Heikinpäivä in Hancock: Commemoration, Creativity, and Community

By

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival, an annual event held in Hancock, a community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula since 1999. The event, which can be defined simultaneously as a harvest or seasonal festival, a community and ethnic festival, and a folk festival, was organized as a conscious attempt at cultural revitalization by a Finnish American culture broker well-versed in local traditions and deeply committed to ethnic heritage maintenance. The development of this festival, in which Finnish ethnic cultural practices were applied to modern American models of the folk festival, took place in an atmosphere where longstanding local stereotypes and prejudices concerning Finns in particular, and Upper Peninsula natives more generally, increasingly were challenged from within. This festival's role in cultural maintenance and revival, inversion of negative imagery, and affirmation of community will be explored. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted among Finnish Americans and interethnic community members, this dissertation explores the ways in which such a festival event makes use of a variety of event models in order to best provide opportunities for intercultural education, in-group community-building, and, ultimately, a reversal of negative cultural imagery ascribed by outsiders.

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Introduction

Heikinpäivä "Big Day" 2014

It was a quiet bustle on the streets of Hancock, Michigan on the morning of Saturday, January 25, 2014 as I dropped off a man dressed in fur-trimmed purple robes and green velvet pants and two girls dressed as grasshoppers in front of the town's only Mexican restaurant and drove away to find a parking spot. Three blocks down the street, I climbed out of the truck and pulled on a rather gruesome full-head mask. The flesh-tone mask bore distinctive black stitching marks all over it; the marks were meant to represent a man who had been ripped to shreds and somehow sewn back together. The pants and Nordic-style pullover I wore also bore these marks. I grabbed a pitchfork out of the back of my truck and walked swiftly down Quincy Street, back to the Mexican restaurant where I had dropped off my husband and two daughters. Others headed toward the restaurant too: two in big fuzzy bear costumes, a bunch of Finlandia University students wearing athletic jerseys in Finnish blue and white, a seven-foot tall swan.

Reaching my husband as he helped our daughters adjust their grasshopper antennas and tie on bright green capes, I handed him the pitchfork. "You forgot this."

My husband, Ron Stewart, was St. Urho, patron saint of Finnish Americans. He would need the pitchfork to chase away the giant plague of grasshoppers gathering in front of the restaurant. And I was Lemminkäinen, "wanton loverboy" of the *Kalevala,* Finland's national epic poem. I needed to find the fellow parade volunteer dressed as my mother, who would chastise me as I cat-called women standing out on the streets. We were about to march, along with a number of others, in the Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival parade.

As the parade started, I scoped out ladies along the parade route to whom I could yell, "Hey honey, what's your number?" I zig-zagged down the street, cat-calling the women and

announcing myself as Finland's most eligible bachelor, as my mother grabbed my arm, pulling me away from the ladies and admonishing me to behave. Sometimes, I knew my flirtation victims, and moved the facemask briefly to reveal who I was and to give them a more normal hello. Ahead of me, I could hear my husband shouting, "Hey, you grasshoppers! Quit eating my grapes!" Behind me, the shaman Väinämöinen played his *kantele* harp as the shamaness Louhi, shape-shifting into a bird of prey, swooped behind him. As we neared the end of the parade, where the majority of spectators stood, kantele instructor Kay Seppala told radio announcer Todd Van Dyke the proper pronunciations and back-stories of each character in the parade, who repeated each in turn as he live-broadcasted the outdoor events of the Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival.

Figure One. Ron Stewart as St. Urho, Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival 2014. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

Following the parade, outdoor games including children's sled racing and a wife-carrying competition took place in Hancock's central green space, Quincy Green, on the campus of

Finlandia University. Inside adjacent buildings were two areas dedicated to indoor craft and food markets and music performances. My oldest daughter, Audrey, ran into one such building, the First United Methodist Church, where she would meet up with the rest of the Kivajat Finnish Dancers, change into their Karelian-style dance costumes, and entertain an audience with Finnish and Nordic folk dancing.

After her performance, our family enjoyed the festival in our own ways, joining up with other friends and relatives, eating *laxlåda* and *piirakat*[1] in the market at the Finnish American Heritage Center, buying a supply of Finnish candy and locally crafted hats and jewelry, listening to a variety of traditional music performers, and playing outdoors on the several types of sleds provided for the children's entertainment. In the evening, my husband and I went out for a Finnish buffet dinner and a dance with music by the PasiCats. Heikinpäivä, as always, was to go out with a bang.

This dissertation explores the legacy of Finnish American culture through festival, primarily in examining the Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival, an invented, contemporary festival that takes place each January in Hancock, a small city in the heart of Upper Michigan's Copper Country. In this harsh environment, where annual snowfall is measured in the hundreds of inches, and actual summer days in the low dozens, seasonal points of passage are worth noticing and celebrating (Smith 1972:161), and Heikinpäivä holds an important position in this respect. It is also a festival that presents and examines the unique culture of the local Finnish ethnic community, which, as we shall see, is the ethnic majority of both the city of Hancock itself, and the county in which Hancock is located. While these people comprise an ethnic majority, the social history of their immigration and settlement in the region resulted in their

[1] *Laxlåda,* Swedish for salmon casserole, is a dish featuring scalloped potatoes and salmon while *piirakka* is an open-face pastry consisting of a very thin wheat or rye crust with a milk and rice filling. The use of foods at this festival will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

continued marginalization in the area. Indeed, deep stereotypes exist about these people, though simultaneously, a deep sense of local ethnic pride is also very visible.

Like many other community festivals, Heikinpäivä belongs to complex worlds connecting pagan, secular, and Christian; local, regional, and global; social, commercial, and political; Finnish, Finnish-American, and Yooper (a term used for residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula). The festival simultaneously upholds and plays with notions of traditionality and authenticity. It has also displayed a surprising lasting power, due in no small part to historical circumstances, moments of serendipity, and intrepid individuals and groups that have committed to the continuation of a Finnish ethnic culture in the Copper Country. Heikinpäivä is a high point of celebration in a full calendar year.

Scholarship on Finnish American Festivals and Folklore

A broad body of scholarship exists that relates both to Finnish American folklife in general and to Finnish American festival, ritual, and celebratory behavior more closely. While some aspects of this culture's festivals remain largely unexamined in the American context (for instance, practices associated with Midsummer), others are well-examined, most notably, the tradition of Laskiainen, which has been celebrated as a revivalist festival in Palo, Minnesota since 1937 (see Moore 1986; Vennum, Penti, and Köngäs-Maranda 1983; Penti 1988). The tradition of St. Urho's Day has also been examined over the years, by folklorists, cultural historians, and community experts. Finally, research involving Heikinpäivä is part of my own previous (2006, 2007) and current work as well as that of linguist Kathryn Remlinger (2006, 2013, 2015 [forthcoming]). Research in Finnish American foodways is particularly important to a broad understanding of festival culture, and the many works of Yvonne R. Lockwood and William G. Lockwood, examining such things as traditional Finnish American dairy products

(2000), and the interethnic use of Cornish pasties (1991) are important works, as are cookbooks featuring Finnish American and Finnish cuisine including those of Beatrice Ojakangas (1964) and Anne R. Kaplan, Marjorie A. Hoover and Willard B. Moore (1986).

Finnish American vernacular culture informs this work because of the importance of these aspects of culture as symbols of ethnicity and cultural persistence and creativity. The works of Yvonne Lockwood feature prominently here, too. Her examinations of the Finnish sauna bath (1977) and rag rug weaving traditions among Finnish Americans (2010) bear special mention. Michael Loukinen, a sociologist who also examines Finnish American folk culture, has contributed to the understanding of intergenerational Finnish American community life (1982). In this dissertation, we will see seemingly humble aspects of culture held up for celebration as part of the festival, and the body of research that already exists surrounding these aspects of culture is eminently important.

Positioning in Community: On the Inside and the Out

Perhaps like many folklorists, my interest in festivals and in human culture more generally come from experiences in my own life. I was born in the Copper Country to a family of what is considered to be typical local ethnic stock (mostly Finnish, with some German, French Canadian, and a splash of Irish mixed in). I promptly settled into a life of bouncing around the country, the child of typical migrants from the area, in search of better jobs and a better life, returning periodically to the Upper Peninsula for vacations, funerals, reunions or short attempts at resettling in the area.

Moving took us primarily out west: Wyoming, Colorado and South Dakota, with a little time in New Hampshire and a few shorter stays in Ohio and Montana. We made connections with people from a vast array of cultural and economic backgrounds, from East Coast bluebloods

to Rocky Mountain Mormons to deeply traditional Lakota families. These people all dazzled me with their unique cultures and I grew to be quite conscious of dialects, foodways, traditional material culture, and other aspects of my friends' folklives that I could see.

I must have learned early on that festival and ritual provided keys for understanding the cultures of the people I lived among and of those who I descended from, because I have always been eager to attend, and fascinated by those activities that really drew forth observable patterns that highlighted what it meant to be a part of a given culture and how to behave within the group under specialized circumstances. Barre Toelken (1991) describes this heightened presentation of culture as selection and intensification. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, referring to festivals with regard to the transient act of cultural tourism says, "Public and spectacular, festivals have the practical advantage of offering in a concentrated form, at a designated time and place, what the tourist would otherwise search out in the diffuseness of everyday life, with no guarantee of ever finding it" (1998:59). Though my stays certainly lasted longer than the average tourist, I have used these events similarly to how a tourist would as I acquaint myself with new people and places, and sometimes, when I reacquaint with the Copper Country, a place I do consider to be home.

My family finally did resettle in the area for my last three years of high school, in the former mining town of South Range. Though I did not know the community and the people myself, the intricate local system of kinship reckoning—beginning from the moment an ancestor first arrived to the area, which, to most locals extends between three and six generations back—meant that others typically "knew" me. They knew my parents, my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins and all of our "back stories." Because many local immigrants had large families of children who did often marry fellow locals (and still do to this day), there are many kinship

connections within and crossing local ethnic groups. When I tell others that, "if I threw a rock out the window right now, it would hit a cousin," I am only half-joking.[2]

Though in general, I am outwardly considered an insider in this community (my right to call myself a "Yooper," for instance, has never been challenged to my knowledge), it is clear that time away from this community gives me a certain outsider status too. Unlike my classmates, many of whom spent all of kindergarten through 12th grade together, I am not able to reference a common history of growing up together. Strangely, however, as I have grown up, I have come to realize, through talking with friends from high school, that many of us had a common migrant experience as young children—several of us even lived in the same trailer park at the same time in Gillette, Wyoming, when our fathers all took jobs in the booming oil fields in the early 1980s. So I am not the only one who is a little in and a little out. But the ties that do exist, especially blood, ensure we all fit.

This conception of relationships is important, both personally and professionally because it means that often, I don't need to explain who I am to locals, and since they often already know my "back story," I may only need to rectify concepts of what "I've been up to" and not completely fill them in. It gives me easy access to individuals and networks in most cases because I am not a complete outsider. These relationships also often mean that there is an interest in my work both because it can readily be shared with the community and because this work demonstrates a set of useful skills that the community can draw from. Reciprocity is a key component of how I relate to the local community as a folklorist, and often, community members

[2] This statement is based on anecdotal evidence from everyday meetings with people who tell me how we are related, as well as my own perusal of genealogical information concerning my family that others have generously shared with me. My paternal grandfather, an ethnic German born in Oconto, Wisconsin, is my only grandparent who is not a second or third generation resident of the area, but my other three grandparents and a step-grandmother all came from large local families (my maternal grandfather, for instance, was one of ten children), whose parents in turn, were also from large local families themselves. For a community that does reckon kinship from the point of immigration on the local level, this means I have numerous local cousins.

know they can ask me to help them translate genealogical records, or recommend history books for them to read, or simply listen to the stories they have to tell, whether it pertains to my fieldwork at the time or not. These relationships, though I will not illustrate most of them in this study, bubble under the surface and create important bases upon how my research, and festival work, can and cannot be done.

Methodology

I became interested in Heikinpäivä long before I got to attend the festival itself. As a graduate student at Indiana University, I had become intrigued by a folklore character, Heikki Lunta, who is immortalized in the Upper Peninsula (and increasingly beyond) as the Finnish American Snow God.[3] During the mid-1990s, several songs about this character played regularly on the radio each winter, including the polka-reggae hit "Guess Who's Coming to Sauna (Heikki Lunta)" by Marquette-based band Conga Se Menne. As the festival itself developed and grew following its founding in 1999, Heikki Lunta quickly became one of the characters featured in the parade each year, and many locals have mistakenly assumed this figure was the chief inspiration for Heikinpäivä itself. My explorations of the Snow God, then, often overlapped with activities, themes, and underlying issues found within the festival, and so I knew that eventually, I'd have to focus more sharply on Heikinpäivä too. Even before attending the festival itself, I conducted survey questioning during my fieldwork season in 2004 to determine what place the festival held in local Finnish ethnic community life.[4]

[3] My interest in this modern folklore character resulted in the completion of my MA thesis from Indiana University, which was converted into an online exhibit at UW-Madison's Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures website, and which still gets reasonable visitor traffic when thoughts turn to snow—or to making snow stop: http://csumc.wisc.edu/exhibit/HeikkiLunta/index.htm.

[4] As this survey resulted in few responses, it will not be an integral part of this dissertation, though I will include some specific commentary offered by survey participants as it best illuminates certain aspects of the festival.

