish verb meaning "bathe" is saunottaa.[8] It is a small point, important only to purists.

When a Finnish family settles on new land the sauna is often the first building erected, and the family may live in it until a house can be constructed. After the farmstead has been completed the sauna continues to play an important part in their lives, and for purposes other than bathing. To the early Finns it served as a drying-shed for their grain, and many of their charms and folk-magic were built around its influence. Most of these spells and charms are little remembered today among Minnesota's Finns, and then usually only as curiousities, but the first immigrants, with their queer Christian-pagan background, reposed deep faith in them.

For instance, if one did not speak in the sauna on Laskiainen (Shrove Tuesday) the mosquitoes would not bite during the following summer. And if a youngster threw a vasta (birch bath whisk) between his legs while in the sauna, it would fall pointing in the direction from which a sweetheart would come.[9] Today these charms are practiced by Finnish young people in much the same spirit as young Americans celebrate Hallowe'en, merely in a spirit of play, with the thought, if they come out right, that perhaps--just perhaps--there might be a little to them.

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7. Van Cleef, Finn in America, 211.
8. Alanne's Finnish-English Dictionary.
9. Makinen-Markham-Palo Laskiainen Souvenir Booklet, Loon Lake School, March 1, 1938.

The sauna, as has been said, was also regarded as a remedy for illness. An old Finnish proverb declares, "If pine tar and the sauna won't cure you, then you're as good as dead." It was sickroom as well as bathhouse, a place for an ill person to be taken until he recovered--or died.[10]

At first many of The Magic Touch charms were practiced only by loihtija or wise women, but they have come to be little more than folk-lore and tales to amuse children. Some of these charms are strikingly poetic. Such a one is the charm for bringing home the cattle in the evening, which was pronounced when they were first let out into the wild meadows in the spring. This charm was brought from the province of Oulu in Finland, and is still known in northern Minnesota. Salt was fed from a bell to the leader cow of the herd, then the bell was fastened to its neck, while the loihitija chanted this alliterative charm in Finnish:

"Kellon kaulahn sivallan
Kuulun kellon lehmälleni
Kuulu, kello, kaiu kello
Kaiu karjamaan perilta
Kaiu koti kartanohon
Sa oot suurin lehmistäni
Vahvin vasikoistani
Tuo sä karjani kotihin
Kalkutellon kartanolle
Saatle iltasavulle
Vielä päivän paistaessa
Keski illan kellertäissä
Tuo jonossa jumalan karja
Karja ehtoisan emännän."

("I lash the bell to the neck,
The far-known bell for my cow;
Sound, bell; echo, bell;
Echo from the farthest meadows,
Echo even to the home farmyard.
You are the largest of my cattle,
The strongest of my calves;
Bring ye home the herd

Date this and following "magic" material properly belong in sauna section.

10. Mentioned by a number of interviews, among them Vernon G. Barberg 1939; Mr. George M. Maki, Angora, 1940; et. al.

Clanking to the farmyard,
Lead it to the evening smudges
While yet the sun is shining.
In the glow of mid-evening.
Bring ina line the cattle of God,
The herd of the generous mistress.") 11

Even in its translation this chant retains something of the somber lure of Finnish forests and farmsteads.

Another charm is one used to prevent freezing the hands, quite an important matter in either Finland or northern Minnesota where the thermometer may lie below zero for weeks at a time.

"Cold, thou son of wind,
Do not freeze my finger nails,
Do not freeze my hands.
Freeze thou the water willows,
Go chill the birch chunks." 12

And this took care of the hiccoughs:

"Go to the loom, the bark, the birch;
Go to the needle, to the thicket, to the spruce . . .
Go to the neighbor!" 13

Among the Minnesota Finns the loihtija has disappeared, except as one or two may still practice their magic in some remote community; most of the charms are today just children's pastimes. But among the first comers, who belonged to a less skeptical generation, there was strong belief in magic. The stories of Maria Rovainen, Nills Folkki and John Wittikko in the Franklin settlement have been told: how Maria Rovainen could keep the cattle from straying by merely walking a circle about them, how Folkki could protect a haystack from prairie fire in the same way, and how Wittikko had to fight with the little people going to the cemetery. These earlier immigrants claimed strange communion with the powers that rule over death and sickness. The

11. Marjorie Edgar, "Finnish Charms from Minnesota", American Folklore, 47: 381 (October 1934)
12. Marjorie Edgar, "Finnish Charms and Folklore Songs", Minnesota History, 17: 407 (December 1936)
13. Edgar, "Finnish Charms and Folklore Songs," 408.

dark forests of Finland from which they had come were little more touched by civilization at that time then they had been a hundred or two hundred years before. In Minnesota the sunlight and wind of the prairies and open fields dispelled belief in such magic, but in the northern half of the state where there are still deep pine forests, where one often meets deer and bear on the roads, the magic of the forest-dwelling Finns has persisted longer. Even today there are some who do not doubt, but their number is growing smaller in this unbelieving age.

While some of the cures practiced by the Finns called out the powers of magic, most of them had a more earthly basis. Johan Piippo, the resourceful pioneer of the Holmes City settlement, practiced his art on both men and animals, but he did it without the help of the dark powers. He mixed his potions, poultices and physics from herbs and plants, many of which were brought over to him from Finland, and he relied on their medicinal properties for the cure. They were apparently quite effective, for he was in great demand among the settlers.

Asafetida, the drug with the pungent odor, was one of the most popular cures, and many older settlers remember it with something of poignancy and something more of horror. The odor, they claimed, would revive a half-dead horse in a twinkling. It was a potent mixture of asafetida and rum which cured the stricken Piippo of cholera in Red Wing, so that he lived to become the leading settler of the Holmes City settlement.[14]

Pine tar, usually in conjunction with the sauna, was supposed to cure any ailment. The sauna was also the place where blood-letting was per-

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14. Besides being mentioned by C. J. Piippo in his account of his father's experience, asafetida is also spoken of by Fred Nadus, Duluth, in an interview in 1938, and by John Manni in his account "Pioneer Life in Carlton County", among others.

formed by the peculiar method known as cupping, widely practiced among the early Finns in this country. The cupping horns were about three inches long, made from the tip of a cow's horn, with the opening in the smaller end covered with a tight membrane. The cupper put the horn on the part of the body to be treated, with the large end next to the skin. Then he sucked on the small end until the skin was red and the blood drawn to the surface. The horn was removed, and the cupper made six to twelve incisions in the skin with an instrument resembling a small hatchet. Then the horn was replaced, the cupper sucked again to start the blood flowing, and the horn was left on until it filled with blood and tipped over from the weight. Sometimes, when treating a broad surface of the body, like the back or chest, as many as thirty horns might be used and a pint or more of blood drawn. Cupping was never practiced on the stomach. The theory behind cupping is that impure, "stagnant" blood can be removed in this manner. Another form, known as dry cupping, is seldom employed. Here, after the blood was drawn to the surface by suction on the horn, the horn was removed, and the cupper massaged the reddened spot until the blood was massaged back into the veins. The skin was not pierced at all. Here it was supposed that the blood forced back into the system would later come out in the form of pimples and boils. If cupping as a remedy has any real scientific basis, modern medical practice is not aware of it.[15]

With the Finns, as among other povertyridden immigrant groups, it was not as a rule the doctor but the local midwife who superintended the birth of a child. Among the Finnish people this profession was often handed down from mother to daughter, and the midwife was a woman of considerable importance and highly respected in the community.

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15. Toivo Torma, "Customs and Festivals MS., Minnesota Writers' Project files (1938)

But homely medical practices are disappearing, along with the superstitions--actually, in fact, it is often difficult to distinguish between the two. When roads are driven into the wilderness and the country is settled, the local healer, with his combination of cures and quackeries, gradually gives way to the licensed physician.

## All Work And No Play

Among the early settlers there was little merry-making. The Finn was fundamentally a serious person; the harshness of his native land had driven much of the laughter and lightness out of his soul. He was forced to fight for every bit of food and comfort he received from his native soil, to say nothing of being called upon continually to beat back foreign armies and to oppose foreign oppression. The battle for existence had impressed itself on his personality. He became thoughtful, patient, grave, never given to levity. He has changed a great deal in this country, but much of the gravity and seriousness remains.

The Finnish immigrant, expecially, had little time or inclination for amusement. Not only was he austere by nature, but his religion also reflected the somberness of the dark forests and rocky soil of Finland. The early immigrants to Minnesota were a deeply religious people, who felt that dancing and other merriment were sinful. The religious doctrine most of them followed, that of Laestadius, founder of the Finnish Apostolic church, was extremely strict. It is not surprising that the pioneers in their reminiscences speak much of work and not at all of play, of a back-breaking tedium relieved only by attendance at church services and visits to neighbors.

The lives of the immigrants' descendants have become more relaxed. With the land cleared and settled there was less work to be done and more time for play. The baboos of religion were loosened. And with the organization of scattered settlers into communities, a social life was built up.

Most distinctly Finnish of all the festivals and holidays celebrated in Minnesota is that of Midsummer Day or Juhannus. Juhannus (St. John's Day) falls on June 24th, only a few days after the summer solstice; it is celebrated

especially among the church people but even the Socialists recognize it officially.

Originally the day was a pagan celebration of that day when the sun, after climbing higher in the sky during the six months preceding, began to retrace its cycle. As was the case with many other pagan fetes, it assumed a Christian complexion with the general conversion of the people to that faith. It then came to be celebrated as thefeast of St. John, whose day nearly coincided with the summer solstice, although many of its pagan trappings still persisted.[16]

In Helsinki, in the days when it was still a peaceful, prosperous city, the entire populace would spend the evening of June 23rd under the open sky, and as the sun made its dip beneath the horizon a half-hour before midnight, thousands of bonfires would blaze out from the hundreds of islands in the bay. The remainder of the night was then spent in feasting, dancing and community singing until, only two hours after its setting, the sun rose again.[17] This is the holiday which, without much change, was transplanted to Minnesota.

In Finnish communities huge bonfires are built. Sometimes,on the shores of a lake, a great raft is made, piled high with logs, boards, automobile tires and whatever else will burn, and after being lighted, it is pushed out into the water.[18]

While the fires burn there is dancing, games, singing of folk songs, speeches and reminiscing among the older people, whe the women serve food and coffee. Festivities last until the fires die down, the woods become dark again, and the stars of the clear northern night are the only light as the last

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16. Torma, Customs and Festivals MS.
17. Frank P. S. Glassey, "Helsingfors - A Contrast in Light and Shade", National Geographic Magazine, 47: 612 (May 1925)
18. Torma, Customs and Festivals MS.

stragglers return to their homes.[19]

These picturesque bonfire festivals are gradually disappearing, for the younger generation does little to preserve the tradition.[20] When the last of the older generation who remembers life in Finland dies, the Juhannus fires will likely die with him.

Laskiainen is the distinctly Finnish winter festival. It occurs on Shrove Tuesday, and was brought to this country by the first settlers in St. Louis County about 50 years ago. The day was celebrated among many of the settlers here and there, but in 1937 the St. Louis County Schools Extension Department became interested in the event and made of it an organized celebration.[21]

The word Laskiainen, literally translated, means "sliding down hill", and the day is marked by all sorts of sliding events: ski running and jumping, tobogganning, sliding on sleds, on spruce boughs, on barrels staves, on straw and on pieces of wood, tin, or linoleum. There is also skating. And there is the popular vipu-kelkka (swivel-sled), also called villikelkka (wild sled), a one-runnered sled on the end of a long, pivoted pole; three or four persons pushing on the short end of the pole give the riders in the sled a thrilling merry-go-round ride.[22]

Besides these outdoor events there are indoor programs which include recitations of poetry, folk songs, and the relating of legends and reminiscences. There are Finnish folk dances: the Finnish Reel, the Heipparalla (comic folk dance and song), the Raatikaan, the Finnish Polka, the Schottische and

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19. Torma, Customs and Festivals MS.
20. Torma, Customs and Festivals MS.
21. Makinen-Palo-Markham Laskiainen Souvenir Booklet.
22. Makinen-Palo-Markham Laskiainen Souvenir Booklet; Torma, Customs and Festivals MS.

the Kymene Kynta. Afterward Finnish food is served: silakka, kropsua, piirakka, and the rest of the traditional Laskiainen fare. Everyone takes part in these dances, while outside the Laskiainen fires burn on the hilltops, and there is tobogganning by the light of torches.[23]

These sponsored celebrations have been very successful, and perhaps it is only the supersensitive who perceive about them a certain atmosphere of artificiality. At any rate, Laskiainen is in some danger of losing, if indeed it has not already lost, that spontaneous note which made of it a genuine folk festival of the Finns.

Christmas is kept in traditional American fashion, with little admixture of old Finnish customs. At many homes the main course at Christmas dinner is lipeäkala, which is practically the same as the Norwegian lutefisk. But America's Santa Claus long since usurped the place of Finland's Joulu Pukki (literally, Christmas Billygoat) and other Finnish Christmas customs have gone with him.[24]

Many of the Finns in Minnesota still celebrate name-days rather than birthdays with the giving of gifts and parties. But this observance is not distinctively Finnish, having been a fairly common practice also among the Swedes, and today the custom is gradually losing favor with Swedes and Finns alike.[25]

Lunch is occasionally served at Finn funerals, as it was in the old country. The custom seems a curious one to many Americans who know nothing of the need from which it sprang. In the early days, when people came to funerals

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23. Toivo Torma, History of the Laskiainen Celebration in St. Louis County MS. Minnesota Writers' Project Files (1938)
24. Mentioned by several interviewed Finns, among them Mrs. A. Lindgard, Minneapolis (1940).
25. Toivo Torma, History of the Laskiainen Celebration in St. Louis County MS. Minnesota Writers' Project Files (1938)

from long distances and means of travel were slow, it was necessary that they be fed before returning home. Usually the lunch is not served until after the ceremony of burial; the custom has been modified, moreover, to include in many cases only the pallbearers, relatives and close friends.[26] Here the custom is being followed from habit rather than necessity, and it is fast dying out today.

The same activities as have been popular among women of other nationalities are common also among the Finns. There are quilting and carding and carpet-rag cutting "bees" in the Arrowhead communities, where Finnish women gather to accomplish that miracle, possible only to their sex, of turning out a great deal of work while seeming to give their undivided attention to conversation. The carding bees especially are a relic of handicraft days that have passed away over most of the rest of the nation. The wool is carded or combed by a majority of the women, while the others spin it into yarns, using the spinning wheel. All these bees end with the serving of the inevitable coffee and cake.[27]

Some communities are made up of both Swedish--and Finnish--speaking Finns, so that there is a double language problem. The St. Louis River community in St. Louis County, for instance, has both groups, although the Swedish-speaking element is in a minority and the Finnish-Finns, therefore, control social and other functions. While there has been wide intermarriage, in general the two groups still do not mix to a very great extent. On the other hand, they are not clannish, and neither will sponsor a large function without the cooperation of the other. But the Swedish-Finns are gradually disappearing, swallowed up by the greater numbers of the Finnish-speaking.[28] They seem

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26. Vaino Konga, Duluth (1938)
27. Mentioned by many interviewed persons.
28. Interview with Herman Bodas, Gilbert, Minn., 1938.

destined to lose their separate identity through assimilation, just as the Finnish-Finns in turn will ultimately lose theirs.

The Finn is typically an organizer and a "joiner." Especially in the Arrowhead, and to a lesser degree elsewhere throughout Minnesota, the cooperatives tend to monopolize the larger group activities, simply because their efficiency and enthusiasm are coupled with man-power which rival organizations cannot hope to equal. But there are also women's clubs, workers' societies and numerous other groups which combine social activities with political purposes. Temperance societies, once so prominent, are no longer numerically important. The Knights of Kalevala, with its auxiliary, Kalevannaiset, is a secret order similar to the Masons, and has engaged itself, among other things, in promoting interest and understanding in the epic Kalevala.[29]

Besides these, there are many cultural and athletic clubs in which the average Finn takes earnest interest. He enjoys a debate, though he often has a hard time keeping it within formal bounds. The weekly Siirtolainen once announced a debate between two teams of four members each on the subject "Resolved: That Finnish language and nationality should be preserved." The next week, reporting the results of the debate, the paper admitted that "the most forceful speeches were delivered against 'preservation.' However, the audience went home convinced that the Finnish language should be preserved and maintained. Twenty-two people took the floor in the discussion which lasted over three hours."[30] Twenty-two participants--in a debate between two four-man teams! There, in a sentence, is the Finn. . .

