

TAPE INDEX

January 22, 1981

Collectors: Jim Leary and
Matt Gallman
Informants: Einard Maki and
Eino Sarkinen
Oulu, Wisconsin

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1. Collector's announcement.
2. Einard's folks were first in mining areas--Bovey, Minnesota which is near Grand Rapids. Both born in Finland. After Bovey, came to Oulu in 1912. Dad worked in woods in winter, cleared land and farmed in the summer.
3. Einard born in 1907, in Bovey. A sister was born in 1909.
4. Parents didn't play music, but all the "kids used to play harmonica." Einard learned then, but didn't play for "years and years" until Oulu had their centennial and asked him to play.
5. Harmonica purchased at age 15 for fifty cents from a candy store in Iron River.
6. Played "some polkas, some waltzes, and Red Wing." Reckons he played mostly "with other kids." Many of his tunes learned from playing records.
7. There were local dances with accordion music at the Oulu Hall; also at Waino Hall and Co-op Hall in Brule. Frank Lehto, the Wihala (sp?) boys and Aili and Walter Johnson played there. "And sometimes there come an outside orchestra. Viola Turpeinen played at the co-op park, largest of the area's Finnish dance halls.
8. E. has been on the farm with a small herd for most of his life, but worked on the roads for Bayfield county for 23 years.
9. E.'s present harmonica cost two dollars; until recently, he reiterates, he hasn't played for forty years. He reckons he stopped playing "because nobody listens" and "that's the only music there was in them days." He now only plays once a year or so for the Oulu festivities. After a year, "them old tunes sound new."
10. He plays a Finnish polka after Viola Turpeinen; he doesn't remember the name.
11. "Harvest Polka," or "Nujulan Talkoopolkka."
12. "Orpo Pojan Valssi," or "Orphan Boy's Waltz."
13. Einard talks about how certain tunes come to him from time to time. He plays "Red Wing."
14. About Lehto, a piano accordion player, who played with a drummer at the Oulu Hall. The Wihela (this is the right spelling) boys had the same combination of accordion and drum. Apparently, Einard recalls no fiddle players.

15. About lunches served at the Oulu Hall. No drinking inside, but plenty had a drink outside on the sly.
16. Viola Turpeinen always drew a big crowd and got people to dance.
17. Einard says he never sang and can't recall any more tunes. There is a long pause, then Eino Sarkinen arrives. He's a local farmer. We exchange pleasantries, then Einard sits down and Matt takes up his button accordion.
18. (There's a brief break in the tape). Matt plays a Viola Turpeinen polka.
19. "Kulkurin Valssi." The two men recall dancing to this "old timer and hearing Viola Turpeinen play it.
20. Matt plays "Rattiko" and Einard gets up and show how to dance it: a polka and then a shuffle.
21. "Mailman Matti." Einard breaks into a sung version of the number after Matt finished playing. "That was played a lot."
22. Einard asks about the Finnish men from who Matt has learned.

(THE FIRST TAPE ENDS)

23. Matt plays "Johan Pa Snippen" and the two men remark that it was played around quite a bit.
24. Eino and Einard, especially the latter begin to talk about "house dances" in vacant houses. Lauri Maki would play button accordion sometimes before he got wiped out from drinking too much.
25. They talk about how, in their community, many thought it a sin to dance; consequently the kids had to sneak off to dance in the vacant houses. They'd often walk 5 or 6 miles to these places and be up all night.
26. Einard recalls that they used to play "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" a lot at those dances and Einard plays the tune.
27. A Swede named Lindbergh (now dead) played button accordion and Swedish tunes at the Blaine School in the town of Orienta. That was the main spot for their pie socials and dancing, but in Oulu township dancing wasn't allowed at the school.
28. The two men comment on how drinking gets more out of hand at present day dances than it used to in their days.
29. Lindbergh was backed by a guitar player named Lennard Erickson who was a good singer. Finns and Swedes alike used to go to their dances in the late 20's and early 30's. Eino mentions the pie socials at the dances.
30. The men recall broom dances and butterfly dances and circle two steps.

31. We talk a little about Einard's singing, but it's soon apparent that he doesn't want to sing. Nor does he have a record player, although he used to have a lot of 78's.
32. I bring in Walt Johnson's album and we look it over. The two men begin to discuss Walt and Aili's careers as musicians since the 1930's. They played plenty at Co-op park, all the wedding dances, then in the upper peninsula. Then he didn't play for nearly 20 years, until he took up music to make a record. ~~again~~
33. Einard remembers Walt singing at Oulu Hall at the age of ten.
34. Eino talks about the expenses of traveling, lodging, and fine performer's clothes that the Johnson's had to face in the depression era.
35. Einard's daughter took lessons and can play the accordion, including a few Finnish numbers.
36. Eino talks about his cousin Henry who played Finnish songs on the accordion by ear. He played in Waukegon where there were many Finns and a hall.
37. About learning a tune and playing by ear.
38. Eino recalls having an organ at home, but he never really learned to play it.
39. Eino and Einard talk about noisy rock and roll, the evils of drinking too much in the taverns, and the lack of places to dance. Years ago, "the girls didn't drink at all," and a lot of the boys abstained too.
40. The two men discuss the evils of dope.

41. (TAPE TWO ENDS)

41. Einard talks briefly about his log cattle barn built about 1912 by his father.
42. The men discuss log construction and their saunas, and the conversation shifts to old World Wisconsin.
43. Eino and Einard talk about the utility of stump fences, and rock fences.
44. About the use of horses and the plowing and clearing of land; also shingling bees and barn raisings. These are extremely general comments, however.
45. Einard talks about stump pulling, this time with some detail.
46. By the time the two men began to hay, work was fairly mechanized. We talk about Olavi and his haystacks, the talk shifts to Olavi in general.
47. The two men also used to see Olavi, Bill Hendrickson, and others at dances.

48. I pull out the camera and ask Einard to play a tune for the camera. He plays the "Finn Polka."
49. Matt plays the same on his button accordions and I take more pictures.
50. I ask to take Eino's picture and then explain the project to him.
51. Einard talks about Joanne Hissa's comic role locally as "Rauhha Kantappa."
52. The talk shifts to jokes and Eino Sarkinen reckons he gets pulled into those jokes because of his name. He tells the joke about the two Finns who overhear a priest talking about a bathtub. They don't know what that is because they're not Catholic.
53. Eino and Toivo mark their fishing place on the side of the boat.
54. Matt tells about Eino going through the ice on his snowmobile. Toivo sees him trying to get it started and yells "choke it."
55. Einard brings out History of the Finns in Minnesota.
56. Then the Oulu Homemakers' History of Oulu is briefly mentioned.

(THE SESSION ENDS)