I attended my first two Heikinpäivä festivals in 2008 and 2009,[5] and since I have moved back, I have attended three more (2012-2014). Initially appointed as the public programming coordinator at the Finnish American Heritage Center and additionally gaining membership in the Finnish Theme Committee,[6] I was involved in many aspects of the planning and implementing the festival in 2012 and 2013, while 2014 served as an opportunity to step back and observe, for the most part, except, of course, marching in the parade and accommodating my daughter's dance performance immediately after.

Figure Two. My family's first Heikinpäivä, 2008. Daughter Audrey Stewart, husband Ron Stewart, me, son Alex Stewart and baby Anneli Stewart. Photograph courtesy Jim Kurtti.

Heikinpäivä is by no means the only Finnish ethnic festival I have attended and conducted fieldwork at, and so many other festivals help to inform this work too, including the

[5] These first two experiences at the festival were incidental to other business that had brought me to the area each time, though I did attend many of the "Big Day" events each year, conducting limited fieldwork at each.
[6] This group is charged with carrying out the festival each year. A detailed discussion of the group is offered in Chapter Four.

following: St. Urho's Day dinner (Farmington Hills, Michigan, 2004), FinnFest USA (2005, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2013, multiple locations nationwide), Juhannus (Toivola, Michigan, sporadically in childhood, also 2012, 2013), Marquette Scandinavian Midsummer (Marquette, Michigan, 2009), Iron County Historical Museum Midsummer (Caspian, Michigan, 2012), Laskiainen Sliding Festival (Palo, Minnesota, 2013), Toivola Jamboree (2013), Aura Jamboree[7] (Aura, Michigan, 2013), and Finnish Independence Day celebrations (Indiana University, 2003-2005; Finlandia University, 2011-2013).

My fieldwork methodology includes several approaches. Early work included the paper survey distributed in the Copper Country during the summer of 2004 to learn local attitudes toward the Finnish American Snow God, Heikki Lunta, which included a section of questions on Heikinpäivä. Though this project returned only 14 surveys, some respondents gave very insightful information, and, as a part of my very first time "in the field," it was an attempt to practice a variety of methods and to learn basic information from as many sources, using as many methods as possible. Between 2004 and 2005, I also conducted archival research, especially through gathering media coverage of the festival, and I conducted interviews concerning both the Snow God and Heikinpäivä with a number of people including musicians, local tourist site operators, neighbors and community members in my field site, and Jim Kurtti, whose 2004 interview features prominently here.

Beginning in 2008, participant-observation at the festival took place, and with my move to the Copper Country in 2011, the "participant" role intensified as I joined the Finnish Theme Committee and worked in tandem with the committee and others through my job at Finlandia University. Much of my research during these last three years also involves autoethnographic

[7] Though both the Toivola and Aura Jamborees are not necessarily Finnish by definition, and feature music of many genres and ethnic backgrounds, they both take place in Finnish ethnic "super" strongholds, and are associated in general with Finnishness.

work,[8] as I was participating in and influencing the festival in my own ways. Often, information that would have been gained in a formal interview and participant observation approach was gained through processes of work. I did, however, continue to rely on interviewing, more traditional "observation" of festival activities, and interpretation of the actions and ideas of the Finnish Theme Committee, taking both observer and participant stances. Finnish Theme Committee members have been especially gracious with me as I have switched between these roles, perhaps sometimes seeming lazy or less willing to work than they all have been.

Because I am an active "worker" in the festival, and cannot see everything and also because I was not witness to the festival in its earlier years, I am also especially dependent on the photographic records of others. Daryl Laitila (d. 2012) and Mary Pekkala provided me with early photographs of the festival, as has Jim Kurtti. I have also relied on the photographs of Karen Johnson, former Director of Communications at Finlandia University, whose extensive online photo galleries are not only expertly done (much like Jim Kurtti's) but also offer a wide range of observation perspectives. When Karen photographed an event, viewing the photos was almost like being there. Finally, I am indebted to my friend, Holly Smith, whose photographs also inform me of aspects of the festival I did not notice, or could not photograph.

I cannot ignore the role Jim Kurtti, director of the Finnish American Heritage Center and founder of Heikinpäivä, has played in all this. As my supervisor at the center, as my former Finnish language teacher, and as a fellow local deeply interested in keeping a relevant Finnish culture in the area, Jim has been of inestimable importance, and certainly this work can be

[8] Autoethnography is a method that very consciously places the researcher into the center of the research. One simple and useful definition of this method calls it "cultural analysis through personal narrative" (Boylorn and Orbe 2014:16). Brian Gregory (2000), reviewing the work of Deborah E. Reed-Danahay (1997), recalls John Dorst (1989) who considers such things as "museum displays, landscapes, and community festivals as autoethnographic 'texts'" (329). This is a useful consideration, as I describe myself navigating and helping to shape a festival created by people who, essentially, use it to describe themselves.

considered an ethnography of him too. Many of my own observations were shaped by our daily conversations, from mundane details like the placement of tables in the tori market to his intricate knowledge of how locals are interconnected with one another, to his "big picture" understanding of how Finnish ethnicity exists in the everyday and how to draw it forth for others to recognize, appreciate and learn.

In this work, although I examine many of the inner workings of the festival, and indeed, played a part in various aspects of it, I do not focus as sharply on certain important processes related to the festival. The festival's financial workings and vendor registration processes are a few such aspects that I do not address in depth. Part of this relates to my interest as a folklorist in focusing on the cultural aspects of the festival events itself and their combined effects on the place of Finnish American life in the Copper Country. The other part is that, as a working staff member at the Finnish American Heritage Center and a member of the Finnish Theme Committee, I had my own appointed role with regard to the festival, which often was in the realm of reserving spaces, assisting in publicizing events, as well as fielding day-to-day questions from patrons who would stop by the Heritage Center for information on the festival during business hours. Though through committee reports and other points of contact, we were all aware of the work of others, it was not necessary for all of us to keep strict track of what the others were doing.

Although I no longer work at the Finnish American Heritage Center, I do still participate in Heikinpäivä-related work through involvement in the Finnish Theme Committee, and through my work with students at Finlandia. I also still collaborate with the Heritage Center in ways that continue to give me insight into the meaning Finnish culture holds for people in everyday and special contexts, including teaching an introductory level community Finnish language class.

Content of this Study

This dissertation will explore the development of the Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival as it relates to efforts to maintain and revitalize Finnish ethnic folk culture in the Copper Country region of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This festival serves not only as a base upon which participants of all backgrounds can celebrate and explore local Finnish culture, but it also is a means by which deeply held negative stereotypes can be brought into an arena of play, allowing the ideas behind these stereotypes to be confronted in a non-threatening manner.

Heikinpäivä's role within a wider body of Finnish American festival past and present and its development into a structure that encompasses several key genres of festival will reveal how it creatively draws from applicable Finnish traditions and American festival structures to create an event that has come to hold great meaning as it has become a regular part of local celebration culture.

In Chapter One, the community in which the Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival takes place will be examined in historical and modern contexts. The creation of a local Finnish immigrant and ethnic community and the institutions that have sustained this group over time will be discussed. Conceptions of local Finnish culture and its relationship to Upper Peninsula regional culture will be introduced, particularly as they relate to stereotypes of both groups. As we shall see, a great deal of overlap exists between images of the two.

The place of festival life in the local Finnish American community will be the focus of Chapter Two. From festival traditions brought from Finland and adapted in the United States to celebrations that were created in response to American life, these festivals continue to have a meaningful role among many Finnish Americans today. This chapter will serve to contextualize the place Heikinpäivä has in the ethnic group's festival calendar and the ways in which the

celebration supplants two earlier festival celebrations that did not have the popularity that Heikinpäivä proves to have.

In Chapter Three, the origins of Heikinpäivä will be examined. The festival, as it exists in Hancock, Michigan, connects the story of a medieval Christian martyr in Finland to the traditional agricultural calendar of Finns, with a body of proverbs surrounding the saint and agricultural practices associated with his feast day. These proverbs, carried into the Copper Country by immigrants, then inspired Jim Kurtti, founder of the festival, to create an event celebrating local Finnish culture as part of the roster of activities associated with Project 34, an annual conference on Finnish heritage maintenance in America that took place in coincidence with the first annual Heikinpäivä festival.

Following its foundation in 1999 and its establishment as an annual event, Heikinpäivä expanded in length of the festival, as well as range of activities. Though a core day of activities, known among organizers as "Heikinpäivä Big Day," is shaped much in line with Stoeltje's *community festival* structures (1983); many of the events preceding the "Big Day" are more closely related to structures associated with *folk festivals,* in which education and out-group inclusion are key concerns (Wilson and Udall 1982). Chapter Four will focus on these components of the festival, examining the festival and ritualesque (Santino 2011) contexts of each.

Chapters Five and Six reveal how organizers use the festival to educate attendees on aspects of Finnish American and Finnish culture and how attendees use the festival for their own personal interests, often related to symbolic aspects of festival life. Comparisons are made between Heikinpäivä, with its local focus, and two 1987 festivals, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife and the subsequent Festival of Michigan Folklife, that had considerable

involvement from Michigan folklorists and helped to strengthen the state's public folklore outreach programs, both of which have provided Heikinpäivä organizers with many direct and indirect benefits. In Chapter Six, the ways in which attendees use and internalize the festival's events will be explored.

In Chapter Seven, tensions between notions of tradition and authenticity among Finnish Americans, Finnish nationals, and folklorists will reveal how inaccurate understandings of cultural community place divergent groups together, creating debate on what can be considered to be traditional and who has the authority to make these claims.

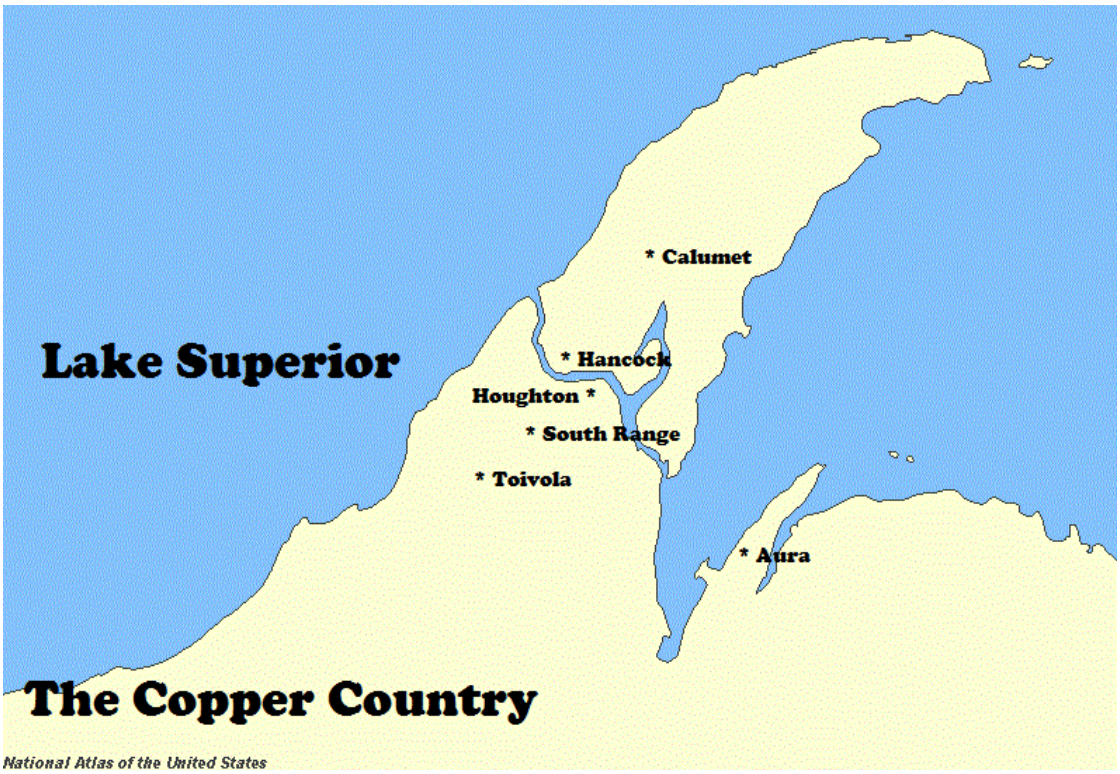
The role of ethnic folklife among longstanding Finnish communities in the United States has been well-documented and this study contributes to our understanding of modern developments within this culture group.

Chapter One: A Finnish American Nesting Place

Introduction

In this chapter, the hometown of the Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival will be placed in geographical, historical, and cultural contexts. The rise of Finnish immigrant to Michigan's Copper Country and the subsequent development of a Finnish ethnic community will be detailed. Internal diversity within the group will be illustrated, revealing many sharp differences that have served to create not only occasional divisions within in the group, but also a variety of unique cultural expressions.

This Finnish experience in America will be seen to be part of the development of an interethnic "Yooper" culture, which connects both to aspects of local stereotypes, as well as aspects of local heritage consciousness, as evidenced by the development of heritage tourism following the decline of industry. Finnish ethnic institutions, as we shall see, contribute actively to programs presenting local history and culture, particularly through participation in the Keweenaw National Historical Park. These factors contribute to the milieu in which Heikinpäivä developed.



Figures Three and Four: Map of Michigan and surrounding area, with the Copper Country highlighted (top) and map of the Copper Country with locations of important communities highlighted (bottom).