Music festivals, too, are popular. National pride in Sibelius, the great Finnish composer, has done much to make the people good-music conscious.

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29. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 155-164; random items in Siirtolainen and Uusi Kotimaa.
30. Siirtolainen, Jan. 19, 26, 1917.

Sibelius societies were already active during the World War, when the composer was much younger and less famous than now. Duluth has been host to Finnish music festivals which have attracted the attention of Finns throughout the Middle West. To one of these, DeKalb, Illinois, sent its Finnish concert band, Waukegan its male chorus, Chicago its mixed chorus, while Ashtabula, Finnish center in Ohio, contributed its Humina Band (Humina means humming). The program was all-Finnish music, and at the conclusion both "America" and "Maamme", the Finnish anthem, were rendered with tremendous power by the combined bands and choruses.[31]

Throughout the state, there are numerous Finnish literary societies. Leader among these is the Order of Runeberg, named for Johan Runeberg, Swedish-speaking patriot poet of Finland. Home talent plays are very popular, and almost every Socialist Hall, Temperance Center and Cooperative society is a regular producer of dramatic entertainments with all-amateur casts. The literary value of the play is often only secondary, the chief requirement being that it shall have some social implication, the more thundrous the better.[32]

With all their interest in music and literature, it is odd that the Finns have not made any very important contributions to these arts in Minnesota. The tradition of the rune singers and the Kalevala runs in their blood, and Finnish newspapers carry poem after poem written by side-road bards in the epic style, but none has won more than passing local repute. It may be that the creative ability of the Finns has found its fullest outlet in political and social organization.

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31. See Siirtolainen, Feb. 16, March 13, 1917, among others.
32. Various issues of Siirtolainen, Uuse Kotimaa, Tyomies.

## Names of Men

The Finns, living close to nature in the old country, customarily went to the woods and hills and countless lakes for names by which to call each other. Many are the Finnish surnames, which when translated, mean nothing more than Lake, River, Island, Oak, Pine or Cedar, or have other meanings that spring, without any philological juggling, directly from the land on which the Finns lived.

The etymology of many of these names is strikingly simple. Besides the bare root-forms mentioned above, there are those which carry suffixes, such as en --abounding in, or la --in place of. Oja, for example, means ditch or stream; Ojala, a place of the ditch or stream; Ojanen, abounding in ditches or streams. Remembering this, and with a good Finnish dictionary, one can translate a large part of the Finnish surnames.

Mäki is to the Finnish what Jones is to English and means nothing more than "hill". In the Arrowhead where Mäkis, Kesämäki, Ketomäki, Hautamäki, Pintamäki, Hakomäki have all become Mäki now, there is many a groaning rural mail-carrier who has a round dozen Mäkis on his route. To complicate matters more, three or four or half a dozen of these Mäkis are named John Mäki. Once in a while one of these Mäkis, tired of having his mail opened by neighbors, will change his name to Mack or maybe to Johnson, which in Minnesota is scarcely an improvement. Besides the legion of Mäkis, there are Mäkinens (Hilly or abounding in Hills) and the Mäkeläs (Place of Hills). After these come all the special hills: Heikkamäki or Sand Hill; Syrjämäki or Side Hill; Korkeamäki or High Hill; Ilomäki or Joy Hill, probably derived from a place where folk dances were held; Pintamäki or Surface Hill -- or it might also mean a place where the slabs from a sawmill were piled; Hautamäki or Grave Hill -- a cemetery; Kesamäki or Summer Hill; Rajamäki or

Boundary Hill, and any number of other kinds of hills.

From the waters came names like Järvi or Lake; Järvinen, Abounding in Lakes; Joki, River; Lahti or Bay; Peralahti, Backbay; Koski, Rapids; Niemi or Peninsula, and countless Islands, Channels, Waves, Brooks, Treeless Islands, Reefs and so on.

Wuori is Mountain and Wuorenmaa, Land of the Mountain; Kujala, the Place of the Lane, and Kujanpää, the End of the Lane; Hauta, darkly, is Grave, and Hautala, a Place of Graves (not necessarily a place formally sanctified and dedicated as a cemetery, which is Hautausmaa); and Perala, the Place in Back, or the Hinterland.

Some families originally took their names from animals; Karhu, Bear, and Kontio, also Bear, but in a poetically colloquial and somewhat obsolete sense; Hirvi is Moose; Saukko, Otter; Peura, Deer and Peurala, Place of Deer; Kuha, Pike; Hauki, Pickeral; Myyrä, Mole; Waris is Crow; Kurki is the Crane; Härkönen means Little Bull and Lintula is a Place of Birds, probably a rookery.

The forest lent freely: Pihlaja means Mountain Ash; Metsa is Forest; Koivu is Birch; while Koivisto is Forest of Birch; Tammi means Oak; Kuusi, the Spruce, and Kuusisto, a Forest of Spruce. These are but a handful to the multitude of Willows, Poplars, Pines, Maples, Places of Split Wood, Branches, Stumps and all the numerous trees, bushes, flowers and debris of the forest.

A few families took their names from their occupations, as did the English Taylors, Smiths and Millers. Rustari is One Who Builds or Makes; Nikkari is a Carpenter; Sorvari, a Woodturner or Latheman; Seppä was originally a Blacksmith, while Seppäla or Seppänen is the Place where the Blacksmith works, and Koskimies is the Riverman, One who shoots the Rapids

-- possibly the man who gave the family its name once guided the rearing, bucking tarboats through the turbulent rivers.

As to possibly half the Finnish names, the original meaning has been lost in the changes through which a language passes, until even the owners cannot tell what their surnames mean or formerly meant, and only the etymologist could hope ever to trace them down. There are many names, too, which have only a local dialectic significance.

A great many Finns changed their names when they came to this country. The first groups, settling in regions peopled by Scandinavians, frequently took Scandinavian names: Olson, Johnson, Anderson, Nelson and the like. Often the new name was a union of Finnish and Scandinavian, as in the case of Isak Parpa or Barba, who changed his name to Barberg, while Matti Tiiperi, who died of the cholera in Red Wing, was also known by the name of Tiiberg. Matti Niemi, pioneer of Franklin, became Matt Johnston, a rather unusual name in a Scandinavian locality. The descendants of Peter Lahti translated the name into the English surname Bay, while Kustaa Sukki became Gus Frisca by a simple translation of Sukki (quick, nimble, frisky) into the Swedish word of the same meaning. Some merely simplified their names to make them correspond to American phonetics: Aleksi Pikkarainen became Alex Pekeins and Antti Puupera came to call himself Andrew Poopert. Names like Harju became Harris, Haryu or Hary; Jarvi was changed to Jarvey, Jarvis or Lake; Manninen became Mannigan. In one family the name Huhtakangas was changed to both Huhta and Kangas, the mother and one son using the name Huhta, while another son calls himself Kangas. Other changes in names are made, most of them being modified, clipped or Swedicized, or radically changed as Nevalainen which has been changed to McBride. The simplest of all the changes was the translation of the Finnish umlaut vowels, ä and ö,

into plain a and o.

## Finglish.

It is strange that even in Minnesota, with all her Finns, the everyday language of the natives has no "loan words" borrowed from the Finnish. On the other hand, the American language has had a profound effect on the Finnish that is spoken here. Indeed, so true is this that it has been proposed to call the American form Finglish, to distinguish it from true Finnish.

Finnish is a highly inflected language; each noun having fifteen distinct cases. When a word is borrowed from the English, it acquires the Finnish case endings in a profusion that bewilders the American. Thus the Finnish word for lake, jarvi, has been generally displaced by leeki, which is merely the Finn's way of saying the English word. The paradigm of the Finglish forms follows:

| Case | Finglish | English |
|---|---|---|
| Nominative | leeki | lake |
| Genetive | leekin | of the lake |
| Accusative | leeki, leekin | lake |
| Essive | leekina | as a lake |
| Partitive | leekia | some of the lake |
| Translative | leekiksi | into the lake |
| Inessive | leekissa | in the lake |
| Elative | leekista | from the lake |
| Illative | leekiin | into the lake |
| Addessive | leekilla | at the lake |
| Ablative | leekilta | away from the lake |
| Allative | leekille | toward the lake |
| Abessive | leekitta | without a lake |
| Comitative | leekineen (-nensa) | with a lake |
| Instructive | leekein | with lakes |

But under the influence of English some of these case endings have gradually fallen into disuse, and in a number of instances the characteristic inflections have been dropped even from words that are purely Finnish.

Here are a few examples of these loan-nouns which are used by American-Finns, with the true Finnish word of the same meaning:

| English | Finglish | Finnish |
|---|---|---|
| arithmetic | ritmatikkia | lasku-oppi |
| block | bloki, ploki | kadun-vali |
| cable | keipuli | rauta-nuora |
| cake | keeki | kaakku |
| depot | tippe | juna-asema |
| fork | forkka, vorkka | haarukka |
| granary | kreinari | viljahuone |
| hammer (noun) | hamari | vasara |
| license | laisi | lipa-kirja |
| mud | moti | rapa, kura |
| pencil | panna | kyna |
| potato | potaatti, pottu | peruna |
| rope | ropu | nuora |
| rug | roksi | matto |
| station | teisinki, steisseni | asema |
| street car | striit-kaara | raitio-vaunu |
| swamp | swamppi, wamppi | neva |
| telephone | fooni, (verb: foonata) | puhelin |
| train | treini, reini | juna |
| vacation | vekeesi | loma |

Among the synthetic verb forms that have been adopted by American Finns are runnata (to run, in a political sense), plaannata (to plan), skiimata (to scheme) and titsata (to teach).

Advertisements are usually translated into Finglish, because they would otherwise mean little to the rank and file Finnish customer. An advertisement of the Sampo Grocery of Menahga and Wolf Lake, Minnesota, is particularly illustrative of the use of Finglish in newspaper advertising. The following items appear in an ad of May 31, 1940, showing the use of Finglish words:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kauran ryynia, 3 paunan kartongi, (carton) | 2 p. | 33c |
| Corn flakesia, (Flakes) Co-op. | | 8c |
| Korppuja, (plain) 2 paunan kartongi | | 23c |

Kukesia, (cookies) pauna - - - - - - - - - - 10c

Vasikan chopsia, (veal chops) pauna - - - - - - - 17c

Sian roastia, pauna - - - - - - - - - - 14c

Wienereitä, (wieners) pauna - - - - - - - - 18c

Baindereita (binder) and garagessamme (in our garage) also appear.

A Sebeka, Minnesota garage offers Kaaroja, (cars) Trokeja,(trucks) Traktoreita (tractors), haalissa (in the town hall); koordista, (cord) hotellissa, cafeissa and prässäystä (clothes pressing).

These are but a few of the so-called Finglish words, which are a combination of English and Finnish words, and are generally used when no word is available in the Finnish language.

In analysing the Finglish words it will be found that the majority are nouns and deal with technical things, machines and so forth. Most of the Finns who came to Minnesota were from rural districts which 40 or 50 years ago were almost untouched by technical and industrial advancement. Coming to this country without Finnish equivalents for the host of new things they found here, they had to take over the English terms and modify them to suit the peculiarities of Finnish speech. Most of that generation had not seen a threshing machine until they arrived in America. Not many were familiar with trains until the day they left the home village and took train from the nearest railroad station to Helsinki or Hanko or some other seaport city. Probably Finnish terms did exist for some of these new things, but they had not become a part of the daily speech of the people.

Most of the verb changes have been created by the American-born second generation of northern Minnesota Finns, who use the English language most of the time and take short cuts when speaking Finnish. In urban dis-

tricts especially, English is the home language and children talk it most of the time, while the parents will talk Finnish or a mixture of both. If the parents are fairly young and progressive and have been exposed to the English language for a long time, they may speak it almost exclusively. The Finnish is occasionally taken off the shelf on special occasions and used like a choice piece of chinaware at a wedding dinner. In country districts, on the other hand, Finnish has a tendency to survive vigorously into the third and fourth generations as it has at New York Mills and in some other solidly Finnish communities. There seems to be a conscious effort on the part of the Finns to start their offspring on the Finnish language, knowing that school will wean them away soon enough from the mother tongue. Many Sunday schools are still conducted in the Finnish language, in an effort to keep alive the knowledge of Finnish as it should be spoken. This is the practise also in church schools held during the summer months.

A trip through Minnesota will bring one in contact with third and fourth generation Finns conversing in pretty good Finnish, and there are some German-Finnish and Swedish-Finnish crosses who by association have acquired a smattering of Finnish, sufficient for conversation. It would not be surprising if, in a community like New York Mills, the language would persist through the fifth and sixth generations, if only in a corrupted Finglish form. Decendents of the original Finnish pioneers are populating the community rather solidly, and infiltration (by outsiders and mixed marriages) are taking place at a very slow rate. This community is an exception, but even there the fond hopes of many Finnish parents, that the Finnish language should live on and on, seem doomed to eventual disappointment. In smaller and less well insulated Finnish settlements the passing of the second generation will take

with it the last knowledge of the language. If any of the third generation can speak it intelligibly, he will be a man apart. It is estimated that 85 to 90 percent of the correspondents on the Finnish language newspapers are immigrant Finns. When they are gone, with them is likely to go the Finnish-American press with its free-for-all editorializing and pungent style.[1]

1. Geo. M. Maki, Angora, Minn.

(rrc)

## Sundays They Go To Church

Before the introduction of Christianity--and indeed for long years after--the Finns were a pagan people, worshipping spirits which lived in the earth, the sky and the water. Almost every object that surrounded them, the trees, the animals of the deep forest, even the winds, had each its own special divinity.

The story of these pagan gods and spirits is told in the Kalevala, a curious blend of legend and history. Christian dogma and even pagan Swedish beliefs have been added until it is difficult now to isolate the original Finnish legends. Experts who have studied the epic, however, have given us a fairly good account of the gods in whom the original Finns placed their faith.[36]

There was Ukko who ruled the elements, wielding the lightning flash as his sword and speaking with the voice of the thunder; he also watched the growth of the crops and the well-being of the cattle. The red-bearded Ahto, lord of the waves, and his wife, the beautiful foam-veiled Vellamo, ruled the sea and granted sucess in fishing.[37] Tapio, god of the forest, was an odd sort of creature, who wore a tall pine hat and had tree moss for skin. His wife, Meilliki, was onewho provided an omen with every change of clothing; when she came to the hunter in golden ornaments he could expect good hunting, but if she wore withes he could count on a poor bag.[38] Those two, Tapio and Meilliki, together were overlords to a large band of spirits who guarded the various animals and objects of the woodland. Likewise, the waters and the pastoral occupations each had its special divinities.

Minor spirits there were in countless numbers; every tree, every ani-

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36. C. J. A. Oppermann, The English Missionaries in Sweden and Finland, 28 ff., (N. Y., 1937).
37. Kalevala, Crawford translation, Rune IX, XLVIII.
38. Kalevala, Rune XIV.

mal, in fact, every object in nature, was supposed to have its protecting divinity. Every homestead, too, had its guardian spirit or haltia which resided in the roof tree, and its tonttu or capricious spirit which dwelt in the garret or outhouses and had to be propitiated with offerings. And subordinate further to these special divinities were many assorted gnomes, nymphs, giants, elves, dwarfs and the like, some harmful, some helpful.[39]

Hiisi, the chief evil divinity, was held in such great respect by the pagan Finns that Christian missionaries had to direct their hottest denunciations at him before they could weaken his influence.

