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No 35

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview

Minnesota

William Liukkonen and Stanley Levine

Jan. 4., 1939

"Finns of Minnesota"

1. Mrs. Mary Jacobson, 527 3rd Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota
2. January 4th, 1939 -- 1:45 - 2:45 P.M.
3. 527 3rd Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota
4. Informant known to interviewer
5. Stanley Levine
6. The house is a two-family flat in good condition both inside and outside. The furniture plain; the rooms very clean and neat.
Located in central part of the city.

FINNISH

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
William Liukkonen and
Stanley Levine
January 4th, 1939

Mrs. Mary Jacobson, 527 - 3rd Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Oulunlääni, Finland, 1887.

She went to fourth grade school in Ely, Minnesota.

Mrs. Jacobson had one brother and one sister.

She came to America, to Ely, Minnesota, in 1900. She lived in Ely until 1904, then moved to Sparta, Minnesota, where she lived until 1910. From there she went to Gilbert, Minnesota, where she stayed for two years. She then went to Crosby, Minnesota, where she lived for eight years. She came to Duluth, Minnesota from Crosby, and has remained here since.

She came to America with her mother and family, having been sent tickets and expenses for her and family to come over.

She thought conditions were much better here than in Finland, immediately upon her arrival in Ely.

She is a former member of the Finnish Workers' Society.

Interview with Isaac Laakeri 239 Greeley Ave No Minneapolis, Minn.

November 16th 1938.

Interviewed By W A Harju

The reason for Isaac Laakeri leaving his homeland was very simple. He said, "that he was at the time 27 years old and had already been a farm hand (Renki) for six years and a couple of years he had worked as a summer man (Kesamies). The job of a farm hand in Finland was very hard and the food was poor. He wanted a better life so he came to America. Unlike many others he never wanted to go back to the old country.

Mr Laakeri came to Franklin Minnesota in the spring of 1892 from Revonlahti, Province of Oulu, Finland through Quebec Canada. He came on the Dominion Steamship Line but has forgotten the name of the ship on which he came.

Isaac Laakeri is now 72 years old and was married May 8th 1894 in Franklin, Minnesota to Mathilda Bogema a widow of Matti Bogema one of the pioneers of the Franklin community. Mathilda Bogema preceded Laakeri, ~~xxx~~ coming to Franklin eleven years before him arriving in the community on July 19th 1881. She had began her voyage from Salmi Sweden which is close to ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{near} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Vojakkala, ~~xxxxx~~ of Tornio, Finland where she was born. Asked the question as to why she came to America, she says, that being a farm maid life was very difficult in Finland and she wanted to go where she could have security in her old age. She now says that "America has been very kind to her".

Important events concerning the life of the Finnish people when they settled in Franklin are memories of hard work and struggle. They remember the time when cinch bugs destroyed their crops and when the grasshoppers came "like clouds". They still own 40 acres of land in the Franklin community and are staunch defenders of the ~~xxx~~ Apostolic Lutheran faith as taught by Lars Levi Laestadius.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: William Liukkonen
Runar Gustafson
Date: Oct. 19, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Hjalmar Laaksonen, First Street Hotel. Born in 1879 in Rauma, Finland. City born, came to Cleveland, Ohio in 1902. Worked as a laborer there in the boiler and street car shops for two years. Moved to Waukeegan, Ill. where he worked as a wire puller in the wire mill for three months. Moved to Minnesota as extra gang for railroad near Minneapolis. Worked there for a few months. Then went to Garrick, Wisconsin. From there moved to Duluth in 1905. Worked at the Mesabe ore docks until 1907. Worked as a plasterer.

Lahde
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL ETHNIC
SUB. BY: WALTER HARJU
DATE: Nov. 15, 1938.

THE FINNS IN MINNESOTA

The "Kansan Lehti" spirit of the people publishes a biography of the Editor of the Uusi Kotimaa, J. W. Lahde, on page 1, issue of Dec. 1916 with his picture in part as follows:

****"Editor J. W. Lahde was born in Karkola, Finland August 2nd, 1856. He completed his grammar and high school studies (Lyseo) in Helsinki after which owing to poor health he went to Germany. After a sojourn of a couple years in Germany he moved to Sweden where he taught Latin and the German language again for a couple of years. In his best days of youth he came to this country, immediately beginning his newspaper career together with Pastor Hoikka establishing the "Valvoja" a religious paper of which he became the editor. During his career in addition to establishing a number of Finnish papers in the east central States as well as the west coast, he also was among those who began to publish the "Finska Amerikaneran" a Finnish Swedish paper which appeared in Worcester, Mass.

"Mr. Lahde has been in the newspaper business for nearly 30 years. In the editorship of the "Uusi Kotimaa" of which he is today the editor he has spent 20 years. If there is anyone who understands the problems and life of the Finnish immigrant it is Mr. Lahde. With his experience of long standing as a newspaper man, he has been able to create a situation especially among the more serious minded people that they love the "Uusi Kotimaa" the paper he edits. So effective has been his work that there are many old agricultural communities in this country where the Uusi Kotimaa has come to their homes so long that the people can not get along without it.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL ETHNIC
SUB. BY. WALTER HARJU
DATE: Nov. 15, 1938.

"Mr. Lahde is an able linguist, writer, and the creator has endowed him with excellent public speaking abilities. He has made thousands of addresses to Temperance Meetings, Song and Music Festivals as well as great public gatherings of the Finns. He has always been well received and has been able to fire the imagination of his audience with great enthusiasm. His rich imagination has made it possible for him to become a great newspaper man. He has written numerous stories and small novels for our newspapers and periodicals. The readers have never tired of them."****

RM

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

SUBJECT: Social Ethnic
SUB. BY: Walter Harju
DATE: Nov. 15, 1938.

THE FINNS IN MINNESOTA

Translation by J. A. Antila of a Finnish folk song "Lapsuuden
Ystävälle" or "Sa Kasvot Neito kaunoinen isäsi Majassa." Published on
page 17 in a magazine called "Kansan henki," Duluth, Minnesota Dec. 1916.

"Within your fathers cabin small
Oh maiden fair, you grew
Like on the spring times meadow green
The lonely flowers do

And all your childhood's sweetest time
With me you used to play
You were my best and dearest friend,
My only joys always.

You were so true, so nice and young,
Pure as the dawning day.
No rose so fair the meadows bear
Within their garlands gay.

But then the world did us estrange
Far off I did depart.
Yet you my darling, will remain
Forever in my heart."

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson

Nov. 16, 1938.

FINNS IN MINNESOTA

Mathew Lahti, 612 Cleveland Street, Eveleth, Minnesota. Born in Eveleth, December 20, 1904. Parents were born in Kauhajoki, Vaasanlääni, Finland. Father born there in 1878, mother in 1881. Both came from the rural districts.

Graduate of grade and high schools. Had five years college education. He is graduate of the Arts College of St. Mary's, Winona, Minn.

His mother came to this country in 1899, to Michigamme, Michigan. Father came to the same place in 1900. They married there and moved to Eveleth, where the father has worked in the mines ever since.

Mathew Lahti is supervisor of Social Sciences for the St. Louis County Rural Schools.

He is a member of the Finnish Civic Club, and of the Finnish Lutheran Church.

New York Mills

Duluth, Minnesota

Topic: Social Ethnic

Submitted by: Runar Gustafson
and William Liukkonen

FINNS OF MINNESOTA

Mrs. Lydia Laine nee Tiitto. Oulul~~ä~~ni Finland Pyhajarvi. Born 1880. Came to New York Mills at 6 yrs. of age. Had to walk 25 miles into the brush following deer trails to the cabin. Father had 50 lbs. flour and an axe and 25 cents. Pajari Olaf living in N.Y.Mills as grocer, gave them a calf, our first cow. Sister 3 yrs. Home had no floor, one window, one room. Hard for me to get used to it. Had to work at 6 yrs. of age with father in woods. Farmers helped us out by giving us a chicken and rooster. I had to go out and snare rabbits for meat. My father caught deer by snares also. No gun or other means to get meat beside the axe. Stayed 11 years. Then moved to Calumet, Mich. Lived there for 6 yrs., moved back to Duluth for 6 yrs. Moved back to N.Y.Mills. 10 yrs.

Used to trade rabbits for sugar, coffee, and other necessities. After the first grain came in we made our coffee out of oats, wheat or barley roasted in the oven. Then ground in the coffee grinder. The first bread was made from grain dried in the sauna. The grain was ground by two round flat stones turned on an axle. Later the grain was hauled to the mill by ox team 25 miles to the nearest town. The first medium of exchange was rabbits. Later the grain, eggs were exchanged. All ground had to be turned over by hand by hand-made shovels, and hoed by hand-made hoes, hand-made rakes. The grain was cut and winnowed by hand. Cloth was bought at the nearest store and sewed by hand into clothes. After we got our first sheep, we spun our own yarn from the wool and knitted sweaters, socks, caps and everything that could be knitted by hand. Our day started from sunrise and ended at dark. 160 acres homestead.

No rest or recreation--only on Sunday. The only time that I had any rest was on Sunday, Midsummer, Easter, Fourth of July, and Christmas.

Post office Runeberg Town, Becker County, 23 miles from New York Mills.

Topic: Social Ethnic

Submitted by: Runar Gustafson
and William Liukkonen

Date: Oct. 5, 1938 and Oct. 10, 1938

Mrs. Maunu was the mail carrier, from N.Y.Mills to Runeberg on her back. Maunu's farm was the first post office. Later on the post office was in Runeberg town - ship, then Mr. Karttunen was the postmaster. Mrs. Maunu was still mailcarrier but now she used a horse. I was 10 yrs. at that time.

Mr. Maunu, husband of the post mailcarrier was lost in the woods one day. Night coming on he found an Indian's hut. The Indians, one not understanding the other's speech, took him in and gave him food and shelter and the next morning took him back to his farm. In those days there being no roads, the only means of travel was by following blazed trails through the woods when it got dark. At night, of course, it was easy to get lost.

The Indians were very friendly there around N.Y.Mills. If the white men were friendly, the Indians would go out of their way to be the same.

Blueberries were very plentiful at that time. We picked the berries and sold them to the Indians for cash. The Indians paid us a much higher price than the white man would pay. Money wasn't used as a medium of exchange. In its place was used chips, or tokens. In this way the storekeepers would force the people to trade at their stores.

We were very glad when the Indians bought our blueberries, because that was the only money that we saw all year. Because of that a great friendship sprung up among the Indians and Finns around New York Mills. There were no quarrels between us, the Indians telling us that we were the finest people that they had ever come in contact with. Cass Lake was the largest Indian settlement nearest to N.Y.Mills.

In 1887 the first school system was established among the settlers in Runeberg settlement. The classes were held in the homes of the settlers for three months of the year. Miss Carrie Coyer was the first teacher, but not being Finnish it was impossible for her to teach us anything, from then on all

Finns of Minnesota

Duluth, Minnesota


Topic: Social Ethnic

Submitted by: Runar Gustafson
and William Liukkonen

Date: Oct. 5, 1938 and Oct. 10, 1938

teachers were Finns. We were taught in Finnish, and it wasn't until I left there for Calumet, Mich. that I learned to speak English.

Organizer for Finnish Women's Club 4 yrs. Finnish Group Entertainment Committees, Plays, Dances.



Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 29, 1938.

FINNS

Henry Lake, 1316 East 6th Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Pyhäjoki, Oulunlaani, Finland, 1890.

Mr. Lake was educated in the grade school.

He came to America, to Gladstone, Michigan, in 1906. He worked in the steel mills there for a year. He went to the State of Washington next, where he worked in the coal mines for two years. He returned to Michigan. He worked in the iron mines at Stambaugh, Michigan for four years. In 1913 he came to Minnesota. For three years he worked in the woods, mines and fields of Minnesota. In 1916 he settled in Duluth, where he has worked ever since. Mr. Lake was in the dry goods business from 1916 to 1936. In 1934 he started in the liquor business.

He came to this country with his uncle, to look for work.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Stanley Levine
Nov. 16, 1938.

FINNS

Mr. J. Luoma, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ East 5th Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Vasa, Finland. He is sixty-one years of age. He had three sisters and one brother.

He had a public school education in Finland, where he went up to the 4th grade. In addition, he took an evening school (night school) course for 4 years.

He learned the shoemaker trade, and was employed at it a number of years in Finland. He was an officer in the Finnish Army.

He served the government of Finland as a turnkey in a Finnish prison for a number of months. He was employed at this job at the time he left Finland. His pay was 1050 marks per year (at that time approximately \$210).

His brother in America wrote constantly of the prosperity in the United States. He finally came here, directly to Fitzburgh, Massachusetts, in 1900. He stayed there for a year, then he moved to Bessemer, Michigan, where he stayed 17 years. He came to Duluth, Minnesota, in 1918.

He states that the best pay he ever had while working in the United States, was during the war. At that time he received \$7.20 per day for iron mining at Bessemer, Michigan. Prices were so high, however, that it knocked wages down in actual purchasing power.

There is an old Finnish proverb that sticks very impressively in his mind. It is this: "In America people cut gold with a wooden knife."

He thinks economic and social conditions were, and are today, much better than they ever were in Finland.

Mr. Luoma is a member of the Finnish Lutheran Church.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 20, 1938.

FINNS

J. Luoma, 4 East 4th Street, Duluth, Minnesota.

He was educated in a trade school, learning the shoemaker trade, during the years of 1891, 1892, and 1893.

At the trade school that he entered, he relates, the only piece of machinery was a sewing machine. All of the work, except the sewing, was done by hand. Shoes were only made to order. Mass production had not entered his district yet.

It took twelve months to tan a hide before it could be used as leather. Only natural substances were used to tan the hide instead of chemicals which are used now. Most of the thick hides had to be imported from South America, because the hide on the Finnish cattle was too thin.

(The best belt leather in the world is made in Oulu, Finland, at the Ostrom Brothers Factory.)

In the process of tanning the hide, it was also made waterproof.

Gilbert, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Walter Kykyri
Dec. 22, 1938.

TUBERCULOSIS AMONG FINNS

INFORMANT: Dr. Florence McInnis, Madison, Wisconsin.


This interview took place at the home of her parents in Gilbert, December 22, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Dr. McInnis is a tuberculosis specialist, is a member of the Wisconsin Tuberculosis Association at Madison.