Hancock: A Finnish American Core Community

The Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival takes place in the city of Hancock, a small town of around 4600 residents, on the north side of the Portage Shipping Canal on the Keweenaw Peninsula, which is located in the Western Upper Peninsula. Hancock and its twin city of Houghton on the south shore of the canal are anchors of commerce, education, and government, in one of the most remote areas of the Upper Midwest. Leaving the centers of settlement located along the spine of the Keweenaw Peninsula results in patchy mobile phone service, infrequent gas stations, and long drives in areas punctuated with only thick forests and the occasional rolling field.

The region of the Keweenaw, which is also known as the Copper Country, is home to one of the largest concentrations of ethnic Finns living outside of Finland, and it has been for decades.[9] Finnish ancestry is so prevalent, that approximately 33% of residents in Houghton County, where Hancock is located, claim Finnish ancestry. The next largest ethnic affiliation in Houghton County is German, with 29%.[10] Finnish language, though fading fast, is still spoken in some public places, and occasionally, Finnish nationals still come and settle in the area. It is the only place in the United States where Finnish language and culture are a part of the public school curriculum, and it is one of a small number of places where Finnish studies can be taken at the college level, at Finlandia University in Hancock.

As far as Copper Country communities go, Hancock is a busy place. The city boasts an infrastructure including public schools, a small private university founded by Finnish

[9] According to the online exhibit, "An Interior Ellis Island: Immigrants and Ethnicity in Michigan's Copper Country," Finns comprised the largest foreign-born population in Houghton County by 1890, and by 1910, they made up one-third of the county's total population. http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu/intro.html. Accessed June 5, 2014.
[10] This data comes from the United States Census Bureau's American FactFinder files B04001: First Ancestry Reported and B04003: Total Ancestry Reported and is based on 2008-2012 American Community Survey estimates.

immigrants, a business district, the county fairgrounds and other features that make it one of Houghton County's more active and regionally-important communities.

Hancock gained its first Finnish immigrants in 1864 or 1865, and within a few decades, not only grew to have an impressive Finnish ethnic district in its own right (see Kaunonen 2010), but also served as a springboard from which other Finnish communities in the region and even across the United States gained more inhabitants. Finns came to the Copper Country at a time when many other foreign-born populations moved in. They set themselves apart from their neighbors in ways that contribute to folk images of the Finns to this day. One of the main points of difference was language: one of the major languages of the Finno-Ugrian family, Finnish bore no resemblance to its neighboring Scandinavian and Slavic languages, and certainly not to languages of regional importance to the Great Lakes region, including English, German, and French. Part of the rise of Finnish community-building in Hancock was a result of the need for commerce, religion and socialization in a language that was familiar to the Finn, and by the 1880s, Copper Country communities including Hancock and Calumet each supported an ever-growing Finnish business community and Finnish-language churches, newspapers, and other such symbols of an ethnic infrastructure.[11]

A map of the Copper Country reveals the influence Finns have had over the Copper Country, with such place names as Toivola, Liminga, Askel, Kyro, and Tapiola sprinkled across the map. Often the first settlers of these places, Finns contributed their own native words to the process of settlement naming, and many of these places still exist today. Some, such as Toivola with its annual Juhannus festival, serve as home to existent proof of a Finnish life and contribute

[11] As will be discussed later in this chapter, some Finnish immigrants also were Swedish-speakers, as Finland has been home to a Swedish-speaking minority since the 1200s (Meinander 2011:8-9), and indeed, had been considered part of the Swedish kingdom from the 1200s until 1808, when Finland was ceded to Russia (Meinander 2011:71-73).

to the ethnic flavor of the region in ways as visible and important as Heikinpäivä. Finnish flags are all over: painted on mailboxes, bumper-stickered onto cars, flying on flagpoles. The Finnish word *sisu,* a word bearing great symbolism in Finland and among Finnish Americans roughly meaning "guts," "determination," and "perseverance," is seen on bumper stickers, t-shirts, hats, and even in the names for a local fitness business, a regional Finnish culture adult education program, and Finlandia University's freshman experience seminar. In this region, Finnish ethnicity is something literally worn by many "on their sleeves," and symbols of ethnicity are recognizable by many in the community.

Though Hancock was named after one of the nation's non-Finnish founding fathers, it is considered to be an "*Amerikansuomalaisten pesäpaikka"*[12] (a Finnish American nesting place), due partly to its standing as a place of first landing in America for many immigrants who later moved on to other points or returned to Finland, and as its position as a place where Finnish culture and ethnicity thrive, and indeed, are incorporated into many aspects of the city's public life.

Hancock's identity is often defined by its relationship with its sister city, Houghton. Just across the Portage Canal, Houghton is more prosperous, more culturally diversified, and seen as more "happening" in general. With Houghton serving as the county seat, and home to Michigan Technological University, as well as several business districts featuring strip malls, restaurants, county offices, a charming old fashioned downtown shopping district and more, Hancock is constantly viewed as an underdog. This relationship between the two communities is evidenced effectively through the rivalry between the local public schools, and through the lack of rivalry between Finlandia University and Michigan Tech, which as a public research university, draws

[12] This phrase continues to be used in descriptions of communities such as Hancock that attracted numerous Finns. Arnold Alanen (2014:55-56) traces this phrase's earliest known usage to 1879, when it was used in the newspaper *Amerikan Suomalainen Lehti,* which was published in nearby Calumet.

from a vastly higher resource base of public funding, grants, endowment funds, student involvement, and alumni support. In recent years, this tension has been exacerbated by a school-of-choice law in the state of Michigan[13] that has caused a flight from Hancock public schools to Houghton, the continued struggle to fill the storefronts and strip malls of Hancock versus Houghton's nearly endless expansion, and of course, the ongoing perception that Michigan Tech is a more prestigious university situated in a better town.

Interestingly, both communities come together regularly through festival events throughout the year, including at Heikinpäivä, when Michigan Tech's pep band marches in the parade, the generic summertime event Bridgefest each June, and the Parade of Nations in September, which is a parade and food/entertainment event highlighting the international and interethnic quality of both university communities. Neither of these festivals feature the same "underdog" rhetoric that Heikinpäivä sometimes brings up, both pertaining to the relationship between Finns/Yoopers and both residents and tourists from outside the area, and, to a lesser extent, between Hancock and Houghton.

Finnish Cultural Institutions

Key institutions in the Copper Country supporting Finnish culture include churches (many of which are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or one of several varieties of the Apostolic Lutheran tradition[14]), social fraternal orders (the Order of Runeberg and Knights and Ladies of Kaleva, though diminishing over time[15]), political and economic

[13] As Kurtti (2001) notes, part of Hancock's response to school-of-choice competition was to expand the reach of Finnish curriculum in the schools.

[14] Churches identified as Apostolic Lutheran or Laestadian are embodiments of the impact full religious freedom had on Finns as they immigrated to the United States. This group of religious communities is based on the teachings of Swedish-Sami Lutheran pastor Lars Levi Laestadius, though many differences between congregations are very evident. It is notable that many aspects of festival behavior among Apostolic Lutherans/Laestadians are discouraged as being too worldly, and thus, their presence is often very small at such events.

[15] I am actually a Second-Degree member of the local Ladies of Kaleva lodge in Mass City, though I am rarely able to attend the monthly meetings since they typically conflict with my work schedule.

institutions (particularly consumer cooperatives and worker's organizations, now largely defunct), temperance societies (which often had overlap with both political and religious organizations) and more. All of these groups recognized early their utility in providing meaningful social interactions beyond their primary purposes, and periodic festivals, often drawing from Finnish traditions, developed rapidly in response to these social needs. As the nature of the community shifted from immigrant to ethnic, many institutions also changed or disappeared, a process that continues to this day.

New institutions are invented to address the role ethnicity plays in life, and to give meaningful support to expressions of a unique Copper Country Finnish culture. Three of the most central institutions are found within the city of Hancock itself, though the reach of these groups, as we will see, reaches far past the city limits.

Suomi College and Finlandia University

The first institution worth examination is Finlandia University. Founded as Suomi College in 1896 by Finnish immigrants, one of the university's initial purposes was to train Finnish-speaking pastors to work in Finnish American communities (Holmio 2001:394). The school was organized by members of the Suomi Synod, a Lutheran organization of ethnic Finnish congregations throughout America. Suomi College retained its affiliation with this synod through 1963, when the Suomi Synod and several other ethnic synods merged together into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). Renamed Finlandia University in 2000, the institution is a small, private, liberal arts college with an ecumenical approach to religious expression, but an ongoing dedication to maintaining and promoting aspects of the university's Lutheran and Finnish institutional heritage.

This commitment to the university's Lutheran and Finnish heritage is evidenced in the continued presence of both Finnish Studies and Religious Studies programs on campus, and the inclusion of Finnish Studies and Religious Studies coursework in the general education requirements for students. A group known as the Finnish Council in America serves the campus by identifying and implementing connections between Finland and the university in various aspects of campus life. The university also hosts the annual Sibelius Academy Music Festival on campus and in surrounding communities each year, bringing musical performers from the prestigious Sibelius Academy in Helsinki to the Copper Country.

Finnish American Heritage Center

A concrete expression of Finlandia University's commitment to maintaining aspects of Finnish identity on campus and in the broader community is also found in the Finnish American Heritage Center, which is fully supported by the university. Founded in 1990 and built in a former Catholic church, this center is a hub of Finnish American cultural life on local, regional, and international levels. The structure was significantly altered, with a climate controlled archive being installed in the lowest level, an art gallery and theater on the main level, and office space in the top floor.

A fulltime archivist works in the lowest level, handling what may quite likely be called the largest collection of Finnish American archival materials in the world, aided by an intern or student employees. The collection includes manuscripts, photographs, audiovisual recordings, art, books, periodicals, and museum items that have been donated to the university since 1932, and that primarily serve to describe Finnish American culture and history in its many aspects. Primarily due to the archive, the Center is a private partner site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park, which will be discussed further in this chapter, and which heightens the

archive's limited function as a historical museum. Visitors (and long-distance researchers) to the center range from high school students completing National History Day projects to ethnic Finns conducting genealogical research to graduate students, professional researchers and community historians conducting research in a wide number of disciplines. These researchers come from many places worldwide, and, in addition to visitors attracted by the Center's status as a National Park Heritage Site, provide the Center's research and interpretation staff with a diverse clientele.

The art gallery, located on the center's main floor, is managed by a staff member of the university's International School of Art and Design. Though often, the gallery features exhibitions of student work or the works of artists with no connection to Finnish American culture at all, an annual exhibition featuring the works of contemporary Finnish American artists is held, and periodically, artists from Finland may exhibit as well.

Over the years, the top floor office space has been the home of the university's music department and even the university president, but now, and most logically, this space is used by workers whose job descriptions either directly relate to the work of the center itself, or that dovetail with the center's mission. Entry signage reveals that the space on the top level houses the center's director, the offices of the *Finnish American Reporter*, and the offices of the Honorary Consulate of Finland for the Upper Peninsula. To those climbing the stairs for the first time, it may seem that an army of workers, from journalists to clerical workers, to diplomats, might await the visitor. These multiple operations, however, are run by two fulltime staff members, who are assisted by a rotating internship filled through the Center for International Mobility in Finland, and during the school year, a student employee.[16]

[16] From fall 2011 to fall 2013, I also worked at the Finnish American Heritage Center in public programming. Though this appointment was officially half-time, I worked increasingly in a more-than-full-time capacity as FinnFest USA 2013 planning and implementation intensified. The center's regular employees will prove to be key players in the festival, as we shall see.

The center designs and implements numerous activities and events that serve to maintain Finnish ethnic culture in local public life. In the fall and spring, for instance, the center offers community enrichment classes in Finnish language and *kantele* performance,[17] a monthly screening of films from Finland and Scandinavia, periodic lectures, the annual celebration of Finnish Independence Day (see Chapter Two), ten art exhibition openings arranged by the gallery curator, and, as we shall see, many of the activities of the Heikinpäivä festival.

The center is also the meeting place or institutional sponsor of several groups, most of which support Finnish American cultural life in the region. The Copper Country Suzuki Association is the only group that has no Finnish cultural mission, though students often perform at Finnish cultural events at the center. Two Finnish youth folk dance troupes, Kivajat and Loistavat, hold dance practice sessions at the center. The Copper Country chapter of the Finnish American Chamber of Commerce often meets here, as does the Finnish Theme Committee, which will be discussed in great detail in Chapters Three and Four.

Finally, the Center is available for rent by private parties, and often serves as a wedding reception hall or private seminar or meeting site. Sometimes these parties may have Finnish interests, and sometimes, they do not. The Finnish American Heritage Center is a well-known site in the community, and one that local residents may have visited for any number of reasons. As a familiar building on Hancock's streetscape, even those who have not entered the space may be generally aware of its location.

Diversity within the Finnish American Community

Though often Finns are generalized to be a homogeneous society (see Raento and Husso 2001), an internal diversity exists that is reflected in the patterns of Copper Country Finnish

[17] The kantele is a type of harp belonging to the family of instruments known as Baltic psaltery. It is an instrument that has a strong place in Finnish traditional culture both in Finland and the United States. For more on this instrument, see Rahkonen (1989) and Hakala (1997).

ethnicity. Within Finland, and in the global Finnish expatriate and heritage community, differences are reflected in religious and political heritage, linguistic practice, Sami indigeneity, and Finnish regionalism, to name a few key factors. The following discussion will focus on those differences noticeably reflected among Finns and their descendents in the Upper Midwest, but in Finland, additional diversification factors do exist.