Sacrifices were regularly offered to these dieties; the first kill of the hunter went to Tapio, the fisherman's first catch was given to the ruler of the waters. Horses, sometimes even men, were offered as sacrifices.[41]

Christianity, we have seen, came with the Swedish Crusades beginning in 1157 under Erik IX and Bishop Henry, the martyr who became the patron saint of Finland. But the Finns, a bull of Pope Alexander III tells us, were unreliable converts. When enemies threatened they were good Christians, asking that missionaries be sent, as well as more earthly help; when danger had passed they habitually reverted to paganism and turned against their missionaries. Then, too, during these first years after the introduction of the Roman Catholic faith, there were wars and raids, first by the Swedish Crusaders against the Russians, then reprisals by the Russians and Karelians, with the Tavastians of southern Finland suffering the brunt of each invasion.[42]

These penetrations by Russia brought the influence of the Greek Orthodox church into Finland, but two Swedish Crusades, the first by Birger Jarl

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39. Oppermann, English Misionaries.
40. Kalevala, Runes IX, XII; Oppermann, English Missionaries.
41. Oppermann, English Missionaries.
42. Oppermann, English Missionaries.

against the Tavastians and the second a little later by Torkel Knutson against the Karelians, subdued both tribes and forced them to return to Roman Catholicism. The Orthodox church was stifled, and today, despite the fact that the Finns were under Russian domination for over a hundred years, only a negligible fraction adhere to the faith.[43] These few are almost all residents of Karelia, ceded to the Russians in 1940.

When the Reformation came to sweden, it swept also over the Finnish province, and the Lutheran faith, under Swedish bishops, became the dominant religion of the land. It has been an extremely powerful force in molding Finnish life. Until themiddle of the 19th century, the church wasthe sole agency making any effort to teach the Finns to read and write. In addition to spiritual direction, it provided the beginnings of education.

When the liberal Russian Czar Alexander II gave freedom of religion to the Finns and released them from the monopoly of a state church, many broke away from the traditional Lutheran faith and turned to pietism, the "religion of the heart rather than of the mind". Most famous of these pietist movements was that of Vocar Lars Levi Laestadius of northern Norway. The Laestadian doctrine in America is identified with the Finnish Apoltolic Lutheran Church, which today is one of the largest Finnish church bodies in the United States.[45]

The stories of the first Finnish churches in Minnesota have been told in the histories of the various communities. Most of the early Minnesota Finns were followers of Laestadius. Their services were held at first in the cabins of settlers, and they had no ordained minister; settlers with some education or some training in comfirmation schools conducted the services.[46]

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43. Aleksi Lehtonen, Church of Finland (Helsinki, 1927) (translated).
44. Lehtonen, Church of Finland.
45. Lehtonen, Church of Finland.
46. Chapters I and II.

Because of the non-conformist doctrines of Laestadius, he was excluded from the fellowship of other Lutherans and his followers were forced to form their own organizations which they eventually came to call "Apostolic." The establishment at Cokato in 1870 of what appears to have been the first Apostolic congregation in America has been related. But the fountainhead of the Apostolic church today may be said to be located in Calumet, Michigan, although the name Apostolic Lutheran was not adopted by the Calumet congregation until 1890.[46A] The Apostolic churches operated in the beginning on a strictly congregational basis, but they veered toward the fellowship conference system after 1908, when the first such conference was held in Calumet. In 1928 they resolved to affiliate the various congregations into one church body under the name "Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church of America," and the consolidation was accomplished the next year.[47]

Broadly, though the policy of the Apostolic church remains strictly congregational, on the theory that too much organization interferes with the Holy Spirit. Members practice extreme simplicity in their homes and their churches. The latter have no organs, no steeples, no attempt at external beauty. Lay preachers conduct most of the services, and the only basic qualification is that they be well versed in the Bible; other training is considered unnecessary.[48] Less than half a dozen of their ministers have been ordained. In the United States there are some 135 churches, and about 30 of these are in Minnesota, with the largest at New York Mills, Kingston, Cokato, Minneapolis and Cloquet.[49] The American Finn today does not like to be called a Laestadialainen.[50]

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46A. Interview with Rev. Eino Tuori, Duluth, Feb. 1940.
47. Private communication, Andrew Mickelson, Calumet, Michigan, Dec. 6, 1939.
48. Jorgenson, Fleisch and Neutz, The Lutheran Church of the World, 361.
49. Mickelson communication, Dec. 6, 1939.
50. Interview with Eino Tuori, Feb. 1940.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church came later, although it is impossible to determine the exact dates. It was the national church of Finland and closely affiliated with the state. Its form of government is synodical and strongly centralized, with the church, especially through the parish priest, exercising considerable authority over the individual. But as to the Finns who came to this country, the bond between church and state was broken, giving the dissident sects, like the Laestadians, the right to worship freely, and at the same time forcing the Evangelical congregations to exist independently, without any central body in control.

At Calumet the Evangelical Lutherans bickered among themselves in petty jurisdictional disputes until in 1890, at a convocation of Evangelical churches, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was incorporated with central headquarter at Hancock, Michigan. But even here the dissension did not end. One faction, having lost its influence in the incorporation, withdrew with some 700 members from the Suomi Synod. Another faction, from entirely different motives, refused to join the Suomi Synod, because it feared that the autonomy of the various congregations would be curbed as it was in Finland. This faction joined the Separatist movement, and in 1900 formed the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran National Church (commonly called the National Synod) with headquarters at Ironwood, Michigan. It is a smaller body than either of the other two Finnish churches, seriously hampered by itslack of pastors. The Suomi Synod, largest of the Finnish churches, has 184 congretations in the U. S., while the National Synod has 66.[51]

There is little or no difference between the doctrines of the Suomi and National Synods; their quarrel is almost entirely administrative, yet the

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51. Jorgenson, Fleisch and Neutz, The Lutheran Church, 360, 361.

rift persists and each supports its own churches and organizations. The Apostolic Church, on the other hand, differs considerably from these two in its basic tenets. Doctrinal differences, however, are no longer a crucial issue with many American Finns, for the advance of sophistication has made for greater leniency in religious matters.

The churches have reflected the gradual Americanization of the Finnish people. Where at first all services were conducted in Finnish, many today use the English language exclusively. Of course there are still churches in which the Finnish language predominates. In Brainerd and New York Mills, English services are held only once a month, while in Middle River all regular services are in Finnish, although the Luther League (Young Peoples' Society) uses English. The drift to non-Finnish churches in some communities is a further sign of a gradual weakening in the hold the Finnish language and culture have upon Finns in America.[52]

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52. Private communications, the Reverend M. Kortesmaki, Middle River, Nov. 8, 1939; John F. Saarinen, Brainerd, Nov. 2, 1939

## Down With Demon Rum!

The Finn is a strange paradox; he is the heaviest drinker and the strongest temperance worker among all immigrant groups. Perhaps the first naturally leads to the second. The rate of commitments for drunkenness among foreign-born Finns has been greater than that of any other foreign-born group in the United States,[53] and yet no other people is so well-known for its work against drink.

The problem did not originate in this country; Finland has the same trouble. There they took a typically Finnish way to cut down on alcohol consumption; they declared drunkenness an act of high treason. But the edict was accompanied by natural corrective measures. In many cases, excessive drinking was found to be due to malnutrition. Food and wholesome recreation were made available to even the poorest wage earners, and classes in cooking and housewifery were organized in every school. Girls and women were fired with the idea that it was honorable and commendable to be good housewives and excellent cooks, and in the schools children were taught that drunkenness was as definitely a disease as typhoid and as severely to be avoided. Healthy bodies, they learned, were necessary to the nation if it was to avoid being Russianized, and sobriety was lauded as a patriotic virtue. From a nation notorious for its drunkenness, Finland's rate of alcohol consumption fell to a point lower than that of any other nation in Europe.[54]

But long before that, Finnish groups in America had espoused temperance. The anti-loquor movement originated in Ashtabula, Ohio, which had a large Finnish population. Most of the men worked on the ore docks, and after a day of

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53. Maurice R. Davie, World Immigrations, With Special Reference to the United States, 272 (N. Y., 1936).
54. "How They Made Temperance Easy in Finland", Literary Digest, 34, (May 14, 1921).

rough, heavy labor, about the only form of diversion open to them was the kind they could buy in bottles. Drinking on the docks was well nigh universal, and many dockhands even carried liquor to work with them.[55]

First among the ore handlers to make a move in the direction of total abstinence were the Finns. During the middle of the 1880's a temperance society was established and Finns and Swedes took enthusiastic part in the movement. Their employer, doubtless realizing the value of having men who did not drink, erected a large hall for their use as a meeting place, library and gymnasium.[56]

From Ashtabula the movement spread to other communities in the west. Almost every settlement came to have its temperance hall. Most of them were in fact community centers; besides the temperance meetings, entertainments were held in these halls, and plays given, usually dramas with some social or educational significance. At first the Finnish temperance movement aimed merely to inculcate the rule of moderation in drinking, but later it came out flatfootedly for total abstinence. At the Sunday temperance meetings a member who had broken his pledge would often be publicly called account.[57]

The methods adopted by the temperance societies for handling the problem were often as unorthodox as they were effective. At Calato, one of the society's problem children was a huge Varmland Finn (native of Sweden) who liked his liquor and defied the temperance society or anyone else to do anything about it. One evening, very deep in his cups, he decided to wreck the temperance hall. Someone ran ahead to warn the society. After a hasty conference, the temperance workers sent out a delegation to head him off. Force was too dangerous, so the delegation treated the rebel to friendly drinks until by the time

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55. W. Frank McClure, "The Finns as American Citizens," The Chautauquan, 49: 247 (January, 1908).
56. McClure, Finns as American Citizens, 247.
57. McClure, Finns as American Citizens, 248.

he reached the hall, they were able to dispose of him by putting him under the stage where he promptly fell asleep.[58]

The various temperance societies met together in State Finnish Temperance Conferences, which in turn sent delegations to a National Finnish Temperance convention.[59] Largest of the temperance groups was the Finnish National Brotherhood Temperance Association, which was organized in 1885 with headquarters at Ishpeming, Michigan. At one time it had over a hundred local societies affiliated, with nearly 10,000 members in all. The churches often acted as temperance work agencies, following the Anti-Saloon League model and temperance societies thus did not usually exist as such where there was a strong church organization to deal with the problem.[60]

The Finnish press supported the temperance movement strongly, and the outspoken local correspondents, with fine disregard for the libel laws, drew moral lessons from individual cases. An Ely correspondent, for example, mentioned a talented band and orchestra leader and musician by name, related how he had taken to excessive drinking and had already served two terms in the work-house; it grieved over the loss of his talents and the pain he was bringing his family, and ended with a strong plea for temperance.[61]

But with the prohibition amendment the movement lost force, and even after that amendment was repealed, there was little interest in revival of the abstinence crusade.

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58. Vernon G. Barberg, December, 1939.
59. See Siirtolainen, Feb. 20, 1917 p. 3, col. 7; p. 8, col. 5; Mar. 2, 1917; p. 8, col. 4.
60. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 152.
61. Sirrtolainen, Feb. 20, 1917, p. 6, col. 3.

## Newspapers in Finnish

Like most nationality groups in the United States, the Finns support a rather substantial list of newspapers and periodicals published in their own language. A notable factor in the support of the foreign-language press is that many immigrants who in their own land seldom read newspapers become regular readers in this country of papers published in the mother tongue. The reason, though, is fairly obvious. Lack of familiarity with the language of their new neighbors tends to set up a barrier to easy social relations, so that they have to depend on their own press to maintain contact with the culture and thought trends of their adopted country. As they progress toward assimilation, the need for this form of liaison between the two cultures disappears, leading to a gradual decline in the language press as the group grows away from the old country and into the new. Since the native Finnish culture is a tenacious one, this process is slower among the Finns than among other groups.

The first Finnish newspaper in America was the Amerikan Suomalainen Lehti, published in Hancock, Michigan beginning in April, 1876. After a brief existence it expired, and was followed in 1878 by Swen Dufva, which lasted for three years before it, too, died from lack of support.[62]

The third Finnish newspaper in America was the first in Minnesota; it is still in existence and is therefore the oldest Finnish paper on the continent. On July 4, 1879, Alex Leinonen published the first issue of his paper at Duluth. Out of it, in 1895 grew the newspaper Siirtolainen (The Immigrant). It is still published as a weekly, but the circulation is small, since the interest of the owners is concentrated chiefly on their daily paper, Päivälehti (meaning literally, Daily or Daily Paper).[63]

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62. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 118.
63. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 118.

The next Finnish-American newspaper was also printed in Minnesota, the Uusi Kotimaa (New Homeland), established in 1881 at Minneapolis by August Nylund. Three years later Nylund moved his paper from Minneapolis to New York Mills, and in 1888 moved again to Astoria, Oregon, taking the name of his paper with him, although he sold the plant and equipment to J. W. Lahde. The latter, in the fall of the same year, started publication of the Amerikan Suometar (American-Finn), a weekly, at New York Mills. When Nylund moved his paper back to New York Mills from the West Coast a few years later, the two publications were merged. The new Uusi Kotimaa took on a radical complexion after the war, especially in its support of Communist attempts to control the cooperatives, and it gradually lost ground until in 1932 it finally gave up the ghost. The plant was taken over and the paper renamed Minnesotan Uutiset (Minnesota News).[64]

There is one other Finnish newspaper in Minnesota, Industrialisti, established at Duluth in 1917 to expound the radical theories of the Industrial Workers of the World. Today the I. W. W. has decayed to almost nothing, but it still continues to support the paper.[65]

Besides the publications mentioned, many others have been published in Minnesota, but for one reason or another--mainly lack of support, they have disappeared again. However, there are two others, both published in Superior, Wisconsin, which should be mentioned because of their large circulation and influence in Minnesota. One is Työmies (The Worker), a daily published every morning except Sunday and Monday, which has many readers in Minnesota. It is a left-wing paper, and, with its circulation of 11,960 (1940),[66] reaches a large audience. The important role of Työmies in the founding of the Cooperative

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64. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 119; Uusi Kotimaa, 1926-1930.
65. Paul Lekatz, Crosby Branch of the Socialist Party Ms., M. W. P. files, (1938)
66. Ayer's Guide to Periodicals 1940. N. W. Ayer and Son, Philadelphia.

Central Exchange--later to become the Central Cooperative Wholesale--is a part of the chapter on co-operatives. Työmies was, from the beginning, the official organ of the Exchange, but during the conservative-radical split in 1929, the paper supported the Communists and refused to print announcements by the conservative group which had come into control of the cooperative. So, in 1929, the weekly Tyovaen Osuustoimintalehti was founded in Superior by the Exchange to present its case to member Finns.[67] Today it has a larger circulation (14,008) than any other Finnish language paper in America.[68] Much of its circulation is in northern Minnesota where the membership of the Central Cooperative Wholesale is largely concentrated.

It has been observed that the Finns have a greater number of radical publications than any other race except the Jews.[69] One writer, after casting aside the possible explanation that the Finns as a people are radical in their leanings, advances the opinion that the large number of leftist papers is due to the fact that it is the later comers among Finnish immigrants who are strongly Socialist; the bulk of the immigrants, conservative or liberal, are so thoroughly Americanized that they no longer need a press of their own.[70]

Like the majority of foreign-language presses, the Finnish periodicals in America have had a hard time. More than 100 have appeared from time to time,[71] but most of them were short-lived, for there are only 20 periodicals listed in 1940: 1 in Massachusetts, 6 in Michigan, 3 in Minnesota, 3 in New York, 1 in Ohio, 1 in Oregon, 2 in Wisconsin and 3 in Canada.[72]

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67. See Chapter VI.
68. Editor and Publisher International Yearbook for 1938.
69. Robert E. Park, quoted by Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 123.
70. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 124.
71. Wargelin, Americanization of the Finns, 122.
72. Ayer's Guide for 1940, N. W. Ayer and Son, Philadelphia.