She stated that a person who has contracted silicosis to any noticeable extent would get tuberculosis much more easily than if the lungs were in good condition. Silicosis prevented the full use of the lungs, thereby weakening the lungs and if tuberculosis infection set in, it would progress much more rapidly and there was less chance for recovery. Silicosis could be easily distinguished from tuberculosis, she said.

Lack of proper ventilation and sunlight were factors in the spread of the disease. She pointed out that the low income groups without proper clothes had to stay indoors much during winter months, depriving themselves of sunlight. Stated that there are more deaths of tuberculosis in March than in September.

Had no knowledge of the prevalence of tuberculosis among Finns in Minnesota.



Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 9, 1938.

FINNS


Albert Maki, Cook Home. Born Soini Vaasa ^{""}Läni Finland, 1863.

Came to Newberry, Michigan in 1890. Lived there for 10 years. Worked as a lumberjack. Moved to Duluth and lived there for 4 years. Then moved to Grand Marais in 1904 where he took up a small homestead and worked as a lumberjack on the side. Wages averages between 15 and 30 dollars per month, 10 hours per day.

Worked in Finland as a farm hand for very little wages. Moved to this country mainly to make enough money to go back to Finland and take life easy, but this he was never able to do.

Does not belong to any clubs or take part in any social or cultural activities.

Education consisted of confirmation school only in Finland.



Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
December 20, 1938.

FINNS

Mr. Eino Maki, 10 E. 4th Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at
Tuurin, Parinlääni, Finland, 1893.

He had four years of grade school education.

He is a carpenter. His father was a building contractor.

Mr. Maki left Finland in 1913 to come to Duluth, Minnesota. He
has lived in Duluth ever since that. His brother was living in Duluth,
so that is the reason for his coming here.

He worked for the Cutler Magner Company loading cars for eight
years. His brother was working as a plasterer, so he started helping
his brother until he learned the trade. That has been his main occupation.

He is a member of the Plasterers' Local No. 729.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 11, 1939.

Finns in Minnesota

Emil Maki, living at 261 Bryant Avenue N., Minneapolis, arrived at Boston in 1902 from Parkano, Waasa Province, Finland. Maki says that the economic conditions were very bad at the time for common or unskilled workers, being a son of a peasant. Afraid of getting drafted into the Russian army when he becomes of age, Mr. Maki prepared to sail for America as soon as the opportunity presented itself. To give an example of how hard it was for a 16 year old boy to make a living, Maki and his father chopped cord-wood, making two cords per day for 50 pennies a cord. It was difficult, because of the restrictions imposed upon them by the forest rangers, to cut even two cords a day, for one could cut only those trees which were condemned for fuelwood by the authorities. So the earnings were in American money equivalent to only 20 cents between the two men.

Maki's ticket brought him to Waukegan, Illinois where he at once secured a job at the American Steel & Wire Co., loading wire bales on to railroad cars for 17¢ per hour. Although the work day was ten hours, Mr. Maki says, in comparison it was like paradise from the way he had to work in his mother country. There was such a difference in working conditions between Finland and America that it is not strange tens of thousands came during the first years he spent in this country, Maki says. Friends wrote to their fellow countrymen of the abundance and plenty here in America and the American "fever" struck the country like a hurricane. Thousands came to escape the army draft, others because of economic reasons and some even

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 11, 1939.

though they were well situated, came purely for adventure. Now America is built, it seems, and the strong, healthy workers are no longer needed. Millions would come from Europe tomorrow if the gates were let down, and if ever the employers needed laborers as they needed them in 1902 they would see to it that the bars of immigration would be again dropped. But with millions unemployed, all willing to work if given the opportunity with decent wages, it is reasonable to say that the government stopped foreign immigration trying to protect those who are here.

Mr. Maki was employed for 15 years with a large construction firm in Minneapolis until the depression came. He is now on WPA as a common laborer. He is a naturalized citizen with a family of six, the oldest a son 28 years old, only two are self supporting. Three oldest sons are only partly employed while the other three, daughters, are attending grade school. Maki says it becomes difficult at time to support the family on WPA wages. A union man all his life, Mr. Maki says he has been with the Building and Construction Laborers, A.F. of L. during his entire stay in Minneapolis. "My greatest hope is to see all American workers organized in strong unions," says Maki.

Married in Wadena county in 1910, Mr. Maki worked in the harvest fields and the woods in the winter time until in 1923 when he and his family moved to Minneapolis. He lives in one of the oldest houses near the Sumner Field Federal Housing Project. The houses in this area were considered the worst in the city and for that reason several blocks of houses were condemned and were torn down.

The children, except an eleven year old girl, were in school at the time this visit took place. The mother is almost bed ridden with

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 11, 1939.

rheumatism. The oldest son was visiting his mother who with the aid of crutches was able to get to the kitchen. The kitchen was very orderly and clean. The floor was bare and unpainted and showed evidences of daily scrubbing, which no doubt was done by the young girl who seemed anxious to help her mother to the best of her ability. The parlor was a large room with an oil heater and a folding bed, which Mr. Maki said, was for the children because it is warmer near the stove. Despite the January rain and slush the entire house was orderly and clean.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 29, 1938.

FINNS

Iver Maki, 246 Lake Avenue South, Duluth, Minnesota. Born in
Tuuri, Parinlaani, Finland, 1885.

He was educated in confirmation school, and in a correspondence
school. He attained further knowledge by means of self-study.

He worked as a saw filer in sawmills in Finland. He came to New
York in November 1906. He lived in New York for six months. In the spring
of the year he came to Duluth, Minnesota, and has worked in, and around
Duluth ever since. He has worked mostly as a saw filer and laborer in the
lumber camps.

Mr. Maki left Finland because he could make a better living in
this country.

There were eleven children in the family. His father was a shoe-
maker by trade. He saved money until he was able to buy a farm.

Mr. Maki was a member of the I.W.W. at one time.

He is a member of the Timber Workers' union.

No 74
John Johnson (Maki)

Minneapolis, Minn.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 4, 1939.

FINNS IN MINNESOTA

John Johnson (Maki) living at 501 Girard Avenue, North, Minneapolis, was born in Finland in the village of Pietasaari, in the Province of Waasa in 1885. He was a son of a well-to-do cabinet maker, helping his father and learning considerable about the trade, despite his youth. At the age of thirteen he completed grade school. After that he worked full time with his father polishing hand-made furniture. At the age of fifteen a great surprise overtook him. His uncle in San Francisco sent him a ticket and as soon as the passports could be arranged he sailed for the distant "wonderland," as he pictured America. Exactly 31 days after he left the port of Hankoniemi, he arrived in San Francisco, by the way of New Orleans, first port of call of the Cunard Liner, Celtic, was New York.

It was only 25 years after the feverish gold rush in 1900 in California when young Maki arrived, but so far the "pot of gold," still, says Maki, remains behind the rainbow as far as he is concerned. Maki (or Johnson, the name he adopted soon after he arrived) for thirty years worked in Oakland in one of the largest tailor shops. He learned the trade from his uncle who had owned a shop in San Francisco for a number of years.

Johnson took active part in one of the finest amateur athletic clubs on the west coast. He was awarded several medals as welter-weight champion wrestler of the West Coast Finnish Association. He also took up music and played a clarinet in some of the leading musical organizations.

There were two interesting high spots in Johnson's career while in San Francisco. On April 18, 1906 he narrowly escaped being crushed by falling stone and debris in the San Francisco earthquake. It happened between 4-5 in the morning. And the other is his personal acquaintance with

Finns in Minnesota
John Johnson (Maki)

2.

Minneapolis, Minn.

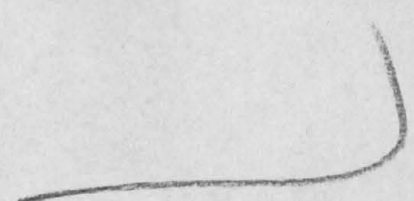
Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 4, 1939.

Tom Mooney. Johnson says he watched the preparedness parade off the same roof with Mooney and a score of others. He offered to testify at the trial but was turned down by the judge. At the same time he was a delegate to the Central Labor Council of the Bay Area from the tailors union rubbing shoulders with Tom Mooney for several years. They worked together in the American Socialist Party also. Mr. Johnson served several years in the Socialist Party committees of San Francisco representing the Finnish Socialist Federation where he also came together quite regularly with Tom Mooney. He said that every one he knew were convinced that the Mooney case was the worst frame up in the history of the country.

Mr. Johnson is now employed as tailor in one of the large department stores in the city. He came to Minneapolis in 1932. Because he ranks high in his trade as tailor, Mr. Johnson says that he was never unemployed except during 1931-32. He was married in 1907 on the West Coast. Has two sons one 28 and the other 32. Both are married and live in California.

Mr. Johnson is very interested in world affairs and hopes to see Tom Mooney again when, and if, he comes to Minneapolis on a speaking tour.

He is a member of the Tailor's Union, and follows carefully the labor movement, particularly the CIO.



Minneapolis, Minn.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman

No 75

FINNS IN MINNESOTA

Nick Maki, born in Harma, Waasa Province, Finland in 1888, arrived on a Dominion liner at the Boston harbor in 1902 with his parents at the age of 14. As his grandfather was a watchmaker and his father a timber scaler, young Nick had been given a little better opportunity in life than a son of an ordinary laborer. He almost completed grade school in Finland at the age of 14 which is rather unusual for common laborer's children, for schools at this early date had not yet been developed to the degree that children could all attend freely regardless of caste. Also children of the poor were compelled, because of economic necessity to begin doing hard labor in the majority of cases at the tender age of ten years. The informant says that this stunted their growth, and is is generally admitted that this is one of the main reasons why the Finns are, as a rule, short in stature.

After one year of school in Bessemer, Mich., where the Maki family landed after spending 15 days on the Atlantic, young Nick worked in the iron mines until 1906 after which he came to Minneapolis to attempt to further his education. This was in the fall of year with the little money he had saved, he enrolled as a student at the Dunwoody Institute. During two summers following, Mr. Maki worked in the mines in Upper Michigan and attended Dunwoody faithfully in winter. In 1908 thousands of miners were discharged, including Mr. Maki, with the result that in Dunwoody during the next winter season Maki was among the missing. Thus Maki remained in the iron mining region working mostly in grocery stores as clerk and trucker. This of course ended his education as a few years later he got married, and settled down, as any young man will. Three children were born, now grown up and self


Minneapolis, Minn.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman

supporting, all well educated, one daughter employed as teller in an Upper Michigan bank. Mr. Maki was divorced from his wife in the early twenties and in 1924 he again came to Minneapolis where he has made his home ever since. His children and the former wife remained, and still live, in Michigan. His father and mother died in Caspian, Michigan.

For ten years Mr. Maki worked at the plumbers' trade in Minneapolis. In 1933, when the Minneapolis-St. Paul Sanitary District was formed, and the deep sewer-tunnel was started, running about 15 miles under the Twin Cities, Mr. Maki, as an experienced miner got a job as "sand-hog." In constructing the tunnel, which at some points is 200 feet under the surface, solid dry sand-rock had to be bored through, a very difficult and dangerous task for the miners. The danger is two fold. There was always a danger of the pressure of underground water pockets causing cave ins making it necessary to use air-pressure locks where the miners worked under pressure, sometimes as high as 32 pounds. One of the worst hazards was drilling dry sand-rock endangering the men and exposing them to the silica dust causing lung ailment called silicosis. Mr. Maki, after working underground two years contracted silicosis forcing him to spend 16 months in a sanitorium. During the past five years Mr. Maki has been an active member of the Building and Construction Laborers Union of the A.F. of L. At the present time the Union is fighting for compensation for Mr. Maki charging that the contractor failed to guard against the industrial hazard.

Mr. Maki is living at 56 Highland Avenue in a public rooming house receiving aid from Public Welfare.



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Duluth, Minnesota
Topic: Social Ethnic
Submitted by: Runar Gustafson
and William Liukkonen
Date: October 13, 1938

FINNS IN MINNESOTA

Robert Maki, 7 west Superior St. Born in Perasunajoki Vaasa ~~Lääna~~ Finland on a farm 1879; came to Virginia, Minnesota in 1899. Came to Minnesota in order to buy a bicycle. I couldn't make enough money in Finland to buy one. Every young man in my country had one, so I had to have one too. The very first check that I received in Virginia, Minn, went for one. I worked as a miner in the Commodore Mine in Virginia. After I had worked for three years in the iron ore mines I saved up enough money to take a course in photography and have been at that ever since. Practised in Virginia for four years, then roamed around the country. Have been to Finland twice. Have had a studio in Duluth for 13 years. Married and have three children. Had three years of grammar school in Finland, that is all the education I've had. Was up until a few years ago a Choir Director for various Finnish organizations.

Killed in auto accident Pennsylvania 1941

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Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 20, 1938.

FINNS

William Maki, 246 Lake Avenue South, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Vaasanlääni, Finland, 1880.

He was educated in confirmation school.

There were eight in the family. His parents were farmers, so until he left for the United States he worked on the farm. He left Finland in 1898, to go to Negaunee, Michigan, where he worked in the iron ore mines for three years. He left there and went to Iron Belt, Wisconsin. For nine months he worked in the mines there, then moved to Ironwood, Michigan, where he worked for six months. He came to Duluth in 1903. From Duluth he went to the Mesabe Range. Has worked in the mines and in the woods around Duluth ever since.

Wages were good, but the work was both hard and dangerous. These conditions were the causes for the Miners' strike in 1907, and again in 1916. Both strikes were lost.

He was making only a bare existence in Finland so came to this country to better himself.

At one time he was a member of the I.W.W., and is now a member of the Timber Workers' Union.

In 1919 he purchased a farm near Sawyer, Minnesota, and farmed that for fifteen years.

(Cokato)

Finnish Study
Ralph K. Andrist
December 6, 1939

Interview with Mrs. Mathias Mattala. Her Daughter, Mrs. Wm. Onkka, acted as interpreter.

Mrs. Mattala was born in Haaparanta, Sweden, which is just across the border (Tornio River) from Finland. She was born in August of 1852, and came to this country in 1873. She remembers the trip over; unlike most of the early Finnish immigrants she did not leave from a Norwegian port after a trip across country, but took the ship directly from Haaparanta and went around Stockholm. The ship was the 'Scandinavia', an old steamship, and she believes that the trip across the Atlantic took about three weeks. From the coast she came to Calumet, Michigan. [There may be an error here; Mrs. Mattala says she came over when 19 years old, but this would make her 21, according to the birthdate she gives.]