The religious alignment of Finns is one important area that has created both social harmony and social division. As mentioned above, historically, the chief forms of Christianity practiced by Finnish Americans have been that of Suomi Synod (later ELCA) Lutheranism and one of several varieties of Apostolic Lutheranism or Laestadianism (see Jalkanen 1972, Holmio 2001:172-202). In brief, the Suomi Synod, founded in 1890, was modeled largely after the existent structure of the Church of Finland (Alanen 2012:46). Many of the early leadership of this Synod were trained in Finland for service in the state church and creation of a church based on their established practices was both convenient and a comfort.

In the two decades before the first Finnish immigrants came to Hancock, a new group joined the ranks of pietistic movements in northern Scandinavia: the Laestadians. Resulting from the personal spiritual awakening of Swedish Sami minister Lars Levi Laestadius in 1844 (Kukkonen 1972:90), this movement is a strong element in Finnish American culture to this day. Though many divisions can be found within the broader group, the use of lay preachers (as opposed to trained clergy), a turn away from the ostentatious and sinful, and a withdrawal from contact with other Lutheran communities and non-church-members are some of the hallmarks of this group (see Holmio 2001:174, Alanen 2012:46-47).[18]

[18] Generalizations and stereotypes about Laestadians are quite common in areas where they are well-established. As a high school student, I came to understand that many of my Apostolic Lutheran peers were not allowed to wear makeup, dance, watch television or listen to more "worldly" genres of music, and that many of them came from large families, sometimes with 20 or more children. Many others who identify as Apostolic Lutheran or Laestadian

A dual Sami heritage is also recognized among many Finns in the area.[19] This indigenous group, with a population spanning the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia, also speaks Finno-Ugric languages. Their traditional lifestyle, however, incorporates elements of hunting and gathering with reindeer husbandry, the latter becoming increasingly important as Finns and Scandinavians moved further north into areas populated by Sami in the 1500s and 1600s (Hætta 1996:18, 20; Talve 1997:346). Though Sami identity is often masked due to the fact that Sami are a people without a state, many Copper Country Finns, either through family stories or through genealogical research, have uncovered this unique identity.

Language, as revealed by the separation of Finns along Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking lines, often leaves Swedish-speakers out of common conceptions of who is a Finnish American (see Österlund-Pötzsch 2010). A community founded by Swedish settlers beginning in the 1200s, they were the result of the slow development of union between Sweden, then a developing state, and Finland, still a land of people who were still not centrally organized by a kingdom or other strong government. Swedish speakers as a group constituted around 15% of the population of Finland by the turn of the 20th century, and were, until around that time, the established cultural and political elite of Finland (Wuorinen 1965:138-139).

For this community, which I will identify as Finland-Swedes,[20] the possibility existed to join established institutions founded by Swedish immigrants, to join a Finnish-speaking

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do not follow all or even any of these rules, reflecting the great diversity in practice found within the different communities of this wider movement.

[19] This heritage as it exists in the Copper Country will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

[20] In their own language, this ethnic group is called *Finlandssvenskar,* or "Finland's Swedes," In America, this group is sometimes called in English "Swede-Finns" or "Swedish Finns," but this causes confusion, especially in the academic circle studying these groups in America, Sweden, and Finland because that phrasing is used in Europe to denote ethnic Finns living in Sweden. In Holmio's original Finnish-language *Michiganin Suomalaisten Historia* (1967), he refers to this group in Finnish as *Suomen ruotsalaiset,* or "Finland's Swedes." The 2001 English translation *(History of the Finns in Michigan),* however, refers to this group as "Swedish Finns." It is worth pointing

organization despite the language barrier, or to create institutions especially for the Finland-Swede (Alanen 2012, Holmio 2001, Roinila 2012). Holmio (2001:407) points out that Finland-Swedes could be found in both Suomi Synod churches or in Augustana Synod churches which served the Swedish immigrant community. Temperance societies, so important to both religious- and politically-minded Finns, were also an area where Finland-Swedes could choose to join Swedish or Finnish groups, though they did also create their own groups, sometimes as a chapter under the banner of the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood, sometimes in the Swedish Finnish Temperance Association (Holmio 2001:408-410, Roinila 2012:48).

Folk Culture, Stereotypes, Finns, and Yoopers

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan (U.P.) is a region celebrated for its vibrant folk culture. The U.P., an anomaly of United States political geography, is a massive arm of land extending off of the top of Wisconsin, and into Lakes Michigan and Superior, with a small connection to Lake Huron at the Straits of Mackinac, which separates the U.P. from Lower Michigan. Though the region is physically attached to Wisconsin, to which it also has many cultural ties, it was brought into Michigan's borders at statehood in 1837 as compensation for the state of Ohio gaining the port town of Toledo (Thurner 1994:37). A five-mile stretch of water separates Upper Michigan from Lower Michigan at the Straits of Mackinac, where Lakes Michigan and Huron merge into one another, and this distance is but one symbol of the numerous perceived differences between the residents on each side of the Straits.

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out that according to Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, the phrase "Finland Swede" did not exist in either Finnish or Swedish before 1914, (after the bulk of immigrants had already come), and so this group would often refer to themselves as Swedes before this new term was coined (2010:199). Mika Roinila suggests that some Finland Swedes did refer to themselves as "Finns," but their use of the Swedish language in daily life made this self-designation difficult to use (2012:7). Several early Upper Peninsula institutions for Finland-Swedes used names that were clearly an early attempt to describe this dual heritage, including the Svensk-Finska Nykternetsförbundet (Swedish Finnish Temperance Association, founded 1902), and the Svensk-Finska Sjukhjälpsförbundet (Swedish Finnish Benefit Association, founded 1900). See Roinila (2012:47-48).

At least since the days of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who was stationed at Sault Ste. Marie in the 1820s and wrote considerably about local Native folk culture, the U.P. has provided a fascinating ground for folklorists, travel writers, novelists, and outdoors enthusiasts of all seasons. Despite the fact that the U.P. comprises 28% of Michigan's land mass (Kandell 2011), it is home to only around 3% of its 10 million people.[21] It is exceptionally rural, and populated by people who, until recently, lived without many of the conveniences associated with modern American life (from 24-hour grocery stores to widespread internet and cable television access outside of the region's small cities).

A copper mining rush beginning in the 1840s first brought white settlers to what came to be called the Copper Country. This area boasts a massive vein of copper that supported numerous mines along its length, and made East Coast tycoons even wealthier (Lankton 1991). This mining rush, as well as logging and subsequent available cutover farmland, would begin to lure the Finns to the region in the 1860s, joining already-established Yankees, Cornish, and Germans, as well as Scandinavians, Italians, Croatians, and French-Canadians, among others, making the area a surprising hotbed of immigrant diversity.[22] Once the mining and timber industries dried up, the remaining local populations settled into a rather stable community with relatively little influx of additional outside populations. The people were ripe for creating unique cultural expressions based on this isolation and their own interethnic interactions.

By the time folklorists really gained interest in the Upper Peninsula, a well-established interethnic, distinctively Yooper (from the abbreviation U.P. for Upper Peninsula) culture had

[21] Population figures are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau report, "Michigan: 2010 Population and Housing Unit Counts, 2010 Census of Population and Housing," which can be found at http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-2-24.pdf. Accessed June 1, 2014. A tallying of all U.P. county population figures adds up to 311,361 residents in the region, compared to a total statewide population count of 9,883,640.
[22] For more on the region's ethnic composition, see the online exhibit, "An Interior Ellis Island: Immigrants and Ethnicity in Michigan's Copper Country," at http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu/intro.html. Accessed June 1, 2014.

developed.[23] In 1938, the area was visited by the likes of Alan Lomax, who came to record regional folk music for the Library of Congress and who found a place so rich with folklore, that he called the U.P. "the most fertile source" among the regions in Michigan and Wisconsin that he had visited, and that he "felt that there was enough material in that region for years of work" (Leary 2008:xvi; see also Leary 2015).

Though much of Lomax's fieldwork in Michigan has been relatively forgotten until recently, another folklorist, Richard Dorson, made a splash (at least in the folklore world) with his 1952 book, *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers.* Republished twice (most recently in 2008), this book holds a central position in the development of American folklore. Dorson gives a lively account of crossing the Straits of Mackinac, then only accessible by ferry boat, "to enter an uncharted world of folk societies",(Dorson 2008:xxvii). It was the people that drew Dorson: their mixture of ethnicities that reflected traditions found in distant ancestral homelands as well as a unique regional culture bringing diverse people together were ready-made for his book. Dorson dedicates individual chapters to several of the U.P.'s ethnic groups, and his introductory tongue-in-cheek description of the Finns really captures the essence of many of the longstanding stereotypes that surround them:

> The coming of the Finn has rocked the northwoods country. He is today what the red man was two centuries ago, the exotic stranger from another world. In many ways the popular myths surrounding the Indian and the Finn run parallel. Both derive from a shadowy Mongolian stock—"just look at their raised cheek-bones and slanting eyes." Both live intimately with the fields and woods. Both possess supernatural stamina, strength, and tenacity. Both drink feverishly and fight barbarously. Both practice shamanistic magic and ritual, drawn from a deep well of folk belief. Both are secretive, clannish, inscrutable, and steadfast in their own peculiar social code (2008:123)

[23] Arnold R. Alanen (2007:106) describes the origin of the word Yoopers in the 1960s, as having come out of public activities of members of a movement to reform Upper Michigan, as well as parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota, into a separate state of Superior. The *Dictionary of American Regional English* lists its earliest known citation of the word "Yooper," from 1977, when it was used in a newspaper article in Escanaba. Regardless of its origins, the phrase "Yooper" has come to be associated with a number of specific stereotypes surrounding Upper Michigan's residents.

Marianne Wargelin-Brown (1994:188-189) relates ideas of Finnish culture and its alleged magical properties to the impact the *Kalevala* had on perceptions of Finns, both by those directly acquainted with the book (such as Marjorie Edgar) and those who may not have been, but still had an impression of these alleged qualities. Wargelin-Brown mentions Konrad Bercovici (who is told the sauna is a "witch-house,") and F. Scott Fitzgerald, who features a Finnish maid in *The Great Gatsby.*

The ethnic stereotypes that surround Finns have persisted since they first made an impression on fellow residents in the area, and they inform many interethnic interactions that take place throughout the region, as well as the image of the Yooper as a whole, which will be explored further below. Writing at much the same time as Dorson, John Bartlow Martin has said of the Finns that

> [T]oday they probably are the biggest single racial group, but they had a hard time of it in the early days. Racial prejudice is not dead yet, but in the [1890s] it was bitter and real. The early settlers had been French and Scotch and English; then the Irish and the Swedes had come, and though the Irish fought the Swedes every year on St. Patrick's Day and Orangeman's Day and nearly every other day, they agreed on one thing: that Finns were no bloody good (1986 [1944]:18).

The foundational populations of Finns in the area were considered an "other" as compared to their neighbors. And this "other" was not only highly unusual, but on a cultural level, highly unwelcome at times.

Unusual cultural images were tied powerfully to images of Finnish political radicalism as, increasingly, early 20th century labor disputes brought Finnish workers to the forefront as exceptionally vocal members of such groups as the Industrial Workers of the World, American Socialist parties and organizations, and, most notably for the Copper Country, the Western Federation of Miners (see Holmio 2001:284-292; Kaunonen 2009; Kivisto 1984; Puotinen 1977). In these dangerous times, many Finns became seen as an enemy of America's very way of life,

and so, in connection with all the other factors that created difference, prejudice, and inequality for Finns, radical politics were an additional factor in the creation of an image of the Finn.

Though some features of this combined image, for instance, political radicalism, has lessened with time, these combined perceptions of Finns persist today, though fading, and indeed, can be seen in popular culture representations of Yoopers as a whole, both by Yoopers themselves, and among those from outside. This is seen most obviously in the Ishpeming-based band Da Yoopers, a regionally-popular band mixing parody and original songs to present an image of Upper Peninsula residents that not only confirm but possibly exceed the typical range of Yooper stereotypes.[24] Yooper stereotypes have even made it into the 2001 feature film, *Escanaba in da Moonlight,* starring Jeff Daniels. This film depicts the woes of Reuben Soady, who, in his 40-odd years of living, has not yet shot a deer, which poses problems for the family as a whole, and displays for an untold audience the image of Yoopers as being strangely mystical.[25]

These stereotypes are also enacted on a daily basis, through in-group (and out-group) joking surrounding Yoopers and Finns, and, sadly, through deeply hurtful behavior toward these people and their unique culture. As Kathryn A. Remlinger explains, "local identity is tied to derogatory ethnic and linguistic stereotypes, typified by pejorative use of the label 'Yooper' The stereotype of the 'dumb Yooper' who "sounds ignorant,' who is independent and 'fiercely proud,' has deep historical roots, growing out of class, ethnic, and language differences in the area." (2007:77). Local identity and its connection to the distinctive regional dialect are seen as

[24] Some of Da Yoopers' best-known works include "The Second Week of Deer Camp," which reveals how little hunting can be done during a few weeks at camp, "The Road to Gwinn," a song about drunk driving set to Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again," and "Transplant Song," with its chorus of "My heart is back in Yooperland, but my ass is in Detroit," highlighting the common experience of migration to Lower Michigan for work.

[25] Though this film was not distributed nationally upon its release in theaters, it has since circulated beyond its original Midwestern audience through DVD rentals and sales, and more recently, Netflix.

primarily negative by outsiders, including those who have moved to the area from elsewhere, and as a source of defiant pride among the locals themselves, though often when living or traveling outside the region, it is seen as beneficial to alter mannerisms that might mark one as being a Yooper. The tension between identity and stereotype is reharnessed as a tool of social exploration, and ultimately, as a representation of cultural pride by the Copper Country's Finns, and to some extent, by the interethnic culture of Yoopers as a whole. This, as we shall see, is part of what Heikinpäivä serves to do. By laying stereotypes side-by-side with presentations of an "authentic," lived culture, the festival serves as an arena for locals to shed ambivalent attitudes toward hallmarks of local culture that are both felt by locals and imposed upon them.