## THE FINN - LIBERAL OR RADICAL?

In general, the Finns who came to Minnesota before the late 1890's had gravitated to localities in which they were able to buy reasonably good land for their farm homes. The great majority of them, moreover, had come from a Finland in which no sharp social or economic conflicts had arisen, and in which a democratic political consciousness was barely beginning to flower. The transition was not a difficult one for them. They became, as a rule, satisfied American landowners, principally concerned with the development of their own farms and only faintly interested, if at all, in popular movements directed toward social change. True, they had the native liberalism of all Finnish people, but their progressiveness took such natural, non-violent forms as enthusiastic support of the cooperative movement.

Back in Finland, though, a decade or so before the turn of the century, important and far-reaching forces were already beginning to operate. While its economy even today is predominantly agricultural, Finland's other industries are by no means negligible, and there is a large wage-earning class. Around 1890, the country experienced a minor industrial revolution, attended with a good deal of unemployment, dissatisfaction and unrest. During the severe economic crisis of 1892-3, the labor movement which was destined ultimately to sweep the nation began to take its first timid hold upon the people. A year later, during January of 1894, there were food riots in Helsinki. By 1895 conditions had eased slightly, but the trade union idea was already firmly entrenched and it continued to grow vigorously.

As Czar Nicholas II persisted in his policy of oppressive Russification, the people united in a series of organized protests that finally culminated in the general strike of October 30, 1905, lasting for one week. So complete was this expression of popular resentment against the Russian policy that even the policemen were on strike.[1.]

Dissension existed, not only between the Finns and Russians, but also between Finnish workers and Finnish capital which, as always in the early stages of a labor movement, interpreted the proposal to organize workers for collective bargaining as a vicious threat against the entire capitalistic system. So it met threat with threat and strove to beat down even the reasonable demands of workers. There were labor protests in the cities, and riots among the peasants in the country, which were brutally put down by the landlords.[2.] After the usual fashion in politico-social conflicts of this sort, the result at first was to render the conservatives still more reactionary, and to drive the workers and peasants in varying degrees toward the left. Thus the chasm between workers and capitalists widened and deepened until it led finally to armed conflict - the Civil War which ended in July 1919 with victory of the White army over the Red Finns. Since then some 20 years of democratic government have weakened the radical movements as suppression never could have done. The united front with which Finland met the Soviet invaders in 1939 was proof enough that Communism was no longer a power in that country.

1. Vilmi, Otto, Early History of the Development of the Finnish Labor Movement; Background of the Finnish Civil War, edited by Arne Halonen. (Translated by Alfred Backman).
2. Ibid.

But this unifying influence of a moderate form of government was not yet felt at the turn of the century. The Finns who were coming to Minnesota around the year 1900 had left Finland in the dawn of its political awakening, a Finland in which class consciousness was just beginning to find a foothold. They came to the Arrowhead just in time to be caught in the upsurge of a similar wave of labor unrest in the Range country.

It was not political radicalism alone which led the Finns of the Arrowhead to take a prominent part in this new conflict. For one thing, there was the added factor of their difficulties with the English language. They could not communicate readily with their new neighbors and in consequence tended to be driven back in upon themselves. They grew more clannish even than the average new immigrant group, and more suspicious of outsiders. They were put to work in the ore pits and lumber camps under foremen who bellowed orders in a strange tongue; naturally, they were slow to obey commands which they scarcely understood, and were thereupon set down by their impatient employers as a stubborn, recalcitrant people.

"Stubborn as an army mule" is a phrase often applied to the Finn. The description lacks justification. The Finn is not stubborn as a mule - not quite.* But he is usually in dead earnest about something or other, and he is a born crusader. Give him a cause, preferably a hopeless cause, and he will be happy in a sober, dogged sort of way.

Such a cause, readymade, awaited the Finns who came to the Minnesota Arrowhead. Almost immediately they grappled with it, and the resulting struggle made labor history in the Northwest.

* A Duluth Finn to whom this manuscript was submitted for approval suggested that this statement needed to be qualified. He was asked to supply his own amendment, and replied as follows: "There may be here and there a Finn who is not quite as obstinate as the stubbornest mule I ever saw. In fairness to other mules, though, I ought to say that Pete was no ordinary animal in that respect." Vaino Konga, June 10, 1940.

These Finns, remember, had a more militant background of political philosophy than those who had settled in the older Minnesota communities. Too, they had here to become cogs in an imperious and often cruel industrial machine. Instead of farming land of their own, as they would have liked to do, they had to go to work in the iron mines and lumber camps.

Conditions in the lumber camps were bad; the food was poor, there were no sanitation measures or facilities, the men lived in bunkhouses where the bunks were often so narrow that they had to crawl in from the ends; and pay was scanty.[3] Conditions in the iron mines were equally bad. The work was dangerous, for at that time safety measures were almost unknown. Wages were low, and most of the mines operated on a contract basis to which men objected strenuously. The threat of silicosis was ever present and the preventive devices which are commonly employed nowadays were then unheard of. Added to all that was the fact that work was seasonal in most of the mines, for the great pits of the Mesabi were open to the weather, and each year when winter came and the ground froze, work had to be suspended until the following spring.[4] Consequently the miners had to live through the winter on the wages earned during the summer months. And since these earnings were usually $2.25 a day or less, there was little chance to accumulate any substantial reserve during the working season, especially for the miner who was head of a family.

3. Interview Aldrich Koski, Duluth, 1938; Andrew Wirta, Duluth, 1938.
4. Tyomies; various articles during strike. Interview with John Hautala, Duluth.

There had already been one strike in Duluth before the close of the 19th century, culminating in bloody battles between police and laborers. Two Finns were fatally shot. The strike had been called in an effort to get contractors to raise wages 25 cents per day above the $1.50 rate which was standard at the time. Municipal authorities fought the strike and the Duluth Daily Tribune spoke of the strikers in its news stories as though they were outlaws. But that was in July 1889, a day when the fundamental philosophy of labor organization and the institution of the strike were considered dangerous and seditious over a large part of the country. Special police and the militia crushed the strike, with every demand of the workers still unsatisfied.[5]

It is difficult to appraise the importance of this strike as a part of the general labor movement in the Arrowhead region. Certainly it did nothing to ease the tension between laborers and employers, and it is very likely that a good deal of the animosity that characterized later strikes sprang from this one. Since both of the workers killed were Finns, it is a good guess that a considerable number of Finns must have been involved, and that already, at that early date, they had become active participants in the labor controversies of their new home country.

The strike of 1889 involved only one city and was concerned with a local problem. But by the first decade of the 20th century, labor unrest had spread over a much larger territory, filling the Iron Ranges with a general feeling of resentment against the mine operators. The United Steel

5. Duluth Daily Tribune, various issues July 3-14, 1889.

Corporation had grown into a huge combine which controlled the iron industry from the mines and pits of Minnesota to the smelters in the east, embracing on the way the fleet of ore boats which connected the two. In Minnesota its mines and its holdings of ore land were incorporated in a subsidiary, the Oliver Iron Mining Company, which controlled a major portion of the iron deposits of the state.[6]

Upon this colossus was focused the ill-will of the miners. It was accused of keeping wages down, of instituting the hated contract wage system, of hiring thugs and gunmen to break strikes and protect its property, and of importing European labor to provide a constant reservoir of cheap manpower at minimum wages. There was undoubtedly some truth in the charges; cheap labor is naturally a tenet of monopolies, just as high wages are the gospel of the labor movement.

There were scattered strikes on the Range and in the surrounding lumber camps. In July 1907 some of the workers in the Johnson S. Wentworth sawmill at Cloquet went out on strike, asking for an increase in daily wages from $2.05 to $2.25. The mill was not shut down, but three of the strikers, all Finns, were badly beaten up without - so the labor paper's story goes - the least bit of provocation.[7]

But there were bigger things in the air than just a strike at a single sawmill. At Duluth the ore dock workers, long dissatisfied with their daily wage of $2.25 for day labor and $2.50 at night, presented their grievances

6. Folwell, op. cit. Vol. 4, Chap. 1, under subtitle "Combinations of Mine Owners", pp. 28-41, discusses the Steel Trust ownership of Minn. Mines.
7. Tycmies (Superior, Wisc.) July 11, 1907.

and demanded an increase of 25 cents a day. They were refused, the company claiming that they had agreed to work at the old wage until November 1. The workers admitted that they had discussed such a pact, but it had never been reduced to a written agreement, and there the issue reached a deadlock. On July 15 the morning shift did not go to work, and the ore docks were deserted, with no ore tumbling through the chutes into ore boats.[8]

The company met this development by sending their boats over to the Superior side, to load at the Allouez docks, and up the North Shore to Two Harbors. The strikers sent a delegation to Two Harbors, and induced the dock workers there to join the strike. Two or three days later the Allouez docks shut down too, and ore once more ceased to move.[9] The strike settled down to a question of whether the United States Steel Corporation could go without ore for its smelters longer than the strikers could survive the stoppage of wages.

Up to that point the protest had been spontaneous, without union leadership. But the Western Federation of Miners, then perhaps the most aggressive labor union in the west, took charge of the strike, and began systematic organization of the workers.

From the docks, the strike spread back to the mines. In addition to a wage increase, the workers now asked also for an eight-hour day, and for abolition of the contract and bonus system of mining. On July 20 the miners swarmed out of the pits. Two days later there was hardly a steam shovel or a man at work in Hibbing, Mountain Iron or Chisholm. The Western

8. Ibid, July 15; Duluth News Tribune, July 16, 1907, p. 3.
9. Tyomies, July 16, 19; Duluth News Tribune, July 18, p. 3.

Federation of Miners sent Tapilo Petreila, a short, heavy-chested Italian who had succeeded in partially organizing the copper miners at Calumet, Michigan, to take charge of the strike on the Mesabi Range. Petreila, master of three languages, was an extremely able organizer. Nervous and voluble, he held complete control over the strikers under his command.[10.]

The Finns have been called the most enlightened miners on the range at that time. There was a strong Socialist group among them who, it was said, were responsible for inviting the Western Federation of Miners to take charge of the strike. It was further charged that their chief objective was to create discontent among the miners and that they were more interested in gaining recruits for Socialism than in winning the strike.[11.] There may be some truth in this claim, but it seems open to question that so many men with families to support would strike for the sole purpose of gaining converts to a cause. It takes a fanatic to risk hunger for himself and his family.

The strike embraced much of the Mesabi and Vermillion Ranges. From the steel trust affiliates,[12.] it spread to many private mining companies. "Citizens meetings" were held at Ely and Bovey, and at the latter town these "citizens" reached the decision that a strike was unnecessary. They refused to recognize the Western Federation of Miners and objected to the use of the red flag.[13.] The miners at Eveleth, however, left the pits, and joined the strike, while at Virginia, Chisholm, Hibbing, Mountain Iron and Biwabik all the mines were closed down.[14.]

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10. Iron Brew, p. 132 Holbrook.
11. Cheney, Chas. B. "A Labor Crisis and a Governor", Outlook, Vol. 89, May 2, 1908, p. 25-30.
12. Tyomies, July 27, 1907.
13. Tyomies, July 27, 1907.
14. Ibid and News Tribune, various issues.

At Hibbing, a meeting of 2000 citizens in the Powers Opera House, in an all-inclusive resolution, denounced the strike as "uncalled for and wholly unnecessary, and against the express wishes of 75 per cent of the men themselves, demanded protection for those who wanted to work and extolled the luxuries of civilization and individual freedom.[15]

In Bovey and Coleraine on the extreme western edge of the Mesabi Range strike agitators were threatened with tar and feathers. A mass meeting of 1,000 men, mainly "officials, business men and train men", denounced the Western Federation of Miners as a "Criminal organization". "The blood red emblem of anarchy is barred at Virginia by Mayor William Eaton, who promises enforcement of its prohibition. He will also see that anarchistic utterances are curbed" - this is the Duluth News Tribune speaking.[16] This paper, as might be expected, was consistently antagonistic to the miners' cause, and made little pretense of objectivity, even in its news stories of the strike.

"Tyomies", Finnish Socialist newspaper published just across the harbor in Superior, Wisconsin, was equally as biased in its reports as the News Tribune, but at the other extreme. (It corroborated the News Tribune's charges of Socialism, but did it proudly.) Oftentimes the variance between reports of the same happening in the two papers was ludicrous. Thus, the News Tribune, in a dispatch bearing a Hibbing date line for July 24, said:

"Members of the Western Federation of Miners gave a pertinent example of the rowdyism, vandalism and irresponsibility which characterize the acts, deeds and history of the organization, at Chisholm last night

15. Duluth News Tribune, July 23, 1907.
16. Ibid.

when they broke three expensive stained glass windows in the Roman Catholic church and sent a rock through a window in the Methodist church. . . . Citizens who were returning home late last night saw a crowd of drunken strikers walking along the road in front of both churches . . . and heard the crash of breaking glass."[17.]

Although the News Tribune admitted that the priest of the Catholic church refused to say he thought the windows had been broken by members of the Western Federation of Miners, it pointed out that the church was attended by many Austrians, who refused to strike and were hated by the Finns and "other foreigners".

The Työmies account of the same episode might refer to some entirely different event:

August 1 - - "have not the Chisholm bosses done enough falsifying? Their last statement, last week said that strikers broke a window of the Catholic church, but the bosses made an error, for it was accidentally broken by a bullet, intended for a couple of workers, while a street was being opened." (translated).[18.]

Among the Virginia miners, Työmies announced, nearly every Finn had joined the strike by the end of July.[19.] The "Austrians" were the biggest non-union factor, the term Austrian meaning, for the most part, Serbs, Croats, and any other subjects of the old Austro-Hungarian empire. The Finns were the most ardent strikers, for long after the Italians and Austrians had sickened of the strike and were going back to work, they held fast.

The militancy of the Finns in their reaction to the high-handedness of the deputies is well illustrated in the tone of a typical story from Työmies:

17. News Tribune, July 25.
18. Työmies, Aug. 3, 1907.
19. Ibid.

"COLORADO'S DREADFUL EVENTS BEGIN ANEW IN MINNESOTA

"60 Finns jailed in Hibbing and other places where they are engaged in strike, charged with trespassing on mine property.

"Gun barrels dance the 'American Freedom' dance in the faces of 'foreigners,' so that they would learn to understand 'American Freedom.'

"Hibbing, Aug. 8th - Finns are herded to the jails, from homes and from the streets. Today after 2 o'clock, gathered together around 30 of the city's policemen and saloon spittoon cleaners, drunks, or whatever ilk they were, with Winchester rifles, under the command of the sheriffs and company superintendents. They went to the Finnish locations; they entered three buildings, then with rifle directed at the men, ordered, and drove them to jail. Those who balked at the shrill orders were hit and probed by the muzzles of the guns. While this march to the jail was going on, there formed a large crowd of citizens to look on. They didn't remember that it was prohibited to form a crowd on the street of the town. At the door of the jail three thicknecked Finns made some resistance against the 'bull-pen' tactics employed by the 'authorities,' but again the gun handles landed on the boys' necks. That that crowd merely looked on only added to the turmoil. It was all planned to prompt the Finns to use clubs in an attack, and so effect a condition requiring the sending of national guards to the iron-range.

"There were 19 in all brought in that bunch, all were Finns. Of these 19, two were not members of the union.

"At 3:30 these butcher guards brought 5 Finns from across the street from the jail, then went to a private business place, H. Vuopi and V. Harju, and took 3 more men.

"It was a joke to witness an occurrence when three police led one Finn to the jail. Near the jail, as soon as this man lifted his hands, immediately the guns were poked on him.

"Comrade D. Angerias and several others were set free immediately, for they did not dare keep them. Right now, they sure are trying every trick to spur them onto attack, but are themselves becoming implicated when the time comes for an explanation as to the origin of all this."[20.]