She married Olaf Jaakkala (Jacobson) in Calumet, probably in 1874.

In 1876 they came to Cokato, coming first to Duluth by steamship, and then taking the train to Minneapolis, and then to Cokato. They stopped in Minneapolis, and she remembers the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. She did not see Minneapolis again for 25 more years, although it is only 50 miles from Cokato.

They bought land from the railroad, 40 acres for \$200, in Section 8 or 9, just a quarter-mile north of where the Apostolic church is located. The church was being built that first summer they were here, and Jaakkola (Jacobson) helped in the building. The structure was of boards, although the homes of the settlers were still all of logs.

Mrs. Mattala baked the flat communion bread for the church.

The couple lived with neighbors until they could build their own log cabin, a two-room structure 20 by 14 feet. In this small building, during the breaking of the land, they sometimes had as many as 11 to 16 men sleeping. The men, she says, were not particular in those days; they merely scattered a little more hay or straw on the floor and went to sleep on that.

At their coming the land was nearly all woods, even though the settlement was ten years old. Man had pushed out some of the wild life, though, because the deer were all gone, and other large game. The labor on the land was disheartening; the trees, most of them oak, elm or other hard wood, had to be first cut down with the axe, and then the stumps were grubbed out with axe and grub-hoe. Often a day was spent on a single stump. They were fortunate that first winter ('76-'77), for there was beautiful weather and they were able to work clearing the land during the entire winter.

They had a hard time buying seed the first year, since they were considered unwise in putting in their wheat so early in the spring, and they were thought to be a poor risk for that reason. The next fall it was impossible to get a threshing machine to their place, and they were forced to carry all their grain on their backs to their neighbor's for threshing. The thresher was powered by oxen, which walked around in a circle. There were no sacks for grain, so Mrs. Mattala got out her four sheets, and the grain was threshed on them. Then it was emptied into tubs, and carried home again! That first crop brought them 96 bushels of wheat.

Only oxen were used in those early days; Isaac Barberg was the only Finnish settler with a team of horse.

She remembers the grasshopper plague. To get rid of them, a long canvas strip covered with tar was pulled through the young ten-inch-high grain; the young hoppers were caught on the tar, and countless numbers of them destroyed. Only two of the farmers used this method, and, she says, they were the only ones who had any kind of crop. There was also a plague of worms one year which in some ways was even worse than the hoppers since they ate the leaves off the trees, something the hoppers had left alone.

The lot of the women was harder than that of the men in many ways. Mrs. Mattala says that the only time most of them had a chance to go to town was when their husbands wanted a mortgage. She was fortunate in that their land never was mortgaged.

At first, when the men made a trip to Minneapolis on foot, they brought back a sack of flour, carrying it on their shoulder all the way. Later, though, they found mills nearer by.

The men planted tobacco, dried the leaves on poles, put it into a barrel, poured sorghum molasses over it, and allowed it to cure. They used it for smoking only, and did not sell it.

Recreations were almost non-existent. The people were very religious, and frowned upon dancing. The husking, quilting, and other bees which we usually associate with a pioneer community were not held. The only recreation was visiting or going to church.

Her first husband, Olaf Jaakkola, died in June, 1882, after they had been married eight years. She later married again, to Mathias Mattala, who died in 1914. She raised six children of her own, as well as seven foster children.

FINNISH

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
William Liukkonen and
Runar Gustafson
November 23, 1938

John Mattila, 317 No. 3rd Avenue East, Duluth. Born at Isakyrä, Vaasanlääni, Finland, September 12, 1881.

He has had eight years of schooling.

Mr. Mattila came to this country, to McKinley, Minnesota, in 1900. He worked around there, in the mines for seven years. After that, and until 1914, he worked as a lumberjack in the woods. In 1914 he went to work as a clerk in a clothing store in Duluth. He worked at that store for fifteen years. In 1929 he bought a farm at French River, and lived there for the following six years. Then he returned to Duluth to work at the Dove Clothing Store, where he has remained since.

He left Finland to come to this country to make a better living, although up until then, he had made a fair living in Finland.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 28, 1938.

FINNS

Mr. Lillian Mattila, 203 East 6th Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Menagha, Minnesota, 1900.

She had three years of grade school education.

Her father came from Oulunlaani, Finland, in 1872. He first came to Cokato, Minnesota, later he moved to New York Mills, Minnesota. Her mother came from Oulunlaani, Finland in 1892. They were married at Sebeka, Minnesota in 1893.

His father worked as a farmer in the summer time, and as a lumberjack in the woods in the winter.

Mrs. Mattila lived in Menagha until she was fifteen. She then went to work, at housework, for her aunt in Two Harbors. She worked there for nine months, then went back to Menagha. She lived six months there and then moved to Hibbing, Minnesota. She worked in a restaurant and a home there for a year, then came to Duluth, where she was married in 1918.

They lived in Duluth until the following spring then went to the State of Wyoming, where her husband had lived originally after he left Finland. Her husband worked in the soft coal mines. They lived there for five years. In 1924 they moved back to Duluth and have been living here ever since.

"There were eleven children in our family and not enough for all of us, so when I was seven years old I had to go out and start earning my own living.

"The women had to go out and work shoulder to shoulder with the men.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 28, 1938.

People lived the same in Menagha as they had in Finland, keeping their customs and traditions intact.

"Schools were one room shacks. The classes were held five months of the year. There was no compulsion to attend school. Teachers were mostly uneducated, having in most cases only a high school education. It was hard for the children to learn English because at home the only language spoken was Finnish.

"I remember one rule that the teacher had. It was that only English could be spoken in the school yard. Well, to get around that, all of us used to go out of the school yard and then speak Finnish as fast as we could.

"Wages at first were only board, room and clothes. Later on I was paid one dollar per month."

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 16, 1938.

FINNS

John A. Mattinen, 49-9th Street South, Cloquet, Minnesota. Born at Kemi, Finland, October 12, 1876.

He was educated in grade school.

Mr. Mattinen came to America, to Duluth, Minnesota, August 20, 1884. He moved to Esko's Corner May 4, 1887. Then he moved to Cloquet, Minnesota on June 6, 1898. He married Laura Panssar on February 2, 1901.

He went into business on November 11, 1901 and retired from business on April 17, 1930.

Mr. Mattinen served as City Councilman from 1912 to 1913, he served on the Charter Commission from 1913 to 1917, on the library board from 1912 to 1924, on the board of directors of the Y.M.C.A. from 1910 to 1920, and held the office of Chairman of the Business Men's Club from 1918 to 1930.

Mr. Mattinen has been a member of the Knights of Kaleva, Masons, Maccabees, Eagles, and for twenty years, a member of the Ilmarinens Temperance Society. He has been a member of the Finnish Lutheran Church since 1902.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 16, 1938.

FINNS

Story by John Mattinen, Cloquet, Minnesota.

First Grist Mill in the Thomson Country

The first grist mill in the Thomson country was built on Erick Palkin's homestead, near Esko's Corner, in the year 1878. All settlers in that township cooperated to build this mill and it was operated on a cooperative basis.

Roads in those days were built along the line of least resistance, the country being rugged. What would not be a few minutes journey, then took days. Primitive wooden sleighs hauled by oxtteams was the only method of transportation able to withstand the pounding over rocks and stumps. Many times the driver would have to get out and dislodge the sleigh during each trip. Roads were passable only in the driest weather.

The crops were planted as soon as the land was cleared. The rocks and stumps which could not be pulled, were left and the seed planted around them. Ashes from the burned brush and trees were used as fertilizer. Cultivation was all done by hand as it was impossible to plow.

The first crop of rye was a bumper one according to the first settlers. Twelve bushels of rye was harvested from one bushel of rye seed.

The settlers now had the rye, but the question was, what were they going to do with it? The nearest grist mill was many miles away and the road was in bad shape.

A meeting was called and the question of building a grist mill was discussed. It was decided to build a mill at Erik Palkin's place, his land being situated near the falls of a river.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson

Dec. 16, 1938.

One group started to work on the building, others to make the shingles and some to find the stone. The stone for the grinding was the hardest to get. Many miles were covered thoroughly before it was discovered near the Thomson Road.

After the rock was split correctly, then came the job of transporting it to the site of the mill. It was a long hard haul, but it was accomplished successfully. In the meantime work on the building had been progressing rapidly, being almost completed when the stone arrived. The next obstacle was the metal work as they had no tools, or smithy on which to work. Somehow this work was done and the mill completed.

It was a great thrill to the settlers when the first flour came out of the mill.

The mill is still standing on its original site although it has not been in use for many years. It marks a milestone in the march of progress of the Finnish settlers in the Thomson Township.

(Note: Photographs can be had by writing John Mattine, Cloquet, Minnesota, or Superintendent of School at Esko's Corner, Mr. Winterquist.)

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 6, 1938.

Finns in Minnesota

Mrs. Hilma Mattson, 230 Mesabe Avenue, Duluth.

1. Family -- Mother and Father were born in Vaasanlääni,
Finland. Tillers of the soil.
2. Place and -- Born in Vaasanlääni, Finland, 1892
Date of
Birth Vaasanlääni, Finland from 1892 to 1902.
3. Places lived -- Fairport, Ohio 1902 to 1908
in with dates
Two Harbors, Minnesota 1908 to 1909
Duluth, Minnesota 1909 to 1938.
4. Education -- Completed the fourth grade in grammar
school.
5. Occupations and -- Chambermaid in hotels.
accomplishments
Waitress in restaurants
6. Other points -- Wages for Chambermaids in hotels at that
gained in in-
terview time (1909) was three dollars per month
with room and board included. The work-
ing day started at seven in the morning
and ended at seven in the evening.

E

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 19, 1938.

FINNS

Matt Mattson, Brimson, Minnesota. Born at Vaasanlääni,
Finland, in 1875.

He had four years of grade school education.

His occupation was farming. His parents were farmers. There
were four in the family.

He came to America, to Bessemer, Michigan, in 1889. He worked
in the iron mines for a year, then he came to Ely, Minnesota. He worked
in the mines for eight years, then enlisted in the army during the Spanish
American War. He served in the army for a year, then returned to Ely,
Minnesota, and went to work in the iron mines. He worked there until 1918,
when he came to Duluth, Minnesota. He worked in grocery stores here until
1926, then moved to Brimson, Minnesota, where he is living now.

"I have taken part and directed Finnish plays for the last thirty
years."

"Am a member of United Spanish American War Veterans and the
Farmer Labor Club of Brimson."

"The reason that I left Finland was because living conditions were
very poor at that time and I heard that one could make a very good living
in America."

✓

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runnar Gustafson
Nov. 1, 1938.

FINNS

Matt Mattson, 7 South 63rd Ave. West. Born in Oulu ["]Lääni, Pyhäjoki Finland, 1869. Came to America in 1888 to Hancock, Michigan. Lived there for four years working as a tailor. Left there for Duluth in 1892 and has lived and worked here ever since. Married and has eleven children.

Economic conditions in Finland were very poor, and it was very hard to make a decent living. Father was in America so he went too. The average wage at that time in Finland was 2 marks a day; the equivalent in American money was 40 cents.

Made as high as three dollars a day in Hancock, which was very much better than I had made in Finland. Conditions were poor in America at that time, but they were better than in the old country.

Served as an apprentice under his father for ten years. No other education because the family was so large that he had to start working as soon as he was able to.

In his home they never had a doctor, or medicines; if one got sick he or she had to suffer until they got well or died. That's all that was to it.

No dentists were used. The teeth ached until they stopped aching and fell out.

Duluth, Minnesota
 Socio Ethnic
 William Liukkonen and Runar
 Gustafson
 October 5, 1938

FINNISH

Fred Nadus, 32 West 2nd St., Duluth. Born Aitkin County, Minnesota, June 22, 1899.
 Father and mother born in Kalajoki, Finland. Came to Minnesota in 1887, Duluth.

Lived in Aitkin County until 1917. Then moved to Duluth. Four years grade school. Passed grade school examination. One year high school.

Timber worker and labor organizer. Teacher, Workers Education. Playwrite--Finnish plays produced and still playing in Duluth and the nation. Writer--author. Wrote history of the timber industry in Minnesota. Play written--Kumma Probleemi.

Asafitida--an herb. Used as a general panacea for all ill and diseases, same as pine tar.

An old custom of the people in the rural districts was to walk into town for their provisions, sometimes 30-40 miles. One incident was concerning a man who walked into town 30 miles, and rolled a 360# barrel of salt back to his homestead. Nothing else was brought but the salt. The tendency was to produce as much as possible on the farm.

Cure for rheumatism--cow manure, fresh. Alcohol. Water. This is mixed together in a barrel or tank and the patient placed into the mixture. This mixture guaranteed to cure rheumatism. One case that had been proclaimed incurable by physicians was cured in this manner.

Stomach disorders--common salt. Patient is placed in steam bath and thoroughly baked. Then salt is rubbed all over the body. Guaranteed to cure. This treatment was used also for cuts and wounds.

(Note--for the best first hand information it was recommended that the interviewer go to Lawler, Minnesota.)

Beliefs and customs--It is believed that if a horse had night sweats it could be cured by hanging a pair of scissors on the wall of the stable, thus keeping the devil away from the horse at night.

Weather--Ring around moon means snow.

Northern lights portend change of weather.

If a crow flew against the stairs there was a death in the house.

If a swallow flew against the window of a house in which there was a sick person lying that person would die.

The baying of a dog means there's a death in the neighborhood.

Note: An incident was told by Mrs. Nadus of a canary that kept flying around a window of the house in which she lived. If she moved the canary moved also.

One day she met an old lady, and mentioned it to her. The lady told her that the bird portended a death in the house. At that time all persons living in the house were healthy, but three weeks later her son died accidentally.

Sundogs (ring around sun) means stormy weather.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: William Liukkonen
Runar Gustafson
Date: Nov. 7, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Ivar E. Newman, Lake Park Hotel, 212 South 1st Ave. E. Born in 1873 in Vaasa Laani, Finland.

Left Finland in 1899 to come to Massachusetts--West Gardner. Lived there two years. Came to Duluth March 16, 1901. Then went to Eveleth. Filed a homestead in Markham in 1902. Lived in Markham until 1910. Moved to Iron, Minnesota and lived there until 1920 when he went back to Finland for three months. Has resided in Duluth ever since his return to Minnesota.

Was one of the first settlers around Markham. When that country was opened to settlers. The only road there was the Vermilion Trail.