Elevating Local History: The Keweenaw National Historical Park

With such attention to local history and cultures, it may be no surprise that the Copper Country has turned to an industry of heritage tourism as a strategy toward resurgence in the long decades following the decline of extractive industries, a process which began shortly after the end of the 1913 Copper Strike, and ended in 1968 with the closure of Calumet & Hecla's last mines.[26] Local historical museums are, as in many places, a staple of many of the Copper Country's communities, and here, they take a number of forms, from the lighthouse museums in Copper Harbor and Eagle Harbor, to the Heikkinen School museum in Toivola, the Hanka Homestead Farm outdoor museum in Askel, and the Quincy Mine in Hancock. Significant archival collections on local history exist, in addition to that of the Finnish American Heritage Center, at Michigan Technological University, the Keweenaw National Historical Park headquarters, and at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

[26] The White Pine Mine, in the far southern reaches of the Copper Country, closed operations in 1995, completely ending copper mining in Upper Michigan.

The Keweenaw National Historical Park was formed in 1992 by an act of Congress, and it incorporated a unique model combining public and private enterprises. Today, the park comprises two federally-managed units, known as the "Calumet" unit in the village of Calumet and the "Quincy" unit in the city of Hancock, and parts of adjacent Franklin Township. In addition to this traditional federal park land, though, 21 independently-owned and managed "Heritage Sites" cooperate with the park, and as a whole, all work in unison to represent the "copper story."[27] These heritage sites include museums, archives, and sites that defy a clear definition but still contribute to the broader story being represented by the park's mission. One such example is the Calumet Theatre, which was opened as an opera house during the height of the copper boom in 1904, and though it offers tours, is not a museum in the traditional sense.

In addition to the Heritage Sites are local museums that do not belong to this system (such as the Heikkinen School museum in Toivola, or the Champion Mine Shaft in Painesdale), but that do still contribute to local understandings of the area's history and that give individuals a platform with which to share their understandings of history and its impact on the present.

Two Heritage Sites present a Finnish aspect of this story, including the Hanka Homestead Farm, an outdoor museum preserving an early 20th century Finnish farmstead in rural Baraga County, and the Finnish American Heritage Center, which is a rare, multifunction member of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. In addition to its official functions in all of the capacities discussed earlier in this chapter, the Heritage Center is available for use by community members and Finlandia University departments for everything from the annual commencement

[27] The phrase "copper story" is one consistently used throughout Keweenaw National Historical Park literature. See, for instance, the park's homepage: http://www.nps.gov/kewe. Dissertations and theses concerning the KNHP have been completed in recent years, including that of Scott See, Director of the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission (2013) and Matthew Liesch (2011). I have participated in KNHP activities as a museum visitor at many of the park's sites, as well as serving as an employee representative of the Finnish American Heritage Center, and as of April 2014, a member of the Board of Directors of the Copper Range Historical Society in South Range.

baccalaureate ceremony to group meetings and even wedding receptions. In a region where an internal ethnic diversity persists even five or six generations since immigration, and a culture of historical self-examination and presentation is encouraged, and has indeed flowered, the role of festivals as a tool of heritage learning and maintenance is a fascinating field. As we will see, Heikinpäivä, many of the key activities of which take place in the Finnish American Heritage Center, has become a part of the movement to tell the "copper story" in a way that seeks to bring it out of the realm of history, and return it to a narrative of an ongoing present.

Conclusion

The establishment of a unique Finnish ethnic community in the city of Hancock and throughout the Copper Country led to the group becoming the dominant ethnic population in the region within a few short years. Through creating businesses and social and cultural institutions that bolstered the community, the region's Finns have maintained aspects of their unique heritage into the present day. While many original institutions serving Finnish immigrants and their descendents have disappeared with increasing assimilation, several key institutions still exist that either directly promote Finnish ethnic culture in the area, or continue to maintain connections with Finland in other ways. Local ELCA and Apostolic Lutheran churches promote such connections using faith and the Finnish American Heritage Center, and to some extent, Finlandia University, promote such connections on secular and educational levels.

This heritage does not operate in isolation, and it can be seen to represent internal linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity, while simultaneously contributing to the diversity of the Copper Country, and the Upper Peninsula, as a whole. Through folkloristic and travel writing, as well as through an entire body of folklore based on stereotypes, images of Finns are

important components to representations of Yooper culture, including, most notably, the language.

Though stereotype is a common vehicle for considering the culture of Yoopers and the region's Finns, local history and culture are also employed as aspects of cultural tourism and scholarly research in the area. The Keweenaw National Historical Park, serving to provide a comprehensive experience of the area's copper mining history, partners with two sites presenting aspects of the Finnish sides of this story: the Hanka Homestead Museum, and the Finnish American Heritage Center.

In the next chapter, festivals that highlight Finnish American culture in the region will reveal the ways in which the early immigrants adapted their festival traditions to their new lives, and how subsequent generations have utilized festival culture to maintain celebratory aspects of their heritage in new ways.

Chapter Two: The Finnish American Festival Calendar in the Copper Country

Introduction

In the Copper Country, festival life today extends far past the Finns to include celebrations of other ethnic communities, celebrations of American life, and celebrations of interethnic and mainstream life as it exists in the region. Like many other ethnic groups, Copper Country Finns, over time, have largely moved from a model of association-based celebrations of holidays celebrated in the old country, to holidays created to celebrate the ethnic experience in America.

This chapter will focus on Finnish American festival, particularly as it has developed in and around Hancock. Over time, festivals trace the course of Finns in the region as they banded together in enclaves to replicate the festivals celebrated in the homeland (as we will see with Juhannus), as they reached out to incorporate American holidays and elements of American forms of celebration into their own holidays, and as they create their own festival events reflective of their experience in the interethnic field of celebration that the Copper Country provides, sometimes with their multicultural neighbors, and sometimes just as Finns. This last category of Finnish American festival is where Heikinpäivä fits.

These events are part of a constellation of activities representing other ethnic groups, American holidays, and locally-created heritage celebrations. The revelry of local July Fourth celebrations and Labor Day parades are examples where these diverse groups come together, sometimes in outrageous ways beloved of folklorists and anthropologists for several generations (see, for instance, Hoefferle 2009). Though, as we shall see, some subversive activities can be seen in Finnish American festivals, the subversive functions that these interethnic and

Americanist celebrations serve will be a worthy area of discussion with regards to certain aspects of Heikinpäivä in Chapter Six..

Early Festivals in Finnish America

According to an often-repeated legend, the first Finns in Michigan's Copper Country arrived in Hancock by boat on Midsummer Eve, 1865, fresh from a transatlantic journey and subsequent interior waterway voyage from the copper mines of Norway where they had been recruited.[28] What they expected upon arrival on one of Finland's most important traditional festivals—a solstice celebration dating back further than can be clearly guessed—is lost to history, but if it was a traditional sauna bath, and an evening of dancing and eating fine foods before a monumental bonfire, they had another thing coming. The men were taken by already established miners to a Norwegian boarding house, and walked the next morning to the Quincy Mining Company offices to apply for jobs in the town's burgeoning copper mines (Holmio 2001:78, Thurner 1994:142).

This small, and perhaps inauspicious, introduction of the Finns to the Copper Country might not indicate that these miners would be the forerunners of what would become the area's numerically dominant ethnic group, but they were. Over time, they got their Juhannus back, and created a vast and vibrant festival calendar that still exists and evolves to this day.

[28] The website for FinnFest USA 2013, held in the Copper Country, presents the 1865 immigrants as being the first Finns to the area (www.finnfestusa2013.org). Carl Ross also presents this as the official start of Finnish settlement in the Copper Country (1977:10). While this group was the first verifiable group of Finns, Holmio (2001:77) notes that an earlier group of recruits from the same region brought a few Finns in 1864, though the group primarily consisted of Norwegians, and Kaups places the number of Finns in this early party at "perhaps not more than ten to twenty males" (1975:59). Alanen (1994:24) discusses the 1864 arrival hypothesis, clarifying that one of the most influential sources for information on Finnish immigration to America, Salomon Ilmonen's *Amerikansuomalaisten Historia* (1926), states that a small number of Finns did come with the primarily-Norwegian group in 1864, but does not include any names to aid in verification of this fact, and that Ilmonen's work, conducted at the turn of the 20th century, though extremely valuable, does contain information that conflicts with "census records, ocean shipping lists, and church records on this side of the Atlantic" (Alanen 1994:28). Whether they came in 1864 or 1865, many of these Finns were part of an ethnic enclave in Norway known as Kvens, who had migrated to northern Norway in waves beginning in the early 1700s during the Great Northern War and effectively ending in the 1870s with the decline of copper mining in the region (See Alanen 1994).

These early miners—many of whom had northern Finnish and Sami roots—were to become a part of a broader story of immigrant, interethnic, and revivalist interactions in the new homeland, and the festival became a ground for reflecting and reframing ethnicity over time. Festival among the Copper Country's Finns has been used internally to demarcate religious and sociopolitical differentiation, and externally to reflect cultural strength and to counteract and even invert negative stereotypes from outside the group.

Early institutional support for Finnish festival culture is evidenced through annual summertime meetings sponsored by a wide diversity of groups, including churches, temperance societies, worker's associations, and fraternal societies (Hoglund 1960:24, 33; Holmio 2001:240, 303). These meetings took place any time between when midsummer was traditionally held in late June, and late July, and sometimes emphasized holidays during or near the event itself, including Juhannus, and July Fourth, American Independence Day. The selection of the summer for such events likely was influenced by easier mobility during the summer months, the ability to camp at the location of the event when large enough, and of course, its relation to existing holidays. Winter celebrations were largely home-based (with the exception of Laskiainen, as detailed below) and as such, not conducive to travel, mass activities, and more. Naturally, the harsh winter weather of the Copper Country also hampered large-group winter activity.

This tradition of organization-based festival had already been developing in Finland before the immigrants came, and was part of a broader move in Europe to "invent traditions," in the late 1800s and leading up to World War I (Hobsbawm 2013 [1983]). Finland in the 1800s was a land in the process of defining and asserting a public and distinguishable identity separate from the Russian culture that had ruling power over Finland, and the Swedish culture of Finland's previous rulers and then-still-dominant upper class (Wilson 1976). In the midst of

promoting Finnish language as the one most appropriate to publicly speak for the nation, and of developing a highly autonomous structure within the constraints of Russian rule, Finland was a part of broader European social movements, including the rise of general education, industrialization, temperance, political, and general social and sporting groups that would migrate along to the new land (see Talve 1997:281, 295; Wuorinen 1965: 177-178, 185, 198-199). This "associative spirit," to borrow a phrase from Hoglund (1960), would serve Finns well as they settled into life as Americans.

Midsummer and Summer Celebrations

Midsummer, as previously hinted, was one of the most important celebrations in traditional Finnish culture; Talve (1997:214) declares it to have "long been the greatest of the summer festivals and it nowadays dominates all others." The festival is perhaps best known for monumental bonfires (*kokko* in Finnish) and, among the Finland-Swedish minority (particularly on the Åland Islands, see Klein 1996), distinctive midsummer poles (*midsommar träd* in Swedish). Both ephemeral monuments serve as a space for public celebration, including music, dance, speeches, and feasting, and both traditions were transplanted to Upper Michigan with immigrants.[29]

Armas K. E. Holmio describes the first annual meeting of delegates of the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood, which took place in Hancock June 21-23, 1888.[30] Delegates from all over Michigan attended to conduct business during these three days, and then, according to Holmio, "The meeting was followed by a big temperance festival on Midsummer's Day,

[29] The Finland-Swedish midsummer pole tradition is not as central to Copper Country Finns as it is in other areas of the Upper Peninsula, including Brevort (see Swanson 1996) and Marquette. The Brevort midsummer celebration is connected to a Lutheran church in that community and has been continuous since the arrival of immigrants from the Åland Islands. The Scandinavian Midsummer Festival in Marquette, which I attended in 2009, is pan-Scandinavian, and emphasizes dance and music, with a small *kokko* being lit at dusk a small distance from the center of the festivities in Marquette's Presque Isle Park.

[30] According to Hoglund (1960:33) the first annual festival of the Brotherhood took place in 1897 and attracted thousands of people.

starting a custom which has been practiced for seventy-five years" (2001:240). Arranged along Portage Lake in a birch grove, the day's proceedings were marred a little by attempts by young attendees to dance (something the Brotherhood had forbidden in its bylaws), but in the end, "the band played and inspiring talks were given. Tears filled many an eye, for hearts were warmed and moved by the ideal of temperance and by the spirit of nationalism. The surroundings, too, contributed to a feeling of nostalgia, for they reminded many a person of the land of his birth" (240).