Viewed at this distance, the actions of the mine owners and operators seem in many cases to have been rather autocratic and indefensible. Iron dominates the Arrowhead country. When the mines are operating, there is prosperity for almost everyone - railroads, workers, retail merchants, the building trades - whether or not they work directly in the ore industry; when the mines are idle, the region sinks back into seedy somnolence. It is not surprising, then, that the mine operators exercised a powerful influence and that law enforcement showed definite bias in their favor.

Special deputies were recruited, many of them among the citizens of Range towns. In Bovey alone 500 men were deputized to protect the mines of Bovey, Coleraine and Taconite against "trouble".[21.] At Nashwauk 150 deputies were sworn in,[22.] while at Eveleth a meeting of business men asked Mayor Jesmore to appoint 50 more special policemen; the mayor agreed and the 50 were appointed, said the Duluth News Tribune, "to work with the 100 deputy sheriffs who have been in the city the last couple of weeks . . . The police will be stationed at all roads leading out of the city and will be instructed to turn back any undesirable citizens who may seek entry to this town as well as to keep in all who might try to interfere with the working of the mines."[23.]

20. Tyomies, Aug. 10, 1907.
21. News Tribune, July 25, 1907.
22. Ibid Aug. 1, 1907.
23. Ibid

The News Tribune also reported that 200 Springfield rifles were being held "in readiness at the [Duluth] Central police station to be sent to the Range at a moment's notice should any trouble break out among the strikers".[24.]

The strikers, attempting to gain recruits and to picket mines still operating, went from mine to mine and from town to town. They were stopped by deputy armies and refused the right to travel on public highways.[25.] It was inevitable, with so many armed men, many of them inexperienced and nervous, that there should be some violence. There were several instances of shootings and clubbings, with many strikers injured, although no deaths occurred that were directly traceable to the strike.[26.] The strikers, in their turn, were accused of intimidation and acts of violence, and several of them, all Finns, were tried at Duluth for threatening to blow up the house of a woman who boarded strike breakers.[27.] It is impossible to know precisely where the truth lies in most of these incidents, with the News Tribune, wholly in sympathy with the steel interests, giving one version, and the violent Tyomies telling quite another story. Almost a year after the strike was settled a more or less impartial discussion included this comment: "The fact is significant that throughout the strike the only harm done to persons was inflicted by armed deputies on fleeing foreigners who failed to understand their orders to halt".[28.]

Many of the deputies were professionals, brought from outside the state, in defiance of a Minnesota law which prohibited such practices. Tyomies referred to them as "Pinkertons" but we have no proof that it was the Pinkerton agency which furnished them. Many of these men were deputized by the sheriff of St. Louis County.

24. News Tribune, July 25, 1907.
25. Tyomies, August 10, 1907.
26. Ibid, Aug. 10, 15, 31; News Tribune, July 23, Aug. 10, 15, et. al.
27. News Tribune, Aug. 9, p. 3.
28. Cheney, op. cit.

Storekeepers in many instances took active part against the strike, refusing the striking miners credit [30.] -- and credit was a vital concern to the strikers now that they were earning no money. [31.] In Hibbing, Chisholm and Mountain Iron, [32.] the union opened its own cooperative stores to supply food for the miners. [33.] The first collections to finance the Hibbing store netted $1,000, and within two days the establishment was operating. A crowd of business men and police gathered in front of the building and demanded that it be closed. This order the workers refused, whereupon the crowd, lacking any authority or right to enforce such a demand, dispersed. [34.]

But for all the enthusiasm of the strikers, the strike did not spread to the entire Range, and the first omen of its collapse appeared when the dock workers reached an agreement with the companies on July 31, and the next day returned to work at West Duluth. The agreement was a compromise, with concessions on both sides. The companies agreed to recognize the International Longshoremen's Union, to raise wages at the end of two months (when the shipping season would be almost over) from $2.25 to $2.50 per day, to hold a joint meeting between company and union representatives every January 10 to set wages for the ensuing year. [35.]

Workers now began trickling back to the mines, although the Finns, almost to a man, remained out. There were some Finns among the strikebreakers, but they were in a very small minority. On August 15 a trainload of 300 strikebreakers, most of them belonging to the mixture of Balkan races

29. News Tribune, Aug. 1, 6, 14, 1907.
30. Tycmies, Aug. 3, 1907.
31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. Ibid
34. Ibid
35. Ibid - News Tribune, Aug. 1, 1907.

called "Austrians", was brought in by the U. S. Steel Corporation and distributed among the mines in the Hibbing district.[36] A few days later 200 Polish strikebreakers were brought into Eveleth.[37] Apparently many of these newcomers had not been informed of the true situation and, when they arrived, were persuaded to join the strikers at once.[38] However, as more outside men were brought in, the strikers, foreseeing the possible permanent loss of their jobs, began to straggle back to work.

The Federation sent for the famous Mother Jones to rally support and rouse enthusiasm, but it was a forlorn hope.[39] Työmies refused to admit that the strike was lost, or even weakening, though the Uusi Kotimaa of New York Mills reported early in September that only a few Socialists remained on strike.[40] On the other hand the Socialist paper insisted that the strike was a success as late as November, but by the end of that month the cause was abandoned.

The strike gained the workers nothing, and it cost the Finns a great deal. From then on, they were gradually weeded out of the mines, especially the members of the younger and more ardent Socialist element. Finns were blacklisted,[41] and many of them, unable to get work, drifted back into the woods, to chop out clearings in the boulder-strewn cutover land.

The strike of 1907 settled no problem. The workers were left with the same grievances and an intensified hatred for the steel corporation. Future troubles were inevitable -- and they came to a head nine years later, in 1916.

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36. News Tribune, Aug. 16, 1907.
37. Ibid Aug. 20, 1907.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid Aug. 19, 1907.
40. Tyomies, Sept. 12, denying this report.
41. Cheney, op. cit. p. 28. Interview with John Wata, Superior; Andrew Wirta, Duluth, Minn.

There had been sporadic disturbances in those nine years, but they were essentially hopeless gestures, and the operators were too powerful to be frightened by gestures. All the old complaints remained: wages were low, the hated contract system persisted, the work was hazardous in the extreme and fatal accidents were common. And the steel corporation stubbornly refused to discuss these grievances with representatives of the miners.

Some rather important changes had occurred on the Ranges in those nine years. By now the Western Federation of Miners had lost its radical complexion to such an extent that it was the only miner's union recognized by the American Federation of Labor.[42] The Industrial Workers of the World, commonly called the I. W. W. or "Wobblies", had fallen heir to the forceful philosophy of the Western Federation. "Big Bill" Haywood, former president of the W. F. of M., had succeeded to the secretary-treasurership of the I. W. W. This radical organization was strong during the years Europe was embroiled in war, and its organizers and agitators traveled over the nation, (usually in box cars) organizing, fomenting dissatisfaction and unrest, and then moving on again.

Meanwhile, the real leadership in the labor movement on the Ranges had passed from the Finns to the conglomeration of southeastern races which had been called "Austrians" during the 1907 strike. Many of the leaders were the same men who had come as strikebreakers at that time; now that the promise of high wages had proved illusory, they in their turn were growing rebellious.[42a]

42. New Republic, Vol. 8, Sept. 1916, p. 108; The Labor World, Vol. 23, June 24, 1916, p. 6.

42a. Cothren, Marion B. "When Strikebreakers Strike" The Survey, Vol. 36, Aug. 26, 1916.

Following the strike of 1907, opposing currents of political thought had split the Finns into two camps. One group preached the wisdom of combining political with economic organization for the improvement of working conditions. This was the stand of the Socialist movement, the Socialist Finns forming about 15 per cent of the 12,000 miners.[42b.] The Industrial Workers of the World, on the other hand, advocated the purely syndicalist theory of industrial unionism; they inclined toward "direct action" at all times, regardless of the political factors involved. Both groups waged powerful and vigorous membership campaigns. The Socialists organized local entertainments and meetings, and participated in state and national political campaigns. They also took the lead in the organization of the consumers' cooperative associations. As for the syndicalist groups, they shunned all such activity, concentrating entirely on their labor union problems, and making ready for the clash with the mine operators which they regarded as inevitable.[43.]

During the spring and summer of 1913, the Industrial Workers of the World began to solicit membership on the Cuyuna Range. At the same time a labor controversy arose involving two underground mines, the Mucham of Crosby and the Kennedy of Cuyuna. The Socialist leaders and organizers were quick to realize that unless they provided the necessary leadership and guidance, their influence in labor circles was almost sure to be eclipsed by the aggressive tactics of the I. W. W. Consequently they opened negotiations with the mine owners for a reduction in working hours and an

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42b. Ibid.

43. Finnish newspapers of the times: Työmies, Socialisti, Siirtolainen, Uusi Kotimaa.

hourly wage increase. After a week or more had passed with no advantages gained, employees of the two mines called a special meeting at which they decided by ballot to declare a complete walkout. This strike lasted two months, at the end of which a compromise was reached awarding the strikers a slight increase in pay and a reduction in working hours.

This strike was followed by a short business and industrial recession which continued until the beginning of the World War. During this period the Socialist organization began to disintegrate rapidly. In May 1915 it changed its name to the "Finnish Socialist Society". This action met with strong opposition from non-Finnish members of the party, and as a result many withdrew and joined the I. W. W. By 1916 the roll of the Socialist party had dwindled to some twenty members, and in 1921 the Finnish Socialist Society disbanded.[44a.]

In April of 1916 came the first faint hint of real trouble -- scarcely more than a whisper -- when fiery Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, an organizer for the I. W. W., moved across the Mesabi Range, addressing meetings of enthusiastic miners at Aurora, Eveleth, Virginia, Chisholm and Hibbing without interference by the authorities. Indeed, it is doubtful if the steel corporation knew what was going on until after she had left the range.[44.]

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had a record as a firebrand and a successful organizer; she had been chiefly responsible for a wild strike of lumberjacks, hard-rock miners, and other workers in Spokane, and she had been a leader in the Lawrence "revolution" in Massachusetts.[45.]

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44. Holbrook, op. cit., pp. 133-134.
44a. Paul Lekatz, Crosby, Minn., Dec. 14, 1938.
45. Cothren, Marion B., "When Strikebreakers Strike" The Survey, Vol. 36.

Almost two months of quiet followed her departure, and then on June 2 the workers at the St. James mine in Aurora suddenly dropped their tools and walked out. There was no violence, and the walkout came as a surprise to the mine operators. The miners in the St. James workings had a special grievance against the contract system, and their demands were for complete abolition of the system, with straight wages of $3.00 per day in dry workings and $3.50 in wet. They claimed that their wages had been averaging less than $2.00 per day. The mine owners countered with the claim that the minimum wage was $2.90 a day, while good workers could earn more.[46] A report rendered afterward by the State Labor Commission partially substantiated the operators' claim by saying that when, at the end of the month, the miners' wages had turned out to be far under the "minimum", additional allowances had been authorized to bring the average up to between $2.50 and $3.00 a day. In any event, such adjustments as were made were considered unsatisfactory by the miners and their protest finally culminated in the June 2 strike at the St. James mine.[47]

This walkout spread the same day to the Miller mine in Aurora, and then swept westward over the Range, with workers swarming out of the mines across the entire Mesabi. Although "Wobbly" organizers were reported to have I. W. W. members planted in each mine as early as February, there were no locals on the Range, and when the St. James walkout came, it was to all intents and purposes a wholly spontaneous expression of the miners' dissatisfaction with the contract system. Immediately after the strike had

46. Duluth Herald, June 5, 1916.
47. Ibid Aug. 16, 1916.

started, though, the I. W. W. took charge, fanned dissatisfaction into overt action, and assumed complete leadership as the strike spread westward across the range.[48] On June 6th, Arthur Boose, an I. W. W. organizer, came to Aurora to help promote organized action. A meeting was called and the strikers formulated their demands, which included a minimum day wage of $3.00 in dry workings and $3.50 in wet, the complete discontinuance of contract work, a straight 8-hour work day, with the miners entering and leaving the mine on company time, semi-monthly payment of wages, abolition of the Saturday night shift, but with full payment of wages for night shift workers on that night, ground-top workers to be paid $2.75 a day with an 8-hour day, and the agreement that if a man quit or was discharged, he must be paid off immediately. The answer of the employers was a foregone conclusion; they flatly rejected the demands and refused even to treat with the I. W. W.[49]

Three days later, when a band of several hundred strikers began a march from Aurora to Biwabik to try to persuade miners in that town to join them, they were met by Sheriff Meining of St. Louis County and a party of deputies, who arrested and jailed Boose and a dozen strikers on charges of inciting to riot and resisting authority.[50]

The lines of the struggle formed quickly. The I. W. W. took charge of the strikers, while the Oliver Iron Mining Company with its private guards and the sheriffs of St. Louis and Itasca Counties with their deputies did everything in their power, often resorting to illegal measures, to put down the strikers. Governor Burnquist gave his full approval to the efforts of the mine police and sheriffs' deputies to break the strike. He sent the following telegram to Sheriff Meining:

48. Duluth Herald, Aug. 16, 1916.
49. Socialisti, June 10, 1916, p. 2; Duluth Herald, June 9, 1916.
50. Socialisti, June 19, 1916; Duluth Herald, June 8, 1916.

"Arrest forthwith and take before magistrate, preferably in Duluth, all persons who have participated and are participating in riots in your county and make complaints against them.

"Prevent further breaches of the peace, riots and unlawful assemblies.

"Use all your powers, including the summoning of posse, for the preservation of life and property.

"The violation of laws in St. Louis County must be stopped at once.

"J. A. A. Burnquist
Governor." [51.]

The telegram virtually gave Meining carte blanche, and set the stage for inevitable lawless acts by undisciplined special police and deputies as the strike progressed.

Following the same course of action as in the 1907 strike the Duluth papers took a violently anti-labor position, condemning every action of the strikers, and condoning those of the authorities, while the Finnish newspapers, Työmies and Socialisti were, naturally, as ardently pro-strike. Työmies did not approve fully of the I. W. W., but accepted it as the only source of badly needed organization.[52.] Even the A. F. of L. paper, Labor World,[53.] after denouncing the I. W. W., gave its support to the strike.

By contrast with the 1907 strike, citizens of the Range towns were this time generally in sympathy with the strikers. Representatives of striking miners met on July 7 with officials of the various Range towns and the entire group passed a resolution condemning the action of the Governor and his representative on the Range, Gus Lindquist.[54.] Mayor Victor Power of Hibbing

51. Duluth Herald, July 1, 1916.
52. Duluth Herald, June 7, 1916.
53. Duluth Herald, June 24, 1916.
54. Duluth Herald, July 8, 1916.

even became counsel for strikers who later in the strike were placed on trial for murder.[55]

As the strike progressed, it enveloped most of the Mesabi and spread to the smaller Cuyuna Range. Some of the miners on the Vermillion Range also went out, but the strike there gained little headway.

Following the arrest of leaders of parading strikers near Biwabik, there was comparative quiet for a time. Then violence broke out in Hibbing when the Oliver Iron Mining Company's special police under David F. Foley clashed with strikers, and John Alar, a striker, was shot to death, a storekeeper was injured, and another miner shot through the shoulder. The Oliver police blamed the strikers for starting the battle when attempts were made to break up a parade, but the residents of the district placed all the blame on the special officers. The incident was too much even for Sheriff Meining who arrived after the shooting and quarrelled with Foley.[56]

A few days later there was a clash at Hibbing, when Oliver police, who had left their own property and were attempting to take over the work of policing the village, fought with picketing miners. Several men suffered knife wounds or were clubbed.[57]

On July 3 mine police came to the home of Filip Masonovitch, ostensibly to serve a warrant for bootlegging. When Mrs. Masonovitch told them to send Chief O'Hara of the Biwabik police, whom the miners respected, violence broke out. Masonovitch, who had been reading the paper, came out, struggled with one of the police who was beating his wife, and, in the struggle, shot him. A bystander was shot and killed by the police. Mrs.