Came to this country to better himself. Had been working in a saw-mill in Finland for 3 and 4 marks a day (the rate that time was 5 marks and 3 pennies per dollar). Worked 10 hrs. per day each shift, six days per week. There was no chance to get ahead in the old country so the only thing to do was to go some place else.

Worked in a chair factory in Massachusetts as an assembler at \$1.25 a day for 10 hours. Room and board was from \$3 to \$3.50 per week. Clothes were cheap. Living conditions were better in this country.

Worked as a miner in Eveleth at \$2 per day for 10 hours. Underground mines were very dangerous at that time because they used safety devices very seldom. If a man got killed or injured he was paid what the company thought was a fair compensation. In 1902 he moved to Markham because times were very poor, and he thought that there would be a better chance of making a living

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: William Liukkonen
Runar Gustafson
Date: Nov. 7, 1938.

on the farm. Homesteaded 157 acres which had to be all cleared by hand. The work was very hard and in order to live he had to find other work because the farm could not support them. Did plumbing and carpenter work in the township and county. Helped to build the first school in Markham. Has been working in Duluth ever since.

RM



Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Stanley Levine
Nov. 21, 1938.

FINNS

Martha Niemi, 17 W. 3rd Street, Duluth, Minnesota. She was born at Diarite, Michigan. She is twenty-three years of age. Her family was not very large. She only had one brother, but no sisters.

She graduated from high school at Diarite, Michigan.

Her occupation is housework.

Seeking a better field for employment, she moved to Duluth, Minnesota, in 1936. She married here, and has one child, a boy.

"I think the younger generation has changed a whole lot from the older generation. The older generation was too puritan. The younger generation is far more open-minded.

"I still like Finnish dishes better than American dishes. The American dishes are not as substantial as Finnish foods.

"I don't believe like some people do, that the Finnish nationality, or any other nationality, should marry necessarily within their nationality.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: William Liukkonen
Runar Gustafson
Date: Oct. 31, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Lucy Niskanen, 8 E. 3rd St. Born in Oululaani, Finland, 1875 of very poor parents. Many times had nothing to eat but bread made of white pine bark.

Her first job in Finland was at Jantte Bakery. Wages were 5 marks a month.

Came to America in 1903 directly to Duluth. Her first job was in Hall's restaurant. Wages were \$6 per week. Worked there for three years. Then went to work as a scrub-women at St. Louis Hotel. Wages were \$24 a month. Worked there as long as hotel was in business. Now working as scrubwoman at Hotel Duluth. Wages \$65 per month.

Has had two years grammar school in Finland.

The reason she came to America to better her living conditions because she had such poor living in Finland.

Boiled white pine bark was used for sore throat and colds.

The first time you tied the bull in his stall if you measured the rope and if it was three feet long, the bull would be tame. When a person died he was put in sauna and a fire was built in the sauna that was supposed to drive the ghosts away.

(Cokato)

Finnish Study
Ralph K. Andrist
December 8, 1939

7
Big Otto----- Related by Ludvig Bajari

A Finnish Paul Bunyan---except that he is supposed to be no legend---was Otto, who lived in the woods somewhere near Cusson northwest of Lake Vermilion. His strength and the things he did with it are related not only among the Finns of the Range, but his fame extends way down into the Finnish settlement at Cokato, where stories by the score are told about him.

There was the time when a railroad was being built through the woods near his home. One morning, the checker, counting over the pile of rails, found one missing. He looked around everywhere a rail might be, there in the middle of the forest, without even a wagon trail to haul anything in or out on. No rail. One of the Finns working on the railroad suggested that the only man capable of walking off with a rail was Otto. The idea was ridiculous, but there was no other place to look, so they went to Otto's cabin in the woods, several miles across swamp and down faint paths from the railroad camp. The rail was there, leaning against a tree.

Otto was taken into court, charged with larceny. The judge, naturally curious, asked whether he had carried the rail home by himself. Certainly, the Finn told him, what was unusual about that? And what did he expect to do with a rail? It made a mighty handy thing for getting out stumps, Otto explained. The justice, both curious and incredulous, adjourned court, and everyone went out to Otto's homestead. Otto picked up the rail, grunted---but only mildly---as he stuck one end of it under a big stump, heaved once on the other end, and the

stump rolled out of the ground. "You see, judge, mighty handy."

The justice agreed, too, that it was a "mighty handy thing", and the case against Otto was dropped.

During the winter, Otto usually worked in a logging camp. He was a handy person to have around when there was any job where it was inconvenient to use a team of horses. One day they sent Otto out to move a pile of logs, with another man to help him. Somehow or other, the other man did not show up, and in the afternoon someone remembered that Otto was out there alone, and probably hadn't had enough sense to come in when the other man hadn't shown up. Otto was that way, much stronger in the arms than in the head. They sent out after him, and found him, sitting on the pile of logs, all of them moved. Now moving sawlogs is a heavy job for two men, who roll them along with ^{peavies} ~~cut~~ hooks, one at each end heaving and prying. They asked Otto how he had done it alone. "Just like this." He picked up a big log by the middle, lifted it off the pile, and carried it about fifty feet. "See. Not'ing to it."

He never did things the hard way. During the winter, the kerosene ran out and, since the snow was too deep for a wagon and team to get in with another drum, a man had to be sent down the road a mile or so with a five gallon can to get some kerosene at the storehouse. Otto was sent one day when the can ran dry. He came back a while later, with the full drum on his shoulder. Someone had forgotten to tell him about the five gallon can.

They tell how Otto went to town to get a sack of flour. He also picked up a heavy breaking plow, threw it over his shoulder, and piled the hundred-pound sack of flour on top of that. Then, on the way back, he stopped in at a neighbor's farm to get a young calf. He

tucked the kicking calf under his other arm, and started out. He met a friend, an Italian, and stopped to talk to him. The Italian, wondering how long Otto could hold his load without putting it down, drew out the conversation. After half an hour Otto had not even shifted their weight, and the friend gave up. When he looked back several minutes later, Otto was trudging around the bend in the road with no sign of faltering.

One of Otto's hayfields was on one shore of his lake, and the farm was on the other. Rather than drive around, he had built a big raft to ferry himself and his hay across the lake. The Finns who knew him insist that he always drove onto the raft, hayrack, hay, and team of horses, and, perching on top of the load of hay, he would row across, using a pair of oars twenty-five feet long.

At times he stayed in some of the boarding houses for men, but his appetite was almost as big as his strength, and it wasn't long before the landlady would start dropping hints that she had more men than she could take care of, and some of them would have to look around for another place to stay. Otto never seemed to notice that he was the only one who was asked to leave.

There was an Irishman who also was something of an eater, and, each nationality feeling that its pride was at stake, the Finns matched Otto with the Irishman in a pancake-eating contest. It was exciting while it lasted. The Irishman started out with a long swinging stride, and pancake after pancake disappeared like clockwork. Otto started slowly, and did not become in the least rattled as the Irishman's lead increased. By the time the Irishman downed his fiftieth flap jack, Otto was left far in the rear, jogging along methodically

behind a stack of cakes. At seventy-five, the Irishman had increased the lead, his backers were jubilant, and most of the Finns had lost all heart for the contest. But by the time he reached eighty the Irishman had lost something of his jaunty gait, and began to labor. At ninety his enthusiasm had left him entirely, and when he passed ninety five, his color likewise left. He was game to the end, however, gulped his ninety-ninth cake down, turned green, and staggered for the door. Otto downed his seventy-fifth, poured sirup over the stack that the cook put on his plate, and went ahead. The shack became still as he rounded the turn into his ninetieth; the only sound was the regular clattering of his knife on his plate, and the smack as each cake disappeared. He ate the ninety-fifth with as much enthusiasm as he had eaten his fifth, finished the ninety-ninth in one gulp, and polished off the hundredth.

The cheering shook the shack, and the jubilant Finns collected their bets. Only Otto was unmoved. He leaned back. "I t'ink that beat him. Now can I have some egg?"

Finnish Study
Ralph Andrist
December 8, 1939

) (Cokato)

"Sementtipaa" (Related by both Ludvig Bajari and Vernon Barberg)

He was almost a figure from Kalevala, old John Saari. Somewhere, during his life, he had gained the nickname "Sementtipaa" (Cement-head) from the story that at one time a timber had fallen on his head, and, scorning common first aid, he had dabbed a handful of cement on the injury. Perhaps that story was untrue, but Old John wasn't.

He lived in the Cokato community, one of those characters no one knows quite whence they came. He dug caves for himself out of the hills, lining them with a few timbers and boards to prevent cave-ins, and there he lived, a typical hermit. He had several of these caves scattered through the Cokato area, and moved around from one to the other.

Sementtipaa was a worker of miracles. He had a wide belt of grey squirrel fur, with the tails hanging down all around. When he put on his belt, he was able to do feats of strength that were impossible otherwise. One of his favorites was to hitch on his belt, and then, grasping a tree in both hands, hold himself out perpendicular to it. It was the belt, he claimed, not his own strength. Once, during a dry spell, someone asked him why it didn't rain anymore. John explained. He was no lover of the Swedes, and once, in a quarrel with them, had torn the power belt. That was the end of the rains.

His hair and beard were long, and he wore a Scotchman's cap, with a hole in the top. Through the hole he pulled a thick lock of his hair, and let it hang down. Another of his caps was made of calfskin, with a calf's tail hanging down the side. John claimed

that he got power from his hair and beard, and would never let them be cut. There was one time when another Finn took him along to Minneapolis, and John walked down the street, power belt and all. He almost stopped traffic on Hennepin Avenue.

From wood he carved out snakes, and painted them so they were works of art. These snakes, too, had power in them, and could work wonderful things.

He was a musician, too, of sorts. He played the fiddle, and made for himself a drum, carved of wood, and with hair and wires hanging on it. It was more than a drum, however. ~~however~~. It was another power, and he could do almost anything with it.

There was a time when John planned to go back to Finland. He made an amphibian, a sort of tricycle on land, while in the water it floated on three pontoons, one in front and two behind, with Sementtipaa peddling away and making the paddle-wheels go around. It was well-made, everyone who saw it agreed, but it was so heavy that John had a hard time getting around with it. He did demonstrate once, going down hill, how it worked, but somehow it never took him to Finland.

From these it might be gathered that John was crazy. Queer he might have been, but not crazy, not even as foolish as he himself thought he should be, for he deliberately acted more odd than he was.

In the woods he talked with the birds and the squirrels, and men who hired him often found that he spent so much time with these conversations that he did little work.

He had psychic powers, and often, in the midst of a conversation, would interject "A women died" or some similar remark, and then go on with what he had been saying. He explained that the vision had passed over his eyes at that moment. No one could be found who

checked his visions.

He was a humorist, too, and had a wit that was lightning quick. But all this died with Sementtipaa. It is probable that he was more of a genius than many of those who laughed at him.

Finnish Study
Ralph K. Andrist
December 6, 1939

(Cokato)

The Sauna of Barberg and Selvala----- related by Isaac A. Barberg.

Nels Selvala and Isak Barberg, living on adjoining pieces of land, worked together to build a log sauna, each of them to have part ownership. The sauna was located on the dividing line between their lands, so that part of it was on each farm.

After their sauna, the Finnish men (all the Finns of the neighborhood used it) were in the habit of going outside to sit on a pile of rocks in the sun, and to talk over one thing and another. The only trouble was that they sat around completely naked. To them there was nothing unusual in that, since the Finnish mores do not consider nudity a sin. Trouble came only when the township put a road down the middle of the section---on which the bath-house stood---and were forced to curve around the sauna. People of other nationalities, driving down the road, were shocked, especially the women, to find a group of naked men sitting on the rocks beside the road, and made loud and frequent complaints. The township finally forced Selvala in 1885 (Barberg by that time had died) to move the sauna, and Selvala, in resentment, sued the township. He won damages from the township for the cost of moving (\$40 or \$60).

This was the first lawsuit among the Finns in Cokato.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: Runar Gustafson
William Liukkonen
Date: Oct. 25, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Charles Paaso, 5 E. 5th St., Duluth. Born in Kuusamo, Finland, 1882. Came to South Dakota in 1900. Stayed there 9 months; from there went to Wakefield, Mich. Worked there in the mines for 7 months. Came to Minnesota in 1901--to Chisholm. Worked in the mines; then worked in a lumber camp 8 mi. from Chisholm. From there he moved to Eveleth. Lived there 3 years. Left Eveleth and took up a homestead at Palo. Lived there 8 years. In 1914 moved to Maringo, Wis. Lived there 13 years. Then came to Duluth and has lived here ever since.

Education consisted of grammar school and some night school here.

Very few people lived in Palo when he moved there and all supplies had to be packed on back from Biwabik 12 miles away. The woods were so thick that they couldn't see their neighbors. They cleared their land in the summer time, and in the winter they logged. Credit was very good in these days; in the summer time they would go in debt, and clear themselves in the winter by logging. Hay was cut along the river banks as much as 10 or 15 miles away.

The only entertainment was hunting and fishing. Pine tar, whiskey, and the sauna were the three medicines. No others were used. The preacher, if you were very ill, would come to see you. There is supposed to be a medicine that was so powerful, that if you ran a sliver in the palm of your hand and couldn't pull it out, if you rubbed this salve on the back of your hand it would drive the sliver out.

FINNISH

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
William Liukkonen and
Runar Gustafson
November 21, 1938

Dr. Yrjö Palonen, 2017 Jefferson Street, Duluth. Born in Multia, Finland, December 29, 1885. His father was a businessman (Lumber and Grocery).

Dr. Palonen went to Jyväskylä High School and College, then passed examination for Helsinki University in 1905, where he studied medicine and law, but he did not finish the courses.

He was sheriff for one year in Kouvola.

He left Finland October 28, 1913, arriving at New York on November 14. He settled in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for a while, where he worked as a Masseur for five years. Then he came to Duluth in 1918, where he worked for Dr. Lindgren, doing laboratory and x-ray work. In 1919 he took an examination for chiropractor in Chicago, since then he has been working in Duluth as a licensed masseur.

Times were getting very hard in Finland at that time, and lack of funds for which to continue his education was the reason for leaving Finland.

He is a member of the Eagles Lodge of Duluth.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: William Liukkonen
Runar Gustafson
Date: Nov. 8, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

John Pesonen, Lake Park Hotel. Born in Vaasi Laani, in 1871. Came to Maine in 1896. Worked in a stone quarry there for three months. Left there for Fitchburg, Mass., where he worked in a gun factory, was paid from \$1.10 to \$1.50 per day 10 hours, per day. Machine operator. Work was easy but it was hard to stand on a concrete floor all day. The men were treated like prisoners, couldn't stop working unless one got permission.