Just as summer festivals proved to be a time for Finns of like minds to gather and celebrate common beliefs and visions of the future, it was also a time for Finns to engage in public displays of ideals not generally popular, going so far as to result in acts of civil disobedience. Holmio (2001:280) also recounts that at a Finnish socialist celebration in Hancock in 1907, thirteen Finns were arrested after they marched in a parade through the downtown with a red flag leading the procession and an American flag in second position.[31] The red flag, a sign of left-wing affinity, had been banned from such display the previous fall in the city of Hancock, and so this celebration served also as a forceful confrontation with censorship and an immigrant experiment with then-existent limitations on freedom of speech.[32]

The most traditional image of Midsummer is that of a secluded event, either home-based or institutionally-promoted, which takes place near the lakeshore and evokes images of home and tradition. Oral histories collected in the 1970s by Suomi College (now Finlandia University) professor Art Puotinen detail both public and private celebrations of the holiday, from picnics at

[31] While Holmio identifies this specifically as a Midsummer parade, the incident took place in late July of that year. The event and subsequent court case is described by Beck (2014).

[32] Similarly, in the same year, a concert at the Juhannus celebration in Hibbing, Minnesota, a mining community also teeming with Finns, is described as having been interrupted by Finnish socialists "and other supporters of an imminent strike" (Hakala 2007:33).

the beach in Jacobsville, a community east of Hancock, to the creation of special decorative elements made from aspen and birch for home-based celebrations.[33]

Juhannus celebrations have also been featured at the Hanka Homestead Museum in Askel, Michigan, which is approximately 25 miles from Houghton. Situated at the deadest end of a narrow two-track road, the museum is a restored traditional Finnish immigrant farmstead.[34] In the 1980s, when the museum was only recently established, midsummer celebrations featuring a *kokko* were held as fundraisers, but were not sustainable, and so they died out.

This midsummer tradition lives on, however, in the Juhannus celebration held in Toivola, Michigan each year. A Finnish farming community founded in 1893 nearly 25 miles from Hancock, Toivola is a community that has three core settlement locations with many homes sprinkled between these areas. At the public beach, campground and recreation area known as Agate Beach, Juhannus takes place the weekend before June 24, the date of the feast of Saint John the Baptist. It is best known for its *kokko* bonfire, which is built up each year by the Toivola Volunteer Fire Department and planned by the Toivola Senior Citizens group. This Juhannus celebration is thought to go back to the first midsummer spent by the earliest homesteaders in Toivola, which would place it around 1894 (Holmio 2001:113-114).

Memorable practices surrounding this variant of Juhannus included, when my grandmother was a girl, the construction of a *kokko* involving the stacking of rubber tires inside a wooden frame device, with additional tires heaped at the base. I first learned of this variant of the *kokko* when, as an intern at the Finnish American Heritage Center, I set up a display booth on Hancock's Finnish American community at the Dee Stadium History Fair in Houghton. While

[33] See Bergh, Marsi and Holmlund (1973) and Karkanen (1973).
[34] This farmstead is so remote, that when I serve as a driver and informal tour guide each fall for a Roads Scholar excursion to the site, trepidation ensues after we have been driving awhile and participants notice us turn onto the third road off the highway and the trees are so thick, it's actually almost "dark out."

staffing the booth, I wandered over to a display on Toivola, put on by the Toivola Senior Citizens Group. A binder of photographs contained several showing this unique setup. I remember asking my grandmother in horror how people could stand to be at that fire, and her response was that the breeze off the lake caused the tire smoke to rise up rather immediately, thus not lingering amidst the crowd on the beach. The use of tires at Juhannus reflects a willingness to deviate from the longstanding formula of burning wood and wood related items (for instance, tar barrels), and thus, a modern adaptation of the traditional practice.

Figure Five: Juhannus tire *kokko,* Agate Beach, Toivola, Michigan, ca. 1940s. Dee Stadium Photo exhibit, Toivola Booth, Summer 2013. Photograph of original by Hilary Virtanen.

Interestingly, this structure for the *kokko* resembles the form known as the *säärikokko,* which was prevalent in southeastern areas of Finland, including the Karelian Isthmus, Savo and the neighboring region of Ingria, in modern Russia (Sarmela 2009:242). Today's *kokko* is a mass of planks, arranged in the shape of a tipi, making the base much broader, and the structure

shorter than the tire *kokko* structure was. Midsummer in Toivola, though suffering a temporary demise in the 1970s (see Vachon 1973), has regained its status as an integral part of community life, and today, locals, tourists, and even Finnish nationals alike participate in this celebration of the continued place Finnish culture has in this community's public, and private, spheres.

Figure Six: Panoramic view of Juhannus celebration, Toivola, June 21, 2013. Held as a closing piece to FinnFest USA 2013, the event attracted a record crowd estimated between 1000-3000. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

The summertime gathering tradition is still used for organizational festivals as well, from annual meetings of Apostolic Lutheran intercongregational groups and the Knights and Ladies of Kaleva,[35] as well as the annual, traveling FinnFest USA which takes place in a community boasting a Finnish ethnic population that is large or very active, in addition to many regional and local festivals in significant Finnish American communities. While meetings for religious and fraternal communities are naturally geared toward specific goals toward the continuation and maintenance of the group in question, such generalized events as FinnFest are meant to draw from a wide diversity of the ethnic community as a whole and to represent aspects of its culture

[35] In *A History of the Kaleva Knighthood & the Knights of Kaleva*, brief descriptions of each Grand Lodge meeting (essentially a national convention) from 1902 to 1994 are provided, but festivities at the conventions themselves are rarely mentioned. In 1910, two hints at Kalevainen festival behavior outside of the conventions are provided: "The convention discussed changes to the opening and closing ceremonies. In the vote, however, the ceremonies remained unchanged. Kalevala Day, February 28, was declared a holiday within the Knighthood" (Ukkonen 2002:210). In the 1970s and 1980s, festivals have more mention in the convention summaries, including plans for celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of the *Kalevala* in 1985 (pp. 299-300, 302), and plans for participating in FinnFest USA (pp. 300, 304). Until rather recently, the group was considered a secret society and so details of their rituals would not have been shared. In 2011, Jim Kurtti was invited to a ritual held by the Knights, it seems so that he could believe that the group was no longer secretive in nature. I attended an initiation rite in 2005 which was still presented as secret in nature; I and other initiates were blindfolded and led into the room.

and history such that all feel included and all may simultaneously celebrate aspects of the culture they identify with, and learn about aspects of the community that are not part of one's individual experience in a welcoming and open environment. Hancock has hosted FinnFest USA three times, most recently in 2013, which had some bearing on the celebration of Heikinpäivä in 2012 and 2013.

Wintertime Festivals

From the end of summer until December, the Copper Country's Finnish festival calendar is largely bare, though summertime music jamborees in Finnish enclave communities do help bring the season to an end. The next significant date on the calendar is December 6, Finnish Independence Day. This day has special significance among Finnish Americans, who tell stories of ancestors who lived through oppressive times just before the Russian Revolution helped Finland to end its relationship with the empire as its Grand Duchy. It is a common statement that since independence was announced,[36] it has been annually commemorated at Suomi College, and Finlandia University, and during my time at the Finnish American Heritage Center, I was in charge of planning and implementing it.

Finnish Independence Day, both in Finland and the U.S., is a more sedate, solemn occasion than its American counterpart. Known best for front windows in homes bearing candles, and a televised presidential reception with many of Finland's top celebrities, politicians, and newsmakers, it is a far cry from the often raucous, boisterous affairs thrown in America, as well as the more subversive, carnivalesque[37] affairs thrown in the Upper Midwest (see, for instance, Nemanec 2007; Hoefferle 2009). At the Heritage Center, the celebration focuses on various aspects of Finnish and Finnish American culture each year. In 2010, for instance, a

[36] Jim Kurtti in particular mentions this frequently.
[37] This phrase, from Bakhtin (1964), is often used to describe the aspects of festival behavior that are used to invert normal social order.

performance of the *Tiernapojat* drama (Star Boys, or the three magi) was staged. This was selected in part because it is an interesting tradition still existent in Finland, but largely unknown in the U.S.[38] As I began my role at the Heritage Center, Jim Kurtti often highlighted the importance of creating programming that had multiple educational and entertainment functions. By providing opportunities for attendees to learn about aspects of Finnish culture that are unfamiliar and combining these opportunities with elements that are familiar and expected (for instance, the singing of the Finnish national anthem), Kurtti expands the potential for what is considered to be traditional among Copper Country Finns, while still providing them with a necessary direct emotional connection to aspects of the program.[39] The evening also featured musical performances, and a fine spread of food.

During my time as public programming coordinator (2011-2013), a potential scheduling conflict with the Finlandia University Art Gallery housed in the Heritage Center caused me to join forces with the art gallery director to present a dual Independence Day celebration and exhibit opening for the annual Finnish American Contemporary Artists Series. While in a basic sense, this was not problematic, due to the nature of the exhibition in question, there was a noticeable gulf between the crowd who had come for the artist and those who came for Independence Day. The celebrations featured musical and dance performances by the Ilon Kaiku Kantele Ensemble and the Kivajat Finnish American Dancers respectively, poetry recitals from Finlandia University Finnish language students, and talks by the artists themselves, as well as, in

[38] One concession to the need to alter presentation for an American audience is in the costuming of the boys in this pageant: in Finland, it is common for one of the boys to appear in blackface, as is also seen in other parts of Europe. For the FAHC version, the boy who played this mage wore a dab of black paint under the eyes, "like a football player," according to Kurtti (field notes).

[39] Jim Kurtti articulates this need to blend familiar and unfamiliar with popular culture and traditional culture in his April 3, 2014 interview, explaining that the unfamiliar and popular often draw people in and the familiar and traditional gives "people an opportunity to attach [their] emotion to something."

2011, a talk by Anneli Halonen, then cultural counselor to the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Figure Seven: Audrey Stewart (left) and Jim Kurtti present Hazel Tepsa with the Hankooki Heikki award, December 6, 2011. Note the use of national dress *(kansallispuku)* by Stewart and Kurtti. Photo by Karen Johnson/Finlandia University Communications Department.

In 2013, Finnish Independence Day was presented as a volunteer appreciation event for FinnFest USA 2013. At this event, guests were treated to high-end door prizes, mountains of catered foods, and even beer and wine, a highly unusual inclusion.[40] Entertainment included singing of the Finnish and American national anthems, and a brief performance from the FinnFest USA 2013 opening ceremony, featuring original performers Courtney Clisch (who sang Hiski Salomaa's "Tiskarin Polkka") and Kris Kyro, who portrayed a Finnish immigrant looking

[40] Beer and wine is unusual at Finnish American Heritage Center events such as Finnish Independence Day for several reasons. Typically these events are planned to be as inclusive as possible for the Finnish American community, accommodating families, as well as the Apostolic Lutheran/Laestadian community, for whom alcohol consumption is commonly prohibited. Apart from these social concerns, the cost of such provisions as alcohol and catered food is too much for the Center's limited budget.

back on her life in America. Though these Independence Day events all differ widely from one another, they each represent a more formal aspect to festival life among Copper Country Finns.

Finnish Independence Day has an important relationship to Heikinpäivä in that it is the venue at which the announcement of the *Hankooki Heikki* award for the coming Heikinpäivä is made. Hankooki Heikki[41] is an honorific title bestowed upon a community member who has contributed significantly to the local Finnish community in any number of ways. Selected by the Finnish Theme Committee, it is expected that this individual will serve as parade marshal in a special costume made for the occasion.

Over the years, Hankooki Heikkis have included educators, artists and musicians, community leaders (both ethnic and city), Finnish expert on snow-buildings Seppo Mäkinen, and Carl Pellonpaa, host of *Suomi Kutsuu,* the only bilingual Finnish-English television program in the U.S. Though the title has a distinctively masculine name, it may be bestowed upon men and women. At Finnish Independence Day, the next awardee is introduced with a highlight of their achievements and presented with a bouquet of flowers. A plaque bearing the names of each recipient is on display in the Finnish American Heritage Center.

This honorific title can be compared to American practices of crowning festival royalty, and particularly, queens. Mary Lou Nemanic (2007) says that such "queen contests" present an image of the American Dream that

> emphasize[d] the popular culture values of glamour, sophistication, and a focus on the latest fashions […which] clash with the working class carnival culture and its traditional values of informality, equality, and community inclusiveness (132).

[41] This phrase translates to "Hancock Henry," using both the Finnish name *Heikki,* meaning Henry or Henrik, and *Hankooki,* which is a presentation of the word Hancock using conventions of the Finnish American dialect known as Finglish. This title was created in 1998 for the Laskiainen Finnish ethnic festival that was celebrated in Hancock for several years prior to the development of Heikinpäivä. See below.

Hankooki Heikki, though an elevated figure enrobed in a lavish costume who presides over the parade with crown and scepter, is by no means a figure centered on glamour and a genteel self-presentation that is so central to the image of a festival queen. Hankooki Heikki does not compete for the title of most beautiful. As Robert Lavenda (1997:26-27) points out, though, festival queens, like Hankooki Heikki, are selected because their biographies situate them within their community, which demonstrates the candidate's local (family) ties and endeavors that make them worthy of the crown. While Hankooki Heikki is selected because of the vast amount of work he or she has committed in support of the Finnish ethnic community, Lavenda discusses a queen's worthiness as also being tied to her future potential.

Traditionally, wintertime festival activities included observation of the Shrovetide festival of *Laskiainen.* Though also centered on home- and small group-based traditions of sledding related both to traditions associated with the agricultural work calendar and to a distinctly Finnish bacchanalian before the fasting of Lent, Laskiainen has proven itself useful to elaboration as a community festival.[42]

Much like Juhannus, and as we'll see, aspects of Heikinpäivä, the Laskiainen festival is based in pre-Christian agricultural practices fused with aspects of Christianity. In this case, Laskiainen traditions address the point in the agricultural calendar when women would stop weaving fabric for the season and begin to focus magical attentions to the planting of flax for the coming season.[43] These magical attentions included the act of women sliding (or sledding) down

[42] See Chapter Three for discussion of the connection between the religious/saint's days calendar and the peasants' agricultural work calendar.