55. Duluth News Tribune, Sept. 7, 1916, p. 5.
56. Socialisti, June 23, 1916; Duluth Herald, June 22, 1916.
57. Duluth Herald, June 30, 1916; Socialisti, July 1, 1916.

Masonovitch was arrested. The Duluth Herald in commenting on the affair, remarked:

> "James C. Myron, one of the best known and most popular men in Duluth, was killed last evening by a bullet fired by a striking miner inflamed against law and order by the anarchistic doctrines of the I. W. W. men who are just now making the range a place where peacefully inclined people can not safely reside". [58]

Deputies rushed to Virginia, took Carlo Tresca, F. H. Little and J. Gilday from their hotel rooms at three in the morning, and jailed them on charges of first degree murder, asserting that their speeches had induced the killing.[59] Later, W. D. Scarlett and Leo Schmidt were also arrested.[59a]

The special deputies and mine police often acted in disregard of the law, employing any pretext to arrest strikers and, particularly, I. W. W. agitators. A photographer for the International News Association was ordered out of Virginia on threat of arrest --his only crime was that Socialist and Labor newspapers subscribed to the press service he represented.[60] The sheriff of Itasca County took strike leaders off the train at Grand Rapids and jailed them.[61] At Duluth an I. W. W. organizer was arrested; the official charge was "spitting on the sidewalk." This was later changed to disorderly conduct, and finally to assault.[62] The charge of inciting to riot and unlawful assembly was stretched by civil authorities to fit almost any situation. Many of the deputies and special police were

58. Duluth Herald, July 4, 1916.
59. Ibid; Socialisti, July 6, 1916.
59a. Duluth Herald, July 5, 1916.
60. Ibid, July 3, 1916.
61. Ibid, Naskwauk Headline.
62. Ibid, July 11, 1916.

doubtful characters, who were hired without any attempt being made to investigate their records, in spite of Meining's boast in the Herald that there was "not a gunman or thug in the crew."[63] He later admitted to a New Republic correspondent that "he had deputized 'over a thousand' of these men, and admitted cheerfully that except for the comparative few appointed by him, he had attempted no investigation of the character of the men thus armed with firearms and public authority."[64] Mayor Power of Hibbing intercepted a letter from Chief of Police McKercher of Duluth, recommending two toughs to a mine superintendent. In this letter McKercher asked that he be notified if the two worthies did not do their work satisfactorily, as "I have something on them."[65]

Early in July, Governor Burnquist had sent his personal representative, Gust Lindquist, to the range. Lindquist remained incognito, spent his time conferring with mine officials, and did not see either representatives of the strikers or city officials. "He was never available to interviewers, but with representatives of the operators was in close touch with the situation."[66] This policy was one of the things condemned at the July meeting of local municipal officials and representatives of the miners.

During the middle of July a report on the strike was submitted to Governor Burnquist by the state labor commission. The commission found a good deal of justification for the strike. It agreed that the contract system was unjust, that many of the workers, in order to get a soft piece of ore to work on, had to bribe the mine foreman, and it supported the contention that the police had made excessive use of their power:

63. Duluth Herald, July 1, 1916.
64. New Republic, Vol. 8, Sept. 2, 1916, p. 109.
65. Ibid; Duluth Herald, Nov. 21, 1916, p. 11.
66. Duluth Herald, July 6, 1916, Virginia date line.

> "We are not entirely in sympathy with the belief that vigorous measures were necessary to maintain peace and safety in this strike. But we are entirely satisfied that the mine guards have exceeded their legal rights and duties and invaded the citizenship rights of the strikers; that such violence as has occurred is more chargeable to the mine guards and police than to the strikers, and that the public police departments have entirely exceeded the needs of the situation and have perpetrated serious injustice upon the strikers.
>
> "Numerous cases of arrest without warrants and unfair trials in the justices' courts were brought to our attention . . . we are seriously impressed that the mine guards should have been compelled to remain on mine property or disarmed when they left it.
>
> "Every shooting affray that has occurred on the ranges has occurred on public property. In no cases have they occurred on or even near company property.
>
> "The parades of the miners have been peaceful, the public police have had no trouble in maintaining order, and if the private mine guards had been compelled to remain on the company property, we do not believe that there would ever have been any bloodshed on the range." 67.

The names of Finns do not appear as often in the accounts of this strike as in the earlier one. Often the Finnish paper Socialisti attacked its constituents for their poor support of the strike, and for their activities as strikebreakers, charges which in some cases may have been justified. 68. Yet Finnish names do appear in the newspaper accounts of arrests for "rioting" and picketing with a frequency greater than their proportion as a nationality group would suggest. The leaders were outside agitators, but two Finns, Jaakkola and Wesman, were active lieutenants. Strike meetings were usually held at Finnish Socialist halls.

With Scarlett, Tresca, and the other leaders in prison on murder charges, the strike was left leaderless until the I. W. W. central headquarters imported Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and other organizers. 69. But as the strike wore on, and autumn approached with the threat of a payless winter

67. Duluth Herald, Aug. 16, 1916. Report printed in full.
68. Socialisti, July 5, 1916, p. 1; Aug. 10, 1916, p. 1.
69. Ibid, July 21 and 24, 1916; Duluth Herald, July 27, 1916, p. 21, July 27, p. 15.

in the offing there was some unrest among the miners. Strike leaders realized the strategic value of having the strike brought to an end by action of the miners themselves, so at a meeting late in September it was voted to go back to work.[70]

On the surface, it appeared that the miners had gained nothing, that they were back at the point from which they had started. However, they had battled the all-powerful steel trust for more than three months, at a time when the mills were swamped with orders from the warring nations of Europe. There were reprisals on the part of mine operators, but not many, as too many workers had been on strike for the companies to discriminate against all of them. Union men were in some cases asked to give up their cards before being rehired, but when they refused, they were taken back anyhow.[71] The old practise of discriminating against Finns was again put into effect in some of the mines, and efforts made to replace them with "steadier" workers.[72] But the owners did gradually grant some of the demands of the miners, since it was inevitable that a continuance of the same conditions would again bring about further trouble in the future. Moderate increases in wages were granted,[73] and working conditions were somewhat improved.[74] On the whole, though, nothing was done to cure the intense distrust the workers were coming to feel toward the labor policies of the mineowners.

70. Socialisti, Sept. 26, 1916. Announcement of end of strike by Central Committee.
71. Ibid, Sept. 28, 1916, p. 2.
72. Ibid, Oct. 18, 1916, p. 2.
73. Siirtolainen, Jan. 2, 1917, p. 1.
74. Holbrook, op. cit., Jan. 2, 1917, p. 1.

## The War Years --- and More Strikes

On the surface, at least, the 1916 strike ended without material concessions to the workers. Even the small wage increases which the steel corporation now granted of its own volition were soon swallowed up by the rapidly increasing costs of living which the war boom produced. The causes of unrest remained and the I. W. W. was gaining in power as its agitators moved over Minnesota and over the rest of the United States. It was a restless era, and flare-ups were inevitable.

From the iron mines the I. W. W. turned its attention to the woods of northern Minnesota, and began to organize the lumberjacks. Conditions in the lumber camps were sadly in need of improvement. Food was poor, sanitation and cleanliness almost unknown, sleeping quarters crowded, wages inadequate, safety considerations received scarcely a thought.[75] The I. W. W. agitators had fertile ground to work on, finding discontent already prevalent, ready to flare up at the least prodding. Most of the lumber camp and mill workers were Finns,[76] driven there in part by the boycott of the mine operators, and also in a measure because their life in Finland had made expert woodsmen of them.

During the latter part of December 1916, a strike broke out in Virginia at a sawmill of the Virginia Rainy Lake Lumber Company. It was fruitless, as the strikers were unable to close the largest of the mills, and production continued.[77] The I. W. W., in whose ranks in this section of the state Finns were very active, did manage to spread the lumber strike here and there across St. Louis, Koochiching and Beltrami Counties, affecting

75. Siirtolainen, Jan. 2, 1917.
76. Alfred Backman.
77. Siirtolainen, Jan. 2, 1917.

several camps, but leaving so many untouched that the movement ended in failure.[78] James Kilday, I. W. W. organizer active in the steel strike, was beaten up by two lumberjacks who resented the strike policy of the radical organization.[79]

In April 1917, the United States entered the war. The I. W. W. became more unpopular than ever, and was pushed underground by the sedition law, the criminal syndicalist law and other suppressive measures. Even the Socialist party lost what popularity it had been gaining among those who were not already adherents. It is easy to imagine the effect on the Finns, whose Socialist branch was the largest of all language federations of the Socialist party, and constituted the main strength of that party in the Range country. Their experience in Europe as a military catspaw, first of Sweden and then of Russia, had developed in the Finns an intense hatred of war, and in the war-bent America of 1917, there was little sympathy with pacifism of any kind. Many Finns were jailed for organizing demonstrations against the draft.[80] Others caught spreading I. W. W. literature were indicted as criminal syndicalists.[81] Miners laid plans to go on a general strike in protest against the jailing of fellow workers who had refused to register for army service.[82]

Secret meetings were held, strike after strike was planned in the mines and there were sporadic walkouts, but with negligible results. With the country at war, strike movements were not very popular.

It would be unfair to generalize about the existence of current opposition to war among the Finnish people. Many Finns fought in the war,

78. Ibid, Jan. 5, 1917.
79. Siirtolainen, Jan. 5, 1917.
80. Työmies, June 6, 1917.
81. Ibid, Apr. 11, 1917; May 11, 1917.
82. Industrialisti, June 20, 1917.
83. Wargelin, op. cit., p. 171.

both as volunteers and drafted men, some 10,000 of them altogether, according to government estimates.[83] And while the Socialist-pacifist element was proportionately stronger than in other nationality groups, it actually involved only a small fraction of the Finns. Most of those not actually in the service led in "home front" activities, selling Liberty Bonds and doing social welfare work among the soldiers.[84] No need to tell what sort of fighter the Finn is when he makes up his mind to fight; Russia and the rest of the world found out about that in recent months.

The Industrial Workers of the World, dominated on the Range by the Finns, lost greatly in prestige because of its militant opposition to the war. Many members found it advantageous to drop out of the organization, since public opposition and the blacklist made membership a handicap. Already in 1919 the rollcall on the Cuyuna Range had dropped from 600 to 400, and the decline continued at an increasing pace, there and throughout the Arrowhead. Today the 600 have shrunk to a scant dozen, whose main work is to support the newspaper Industrialisti in Duluth, and to give socials and benefit dances for "class war" prisoners.[85]

It was in the last weeks of 1917 that the Finnish struggle for independence broke out, resulting in the bloody civil war in which the "Whites" under Mannerheim, with the help of German troops, defeated the "Reds" who sought autonomy with the Soviet Union. The struggle had a tremendous effect on Finns in this country. They were profoundly moved that their nation, to which they were intensely loyal, should at last have become a state in its own right. As for the radical element, its members

84. Wargelin, op. cit., p. 171.
85. Lekatz, Paul Crosby branch of the Socialist Party MSS.
86. Wargelin, p. 168, Finnish Socialists.

were highly indignant at what they called the "betrayal of the working class" by the Whites. Socialists and syndicalists forgot their differences and organized joint committees to investigate the many refugees who came from Finland, to see whether they were friends or enemies of the working people.[86.] These cases were widely discussed in the Finnish language newspapers. If the immigrant was found to be a friend of the workers, he was recommended for membership in American labor organizations, but if he had participated in the civil war against the workers at home his record was made public in the newspapers and the working people were warned against him.[86.] It would be hard to say how many Minnesota Finns supported each side in the civil war back home, but certainly a majority rejoiced at the thought of a free Finland. Most of the partisans of Red Finland lived in the Arrowhead, while the other settlements, older, made up prosperous and conservative landowners, perhaps preferred a fatherland where wealth was not too evenly distributed.

The Communist party, during the last decade and a half, has fallen heir to the left-wing philosophy of the I. W. W. and of the radicals in the Socialist party. It looks on Russia as the source of all dogma, and the paradise of the proletariat -- or at any rate it did up to the closing months of 1939. Then the invasion of Finland by Russia produced in many Finnish-American-Communists a violent internal struggle between their Communist ideals and their passionate love for the fatherland. There are still a number of Finns in this state who believe that the Russian invasion was really an attempt to free the Finnish worker, but in the main Communism has probably lost caste among the Finns of Minnesota since the fall of 1939.

86. Harju, W. A.

# WHERE FINNS ARE, THERE ALSO ARE COOPERATIVES

The zeal of the Finns for political and social reform, as well as their talent for organization, found ready expression in the labor movement that swept through the Minnesota Arrowhead country in the early 1900's. But they found also another outlet, equally important, in the development of consumer cooperatives. This, moreover, was a movement which was not confined wholly or principally to the Arrowhead; it enveloped the older Finnish communities of the state as well.

To the Finn, the cooperative is not merely a store at which he saves money on his purchases. As an institution, it goes far beyond that. It provides an outlet for non-violent expression of that earnest, passionate political ideology which is characteristically his. When controversy arises, it sounds over the counter of the cooperative as fervently as in the meeting hall. And as an inevitable corollary, when schisms appear they split the cooperatives along with socio-political organizations.

And yet, despite this inability to divorce reform from business, the leading Finnish cooperatives thus far have weathered all storms, and stand today as a monument to the sober purpose which inspired their creation. Without them, the struggle of the Finn to exist on the scanty wage of mine or lumber camp, or to scratch a living from the thin soil of cutover areas in the Arrowhead, might have had a different outcome. The older Finnish communities to the south and west might have prospered without cooperatives, but probably by now the average Arrowhead Finn, without them, would have been in a sorry plight.

There is significance in this fact that Finnish cooperatives thrive in the old, conservative communities of the state, as well as in the radical, class-conscious Arrowhead. It suggests that the movement had its roots deep in old country philosophy, stemming perhaps from memories of oppression at the hands of Swedish landlords on the land and Russian slavedrivers in the mills and forests. It hints at a strange, dogged sort of humanitarianism which seems to lie in the heart of almost every Finn, inspiring him with a determination that the man who works with his hands, whether landowner or laborer, shall enjoy a fair share of the fruits of his toil.

In Finland today, the consumers' cooperative has reached a high state of perfection. The movement really had its first feeble start around 1880, but did not attain concrete form until 1899, when the Pellervo Society was established. As a result in part of the educational program conducted by Pellervo, other cooperatives sprang up here and there during the next few years, but until 1915 these were scattered, independent enterprises, operating without any coordination of effort and in some cases in actual competition with one another. But Pellervo in 1915 succeeded in bringing them together, with five central organizations commanding as many different fields of commerce: S. O. K., operating the retail stores, Hankkija and "Labor", the farmers' buying organizations, Valio, the butter export society, and Rural Banks' Central Credit Association, a financial medium for farmers and rural banks.

These are still the leading cooperative agencies in Finland today, though there are now numerous other national groups. Cooperatives of one sort or another embrace every material phase of life in Finland; they operate general merchandise stores, dairies, restaurants, bakeries, groceries, rural

banks, farm machine-buying societies, peat moss societies, wholesale houses, and export firms. Almost half the people of the country are connected in one way or another with the group-buying system.[1]

In Minnesota, curiously enough, the Finns were not the first cooperative buyers. The Farmers' Grange started the original cooperative stores in this state in the 1890's. A little later, at the beginning of the present century, the Right Relationship League opened at least 50 cooperative stores. The store at New York Mills is one of the survivors of this group. Possibly its location in a Finnish community accounts in some measure for its survival.[2]

The union stores which were set up during the strike of 1907 have been mentioned. These were not strictly cooperative stores, but were operated mainly as strike commissaries, to give the striking miners credit in order that the strike might be maintained. When the strike ended and the need for the stores was gone, they disappeared.