Moved to Michigan in 1900 where he worked on the Sault Ste. Marie canal when it was being built. Wages were from \$2 to \$2.50 per day. Board and room was \$16 per month. The work was very hard but the men were treated fairly.

Came to Duluth in 1907 and worked here as a plasterer's helper. There was a money panic when he came here so the times were hard. When he had worked he was paid \$2.75. There was lots of work, but the pay was very poor. Woods workers were working for \$16 to \$18 per month. Has been worked most of the time in Duluth.

RM

Material on Johan Piippo, as given by his son C.J. Piippo
requested by Federal Writers Project

1839. Johan Piippo came from _____ Finland, born there on

His family had lived in the same community for 700 years, and the community was named with his family name.

He left Finland in 1861-62, because of famine in Finland, due to seven years of poor crops. He crossed by snowshoe, with four other young men, ^{through Lapland} into Norway, hoping to find better living conditions there. He came to a fishing center called Hammerfast, and there he worked at fishing as a means to acquire enough money to get to "United States America". He worked there four summers. He acquired enough money to get a ticket to America, with his final destination Kalumet, Michigan. He sailed from Hammerfast, Norway, to Liverpool, England, and by sailboat to New York City. When he arrived at Kalumet, Michigan, he had 17 lbs. English currency, to start in the new country with.

He worked at Kalumet, Michigan, in 1865, as a barrel stave maker, working on copper barrels that required skilled workmanship. He was able to make up 26 barrels a day. He left Kalumet to go to St. Louis. There he got interested in homestead land in Minnesota. In November of that year (1866) he filed a claim for homestead land, at the land office in St. Louis. He did not know what kind of land he was filing claim on, as he just pointed his finger to a spot on the homestead area map and said he would take the land which he indicated with his finger. There were other Finns in St. Louis at the time, also interested in getting land for homestead in Minnesota.

From St. Louis he went to Red Wing, Minnesota, by steamship. He lived at Red Wing in a community of Finns, and was among those who worked selling elm wood to the steamship company for fuel to operate the steamships. There was a cholera epidemic at Red Wing in 1865-66, and he fell ill from that. (He had lifted a man dying from cholera, who had tumbled from his bunk in the bunkhouse where the woodcutters stayed, and as the man died, the death effects of the cholera had affected Piippo.) Within several hours Piippo saw the grass grow black, and the day grow dark, and he knew the cholera had struck him. He instructed a friend of his, another Finn named August Peteri, also a settler in Moe township, to get him a quart of rum and assafetida. He drank a mixture of these two, and recovered in a few days.

He left Red Wing and went to St. Cloud, and travelled by oxen from St. Cloud to Douglas County. The trip from St. Cloud took one week, and travel was as slow as "lice in tar" (Finnish idiom) The son of Johan Piippo, C.J. Piippo, has in his possession now a photograph of

Alexandria as the town looked in 1866, showing the log stockade, the first hardware store, etc. A "Locator" from the St. Cloud land office accompanied the party of settlers to their homesteads, as they themselves had no idea where such were located. There were no bridges anywhere, all the creeks had to be forded, or the wagon had to go in a round about way to reach their destination. The party stopped on a Saturday evening at a shack of a homesteader near the Piippo homestead (Piippo located in section 26 and 29, Town of Moe) and the party stayed through Sunday, camping in the yard and as many as possible staying in the shack. On Sunday the men of the party helped put windows in the shack, windows which they had brought from St. Cloud by wagon. The other members of this party of settlers who came from ~~St. Cloud~~ ^{Wing} Red to their homesteads were as follows: Peter Eric Juline, and his wife and five children, Johan Piippo, Issac Johnson (~~Isak~~ Isak Jaakon-Antti)

Material on Johan Piippo, as given by his son, C.J. Piippo requested by the Federal Writers Project

August Peteri, Mattis Saari. The company of settlers stayed at this cabin a week or so. Peter Erick Juline stayed at the cabin all winter and gave permission to the rest of the party to build a shack on his homestead and live there during the winter. They also built shacks on their own homesteads that winter. Supplies came from St. Cloud on the stage. The settlers skidded to town in the winter, and in spring could travel by creeks and lakes into Lake Cowdry (Douglas County) and from that point walked the rest of the way into town, a distance of between two and three miles.

Flour cost \$18.00 a barrel, pork was 25 cents a pound. Game was plenty, and there were deer, elk, grouse, partridge, prairie chicken, muskrat, mink, otter, wolves, foxes, and several buffalo were seen in the winter of 1866. The only food the settlers had to buy was flour, salt, and coffee. Tobacco was very high, and the settlers hoarded it carefully.

After Johan Piippo had settled in Douglas County for two years he wrote of the wonders of the land ~~land~~ to his friends in Finland, John Matson Lehto and Matt Jacobson. These two men saved money for a ticket, arrived in New York with only the address of Johan Piippo as being "Moe Township, U.S. America". They walked from New York to Moe township and Piippo's homestead in two months!

The two men who accompanied Johan Piippo on his trip to America parted in New York, expecting never to meet again. These two men, Ole Hammer and Anton Holling ~~born~~ settled within a radius of six miles of the homestead of Johan Piippo, and met him some time after each party had settled there, on their own homesteads.

When a land patent was issued to the settlers, at the end of their five years of homesteading their property, the settlers who had been foreigners were granted citizenship automatically with the issue of the land patent. Consequently, many of the Finnish settlers in Moe township never took out citizenship papers. one of

The party of settlers mentioned on this page was the first party of Finlanders to settle this far west in the state of Minnesota.

In 1867 the following settlers came to Moe township: Antin Kanvosaari, Eric Haara, Duomas Maikko, Peter Valimaa, Ma ddi Makkonen (Matt Jacobson) Johan Lehto, Issac Johnson.

Johan Piippo built his first house in the winter of 1867, on the present location of the Finnish Lutheran Cemetery, on the church grounds of the Holmes City Jariven Suomalainen Kiukko. He was a carpenter by profession, and contracted to build barns for the other settlers in the township. In the summer of 1868 his house was destroyed by fire of unknown origin. All his possessions were lost, except for his carpenter tools and the clothes he wore. The property of three other bachelor settlers had been kept in the same house, and that was destroyed also at the same time by the fire. In 1868 Piippo made a mortgage agreement with J.P. Cowing, hardware merchant in Alexandria, to obtain from Cowing a scythe and handle to cut hay on his homestead. He planned to have hay cut that year, so that from the proceeds of his trapping of furs in the winter to come he could buy a cow, and begin ~~beginning~~ farming. After some reluctance, Cowing accepted a mortgage on 160 acres, in exchange for the scythe. Johan Piippo cut the hay, bought a cow the following year, going to Sauk Center for the purchase of the cow. In a few years he had obtained two bull calves and these made his first yoke of oxen. His first crop was tobacco, the next crop was wheat.

Material on Johan Piippo, as given by his son, C.J. Piippo
requested by the Federal Writers Project

Johan Piippo was considered one of the best trappers in the county. He trapped 125 muskrats in one trapping. He also shot nine elk out of a herd of over a hundred, on one occasion. He nearly lost his life on a trapping trip to Lake Travers, in the early spring. The trip from his homestead was about forty five miles, which he walked. His gunpowder got wet, so that he could not shoot any game, and he had no food. The weather turned bad, and he managed to get home again, after catching one raccoon, roasting it, eating half, and packing the rest away for his long trip home again. For salt on the meat he used his ~~gunpowder~~ gunpowder, which had saltpeter in it. He helped many of the settlers to obtain meat for their daily food, and one grateful settler's wife, Mrs. Clara Nord, knitted him the first pair of socks he had to wear in the new country. Another settler's wife made him a pair of mittens. He had saved their family from practically starvation by taking up a collection for them, among the settlers in Holmes City. This family's name was John Sievert. Johan Piippo raised a collection of twenty five dollars among the settlers, of which he himself contributed two dollars, and after helping John Sievert buy groceries, carried them home to the Sievert farm, and then shot a deer for meat for the family and carried that to them. The family had been living on burned corn meal mush for six weeks.

There were more settlers from Finland who came in the spring of 1867 to Moe Township, and in 1870 the following parties came: Herman Karjalainen, the first Finn preacher in Moe Township, Simon Pelikka, Johan Bulju, Lars Pajari, Olli Kaitaniemi, Issac Luukkainen, Issac Davidson, Apram Vettanen, Joseph Josephson, Jacob Kilpela.

Johan Piippo came to America because it meant great opportunity for him. In Finland early frosts had ruined the crops for seven years, and people starved to death. He came of a poor family of 14 children. He was aided by an uncle of his, a country doctor who taught Piippo all he knew about medicine, herbs and drugs. Piippo was frequently called on by the settlers, to aid their sick. He used herbs in medicine and often wrote to Finland asking the settlers who planned on coming to America to bring him herbs from Finland whose use he was familiar with.

He suffered many hardships in the early days of homesteading. After two years of crop-raising, he had a surplus of only five bushels of grain. Grasshoppers ate the crops, and blue birds and black birds came in huge flocks to eat the grain.

He was the first Finn settler in Moe township to raise crops. The first land in Moe township to be broken up was on the farm of Tor Evenson, and was broken up by Ole Amundson. Written up by:

Katherine Henry

APR 1 1939

March 31, 1939

Mr. Richard Sackett
Historical Records Survey
13th Floor, New Post Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Sackett:

I am sending in today a report obtained from C.J. Piippo, on his father Johan Piippo. I went out to Mr. Piippo's farm with the intention of asking him about some of the early settlers in Moe township, so that I could locate them in the deed records at the courthouse, and also in the naturalization records, etc. as you suggested. He has not a great deal of information available on any of the other settlers that would be of much use to me in such work. However, he did tell me many interesting things, which I am sending now. You will notice a space left for the name of his birthplace, which I will have to obtain from Mr. Piippo on another visit to his place. I do not know if the Federal Writers Project wants just exactly the material I am sending, but judging by a previous inquiry they had sent Mr. Piippo, I followed their questionnaire as much as possible. Some of the information they requested of him he did not have.

In regard to finding information on other Finn settlers I find that there is no information in the clerk of courts office, in the declaration of intention records, of that early a date (1866) that gives me any help. There is no mention of point of emigration, whether the declarant could spell his name, and the way he spelled it. Mr. Piippo tells me that many Finns changed their name on their arrival in America, and in my report I have given the original name whenever Mr. Piippo could tell me of it. Finland was under the dominion of Russia, and also of Norway and Sweden, as Mr. Piippo has it, so that the Finns arrived in America, able to speak and write these three languages. The point of emigration might be from Norway or Sweden, and the sovereign to whom they renounced allegiance in their declaration of intention record might have been king of Norway, Sweden, or Russia. In looking over the declaration of intention record I would have no way of knowing who these early settlers were, either by the English names they took, or by their point of emigration.

The only information I can get now on the rest of the Finnish settlers will be from the church record of early communicants, and from the Deed record in the register of deeds office, since I now have from Mr. Piippo some idea as to their names. Have you any more suggestions on where to look for information?

You mention vital statistics as a source of information, and by that I presume you mean birth and death records. They do not seem to have any information that would be of much help for more information than that the county of the parents of a child is given, of the birthplace of a deceased person. In either case, I already

know from Mr. Piippo that these people whose names I now have, came from Finland. I might be able to find out the province in Finland, and will ask him about that.

What information shall I ask for in soldier's records? It is possible I can find out on inquiry who the soldiers in this county were, of Finnish descent. Do you want descendants of early settlers, or Finns who now live in the County?

What type of information shall I ask for at the office of the agricultural agent, home demonstration agent, and relief agency? I ~~learn~~ on inquiry that the Old Age Assistance office will have information on such Finnish people as have applied for Old Age Assistance, but what shall I inquire for in the relief office?

I am paying another visit to Mr. Piippo's farm this Sunday, April 2, as he is too busy at any time during the week to talk about these matters. Do you want me to finish the work I have started on the Finns, or shall I discontinue further work, outside of this visit, until I am again located in Douglas County? I am leaving this county on Monday April 3, to locate a Glenwood, in Pope county. It is possible I do a few hours work on Fridays in Douglas County, on my way back to my home in Douglas County.

Very truly yours,

Katherine Heney

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Nov. 21, 1938.

FINNS

Arne Pisila, 322 $\frac{1}{2}$ South 1st Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Astoria, Oregon, 1908.

His education included grade school and two years of high school.

Mr. Pisila served in the United States Army for five years. He is a photographer and a salesman.

His father was a sailor, fisherman and a farmer. His father was born at Oulunlaani, Finland, in 1857. His mother was born at Tamarfors, Vaasanlaani, Finland, in 1871. His father left Finland when he was 17 years of age. He went to America and was employed for nine years as a sailor. In 1883 he settled in Astoria, Oregon, where he is still living.

His mother came to the United States in 1887 with her mother. They settled in Astoria, Oregon.

Mr. Pisila left home at the age of 17. He went to Portland, Oregon, where he worked for four months in a candy factory. He got the itch to travel, so he went to California. He worked there for a few months, then he went to Fairport, Ohio and worked there for five months, as a packer in the lime factory.

"From Fairport, Ohio, went to New York where I joined the Army. Was in the Army for five years. After, I left the Army and went back to the state of Washington."

The depression was going strong at that time. He couldn't get a steady job so he started organizing the unemployed and farmers for relief and other aid. In June 1936 he went to work at the Coulee Dam. He worked there for 16 months. Then he came to Duluth, Minnesota, where he is now living.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 3, 1939.

Finns in Minnesota

Catherine Raisanen (Hanson) came to Minneapolis in 1885 from Puolanka, Oulu Laani (Province), Finland. Did house work in Minneapolis seven years and in 1892 met John L. Hanson (Niemi) in Franklin, Minnesota, were married and moved from Franklin to Murray County, Minnesota, Des Moines Township where John L. Hanson's father, Hans Hanson homesteaded on a 160 acre claim in 1879 and later added 80 acres to the tract through a purchase. The Hansons lived on the same farm until 1922. Seven children were born in age rotation, Alfred, Hilma, Mary, John, William, Hilja and Francis. Francis, age 27 being the youngest. John and Alfred live in Minneapolis, at 530 Irving Avenue North. John is married, and has two small children. Alfred lives with Grandmother Hanson at the same address with separate household. She is receiving old age assistance.