[43] According to Salmela (2009), the importance of agricultural success among Finns resulted in a profoundly rich folklore surrounding the folk calendar of work itself, and a body of thoughts and actions that helped to bring about success. As we will see in Chapter Three, proverbs that came to be associated with saint's days helped to focus the farm family on work they should be doing, as well as helped them to remember omens that could be found on that given day that would help to predict the success of their work. Actions such as the sliding associated with Laskiainen worked in tandem with omens and the schedule of work itself to bring about greater success in an age

snowy hills, which was associated with successful flax harvests (see Talve 1997:209, Penti 1988). The word, Laskiainen, in fact, appears to be related to the Finnish word *laskea*, "to descend," referring to the act of sliding down a hill.

In the Christian era, this observance was realigned with Shrovetide, the period before Lent, and the pagan activities associated with Laskiainen were recast as festival behavior along the spectrum of Fat Tuesday and Carnival behavior. Long before the immigrant generation came to America, Laskiainen was also associated with special foods, namely pea soup and cardamom buns filled with cream known as *laskiaispulla.* These foods, especially pea soup, are considered to be very traditional to Laskiainen in Finland, and they are widely recognized as traditional in Finnish American communities as well.

The most successful example of a longstanding American Laskiainen festival is found in Palo, Minnesota, where it has been an established public event since 1937.[44] Founded under the auspices of the Leisure Education Program, a New Deal project aimed at better incorporating Palo area Finnish immigrants and their children into American culture, the festival was an interesting experiment in integration through sharing this cultural tradition with the broader community (Penti 1988).[45] At Laskiainen, a program of activities highlights the Finnish practice of "sliding" using an impressive downhill track as well as several traditional *vipukelkat,* or whip-sleds.[46] As people line up to plunge down the well-iced sledding hill, and spin along the whip-

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when survival required gathering all the luck and power one could toward the outcome of the harvest (Talve 1997, Penti 1988).

[44] According to Marsha Penti (1988), a church-based Laskiainen festival was held in Palo in 1927, but the community-wide event that is still celebrated today did not begin until 10 years later. Additionally, Penti reveals that the festival was discontinued during World War II but reinstated in 1949.

[45] As Victoria Grieve (2009) demonstrates, New Deal-era culture brokers, including those who worked for the federal government and those who operated independent arts programs (such as the National Folk Festival), incorporated ethnic and immigrant folk elements into public cultural works in a pluralistic way not previously seen in America.

[46] As we will see, the whip-sled is an important feature at Heikinpäivä, too.

sled route, indoor activities including music, food, a winter market, local history museum room, family dance, basketball tournament and royalty coronation add to the fun.

This festival, as it exists in Minnesota, displays many aspects of American ethnic festival culture. Many components of Laskiainen have surprising staying power, and the festival has a well-developed formula that has proven the test of time (see Moore 1986, Penti 1998, Vennum, Penti and Köngäs-Maranda 1983). While the event is framed around the sledding track, keeping true to its pagan and carnivalesque roots, many activities surrounding the sliding elaborate on the role of Finnish identity within the community, and create points of inclusivity across ethnic lines through generalized festival activities.

When I attended Laskiainen in 2013, I was struck at the inclusivity of all aspects of the festival; even the dance was a family-friendly event. Though this had been documented in the film *At Laskiainen in Palo, Everyone's a Finn* (1983), seeing it in action was vastly different from the dances I had experienced at many other Finnish ethnic festivals, particularly in its emphasis on being a family-centered dance for all, as opposed to traditional dancing for (older) couples or folk dancing for the trained. As I unpacked some of my vendor's booth materials the first night of Laskiainen, I was drawn to check on the activities inside the gymnasium at the Loon Lake Community Center when I recognized "The Chicken Dance" following a succession of American country music songs from the past four decades or so. Toddlers giggled as they tried to follow their parents and grandparents through the steps. Even teenagers joined in the fun. This inclusion of both music familiar to a broad American audience and this particular song, "The Chicken Dance," which is recognized as being playful, even carnivalesque, reflects the blending of unique Finnish elements in the festival with those that are recognizable and enjoyable to a broad audience. Finnish music, with its sometimes intricate dance steps and non-

English lyrics, may not always be accessible and appealing to the many. Though such incorporations are certainly not authentic to the Finnish experience, they are quite important to the interethnic and Americanizing experience of the Upper Midwest.

Laskiainen was also celebrated in Hancock, to varying degrees, for decades. The primary sponsor of the event was often Suomi College, which held sledding parties and snow sculpture competitions, served traditional pea soup, and offered musical programs and other activities, with the last such event being held in 1998 as an attempt to revive the festival. As late as the early 1990s, Laskiainen was a component of Suomi College's Winter Carnival, which also featured athletic tournaments, royalty coronation, and events commonly associated with college Homecoming traditions (see Penti 1987, "Laskiainen Events Planned" 1998).

This last attempt to revive Laskiainen in Hancock came with Arja-Leena and Pekka Karstu, a Finnish immigrant couple, who in the 1990s opened up an import store, FinPro, first in Calumet, and later moving to a site in Hancock. The Karstus became very active, and Jim Kurtti remembers that the FinPro store soon was the "hub of the Finnish Theme Committee" (interview, April 3, 2014). The first year that the Karstus held a Laskiainen event, participants sledded down Finn Street, one of the steepest in Hancock.[47] Following this, they ate traditional Laskiainen pea soup and bread made by Arja-Leena Karstu.

The Karstus continued to develop Laskiainen for several years, growing it little by little. The second year of the festival, sledding activities were moved to the steep hill in front of the Hancock High School (currently the Finlandia University College of Health Sciences), which is conveniently located next to the Finnish American Heritage Center, and provides a safe, and more widely useable area for sliding down. In 1998, at the final Laskiainen celebration, the honorary title of Hankooki Heikki was bestowed for the first time. The first recipient was

[47] This hill is so steep, it is closed for at least half the year due to the dangers of winter driving on it.

Katherine Heidemann, who served in the Finnish Theme Committee and Hancock City Council for many years. With the beginning of Heikinpäivä in 1999, Laskiainen ceased as a public celebration in the Hancock area, though Laskiainen's key elements are certainly present in this new festival, including Hankooki Heikki and the inclusion of sledding activities.

Suomi College also hosted annual celebrations of St. Urho on or around March 16. An invented saint with roots in Minnesota's Iron Range, St. Urho is commonly known as the "Patron Saint of Finnish Americans," and his story and date of celebration are tongue-in-cheek challenges to the celebration of St. Patrick, beloved among Irish neighbors in the Iron Range.[48] Created only in 1956, this festival is evidence of the interethnic nature of folk culture in Finnish enclaves of the Upper Midwest, as well as evidence of the place a uniquely American experience has on Finnish ethnicity over time. The development of this character has been seen as a unique departure from earlier Finnish American cultural creation in that it had no basis in Finnish traditionality at all, and because of this, the event has certainly attracted negative response among some Finnish Americans (see Virtanen 2012:76-77, Susag 1998:8).[49] This figure and his holiday have spread widely among Finnish American and Finnish Canadian communities, and it has had a key role in the shift from the use of a body of folk culture relevant to the ever-receding immigrant and early post-immigrant generations, to the generation of Americans who recognize their Finnish roots and wish to celebrate them in new ways relevant to them.

[48] Saint Urho's development and uses has become well-documented through both grassroots use of the internet and the interest of several researchers over the past few decades. For detailed information, see Asala 2001; Heimo, Hovi and Vasenkari 2012; Kaups 1986; Lockwood 1988 and 1990; Paavolainen, 1982, Virtanen, 2012a, Winker and Jokela, n.d.

[49] The summary of the 1980 Knights and Ladies of Kaleva Grand Lodge Convention states that the St. Urho's Day celebration was "introduced" at the convention, noting that the festival was being celebrated among Midwestern Finns. The lodge members had a negative response to the new holiday: "The members of the Knighthood decided not to celebrate the occasion because it was based on a fictional story. Celebration was left to those who believed St. Urho was worth celebrating" (Ukkonen 2002:297).

At the celebrations at Suomi College, plays and skits elaborated on the story of St. Urho as he valiantly protected Finland's grape harvest from swarms of giant grasshoppers during the last interglacial period. In one instance, former professor Dan Maki described a contest to properly pronounce a phrase commonly cited as coming from St. Urho's mouth as he chased the grasshoppers from the vineyards: *"Heinäsirkka, heinäsirkka, menee täältä hiiteen"* [literally, "grasshopper, grasshopper, go from here to hell"]. At this contest, an African American[50] friend of his had been placed in the audience, and when two other members of the audience failed at this attempt, she stood up and offered to try. After rattling off the phrase perfectly, she "won" a trip to Menahga, Minnesota, home of a St. Urho statue (field notes, November 15, 2013).

These celebrations, too, died out with the foundation of Heikinpäivä, though St. Urho is presented each year in the parade. Today, St. Urho's Day is not a publicly-celebrated occasion in the Copper Country, though it is recognized. On this day, it is common to see those in the know dressed in the saint's colors of purple and green. The internet has also become an important means of sharing recognition of this day, with Facebook status updates, sharing images portraying St. Urho, not only in the Copper Country and the Iron Range, but nationwide.[51]

Compared to the celebrations of the saint seen in his home territory of Minnesota, boasting drag competitions,[52] boisterous parades, and many expansions upon the legend of the saint, the Copper Country's celebrations were quite sedate. They took place indoors at the

[50] The implication, based on stereotypical assumptions, was that this participant would be among the least expected by audience members to know how to pronounce these words correctly.

[51] Part of this observation on St. Urho's internet presence comes from my own interactions with Finnish-American friends on Facebook, and the recognition of the celebration through status updates. I do not know of any research that has been done on this particular phenomenon at present, though such internet lore would certainly be quite interesting to study.

[52] The Queen Helmi Drag Contest is held in Finland, Minnesota every year in the attempt to "find the beloved saint a wife" (Asala 2001:46). Men dressed in women's clothing and makeup not only contribute to the carnivalesque atmosphere of this particular St. Urho's Day celebration, but this event also connects to Upper Midwestern and Finnish American stereotypes of femininity and masculinity (see Virtanen 2006a). Contestants often sport facial hair, blacked-out teeth, or heavy, masculine boots, among other inclusions. For recent photographs of the Finland, Minnesota event, including the drag contest, visit the "St. Urho's Celebration in Finland, MN" Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/sturho).

Finnish American Heritage Center, and though the public was welcome, the insular nature of the event did not necessarily encourage widespread participation.

Finns in Local Multicultural Festivals

Finnish ethnicity is also highlighted in unique ways through local festivals highlighting the multicultural nature of the Keweenaw as a whole. Each summer, the Calumet Heritage Days festival selects one longstanding local ethnic community to celebrate, giving prominent members of the group an opportunity to present their culture within the framework of the festival as it has been established. This event, sponsored by Main Street Calumet, a local business community development organization, is one of several held each year in Calumet that highlights aspects of the village's cultural heritage, but it is the only one that gives such agency to a given cultural group. These events serve to bring visitors (both local and tourist) in to Calumet's historic business and museums district, also providing opportunities for local food and craft vendors to sell their wares. At the 2012 Calumet Heritage Days celebration, Finnish elements included a cultural program of music and folklore at the Keweenaw Heritage Center, a parade at which the Finnish presence was highlighted through the inclusion of representatives of FinnFest USA 2013 and the Kivajat Finnish American Dancers, and an afternoon events roster primarily featuring Finnish ethnic music and dance performances in a park just off of Calumet's business district.

Finnish elements are also found in the Parade of Nations, held each September in Hancock and Houghton. This event, featuring a parade that starts on Quincy Green at Finlandia University, and ends at the Dee Stadium in Houghton and a fair event featuring numerous ethnic food and craft vendors and performances by ethnic dancers and musicians of many cultures, highlights the diverse community fostered between the local and university-based populations of the two cities. Held in the early weeks of fall semester, it is also promoted as a welcome to the

students of each university.[53] Many of the ethnic food booths are actually operated by ethnic student associations at Michigan Technological University, while local ethnic restaurants and individual vendors also contribute to the amazing variety of foods available that day.

The parade is actually quite simple: its primary structure is the inclusion of the flag of every nation represented in the student bodies of Michigan Tech and Finlandia. Participants then march with the flag that they wish to be associated with. For foreign students, the choice is often to march with the flag of their country. American-born participants may choose to march with the American flag, or with a flag representing their ethnic heritage. Often, if a flag has no "citizen" to bear it, extra participants will step in to carry that flag, ensuring that all nations are represented. The Finnish flag is always carried, and additionally, Finnish crafts and baked goods are offered at the event following the parade. These goods are available through Finnsight, a business operated by former Finnish instructor Anna Leppänen. Though neither the Calumet Heritage Days nor the Parade of Nations are ethnic festivals in the way that Heikinpäivä is, both events serve to bring awareness to the place of ethnicity—both longstanding and recent—in the Copper Country.

Conclusion

Several times annually, local Finnish Americans may take part in festivals that celebrate aspects of their culture either on its own, or as part of the local interethnic and international culture fostered both by the longstanding community of local residents and the more transient community created by the universities in Hancock and Houghton.