But by then the seed was sown. The emergency need passed, with the restoration of store credit to miners who went back to work, but there was another sort of need, a constant need for rigid economy, always confronting the farmers of cutover Arrowhead land. If the plan worked in an emergency, why wouldn't it work indefinitely, year after year? The question was answered by establishment of the first real cooperatives on the Range, first at Virginia in 1909, and at Cloquet the next year.[3] The Cloquet enterprise, organized entirely by Finns, has grown today into the largest and most successful cooperative in Minnesota.

1. Smith, Hardie, "Land of the Finns" MSS., Minn. Writers' Project files.
2. Eustis, Frank C., The Cooperative Store Movement, (Study by Minn. Dept. of Agriculture, Dairy & Food, 1935) Chap. IV, p. 34.
3. Ibid, pp. 42-48.

Cloquet is a small city of 7,000, twenty miles southwest of Duluth, in the midst of cutover land where the lumber mills are still engaged in processing second-growth timber which is unfit for lumber. Per capita income is low in town and in the adjacent territory, and it is not always a simple matter to be ready for the grocery bill. It was in the hope of making this problem easier that the Finns organized their cooperative, the Cloquet Stock Mercantile. The famous Rochdale principles, which had brought success to the workers' cooperative at Rochdale, England, were put into effect from the very beginning:

1. Democracy of control - Each member has only one vote.
2. Limited interest on capital - investments in the society shall receive not more than the minimum prevalent rate of interest.
3. Savings returns - If there is any profit (after setting aside reserve and other funds) it shall be used for the good of the members, or shall be returned in dividends based on patronage.
4. Unlimited membership; the only ground for excluding a person from membership is that he purposes to injure the society.
5. The society shall be composed of individuals who join voluntarily.
6. Business shall be done for cash.
7. There shall be no voting by proxy.
8. Political and religious neutrality shall be maintained.
9. Beginning with distribution or the rendering of service to its members, the society shall aim to expand its business, to unite with other societies, to produce things which the members need, and finally to secure access to raw materials. [4]

The Cloquet store starting with nothing, and went through eight years of hardship which culminated in the great forest fire of 1918, when Cloquet, with everything in it, was wiped out. The store with all its records was destroyed.

4. Russell Lewis & Mauritz Seashore, Consumer Cooperative in Minnesota, WPA & Minn. Dept. of Agriculture, Dairy and Food, (1937) (This version was written by Dr. J. P. Worbasse, Pres. of Cooperative League of U. S.)

After the fire the society put up a temporary structure on its property, and starting all over again. It made many new friends during this period by maintaining a reasonable price list and not taking advantage of the temporary merchandise shortage.[5]

The year after the fire, in spite of the fact that they themselves had not yet recovered the ground lost in that disaster, the stockholders voted at their annual meeting to erect a new building, and to assist in financing the Cooperative Wholesale at Superior. In 1921 the Cloquet Stock Mercantile Company was renamed the Cloquet Cooperative Society, and in 1923 the Knife Falls Cooperative Association, only a mile distant from the Cloquet store, amalgamated with the Cloquet society to become Store No. 2. It was a happy combination, since the Knife Falls store had served mainly farmers, while the Cloquet society was made up of city wage earners; the merger was beneficial to both. In 1927 Store No. 3 was opened at Esko's Corner, a few miles east of Cloquet on the highway to Duluth, and a modern $10,000 filling station was built in Cloquet. Soon afterward, the cooperative store at Mahtowa, twelve miles southwest of Cloquet, became Store No. 4.

Warehouses in Cloquet today serve the members with feed, flour and building material, and there is a dynamite warehouse outside the city. The society has a large coal yard and does the biggest coal business in the city.[6] It also operates its own insurance agency, a garage and a ticket and travel agency. It can sell an auto and the oil and fuel to run it, radios and farm machinery, lumber and roofing material. About the only thing it does not supply is professional services.[6a]

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5. Eustis, Op. cit. p. 42.
6. Ibid, p. 43.
6a. Fryer (below).

The Cloquet society is so powerful that it has driven out all chain store competition, although occasional attempts are still made to establish chain stores there. A patronage dividend is paid each year, a week or so before Christmas. Five per cent of the net profits is paid annually into an educational fund. Picnics and entertainments are held frequently, and there are numerous educational meetings, at which the purposes of the organization are discussed, and plans made for further expanding its activities. The basement of the main store in Cloquet has an auditorium seating 500, where classes are taught democracy and the principles of cooperative merchandising.[7.]

The Cloquet Cooperative Society is not only the largest in Minnesota; it is one of the largest in the nation. It operates its own fleet of trucks, and in 1939 had total sales of $1,135,476. It begins its thirty-first year in 1940 with 3,018 members enrolled in the stock register.[8.]

The intimate interest of a member in his cooperative finds its natural basis in the fact that he is not merely a buyer, but owner and seller as well. His stock share draws interest at a moderate rate; profits beyond that are returned to members in the form of purchase dividends - and "education". The general aim is to maintain prices at current market levels.[9.]

There is no obvious intrinsic reason why other nationality groups should not be equally as successful as the Finns at this business or organized buying. The fact remains, nevertheless, that in Minnesota the Finns stand out as the one group which has made a consistent "go" of the system. Others have started with hopeful vigor, only to have the first enthusiasm smoulder and die out as members grew tired of waiting months, or a year or more, before

7. Ibid, p. 44 -45.
8. Fryer, N. R., The Rochdale Principles, MSS. Minn. Writers' Project files (1938) p. 5.
9. Ibid, p. 7.

actually getting their hands on the savings realized through their group purchases.

The Finns are good waiters. It would seem that these people, classified by anthropologists as "roundheaded", are in fact longheaded in their wisdom. Once persuaded of the virtues of cooperative buying, they not only put the theory into practice, but stick doggedly to it until the theory had had a chance to prove its practicality. Maybe it is foresight, maybe it is that traditional stubbornness; whatever it is, it works.

None of the other cooperatives set up during this formative period ever attained an importance equal to that of the Cloquet Society, but most of them, especially where Finns were the dominating nationality group, managed to wring some measure of prosperity out of their early struggles. A considerable majority of these cooperative stores were set up in the northern part of the state, extending westward to New York Mills, Menahga, Sebeka and other Finnish communities. They are especially numerous north and west of Duluth in St. Louis and Carlton Counties, the areas of greatest Finnish concentration.

However, as has been said, cooperatives were generally successful even in the older communities. At Cokato in 1910, the year the Cloquet cooperative was established, the Cokato Farmers' Mercantile Association was being organized. Its membership is made up wholly of Finns and Swedes; custom decrees that three of the seven-man board of directors shall be Finns, three Swedes, and the seventh shall be a member of that nationality which is numerically greater in the cooperative at the time of election.[10]

By the end of the first year 390 shares of stock in the Cokato Association had been sold at $10 a share; at the beginning of 1940 $15,000 in stock was outstanding, while the net worth of the Association was double that figure.[11]

10. Interview with A. W. Nelson, Manager of Assn., Dec. 1939.
11. Ibid.

The Cokato store, like those in the northern part of the state, is a true cooperative; it sells at the prevailing market price, and a patronage dividend of 4 per cent on purchases is declared annually.[12] It is independent, whereas stores in the northern Finnish communities generally belong to one of the two cooperative wholesales.

12. Ibid.

## The Central Cooperative Wholesale

The World War years placed the cooperative stores in a precarious position. Scarcity of commodities, coupled with rigid rationing of the supply had produced a sellers' market, in which the quantity of goods sold was determined by the sellers' ability to supply, rather than by the consumers' readiness to purchase. In this situation, the managers of cooperatives began to scent widespread discrimination on the part of wholesalers against their societies. There came a time when they were unable to obtain sugar and other rationed commodities from wholesalers at any price.[13.]

So it was that in July 1917, delegates of twenty cooperative societies met at Superior, Wisconsin, to discuss the feasibility of pooling their buying power. But their scheme soon grew beyond the mere matter of pool buying, and they finally decided to create a regular wholesale house, founded on Rochdale principles, bearing the same relation to its member societies as the societies themselves bore to their individual members.[14.] Contributions were asked for, and from the twenty delegates present a total of $15.50 was subscribed.[15.] With that magnificent sum as its starting capital, the Cooperative Central Exchange opened operations. John Nummivuori was named manager, and set up his office in one corner of the quarters of Punikki, Finnish humor magazine. His office furniture was one chair, one typewriter, and a packing box for a desk.[16.]

That was the Cooperative Central Exchange in its beginning. It was not exactly a formidable establishment and it is small wonder that private wholesalers paid little heed. For a time, too, its prospects were fully as

13. Fryer, op. cit. p. 8.
14. Cooperative Pyramid Builder (Organ of Central Cooperative Wholesale) Vol. II, 9-10, p. 259, 261.
15. Fryer, op. cit., p. 2.
16. Cooperative Pyramid Builder, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 1.

gloomy as the dark, dusty corner in which it was housed. Even the Finnish cooperatives at first showed little enthusiasm for the Exchange. As a later manager, Eskel Rönn put it: "Of the original twenty societies, five got weak in the knees and quit, while others paid for their shares only with promises."[17] Much of the coolness with which it was received grew from the fact that its backers were predominantly Socialists. It was during this period that the Socialist movement was strong among the Finns of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and one of the Socialist tenets was the formation of a cooperative commonwealth. Whereas, the cooperative to many of its members was just a means of saving money on necessities, the Socialists visualized it as a part of their broad program looking toward complete integration of the working classes. Työmies, organ of the Socialist Finns, was an ardent supporter from the start, and soon came to be recognized as the official organ of the Exchange.[18] The first label of the Cooperative Central Exchange was the crossed hammer and sickle of the Second International, and under the leadership of such zealots as Matti Tenhunen and Oscar Corgan, manager of Työmies, its constant urge was that cooperatives must be kept intensely class-conscious.[19]

But even so controversial an issue as that failed to keep the Exchange down. It grew rapidly. One reason, of course, was the difficulty member societies had in getting merchandise from private wholesalers. And the very fact that so many of its staff were Socialists made it attractive to the left-wingers among the Finns of the range country. A good many of the societies were already Socialistic in tone, having been born of strike commissaries, or organized by members who had been forced into subsistence farming by the black-list that shut them out of the mines. But chiefly it was kept going by the

17. Rönn, Eskel, "How Dreams Come True" Cooperation (published monthly by Coop. League of U. S. A.) (Sept., 1924).
18. Interviews, Walter Harju, Alfred Backman.
19. Builder, passim.

zeal with which the Socialist directors performed their work; to them, it was a crusade as well as a business enterprise.

During the three months that it operated in 1917, the Exchange made a profit of $268 on sales of $25,573. Any profit, where a loss had been expected, was a good talking point, and other societies gradually began to show more interest in the Exchange. The next year it bought an old hall and converted it into a warehouse; it ended that year with $2,068 profit.[21] That same year the Exchange organized its first school for cooperators, under an auditor, H. V. Nurmi, who conducted a one-week course in bookkeeping.[22] The following year the course was expanded to four weeks, and covered also merchandising, business correspondence, and the history and principles of the cooperative movement.[23]

By 1919 the Exchange was selling coffee under its own brand, with the trademark of a red star with the hammer and sickle superimposed. That year, too, it began to operate its own bakery. As bakery goods had been reaching the stores in an unsanitary condition, this new service was an immediate success. During 1919 the Exchange tripled its business and its net profit.[24]

The educational work was so well received that in 1920 the Exchange board voted to create the post of educational director. The first educational director was V. S. Alanne, a Finnish scholar and compiler of the Finnish-English dictionary now standard in libraries, whose work had won him the respect of Finns throughout the region.

Alanne foresaw the post-war deflation before it arrived, and warned Exchange members to reduce their inventories. When the crash came, the Exchange weathered it with only a few set-backs, though it did have a struggle keeping some member societies from going under. Nineteen of the 41 were in difficulties;

20. Fryer, op. cit., p. 9.
21. Northern States Cooperative League Yearbook, 1926 (Section on CCE).
22. A. V. Nurmi in Builder, II 9-10, pp. 271-272.
23. Beveri Alanne in Cooperation, Vol. VI, No. 11. - 24. Builder II, 9-10, p. 267.

the hardest hit of all were the members in Michigan, where the closing down of the iron mines had struck the stores a body blow. Many of these stores were reorganized,[26] and most of them managed to get back on a sound footing.

The lesson, though costly, was a valuable one. The depression, coming exactly as Alanne had predicted, proved his sagacity as a business prophet. It demonstrated also the importance of well-planned training in cooperative management, and the cooperative school was rapidly expanded and graduate managers and employees were urged to return for post-graduate work. Non-Finnish cooperative associations were drawn into the fold, bringing new strength to the Exchange and its member societies.

The extraordinary success of the Exchange's educational work was due largely to the labors of Eskel Rönn. During the 1907 strike in Michigan, Rönn had developed an antipathy for private business. Later, he came to Minnesota and worked in the mines until the operators blacklisted him as a labor agitator.[27] He then went to work for Työmies. After the war, having served 16 months in the army, he returned to Duluth and was hired by the Exchange. In 1922, at the age of 28, he was made manager.[28]

The practice adopted by the Exchange was to conduct its schools first in English, then to repeat the entire course in Finnish. Eskel Rönn was primarily instrumental in the founding in 1926 of the Cooperative Pyramid Builder, the first house organ of the Exchange. It was printed in English. Before that time a weekly page in Työmies had served the purpose, but with so many non-Finnish members now affiliated, a way had to be found to reach them also.[29]

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25. Cooperation, Vol. VI, No. 11.
26. Builder, Vol. III, no. 8, p. 229.
27. Interview with Walter Harju.
28. Cooperative Pyramid Builder, VI 5, p. 31.
29. Cooperative Pyramid Builder III-3, p. 71 (Story on Cloquet)

Out of a conference called in 1922 by Educational Director Alanne of the Exchange was born the Northern States Cooperative League, a regional organization of the cooperatives for educational purposes. Alanne was made secretary, and divided his time between the League and the Exchange. The Exchange made the first contribution of money to the League, and, with the Franklin Cooperative Creamery Association of Minneapolis, was its chief support in the early years.[30]

The first million-dollar year of the Exchange came in 1926. Its growth had been phenomenal. The names of 120 societies now appeared on its books as regular patrons, and 71 of these were members. The hall that had been a warehouse and bakery was so crowded that the bakery had to be housed in a building of its own in order to provide more warehouse space.[31] Financially, the Exchange was solid as a rock. It had set up ample reserves for depreciation and bad debts, and its inventory was low.[32]

Minnesota stores had contributed prominently to the growth of the Exchange. Fifteen of the 25 leading buyers in January 1927 were Minnesota societies; they accounted for 42 per cent of the total sales for that month. Besides thesem many smaller Minnesota cooperatives were regular purchasers.[33]

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30. NSCL Yearbook, 1926.
31. Cooperative Pyramid Builder II-2, p. 53 et. seg.
32. Hardie Smith, Central Cooperative Wholesale MSS., Minn. Writers' Proj. (1939)
33. Cooperative Pyramid Builder II-2, p. 52.

## Warfare and Schisms

While the financial structure of the Exchange grew stronger, however, lines of political fracture began to spread through the organization. A majority of the exchange directors and employees were Communists, and the Finnish member societies also were largely left-wing Socialist organizations. The non-Finnish societies, led by men like J. P. Warbasse, were opposed to the radical element. V. S. Alanne, educational director, although a Finn, had already left the Exchange in 1925 because he could not follow the directors in their left-wing philosophy.[34]

The Communists and radical Socialists held that cooperatives should promote the labor movement and participate actively in its controversies; the conservatives wished to keep the organization clear of political ties.[35] In 1926 a motion before the Northern States Cooperative League convention, proposing that cooperatives refrain from political activity, was defeated by the strong opposition of Exchange delegates.[36] Later in the same year the Exchange, at the Fifth Cooperative Congress in Minneapolis, induced the Northern States Cooperative League delegates to go on record as favoring "working-class cooperation."[37]

The next year, 1927, the Northern States Cooperative League sent four delegates to the Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance at Stockholm. Of the four, Dr. J. P. Warbasse and Cedric Long, respectively president and secretary of the League, belonged to the conservative faction; Eskel Rönn and Matti Tenhunen, of the Cooperative Central Exchange, were left-wingers. When Russian delegates presented a resolution affiliating the labor unions of

34. Rönn "In Days of Old, When Knights were Bold", Coop. Pyramid Build., II-1, pp. 5-6.
35. W. Harju.
36. Coop. Pyramid Builder, II-1, p. 5-6; I-6.
37. Ibid, II-1.

the Third International with the cooperative Congress, Rönn and Tenhunen supported the program. Tenhunen said: "The cooperative movement is primarily a labor movement . . . We call upon the Alliance to come out unconditionally for the defense of the toilers." Rönn made a speech in the same vein. But intense opposition developed, resulting in defeat of the Russian resolution, and one was adopted in its place declaring the cooperative movement to be non-political and unconnected with any single party or group.[38.]