Hans Hanson, who died in Murray County, Minnesota in 1900, came from Kemi, Finland, accompanied by his son John J. Hanson in 1873 and arrived in Hancock Michigan the same year. The Hansons left Finland mainly to evade conscription to the Russian Army and partly because of the lure America seemed to hold out for immigrants.


Mrs. Hanson's husband, John J. Hanson, died October 3, 1937. During the intervening period between 1922, when the farm in Murray County was sold for mortgages, and upon moving to Minneapolis, the entire family scattered in all directions. Alfred who had served in the U. S. forces in France remained in Minneapolis while all the rest of the family left in

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Alfred Backman
Jan. 3, 1939.

quest of work. Catherine Hanson is a very devout Lutheran, having been a life-long member of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church while her son Alfred is conducting services regularly at the Pentecostial Mission. Mrs. Catherine Hanson is vitally interested in how events turn in Spain for her son, Francis, has been with the Loyalists forces for the past 20 months serving in the medical corps doing first aid.

RM



Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Runar Gustafson
Dec. 7, 1938.

FINNS

Adolph Emil Rajanen, 1110 E. 2nd Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Saarijarvi, Vaasanlääni, Finland, November 27, 1900.

He was educated in grade school and two years in high school. He attended the Barber College at Minneapolis, Minnesota. He received business training in night school.


His father is a shoemaker, living in Menagha, Minnesota.

Mr. Rajanen came to Wolf Lake, in Becker County, Minnesota, in 1903. He lived there until he moved to Duluth in 1925. He has resided in Duluth ever since that.

His family came to this country to get a new start in life, for living conditions were poor in Finland when they left. His oldest sister came to this country first, then his father and the rest of the family came later.

Mr. Rajanen is a barber at 534 West Superior Street, Duluth.

He is a member of the Finnish Lutheran Church, and a member of the Master Barber Association, which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.



INTERVIEW

Name: Mrs. Liisa RantaAho

Age: 68

Born: 1870, in Vaasaland, Finland

Address: Eveleth, Minnesota, Jones Street

Life in Finland:

"I was born in Vaasaland, Finland, near the "Lappa Jarvi", a location approximately fifty miles inland from the coast of Finland, I was brought to womanhood in quite a strict fashion, for my parents were of the old religious school, and consequently my youth was one of the straight and narrow path type. During my youth I had to work upon our farm quite hard and I had no leisure time for my own interests, My work mostly consisted of weaving linen cloth out of the flax grown on our farm and I also made shirts, dresses, and other clothings from the material.

During my youth I knew practically nothing about superstitions because my parents had enough sense to realize their fallacy and therefore believed that their offspring should ~~know~~ know as little as possible for fear that they may become cowards and fear the dark. Finland and Finnish customs allowed the entrance of many stories and legends for, in the northern part of Finland the people lived quite ~~primitive~~ and in quite a primitive fashion. However the tales of the thieves and robbers were spared as far as I am concerned ~~because~~ and I am glad that it is so, for as I have in my later day and age read about them, I feel that my parents have done right.

While still living in Finland, I married a young lad of twenty and since he lived in the village, I had to say goodbye to my parents and move to his home. He was an apprentice to a shoemaker, but as soon as we were married he had to go to the army for a three years training. This army training was compulsory so there was nothing for me to do but wait; each month he sent to me a small check which he received for his services.

INTERVIEW continued:

My husbands work in the army was so successful that after his three year term he was asked to stay in the army , receive a larger salary, gain the title of lieutenant and cast his future into the task of aiding in the protection of the mother country. Fortunately, or unfortunately, he turned to the art of making shoes. His reason for not staying in the army was that there they made a wolf out of a man, wolves who, in a pack would annihilate a whole village or city without a particle of mercy.

My husbands health was very poor and he soon found out that he was not suitable for the task of making shoes. In the meanwhile there had come from America some native Finns who greatly praised their successful attempts to make a living in America. They especially liked the work in the mined and lumber camps of the Iron Range. When asked why they returned to Finland, they said that they are going back as soon as possible after they have made means of supporting their elders.

Upon receiving this encouraging report, my husband came to America to earn some money and then he would send for me. He received a job in the mines of Ohio, and in 1900 he sent me a ticket to the village of Eveleth, Minnesota, a village situated about 60 or so miles from Lake Superior. The ticket, running from Halkoniemi, Finland to Eveleth, Minnesota cost my husband 300 marks in Finnish money or \$60. in American.

As I was preparing to leave, all those who had already been in the United States cautioned me, and said that you will get along alright provided ~~you don't~~ you don't drink. Since both my husband and I fulfilled these qualifications, I was very certain that we would be able to make a living in the prosperous land of America.

With me I took along as much food as possible. Many were the cheeses breads, hams , and sweets that were brought to me as I entered the ship destined for the United States on the 12th of January, 1900.

continued:

INTERVIEW (continued)

On the ships the beds were similar to the bunks my husband slept on during his stay in the army. I drank only one cup of coffee on the way across the ocean, for I had with me a coffee pot and other necessities. Each night I thanked the good neighbors for having included a coffee pot and other priceless articles in their farewell packages. They must have realized that the cooking on the ships was not of the first class, especially since I was traveling on the 3rd class level. Of the other food on the ship, I only liked the white bread-- it tasted very good for it was the first time I had ever tasted it and to me it was like a luxury. I had enough food to last me until I reached Eveleth and quite often I gave some of my acquaintances a taste of ~~my~~ my proud Finnish food, of which I was so proud.

We foreigners must have looked quite ignorant to the train conductors because they were afraid to leave us alone for even a small length of time. While the train stopped in Duluth for a moment, I went out to look about me, but I did not get far for one of the officers immediately grabbed me and placed me upon a seat in the train. He swung his arms about and I suppose he was trying to impress me with the danger of leaving the train and getting lost.

I knew not a word of English so I must have been similar to a 30 year old package of liveliness. At first the conductors attempted to speak to us but when he received no response he merely looked at our tags on our trunks to find out our destination.

I was greatly disappointed in Eveleth, especially when I first appeared. I told my husband as we were walking about the streets the first day that; " This is a heck of a place to bring me, compared to the rosy picture I have painted of it on my way up here." As I walked about the boarded sidewalks the first day I had to be careful not to step into two feet of mud on both sides of me.

Since I still was young, I secured work washing clothes at a dollar

INTERVIEW continued:

a day. My husband also worked in the Eveleth mines until 1928.

Eveleth in 1900 was in the process of being moved from the present location of the open pits to its present spot. The reason for this change is because ^{above} the first settlers built their homes ~~ente~~ the rich iron ore fields and when they discovered their mistake they naturally had to move. Eveleth in 1900 was quite small, having as its major buildings; 3 small one room schools, 4 grocery stores, hotel, hardware store, etc.

Immediately upon settling in Eveleth, I joined the Ladies Aid Society, sponsored teas, parties etc. in order that the Finnish people in Eveleth could support a minister. At first I went to the church in Sparta ~~te~~ because Eveleth had no Finnish Lutheran church as yet, but when Sparta's church was moved to Gilbert, the people in Eveleth built their own. Since that time there have been eight different ministers in Eveleth.

There already was a bath house in Eveleth when I came there and it seemed like being at home to be able to go to the steam bath again. The rates were quite moderate, being 15¢ each and 25¢ for two people. The bath house did not have very many accommodations and the style was quite primitive, but a few years later another Finn built a better bath house, so obviously the competition improved the services.

~~During the last few years the Iron Range has been receiving a number of Finnish movies from Finland, type typical of the country, according to the popular opinion of a great many Americans. I went to the first movie and I believe it will be the last, for I was astounded at the descriptions of Finnish life and customs. I think that the movie producers in Finland has painted a false picture of true Finland, I do not believe it is right of the producers in Finland to send over such material which will eventually change the Americans views of my home country. The picture that I saw was "Dream And Shadow", a picture in which fighting, cursing, and drinking were the only descriptive parts with any humor in them. Why could they not have showed us some pictures of innocent play and humor, why bring out the worst, exaggerating even that?~~

continued

Louise H.

INTERVIEW continued:

Those movies are to ^{me} my and many otherse a sample of ~~the~~ Finland's worst. In fact I believe that the United States has greatly lost its dignity and bearing since the World War, but that is no reason for the producers in ~~the~~ Finland to attempt to show that the country of Finland can equal our own in vice and crime.

It is often said that a father in Finland would willingly support nine sons, ~~while/nine~~ or vice versa, but in America nine sons can't support one father.

But summarizing all this I must say that I, in my 68 years have had ample opportunity to return to Finland, but I have been optimistic, maybe a little too optimistic, for as yet ~~the~~ I have seen no change for the better. I am, however, still confident that Americans in general will make good in time, but that *time* I am afraid ~~that~~ I will never see ~~that-time~~.

Louis
Lomax

Gilbert, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Toivo Tormo
Nov. 30, 1938.

FINNS

Name: Mrs. Liisa Rantaaho
Address: Eveleth, Minnesota, Jones Street.
Age: 68
Born: 1870, in Vaasaland, Finland.

Life in Finland

"I was born in Vaasaland, Finland, near the 'Lappa Jarvi,' a location approximately fifty miles inland from the coast of Finland. I was brought to womanhood in quite a strict fashion, for my parents were of the old religious school, and consequently my youth was one of the straight and narrow path type. During my youth I had to work upon our farm quite hard and I had no leisure time for my own interests. My work mostly consisted of weaving linen cloth out of the flax grown on our farm and I also made shirts, dresses, and other clothings from the material.

"During my youth I knew practically nothing about superstitions because my parents had enough sense to realize their fallacy and therefore believed that their offspring should know as little as possible for fear that they may become cowards and fear the dark. Finland and Finnish customs allowed the entrance of many stories and legends for, in the northern part of Finland the people lived ⁱⁿ quite a primitive fashion. However, the tales of the thieves and robbers were spared as far as I am concerned and I am glad that it is so, for as I have in my later day and age read about them, I feel that my parents have done right.

"While still living in Finland, I married a young lad of twenty and since he lived in the village, I had to say goodbye to my parents and move

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to his home. He was an apprentice to a shoemaker, but as soon as we were married he had to go to the army for a three years training. This army training was compulsory so there was nothing for me to do but wait; each month he sent to me a small check which he received for his services.

"My husband's work in the army was so successful that after his three year term he was asked to stay in the army, receive a larger salary, gain the title of lieutenant and cast his future into the task of aiding in the protection of the mother country. Fortunately, or unfortunately, he turned to the art of making shoes. His reason for not staying in the army was that there they made a wolf out of a man, wolves, who, in a pack would annihilate a whole village of city without a particle of mercy.

"My husband's health was very poor and he soon found out that he was very poor and he soon found out that he was not suitable for the task of making shoes. In the meanwhile there had come from America some native Finns who greatly praised their successful attempts to make a living in America. They especially liked the work in the mines and lumber camps of the Iron Range. When asked why they returned to Finland, they said that they are going back as soon as possible after they have made means of supporting their elders.

"Upon receiving this encouraging report, my husband came to America to earn some money and then he would send for me. He received a job in the mines of Ohio, and in 1900 he sent me a ticket to the village of Eveleth, Minnesota, a village situated about 60 or so miles from Lake Superior. The ticket, running from Halkonien, Finland to Eveleth, Minnesota cost my husband 300 marks in Finnish money or \$60 in American.

"As I was preparing to leave, all those who had already been in the United States cautioned me, and said that you will get along alright

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provided you don't drink. Since both my husband and I fulfilled these qualifications, I was very certain that we would be able to make a living in the prosperous land of America.

"With me I took along as much food as possible. Many were the cheeses, breads, hams, and sweets that were brought to me as I entered the ship destined for the United States on the 12th of January, 1900.

"On the ships the beds were similar to the bunks my husband slept on during his stay in the army. I drank only one cup of coffee on the way across the ocean, for I had with me a coffee pot and other necessities. Each night I thanked the good neighbors for having included a coffee pot and other priceless articles in their farewell packages. They must have realized that the cooking on the ships was not of the first class, especially since I was traveling on the third class level. Of the other food on the ship, I only liked the white bread--it tasted very good for it was the first time I had ever tasted it and to me it was like a luxury. I had enough food to last me until I reached Eveleth and quite often I gave some of my acquaintances a taste of my Finnish food, of which I was so proud.

"We foreigners must have looked quite ignorant to the train conductors because they were afraid to leave us alone for even a small length of time. While the train stopped in Duluth for a moment, I went out to look about me, but I did not get far for one of the officers immediately grabbed me and placed me upon a seat in the train. He swung his arms about and I suppose he was trying to impress me with the danger of leaving the train and getting lost.

"I knew not a word of English so I must have been similar to a 30 year old package of liveliness. At first the conductors attempted to speak

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to us but when he received no response he merely looked at our tags on our trunks to find out our destination.

"I was greatly disappointed in Eveleth, especially when I first appeared. I told my husband as we were walking about the streets the first day that; "This is a heck of a place to bring me, compared to the rosy picture I have painted of it on my way up here." As I walked about the boarded sidewalks the first day I had to be careful not to step into two feet of mud on both sides of me.

"Since I still was young, I secured work washing clothes at a dollar a day. My husband also worked in the Eveleth mines until 1928.

"Eveleth in 1900 was in the process of being moved from the present location of the open pits to its present spot. The reason for this change is because the first settlers built their homes above the rich iron ore fields and when they discovered their mistake they naturally have to move. Eveleth in 1900 was quite small, having as its major buildings; three small one room schools, four grocery stores, hotel, hardware store, etc.

"Immediately upon settling in Eveleth, I joined the Ladies Aid Society, sponsored teas, parties, etc. in order that the Finnish people in Eveleth could support a minister. At first I went to the church in Sparta because Eveleth had no Finnish Lutheran church as yet, but when Sparta's church was moved to Gilbert, the people in Eveleth built their own. Since that time there have been eight different ministers in Eveleth.

"There already was a bathhouse in Eveleth when I came there and it seemed like being at home to be able to go to the steam bath again. The rates were quite moderate, being 15¢ each and 25¢ for two people. The bathhouse did not have very many accommodations and the style was quite primitive,

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but a few years later another Finn built a better bathhouse, so obviously the competition improved the service.