The repercussions were soon felt in the Cooperative Central Exchange in this country. Warbasse and Long joined in a letter charging the two Finns, Rönn and Tenhunen, with Communism, and asserting that their conduct at Stockholm was tantamount to betrayal of the League. The letter hinted strongly that the Exchange Societies themselves were Communist-dominated.[39.] Rönn and and Tenhunen replied that they had merely carried out the instructions of the League in its 1926 convention.[40.] Warbasse then countered with an attack on Finnish cooperatives in general, accusing them of a desire to inseminate the entire national movement with Communism.[41.] The Exchange called for a vote of its members, and found most of them in favor of "working class cooperation" as opposed to "neutral cooperation."[42.] Then Alanne, now educational director of the Franklin Cooperative Creamery of Minneapolis, organized a poll of the directors of the Cooperative League, and this ballot resulted in a vote of 12 to 4 in favor of neutrality. Only the four Finns, Rönn, Tenhunen, Saari and Wirkkula of the Exchange, voted against remaining aloof from politics.[43.]

38. Builder Vol. II 9-10.
39. Ibid II - 11, p. 358.
40. Ibid, pp. 358-359.
41. Quoted in Builder, III -2 p. 41.
42. Builder III-5, p. 130.
43. Ibid, III -7.

Events came to a final head with the collapse of the Coolidge Boom in the autumn of 1929. This was the signal for an attempt by the Communists to gain entire control of the Exchange. Many of the department heads and employees and a majority of the directors were Communists, and so were hundreds of Finnish members of the stores. The party also claimed control of the Finnish Federation with its many affiliated workers and farmers' societies, the Women's Clubs with a membership of about 1000, and the Communist Youth League, with about the same number.[44]

The first move in their strategy was a request for a loan of $5,000. The right wing maintains that this demand came from the party itself; the left-wingers assert that it was Työmies which made the request. Anyhow, the board refused.[45]

Then $1,000 was demanded to pay the expense of participation in the Trade Union Unity League conference at Cleveland, a conference of Communist labor organizations.[46] The board cut the amount to $250, but sent a delegate.

A member of the party executive committee, Robert Minor, came to Superior to present a demand that one per cent of all sales be contributed to the party. This one per cent was to be paid to a dummy lawyer in New York as "fees"; it would have amounted to about $20,000 a year, or half the dividend declared in 1929.[47]

The board found this too much to swallow, and refused the request outright, with only one or two members dissenting.[48]

44. A. J. Hayes "The Internal Struggle" Builder IV-4 p. 76.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

The Communist party thereupon demanded that George Halonen, educational director, be removed. Halonen had been expelled from the party when he sided with the Exchange. The board of directors again refused the party demand, even those members who were later to be expelled for their left-wing activities concurring in the refusal. Then Työmies, controlled by the party, opened an attack on the board. The party finally formulated its demands, and presented the following "proposals":

1. That the Cooperative Central Exchange and its affiliated stores be made auxiliaries of the Communist Party.

2. That the Third Period program (scrapping liberal cooperation and adopting a policy of open sabotage) be followed in labor disputes; that all A. F. of L., I. W. W., Farmer-Labor and Socialist alliances 49. be scrapped in favor of the Communist party and the Communist unions.

The Exchange composed an answer to the attacks of Työmies, which was still official Finnish organ, and forwarded it with a request that it be printed in the Exchange's column. Työmies refused. The Exchange thereupon had the answer mimeographed and distributed it to member societies. An issue of the English Pyramid Builder, printed under contract in the Työmies plant, had been run off and was ready for mailing when the Exchange heard the rumor that Työmies was going to refuse to release the Builder from its shops. On November 25 a band of Exchange sympathizers broke into the plant and made off with the copies of the Builder, afterward claiming that the Työmies staff had already seized and burned 1,500 copies. The left-wingers countered that the only copies burned were some that had been trampled on and ruined by the raiders and that these had been destroyed by the janitor. It is unlikely now that the real truth of this episode will ever be generally known. 50.

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid; "What It's All About", (an unsigned article), Builder, VI-1.

Here at last matters had reached an open breach between the Exchange and the party. Communists who supported the Exchange were expelled from the party, and Exchange employees who stood by the party line were discharged. To insure proper presentation of its case to Finnish members, the Exchange founded Työväen Osuustoimintalehti (Workers' Cooperative Press) to replace its page in Työmies.[51]

The battle spread to the individual associations by the middle of November, after member societies at their district conferences had supported the position of the Exchange. The annual meeting of the Exchange was to be held in April; both factions spent the intervening period in a heated campaign to line up delegates, pleading and persuasion often degenerating into arguments of the knockdown-and-drag-out variety.

At the April meeting the radicals were routed, polling only 16 to 18 per cent of the vote. Three of the eleven board members, Matti Tenhunen, Oscar Corgan, and Jacob Vainionpää, were ousted.[52]

The Exchange itself was thus purged of Communistic influence, but the party still controlled some 17 of the member societies, and these withdrew from the Exchange and formed the "Workers' and Farmers' Cooperative Unity Alliance", with headquarters at Superior, to act as wholesaler for the group.[53] Stores which were formerly members of the Cooperative Unity Alliance in Minnesota are located at Cook, Makinen, New York Mills, Rosy and Gilbert, with a branch of the latter store at Virginia. The store at Chisholm also went over to the Alliance, but that unit has since gone out of business.[54]

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51. "What It's All About", cited above.
52. Builder, V-4, Uusi Kotimaa, XLIX -49 (April 26, 1930) p. 1 (Speeches of three ousted members)
53. Hardie Smith, CCW MSS op. cit., p. 22.
54. Eustis, op. cit., p. 39, Appendix B-1, B-3 (map).

In 1934 the C. U. A., embarrassed by lack of cash, suspended operations. The individual stores have steadily lost ground, and now there is strong sentiment toward taking them back into the original organization.[55.]

At the 1931 meeting the Exchange voted to change its name to "Central Cooperative Wholesale", and at the same time discarded the Star trademark with its hammer and sickle, adopting in its place a uniform CO-OP label. The magazine Cooperative Pyramid Builder was replaced with a bi-weekly paper named the Cooperative Builder, which the next year became the organ also of the growing Midland Cooperative Oil Association.[56.]

The growth of the Wholesale since this reorganization has been even more spectacular than before. In 1930 clothing was added to its line and proved satisfactorily profitable. In 1935 the Wholesale bought one of the most modern warehouses in the Northwest at a bankruptcy sale; in the same year it added a coffee-roasting plant, and two years later it opened a branch warehouse and feed mill at Virginia, Minnesota.

The two papers, Cooperative Builder and Työväen Osuustoimintalehti are now published by a subsidiary, the Cooperative Publishing Association.[57.] The second named has a greater circulation than any other Finnish language paper in America.[58.]

The educational work of the Wholesale has been continued and expanded. Today summer institutes are held for adults, and summer school camps for children. A cooperative vacation camp was established, the now famous camp on the Brule River.[59.]

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55. W. Harju - "Coop. store" MSS., p. 5.
56. Builder, VII -1.
57. Fryer, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
58. Editor & Publisher, International Yearbook, 1939.
59. Smith CCW MSS., op. cit., p. 20 (Fryer, p. 11 on education)

The cooperative societies managed to ride out the depression without crippling losses. Central Cooperative Wholesale reached an all-time peak in 1939, with total sales of $3,426,458, and net savings to patrons of $85,982.[60] Naturally, there have been minor setbacks. In 1939 the auditing department, which had played a prominent part in bringing financial stability to the member societies, was separated from the Wholesale by federal action. While its future is not yet certain it will probably be incorporated sooner or later as a cooperative enterprise, serving the Wholesale as a subsidiary.

60. Cooperative Builder, Apr. 20, 1940, Vol. XV, No. 16, p. 1, col. 5.

## District Federations of Stores

Within recent years another sort of organization among individual societies has sprung up. These are district federations of stores for group buying, education, and similar activities. There are three such federations among the Finnish cooperatives in the Arrowhead:

The Range Cooperative Federation: Virginia (headquarters), Hibbing, Little Swan, Iron, Orr, Angora, Aurora, Biwabik, Embarrass, Palo, Ely, Zim, Meadowlands, Nashwauk.

The Carlton County Cooperative Federation: Cloquet (headquarters), Brookston, Floodwood, Wawina, Toivola.

C. A. P. Cooperative Federation: Kettle River (headquarters), Moose Lake, Denham, Wright, Cromwell, Lawler, East Lake.

The purpose of these federations is to band the stores together to secure services that none of them individually could afford or manage. As an example, the Range Cooperative Federation operates a trucking service for all its members, giving the stores frequent deliveries at low cost. If any profit is made, rebates are given the stores on their patronage. A sausage plant is operated by the federation, and it was largely responsible for organizing a cooperative creamery. Both these are at Virginia. It also conducts a funeral home -- cooperative, of course.

All three federations have formed cooperative oil associations, of which the member stores own the stock. How far the federations will expand depends upon the policy of the Central Cooperative Wholesale. Wherever there is a gap in the Wholesale's services, the federations will act to supply the needed service as it did in setting up the sausage factory at Virginia. If

the Wholesale decided to provide the services now lacking, then there may be no need for further expansion of the federations.

The federation bears the same relation to member societies as do the societies to their individual shareholders. The societies are treated as individual members, but each has representation in the federation proportionate to the size of its own membership. The board of directors is chosen by representatives of the member societies. Patronage dividends are paid directly to the member societies.[61]

61. All data on federations from Eustis, op. cit. pp. 56-58.

## Employees Unionized

Even the employees of the cooperatives are organized. The first meeting to discuss some sort of union among cooperative employees was held in Virginia in 1930.

The proposal to organize a union among cooperative workers presented a unique situation. Unlike other unions, where employees banded together to bargain with private employers and to protect themselves from exploitation by private business, the cooperative workers were, in a sense, working for themselves, for they all owned shares in the cooperatives which employed them.

Prior to 1930, there had been no generally accepted standard of wages, working conditions, education and training of employees. The Virginia conference soon discovered that there was no existing union or organization into which the cooperative employees would fit. There were so many types of workers -- clerks, bookkeepers, drivers, warehouse men, creamery employees and bakers, to mention a few -- that it would be necessary to create a union broad enough to include all of them. Furthermore, the principles of the cooperative movement called for organization into one large union, rather than by crafts.

Nearly all the workers in the northern cooperatives are members of the union today. They have done little toward establishing higher wage rates, but a great deal has been accomplished in the way od education. Full support is given to the annual school held by the Central Cooperative Wholesale at Superior.

There have been no disputes between employees and employing cooperatives so far, but the machinery is all set up to take care of any such disagreement or grievance. If a problem arises which cannot be settled through joint discussions, a committee of seven is to be selected, three by the employees, three by the cooperative, and a seventh member chosen by these six. The committee

reviews the charges and claims, and then renders its verdict, which must be unanimous.[62] This decision shall be binding on both parties.

In addition to the stores and wholesales, with their affiliated bakeries, sausage plants, oil companies and similar enterprises, cooperatives have entered into a number of other fields. Cooperative creameries and farmers' elevators are well-known, but these are not limited to Finns -- nor are they even most successful with that nationality. Cooperative burial societies are increasing in number, and these, too, are by no means exclusively Finnish in their membership. There are also a number of mutual fire insurance companies.

In the Cokato community the Finnish Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Cokato is the only cooperative venture in that part of the state to be formed by the Finnish people alone, although they have been leaders in the organization of other cooperatives. From its original memberships, a mere handful of hardpressed farmers of the Cokato neighborhood, the insurance company has made steady progress until it now has 480 policy-holders, with total insurance in force of $2,225,000. Regular assessments are low, with occasional special levies to meet extraordinary disbursements. The company operates principally within the limits of the Finnish settlement in Wright and Meeker Counties. At first all the members were Finns, but through numerous sales and exchanges of insured property, the insurance policies have found their way into the hands of many non-Finnish owners, until only the name now remains as a reminder that the company was at first an all-Finnish venture.[63]

The New York Mills Finnish Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Association is also a very strong organization. But the Finnish Mutual Fire Insurance

62. All data on Cooperative Union from Eustis, pp. 58-60.
63. Interview with Wm. Onkka, Cokato, Dec. 1939.

Association of Carlton County has provided perhaps the most impressive demonstration of the faith the Finnish people have in their cooperatives, surviving even the most drastic misfortune. The 1918 fire which completely destroyed Cloquet and much of the surrounding area was a great blow to the association. Its losses in the fire totaled $105,000, and its reserve was insufficient to cover the entire amount. Assessments to the amount of $18,000 had to be made, and the loyal members, although many of them had lost a great deal besides in underinsured properties, nevertheless paid the full amount. A few of the policy holders did drop out, fearing collapse of the mutual, but the association has completely recovered from the blow and today is stronger than ever.[64]

64. Uusi Kotimaa, Vol. 23 (Oct. 22 & 27)

# S O H E R E I S T H E F I N N

And now we come, like the photographer from his darkroom, to examine the result of our work. We have developed the print, and the picture that emerges is a strange and confusing one. It might be a multiple exposure, it is compounded of so many curious paradoxes, of sharply contrasting lights and shadows. Yet the camera has not lied; this is indeed the Minnesota Finn.

To generalize about any people is dangerous, and it is particularly so in the case of the Finn. A creature of many contradictions, he just doesn't fit into any pattern. A salesman, for example, having heard that Finns are heavy drinkers, may think to promote an easy sale by offering the co-op Manager a nip; likely as not, the customer in fact belongs to one of those Finnish temperance organizations which are among the strongest in the country. That is the way with Finns all along the line. It was that way far back in history, when the original band of eastern nomads took a sudden notion to settle down in a rocky, barren land of hills and swamps, and their descendants have clung tenaciously to it ever since.

The Finn on the surface is stolid and phlegmatic, yet he burns underneath with a fierce, unwavering idealism. Intensely patriotic, he has an undying hatred of war. He is a lover of civil rights and individual freedom, yet has no fear of collectivist regimentation. He is a man of convictions, convictio ns so positive that his churches are rent with schisms, his clubs and even his cooperative societies are battlegrounds of political and social

controversy. But let no outsider think to take advantage of this factionalism, for at the first sign of attack from the outside, all these lines of cleavage will promptly disappear and the attacker will find himself facing a united front.

The Finn is a confirmed rebel against tradition, a non-conformist who questions all the shibboleths of the conservative social order, and turns up his nose at many of them. Yet it was little Finland that put to shame the strongly capitalistic states of Europe by holding steadfastly to the notion that a financial obligation is sacred. Not war, nor depression, nor the economic distress of taking care of 400,000 refugees in a land that was barely supporting the 2,000,000 already there, was acceptable to this debtor as a sufficient excuse for non-payment. So on June 15, 1940, as on every other June 15 since 192 , the U. S. Treasury received every penny of the payment then due on Finland's World War debt. There had been diplomatic hints by the creditor, and an outright statement by the U. S. Congress that this payment might well be devoted to relief at home, but Finland's answer was: "No. This is a just debt. It must be paid."

That was Finland. That is the Finn - a Man of Iron.

(rrc)