"During the last few years the Iron Range has been receiving a number of Finnish movies from Finland, typical of the country, according to the popular opinion of a great many Americans. I went to the first movie and I believe it will be the last, for I was astounded at the descriptions of Finnish life and customs. I think that the movie producers in Finland has painted a false picture of true Finland, I do not believe it is right of the producers in Finland to send over such material which will eventually change the Americans views of my home country. The picture that I saw was "Dream and Shadow," a picture in which fighting, cursing, and drinking were the only descriptive parts with any humor in them. Why could they not have showed us some pictures of innocent play and humor, why bring out the worst, exaggerating even that.

"Those movies are to me and many others a sample of Finland's worst. In fact I believe that the United States has greatly lost its dignity and bearing since the World War, but that is no reason for the producers in Finland to attempt to show that the country of Finland can equal our own in vice and crime.

"It is often said that a father in Finland would willingly support nine sons, vice versa, but in America nine sons can't support one father.

"But summarizing all this I must say that I, in my 68 years have had ample opportunity to return to Finland, but I have been optimistic, maybe a little too optimistic, for as yet I have seen no change for the better. I am, however, still confident that Americans in general will make good in time, but that time I am afraid I will never see."

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
Runar Gustafson
October 6, 1938

FINNISH

Victor Riska. Born in Kroneby County, Finland, 1861 on a Farm. Came to America in 1882 at the age of 21. Lower Michigan left Michigan to come to Minnesota in 1897. Duluth. worked as a grader in sawmill for 10 yrs. Built houses for 3 yrs after that, started in the grocery business in 1910 until 1928 when failing health forced me out of business.

Sawmills were going strong so there was no scarcity of work.

West Duluth at that time was separated from the city of Duluth, but agitation was started two yrs later to join the two together.

Leased property to build houses, for three years so it was easier to build at that time. Lots usually ran about \$250.00 a piece.

Organist at the church at 53rd and Wadena Lutheran Church.

Deacon and trustee of the Lutheran Church.

Suggested by Mrs. A. Gustafson

Haastattelu 16.11.38

WPA, Harju

Ida Juhanna Roanen, 30.9.1863 Hammerfest, Norja. Isä suomenruotsalaisia ja äiti suomalaisen. St.Peter, Minn. v.1864, sittemmin Franklyn.

Samoihin aikoihin tulleet suomalaiset olivat MR. and Mrs. Antti

Roanen, Matias Niemi perheineen, Salomon Pudas, Peter Lahti ja Matti

Niemi. Kaksi vm. oli siällissodan veteraaneja, sillä he olivat liittyneet Pohjoisvaltioiden armeijaan hieman ennen sodan päättymistä.

Matti Niemi oli Matias Niemen poika. Eräs hänen pojistaan on nimeltään Nikolai Johnson. (Vrt. kaikkia näitä tietoja aikaisemmin kopioituihin)

[Ida Roanen]

1.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Submitted by: Walter Harju
Date: Nov. 16, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Interview with Ida Juhanna Roanen (Mrs. Isakka) 254 Humboldt Ave. No., Minneapolis, November 16th, 1938.

Ida Juhanna Roanen was born in Vadso near Hammerfest, Norway, Sept. 30th, 1863. Her parents were fishermen. Her father was a Finnish Swede and her mother was a Finn who had gone to Norway in her teens where she learned the Norwegian language. They both came from poor peasant stock and moved to Norway in quest of a better life.

Ida Juhanna came to St. Peter, Minnesota in 1864 when she was less than a year old and from there moved to Franklyn, Renville County with her parents. She does not remember anything about how they came to Minnesota whether it was through Canada or by some other route. She does, however, remember something about the first people who came to St. Peter with them. According to her reminiscences there were three families with five men in the group that came to St. Peter at the same time. There was her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Antti Roanen, Matias Niemi, and his family, Solomon Pudas, Pere Lahti and Matti Niemi. The latter two were veterans of the Civil War who had joined the northern army a little before the war ended. Matti Niemi was the son of Matias Niemi. One of Matias Niemi's sons, Nikolai Johnson, still lives on the original homestead near Franklyn, Minnesota. He was fourteen years old when the group arrived in St. Peter.

After they moved to Renville County, Ida Juhanna remembers about their life from an early age. When they moved there the Sioux uprising was still fresh in the memory of the people. On their arrival they lodged at

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Fort Ridgley. There were very few people in the region of Franklyn when they came. She says that this gave rise to much crying and complaint among the women. They complained about not having a church to go to. There were no other Finns to associate with which made them lonesome. They had very little money or means with which to live which gave rise to discouragement and many tears on the part of the women. A crude log cabin of one room with a sod roof was constructed on the homestead. A cow was secured which was housed in a crude shelter made of poles stuck into the ground about a foot apart between which was packed straw and other refuse material held together by slim poles laid lengthwise between the poles which formed the walls of the barn. Some of the upright poles were crotched at the top on which rested the rafter poles which were covered by a roof of branches, hay and rushes. This kind of a shelter for the cattle was called a "Runsu navetta" by the Finns.

When Ida Juhanna was about five years old her father died of a stomach ailment leaving the mother with her children alone on the homestead. Her mother, however, was a very resourceful woman taking into her hands the operation of the place. Very soon she had two yoke of oxen with which the breaking up of the land was begun. For a number of years the cultivation was done with primitive means. The harvesting the cereal crops was done by hand. The threshing was done by a flail and winnowed by hand in the wind. Grain was ground in the early days for household use with a coffee mill.

In the early settlement there were no schools so the rudiments of education were taught at home to the children by their mother. Mother Roanen

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had learned to read in Norway and since that time she had been known for her interest in books. The only books available at the time in the Finnish language were religious works. Mother Roanen taught her children first to read the katekism and the history of the Bible. Later when they became more proficient she had them read Martin Luther's work. She was also charged with teaching the other Finnish children of the neighborhood.

Ida Juhanna is, as her mother before her, possessed with esoteric wisdom. Her mother was widely known for abilities to work charms among the people. Ida Juhanna claims to also have some of these abilities. She tells you that she is able to foretell the death of her friends. To the inquiry as to how she does this she says that she can smell death sometime before it takes place among her friends and they finally come to her as apparitions before they die. She ascribes this ability partly as an inheritance from her mother and partly to being frightened by a corpse when she was fifteen years old. About her mother she says that she was able to confine cattle within a certain circle in meadow that she would walk around every morning. In the early days they had a cow which she confined in this way for a long time and as the children remember the cow would never trespass beyond the limit that she walked around. One morning, however, she forgot to do this and the cow estrayed and was stolen and they never found it afterwards. Ida Juhanna also tells about another person in the Franklyn neighborhood known as Aldrick Folk who possessed the ability to confine fire by walking around a stack of hay or any other object in such a way that the fire would die out when it reached his tracks. She claims that many people of the community have seen him do it with hay stacks during

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the prairie fires that took place in the early days. Ida Juhannas mother after being widowed a few years married a man by the name of Friska. Soon after that he went to Dakota to look for land. He never returned from the trip and it is believed that he froze to death. After this with other neighbors she sold her land and also moved into the Dakota territory. It was not long, however, that all of them came back to the Franklyn neighborhood where mother Roanen married again for the third time. Ida Juhanna was married when she was comparatively young. She has reared a family of 10 children of which 4 are living. She now lives with her husband at 254 Humboldt Ave, north Minneapolis, Minnesota.



RM

Minneapolis, Minnesota
Topic: Social Ethnic
Submitted by: N. A. Fryer
Date: October 31, 1938

FINNS OF MINNESOTA

Interview with John Abraham Rovainen;

The first Finnish child to be born in the state of Minnesota is John Abraham Rovainen of 254 Humboldt Avenue, North, Minneapolis, Minnesota. His parents migrated from Norway via Canada. As children his mother and father moved to Norway from Finland and there a daughter was born to them. This daughter, who is living in Minneapolis was ten years old when she came to America. She recalls nothing at all of the trip to St. Peter, Minnesota, where her parents settled. She recalls their settling at Franklyn in Renville County, her work on the homestead, and the birth of her brother John Abraham.

The birth of this child was a great event for this girl of eleven or twelve. Her mother a practising midwife was teaching her the technique of the profession, and the young girl was afraid that she would not get enough experience in the newly settled country. Being a midwife had been a tradition with the women in her mother's family for generations. However, a few years later, the high increase in births made up for the early lean years.

John Abraham Rovainen was born in St. Peter, Minnesota on February 24, 1865. When he was two years old his father died, and left his mother with three children. She continued to clear the homestead and to build it up so that she could get the legal title to it. In addition to this she continued her work as a midwife. After she got the legal possession to the farm, she sold it and to-gether with her three children moved to North Dakota. There she married again, and continued to work on the farm and to attend women in confinement. Her life with her second husband was a short one. She had been only married two years when he died. After her third marriage she returned to Franklyn and with her savings of around seven hundred dollars, which were the proceeds from the sale of her first farm and the earnings from her confinement cases, she purchased

another farm and there continued to live. With this husband she had one daughter.

John Abraham, who got his middle name in honor of Abraham Lincoln, had a very uneventful boyhood when compared with the boyhood of the lad of today. His schooling consisted of three month's work in a rude log-cabin, and when we consider that he was only nine or ten years old at that time, the fundamentals that he received must have been very well taught, because today, he can read and write English. His second step-father was a widower, and his daughter, who was educated in Red Wing was the first school teacher in the county. The boy did not attend her school.

During the same period he also recalls the coming of the first minister from Cokato. His visits were very irregular, and the meetings were held at the various homes. During each visit a member of the community "put him up" for the stay. A collection plate was passed and the meager contributions went to the minister. For the main part of his livelihood he depended upon his congregation in Cokato. Three or four years after this John Abraham recalls the building of the first church and how all the members of the community assisted.

The hammer, saw, plane, and chisel that he used were brought to this country by his father. They had been made for his grand-father, and had been a parting gift to his father. The saw has been stolen or lost, but the other three articles are in his possession. The plane is a beautiful tool made of birch, that has been mellowed and stained by age. It is a solid block of wood with an opening in the middle to hold the two inch blade, and the small knob-like device that holds the blade in place. Seen on a table it looks like the bow end of a viking ship. The front is shaped like the bow-sprite and this is the handle grip for the left hand. All the articles were made by the village smithy in far-off Norway.

All through his youth he lived in the original log-cabin, and wore clothes

Finns of Minnesota

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Submitted by: N. A. Fryer
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of home-spun. When he was fifteen years old his step-father purchased a horse. It was one of the first in the community, oxen being used for all purposes. At this time he also recalls having about sixty shepp and about twenty-five head of cattle. There were also a few chickens, and the eggs could be bartered at the town sfores at the rate of ten cents a dozen. The butter that they disposed of in the same manner brought them from ten to fifteen cents a pound.

One fall he drove to New Ulm in an ox-cart and sold twelve sacks of wheat and twelve sacks of wool. For the wheat he got twenty-five cents a sack, and for the wool he got twenty-five cents a pound. Each sack contained about ten pounds. He started for New Ulm, a distance of about thirty miles, at three o'clock in the morning and got there at nine in the evening. He transacted all his business that night, purchased the articles that he wanted, and retired to the local inn to get a "night's sleep." At three o'clock in the morning he started for home.

When he was eighteen years old he attended the first large gathering of the community. It was the Fourth of July celebration, and all the county seemed to have gathered at Franklyn. He recalls speakers and a sort of picnic afterwards and then an afternnoon of visiting and exchange of ideas. Outside of gatherings of this type and church services, he recalls no other forms of social contacts. All were too busy working on the farms and clearing the land. There seemed to be no end to the work and chores.

The red plums of the river bottoms are one of the things that he misses of his early life. They were very abundant, and somehow with man's conquest of the land they have disappeared. Everyone was fond of them and plum gatherings were one of the recreations of the community. The prairies were full of strawberries and the woods full of wild grapes. Due to the high cost of sugar very little was preserved, but much wine and grape juice was made. He remembers sugar to have been about fifty cents a pound, and coffee just as high. In

addition to these fruits, they had the vegetables that were grown on the farm, rutabagas, potatoes, turnips, and pumpkins. Wheat was the principal crop to sell, and for domestic use they also raised oats and corn.

Trapping animals was another of the favorite pastimes of the boys and men of the community. With their snares and traps they caught wild ducks and muskrats, which they ate. The muskrats being the most sought after, their pelts could be sold for about twenty-five cents. Prairie chickens were also snared for food. Yellow foxes, minks, weasels, and otters were also caught in large numbers. The mink, then like today, commanded the best prices. Sometimes as high as one dollar and twenty-five cents being paid for a mink pelt. In all his years on the farm he only caught one skunk, and at times it seemed as if the entire country was infested with them. One winter the white swallows were very numerous. In fact they were plagued with them. They were caught in snares and for weeks they constituted the main dish at all meals. They were like small pigeons and it took a full sized tubfull to make a meal for the five or six, who were at their table.

When he was ten years old he remembers the plague of grasshoppers. They came like a black cloud and destroyed everything that had not been harvested. Luckily they came in the midst of that season. The country was turned into a barren waste, and all winter the settlers feared about the eggs that had been laid. But Providence was kind and the heavy and constant Spring rains rotted the eggs and so the grasshoppers became a distant but sad memory. That winter times were a little hard as half of the crop had been consumed. But worse of all, the settlers had to use some of the savings that they were putting away for the purchase of more land, machinery and live-stock.

In 1885 he made his first trip to Minneapolis and it was by railroad. The fare was three cents a mile and it was his first trip away from the farm

for any length of time. It was winter and he was going to the city to find work as a carpenter or as a laborer until the spring season opened. This way a new life was opened for him, and twenty years later he left the farm for a permanent residence in the city.

Mrs. R. was eight months - They came by sail boat over the Ocean to Quebec, Canada, and by inland lakes and rivers to their destination, St. Peter, Minn. It took them three months from the time they left Vadso, Norway.

They lived at St. Peter for two years, where the son Abraham was born, and then moved to Franklin, where they took up a homestead. (Stayed at the Fort at first.) Five months after Ida Juhanna's father died or (2 years in Franklin) a daughter was born. (Mrs. Julberg, 431 Queen Ave. No. Mpls.) and the mother worked out the claim.

When Ida was seven years old, her mother married a man by the name of Friska, who lived at Red Wing. He was a widower, and had ten children. Five died of the cholera, three were adopted by other families, one girl continued school, and one boy who was deaf and dumb, lived with Mrs. Rovainen and his father a year after their marriage. The boy ran away from home when seventeen years old and was never heard from again.

From this marriage there was a boy and girl; the boy being born after the father died. In May 1872, Mr. Friska and step-son, John Abraham Rovainen, left Franklin for the Dakota Territory, the homestead having been sold, and Mrs. Friska and the rest of the family followed her husband and son to the Dakota Territory in September of the same year. Soon after they arrived there the husband (Friska) went back to Franklin to collect the balance of the money due on the sale of the homestead and it was on his return to the Dakota Territory

he died. They claim he was frozen to death. Whether he was found and the money received, they have no definite knowledge.

However, Mrs. Friska with her children returned to Franklin, in 1874, and soon after married Andrew Anderson, from which union there were two children, one of whom died.

Mr. Friska traveled from Red Wing to Franklin by horse and cart.

Ida Juhanna married quite young; her first husband's name was Koilli and though married again to Mr. Isakka, she is still called Mrs. Koilli by her friends.

FINNISH

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
William Liukkonen and Stanley Levine
November 14, 1938

Karl Rovasaari, Cook Home. Born in Happonranta, Finland. Parents born same place. Came to America in 1903 to Duluth. Moved from Duluth to Ely and worked in lumber camps and sawmills. Wages were \$1.75 per 10 hour day at the sawmills.

Went to confirmation school in Finland.

He came to America "to get rich." Fabulous stories of wealth and easy fortunes were told in Finland of America.

There was lots of work in the camps and mills but wages were low.

Doesn't belong to any social or temperance society in this country.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Stanley Levine
Dec. 15, 1938.

FINNS

Mrs. T. Ruth, 615 W. 2nd Street, Duluth, Minnesota. Born at Swan River, Minnesota, 1914. She has two sisters and two brothers.

She graduated from the 8th grade at Leipold, Minnesota.

Mrs. Ruth moved to Duluth in 1932.

"My parents spoke Finnish practically all the time at home. I think that it would be better for school kids if their parents didn't speak Finnish, but learned to speak English. Why, I've seen some of the kids back home who couldn't speak a word of English when they began school. Imagine the disadvantages in this for the kids beginning school.

"There were a great number of different nationalities living in harmony around Swan River. There were Swedish, Finnish, French, German, and Norwegian, and there was never any slurs about, or jokes against one nationality or the other. It was only when I came to Duluth that I began to notice discriminations in remarks about "Swedes" or "Irishmen" or "Jews." Everybody seemed to be race conscious, or should I say nationality conscious, and everyone attacked a nationality just as if it were everyday talk."

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Runar Gustafson
Dec. 23, 1938.

FINNS

George Sahlman, Cloquet, Minnesota. Born at Tampere, "Hameen-
laani, Finland, 1900.

His father was owner of a carriage factory in Finland, and he was a toolsmith at shipyards in Superior, Wisconsin.

Mr. Sahlman is a merchant, operating a clothing store in Cloquet. He came to the United States with his mother at the age of ten. He came to Superior, Wisconsin. He lived there for five years, then he moved to Proctor, Minnesota. He moved from Proctor to Thomson Township. In 1908 he moved to Cloquet, Minnesota, where he has lived ever since.

The principal reason for his father's coming to this country was because he didn't want his sons to serve in the Russian Army.

Mr. Sahlman is a member of the Carlton County Safety Commission, the Cloquet Police Civil Service Commission and the Cloquet Co-operative Society. He is a member of the Minnesota State House of Representatives, a member of the Moose Lodge, and a member of the Finnish Lutheran Church.

He is married and has two children, one, a graduate of the Teachers College, and the other is attending high school.

Gilbert, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic

Toivo Torma

Dec. 14, 1938.

Finns in Minnesota

Interview: Name: Anton Salmi - Makinen, Minnesota.

Birth place: Oulu, Finland

Age. 64 years old.

I lived right next to the city of Oulu, in Finland, and I often read and heard stories of America from letters sent to the parents of these "American" adventurers.

I had some friends in McKinley, Minnesota, and when they sent to me letters telling me of the wealth and high wages, I, at the age of 24, decided to come to McKinley, Minnesota.

I landed in Boston, Massachusetts, and immediately started west, to the mines of Minnesota. I knew no English, therefore, I felt quite ignorant, but I believed that during the five years I was to stay here I wouldn't need to know the English language.

I did not stay in McKinley very long, but went to Eveleth, where better boarding conditions were prevalent. In 1894, Eveleth was just beginning to excavate the dirt from the top of the ore. I worked in Eveleth for 7 years, and in 1901, I filed a claim in Makinen, Minnesota, where I have lived until now.

My five years have gone by now, and I had not even thought of going back to my parents. I had learned to speak a bit of English, made some friends, and was interested in the advancement of the Iron Range.

In 1901, there were 4 others who filed claim for land in Makinen, and there were already one or two who had come the year before. We went to Makinen to see what type of land we bought, in the winter of 1901, for

Gilbert, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Toivo Torma
Dec. 14, 1936.

during the summer it was too difficult to travel. We first traveled along the Miller Trunk, a road hardly passable with a team, and then cut into the woods and traveled approximately nine miles, where our respective pieces of land were situated.

During the winter I built a cabin, made a rock stove, ate partridge and slept, for there was nothing else to do until spring.

The woods at the time were full of wild animals. The THING which surprised me most was that they were so tame. The deer could be shot from the doorstep and the partridge were like chickens. The partridge came to eat from a persons hand, but when a cat was seen by them, they immediately flew away.

During the first year, a road was built, from the Miller Trunk up to Makinen. There were no horses at first, so we had to carry our loads on our back.

In 1910, I went to Finland for a visit and to me there seemed to be no change. Everything appeared as before, my parents were still living, etc. so a year later I returned to my farm. I have lived in Makinen, a bachelor the whole time, but even that fact hasn't made me prosperous. I do not think I would care to return to Finland for no personal interests are left there.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sub: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: Alfred Backman
Date: Feb. 6, 1939.

Finns in Minneapolis

At the age of 19 Peter Saarenpaa, 242 Humboldt Avenue N., came to Minneapolis August 11, 1871, from Torniojoki, Province of Oulu, Finland.

Peter says that, when he stepped off the train at the old Milwaukee depot 61 years ago, the Mississippi River seemed to him to be the grandest sight he had ever beheld, particularly that part where the huge sheet of water leaped over the rocks at St. Anthony Falls.

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Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sub: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: Alfred Backman
Date: Feb. 6, 1939.

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FORM A

Circumstances of InterviewSTATE *Minnesota*NAME OF WORKER *Alfred Backman*ADDRESS *232 James Ave Mo.*

DATE

SUBJECT

1. Name and address of informant *Chas. Saari, 254 Humboldt Ave No.
Minneapolis Minn.*

2. Date and time of interview *Dec. 29, 7 p.m.*

3. Place of interview *Finnish Club rooms 430 Fremont No
Minneapolis.*

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch
with informant

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. *Club rooms have
reading room, library, Kitchen & small dance hall.*

(Use as many additional sheets as necessary, each bearing the
proper heading to which the material refers.)

FORM B

Personal History of Informant

STATE

Minnesota

NAME OF WORKER

Alfred Backman 232 James Ave No. Mpls.

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT

*Chas. Saari, 254 Humboldt Ave. No.
Minneapolis Minn.*1. Ancestry *Common laborer*2. Place and date of birth *Helsinki, Finland, Europe*3. Family *Wife & one son.*4. Places lived in, with dates *See write up attached*5. Education, with dates *None except self study to
read & write Finnish well also reads English well,*

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

Common labor & carpenter,

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant *Tall and well built, looks
very cultured & clean cut.*

10. Other points gained in interview

(Use as many additional sheets as necessary, each bearing the proper heading to which the material refers.)

Social Ethnic
Interview with Charley Saari
254 Humboldt Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mr. Saari's original name appears on the passport as Lokasaari. He was born in 1883 on the outskirts of Helsinki, Finland, but moved soon after, traveling over the entire country with his parents. His father was a wood-worker and specialized in hewing logs for the building of churches.

In 1885 the father came to Philadelphia, and from there removed to Boston Mine, ~~a-mining-village~~, located near Calumet, Michigan, in the Copper Country. Within a short time Mrs. Saari arrived in the mining village with her son, Charley, and the united family moved to Oskari, Michigan, directly across the channel South of Hancock on the mainland. Mr. Saari said that six weeks were required for the crossing of the Atlantic.

Mr. Saari recalled that, while a small boy, he often heard his father talk of an old Finlander by the name of Noppa, who had migrated to the Copper Country from Finland during the Civil War and established a dry goods store near Calumet. The story is told that Mr. Noppa, in the winter, hung a red lumber jacket on a hook in the front of his store for display purposes, and that to this day the village and its famous mine carry the name "Red Jacket." Mr. Noppa was said to be the first Finn in the Copper Country.

Mr. Saari's education ended abruptly when he was six years old because he had to carry lunches and supplies to his father's crew of woodsmen, who felled trees in the ~~surround~~ woods surrounding the logging camp, later a village, where he spent his boyhood and early youth. He said that he was given a mouth organ to sound when he neared the scene of the felling so that the workers would know where he was and take care to not fell the timber over him or into his path. He stated that schooling in

this backward, dark, and heavily wooded region was considered by the "best" people to be something of a sin and conducive to laziness. Culture was confined to the knowledge and practice of the Cult of Lestadius.* In spite of early handicaps Mr. Saari taught himself to read and write both English and Finnish very well. He reads the local papers, is a 30 years subscriber to the Finnish Federation Daily Labor newspaper, the Tyomies, patronizes the reading room of the Finnish Federation Club at 430 Freemont Avenue North, and is a regular voter and keen observer of American politics and economics. He is also widely read and well posted on international affairs.

He is a member of the local Finnish Federation Club and was one of a committee delegated to care for the Glenwood Park grounds during the Finnish Delaware Tercentenary festival in the summer of 1938. He said that the committee was commended by park officials for the remarkable care and neatness with which the grounds were used. Both he and Mrs. Saari were confirmed in the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church.

Mr. Saari ~~stated-that~~ began working for himself at the age of 15, in the summer in the woods, in the winter in the mines, until the time of the famous copper strike of 1913, in which he participated, being a member of the Western Federation of Miners. After the strike the family moved to Keeweenaw County and settled in the village of Keeweenaw Bay where they lived for two years. Mr. Saari left Keeweenaw Bay to go to Flint and Detroit, where he spent a year. He next worked for a shipping season on a package steamer plying the Great Lakes, and then moved to Virginia, Minn. to take employment with the National Construction Company.

*Lestadius lead a group of Finnish people out of the Finnish Lutheran Church. The cult has grown to considerable size and numbers thousands of Finnish people among its supporters.

From 1917 forward for the next 15 years Mr. Saari worked as common construction laborer for the National Construction Company on the Minneapolis Auditorium, Foshay Tower, Central Norwegian Church, new Post Office Building, Hennepin County Work House, Sheridan High School, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and ~~Pacific~~ Railroad's round house, and other buildings in Upper Michigan and Northern Minnesota. He was a member of the Building and Construction and Common Laborers Union, A.F.L. No. 563.

For over 15 years Mr. and Mrs. Saari and their ^{only}son, Robert, have lived in Minneapolis in north side "Finn Town," located on and about Cedar Lake Road and Glenwood Avenue.

The interviews took place at the Finnish Federation Club, 430 Freemont Avenue North.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Subject: Social Ethnic
Submitted by: Stanley Levine
Date: Nov. 4, 1938.

The Finns in Minnesota

Gene Saari, 26 W. 3rd St. Parents both Finnish. Father born in Seinjaki, and mother in Nurmo, Finland. Born in Chisholm, Minnesota, 1909.

Four years of public school but has developed himself intellectually to University level.

"The Finnish timber-workers in old Finland were in truth, serfs on the timber land. You see, the Finnish timber workers would live on a patch of land that was owned by monopoly timber corporations. The Corporation gave the land to the worker and his family to live on, but just for so long as there was timber to be cut. When there was no more timber to be cut the corporations forced the worker and his family off the land and to another timber patch. Then the greedy corporations sold the cut-over lands.

"In this country the Finnish immigrants went into the timber and mining industry because they were illiterate in the English language and had to take the hardest and the least-paying jobs. After months and sometimes years of saving the workers would buy a small plot of land and settle on it."

No 100

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sub: Social Ethnic
Sub. by: Alfred Backman
Date: Feb. 6, 1939.

Finn in Minneapolis

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FINNISH

Duluth, Minnesota
Socio Ethnic
William Liukkonen and
Runar Gustafson
November 21, 1938

John Salo, 108 E. 1st Street, Duluth. Born in Tuurinlääni, Finland, 1886.

He was educated in grammar school only.

He worked as a farm hand.

Mr. Salo came to America, to Chisholm, Minnesota, in 1907, where he worked in the mines. He then went to the Dakotas, where he remained for six years. He returned to Minnesota, and worked in the woods for some time. He finally settled in Duluth, where he has been for the last twenty years. While in Duluth he has been doing mostly odd jobs.

Wages were very low in his home district, so he left for America, having heard of a chance to better himself in the new country.

He came to Minnesota because the wages were higher than they were out east.

Mr. Salo belonged to various Finnish clubs.

Duluth, Minnesota.

Social Ethnic
Stanley Levine
Dec. 6, 1938.

FINNS IN MINNESOTA

Miriam Sanda, 1111 Tower Avenue, Superior, Wisconsin. Born at Lawler, Minnesota in 1913.

Miriam Sanda is graduate of high school at Lawler, Minnesota.

Came to Superior in 1935 to work in Central Co-operative Wholesale House. Worked as Bakery Packer. At present is Executive Secretary of Northern States Co-operative Youth League.

"Let me clear up a mis-understanding. The co-operative movement is certainly not limited to Finnish people, although it was originally started by Finnish immigrants in the North Central States.

"The main purpose of the Youth League is to educate youth in the principles and purposes of co-operation, teaches them to adjust themselves to adulthood, and offers them recreational and cultural activity. It also teaches them a necessary function: the science of living harmoniously with one's neighbors.

"The league helps sponsor yearly co-operative youth courses, and issues pamphlets and educational literature. We have a Youth Co-op paper of our own. The "Co-op Future," published every three months.

"I think co-operation as an economic-social movement is growing in the United States. And it will continue to grow much faster in the future. The people need the co-operative movement; the co-operative movement needs the people."