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[53] Though a local conception of internal diversity is understood in the Copper Country, international and minority students at Michigan Tech and Finlandia may often be overwhelmed by the high visibility of white ethnicity in the area. This is a common area of discussion among faculty at both schools, who recognize that discomfort over what can be perceived as a potentially racially hostile environment by students can be detrimental to their sense of belonging in the community. By celebrating the Parade of Nations, students and the local community are given visible proof of just how diverse the community really is when locals and the universities are counted together.

Inspiration for these festivals comes from longstanding traditions brought from Finland, more recent traditions of organizational summer festivals, and from American models of ethnic and community festivals.[54] While, as the case of St. Urho's Day illustrates, sometimes new festivals may be controversial within the Finnish ethnic community, the creation of such events is still considered to be important and worthwhile for community and heritage maintenance. In the next chapter, the mix of influences and inspirations that contributed to the creation of Heikinpäivä will reveal both the complex history that this festival has with regard to its ancient Finnish roots, and the American contexts that called for a festival of cultural revival to be created.

[54] Specific festival models and formats will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Heikinpäivä's Origins in Finland and Hancock

Introduction

The origins of Heikinpäivä are tied to a history of folk cultural developments that span centuries and, in its iteration in the Copper Country, continents. In this chapter, we will see how this festival, local in nature, is based on a historical narrative and cultural practices from medieval Finland. I will approach this story first through its ancient origins found both in Finland's early Christian history and its agricultural folkloric practices, then connecting to survivals of this cultural legacy that came to America, and served as the inspiration for the festival itself.

The development of the festival starts with the story of Bishop Henrik of Uppsala, a saint martyred in Finland during the Middle Ages. He is later commemorated indirectly through the association of his feast day, January 19, with agricultural proverbs concerning weather omens and work prescriptions. Finally, these sayings, remembered by immigrants in the Copper Country, were noticed by key community members as being a remarkable holdover of folk culture dying out in modern Finland itself. These elements of culture came to be useful in 1999, when Houghton and Hancock were selected to host the annual Project 34 conference, a group of Finnish ethnic community leaders concerned with maintaining aspects of Finnish culture into the future. These proverbs, forgotten elements of culture in Finland, came to have renewed meaning in the Copper Country in the midst of a blossoming of Finnish cultural activity.

Bishop Henrik of Uppsala, Finland's Patron Saint

The celebration of Heikinpäivä, as it exists in the Copper Country, has complex origins in aspects of Finnish culture that have largely vanished today. The phrase *Heikinpäivä* translates to Henry's Day, and it references several separate but related traditions, all stemming from the

legend of St. Henrik, who is said to have been martyred in Finland while working to Christianize the people there in the 1150s.

Bishop Henrik's story is featured in its own dedicated page on the Heikinpäivä website.[55] On this page, festival founder Jim Kurtti offers a detailed version of the events of the martyr's life and his importance to Finnish Americans today. According to the account on the Heikinpäivä page, Henrik, an Englishman, was brought to Sweden with Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear and installed as the bishop of Uppsala in 1151. In 1155, Henrik accompanied Swedish King Erik on a mission to "punish the Finnish pirates" and worked to begin converting Finns in the areas of the Åland Islands and modern-day Turku. According to Kurtti, Henrik stopped at the home of peasants Lalli and Kerttu; Lalli was not home and Kerttu was reluctant to provide the bishop with food, which was required of people when faced with such a visit. Kerttu finally fed the bishop, and he paid her and went on his way. Once Lalli returned home, Kerttu told of Henrik's visit, but "intentionally did not mention that the bishop paid for his food." Lalli, angered by this, killed the bishop as he crossed over the frozen Lake Köyliö. He stole the bishop's mitre and attempted to steal the ring, but after he cut off the bishop's finger, he lost the ring, which sank to the bottom of the lake, where "it can be seen shimmering in the waters."[56] Lalli survived for another year following the murder, but first ripped his own scalp off after putting the bishop's mitre on his head and then trying to remove it, and then spent the rest of his life hiding from mice that followed him wherever he went, eventually chasing him up a tree, and gnawing the tree down into the lake below, where he drowned.

[55] http://www.pasty.com/heikki/sthenrik.html, accessed April 29, 2014.
[56] In other representations of the martyrdom of the saint, the detail of the shimmering ring submerged in Lake Köyliö is supplanted by the ring, still attached to the bishop's severed finger, being found the next spring and effecting several miracles See, for instance, Ganander (1789:16).

This version of the bishop's martyrdom and lasting influence in Finland has become the version orthodox to Copper Country residents and festival-goers who seek more information on the characters represented in the events. Bishop Henrik, however, has been portrayed in a variety of historical contexts and legendary variants that even today complicate what we can know of the real man and his activities in Finland.

Since the late Middle Ages, the martyrdom of a Catholic bishop named Henrik, or Henry, has been regarded as an important cornerstone of Finnish early history, and he clearly was an important figure in Finnish folk narratives of history and religion. At the outer fringes of what is considered to be the Finland of historical record, legend has long held that the Englishman Henry, earlier installed as Bishop of Uppsala in Sweden, was a part of the first crusade to Finland, organized by King Erik of Sweden sometime in the mid-1150s (see, among others, DuBois 2008, Ganander 1789:16, Meinander 2011:8).[57] This crusade has been framed as the starting point of Christianity in southwestern Finland, and the need for it has been described as a response to the murder of Christians by Finns (Sands 2008:205). Philip Line (2007) suggests that the story of Henrik's mission and martyrdom in Finland was somehow conflated with the story of King Erik's raid/crusade, which was possibly originated in 1286 with the Bishop of Turku, thus placing the two into the same crusade mission (376).[58]

One of the best known sources detailing the martyrdom of Bishop Henrik is the ballad, *Piispa Henrikin Surmavirsi*, ("The Ballad of the Death of Bishop Henrik") the earliest known copy dating from the rather late date of 1670, though likely already a well-known and long-sung

[57] This historicity of the saint has been contested as completely untrue by some historians (see, for instance, Wuorinen 1965:31-37). Thomas DuBois, however, mentions that more recent scholars have come to the conclusion that Henrik was likely a historical figure, though the fact that Christianity was already existent to some extent in the area of Finland that he settled in has been downplayed (2008:72).

[58] Line additionally discusses the medieval documents that contribute to dating Henrik's crusade and martyrdom at some length, relating these sources to the height of his cult in the 1400s as well as attempts to date the crusade by scholars, placing the year Henrik arrived in Finland variously as 1150, 1155, 1157, and 1158 (2007:425-428).

ballad by that point (see DuBois 2008:92-98). It is in this ballad that the murderer and his wife's names are first contributed to the written records. In this story, similarly to that presented by Kurtti, the bishop and his servant visited Lalli's home when he was not there, and Kerttu later tells Lalli that they were not paid for their hospitality. The bishop, already crossing Lake Köyliö, predicted his coming murder and instructed his servant to hide, and then to return for Henrik's body later. The body was to be put into a cart drawn by an ox, and then the ox was to be let to roam, and where the ox stops was where Henrik's church was to be built.

As the legend follows (DuBois 2008), the ox-cart with Henrik's body came to rest in a particular location at Nousiainen (Swedish Nousis) and there his church was built. Later, his relics were brought into Turku, where they were laid to rest at the cathedral, located in Finland's first bishopric. A cult developed around Henrik, and the date of his martyrdom was established as his feast day. Even after Lutheranism became the official religion in Finland, as a part of the Swedish empire, in the late 1500s, the cult of Henrik and legends surrounding the saint managed to linger, and as we'll see below, his feast day contributed to a system of time reckoning in Finland tied to a body of seasonal proverbs.

Transitional Meanings: The Agricultural Calendar

As the commemoration of saints such as Henrik increasingly populated the calendar, folk traditions imbued each day with meaning beyond that which the saint contributed to the day itself. Sometimes these days referenced long-established traditions associated with pre-Christian Finland that continued once pagan holidays were revamped to present a Christian face.[59] This is well exemplified by the Feast of St. John, Juhannus, which is observed formally on the evening before June 24 (the day of St. John the Baptist), but which is superimposed over the ancient

[59] This was a common transitional practice in many cultures that were Christianized. See Santino 1994, Smith 1972:162.

Finnish summer solstice celebration (see Talve 1997, Sarmela 2009). Juhannus is still extensively celebrated in Finland, as it is in Michigan's Copper Country, and it still maintains many of the elements of magical utility that were kept long after Christianity was considered to be Finland's true faith. Such magic can be seen in the use of the bonfire to ward off evil spirits, to assist unmarried women in prognosticating luck in courting, to bring forth a successful harvest, and to symbolically cleanse through its smoke (Sarmela 2009:244-245).[60]

At the end of his printed narrative of the legend of St. Henrik on the Heikinpäivä website, Kurtti (n.d.) cites the continued influence of the bishop's feast day of January 19[61] among the Copper Country Finnish-speaking community members who remembered agricultural proverbs associated with the day, falling as it does, at a traditional point in the agricultural calendar known as *keskitalvi* (midwinter). These traditions include observations identifying this time of year as the coldest, and thus a reasonable time to ensure enough supplies were in stock to last the season; also present are prognostications for the coming agricultural year, including omens of favorable (or unfavorable) seasons and periods at which work would best be done. These traditions did come to the Copper Country as useful reminders of work to be done and as omens of what one could expect from the coming harvest. In a region in which annual snowfall may often surpass 200 inches, local Finns could continue to find meaning in their proverbs even as agriculture declined over the course of the 20th century (Abrahams 1982:174).[62]

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[60] Interestingly, Sarmela also notes a unique connection between young men leaping over flames in the Midsummer *kokko* and women sledding on Laskiainen as a means of ensuring a successful flax crop: leaping over the flames "promoted the growth of crops, especially of flax; it would grow as high as the leapers would leap" (2009:245).

[61] Some sources cite the date of Bishop Henrik's martyrdom as taking place on January 20 (see, for instance, DuBois 2008), though the present date of the saint's commemoration and related name day take place on January 19. Current research has not revealed when nor why this shift may have taken place, though Thomas A. DuBois suggests that perhaps this shift was meant to accommodate the celebration of two other saints widely popular in medieval times whose feast days also both fall on January 20: Sebastian and Fabian (personal correspondence, February 27, 2014).

[62] Michigan Technological University's Keweenaw Research Center tracks snowfall data at a station at the Houghton County Memorial Airport several miles south of Calumet. Snowfall records from 1890 to the present are

In the decades following his death, Henrik's day became fixed as one of the quarter days of the calendar, used to mark seasonal passages (Talve 1997:207). Saints' days in general, and quarter days in particular, were crucial to European folk conceptions of timekeeping with regards to tracking the appropriate times for many activities, from, of course, any activities associated with venerating a given saint, to other major religious holidays, to seeking favorable periods for executing agricultural tasks.

For what became known as Heikinpäivä, along with many other named saint days in Finland, calendrical meaning associated with such agricultural practices became a key element of the day's folk traditions (see Santino 1994:17-18). Matti Sarmela explains that

> [p]art of the eco-folklore of agrarian cultures is measuring of time, determining of the times for sowing and harvesting and knowledge of the weather: forecasting of future weather and annual yield, interpreting nature's signs (2009:46).

These observations were considered to be vital to ensure the success of the community year after year, both in measuring the productivity of a given year's, or given season's, work, and in determining the course future work plans would take based on these signs (Hautala 1948). Henrik's day, almost a month after the winter solstice has passed, became associated in some communities with existent agricultural traditions surrounding the midpoint, or coldest point, of the winter season, along with the saint day of Paavali, which falls on January 25.[63]

Proverbs pertaining to Henrik and Paavali bear remarkable relation to one another. For instance, each day, positioned as they are six days apart, is described as the midpoint of winter, in a general sense and with regards to seasonal dependence on stored foodstuffs: [Heikki or

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maintained on the MTU Alumni Association page, using the data from the Keweenaw Research Center, as well as uncited sourcing before 2000. http://www.mtu.edu/alumni/favorites/snowfall/snowfall.html. Accessed May 25, 2014.

[63] Paavali is the Finnish name for Paul the Apostle. I do not know exactly how or why these days became variants of marking the midwinter passage, nor why, in some traditions, the days work in tandem with one another, either when a portion of the midwinter work is split between the two ("Heikki divides the hay, Paavali counts the wood"), or when the weather conditions on Heikki's day can serve to interpret the coming conditions on Paavali ("When Henrik is easy, so Paavali is a hard blow.")

Paavali is] *"talven napa"* (winter's navel), [On Heikki or Paavali] *"talven selkä taittuu"* (winter's back breaks), *"Heikkinä eläinten elo kahtia, ihmisten elo kolmia"* (On Heikki's day, animal's foodstuffs are halved, people's foodstuffs are one-third less), *"Paavalina karjan ruoka kahtia, ihmisen kolmia"* (On Paavali's day, the cattle's food is halved, and people's a third less). Both also contribute in proverbs to a series of tasks taken in the midwinter season: *"Heikki heinät jakaa, paavali puut tasaa"* (Heikki divides the hay, Paavali counts the wood). Both also are used as prognosticators of future weather/agricultural conditions, often as evidenced on other name days: *"Kun on helppo henrikki, niin on paukku paavali,"* (When Henrik is easy, so Paavali is a hard blow); *"Kun heikkinä helisee ja paavalina paukka, tulee hyvä hernevuosi"* (When on Heikki it rattles and Paavali it blows, it will be a good year for peas).[64] Finally, both are associated with bear metaphors in which "the bear rolls over," indicating being half done with hibernation (for these proverbs and others, see Hautala 1948:38–44). Though in these instances, the bear rolls over but doesn't wake up, these bear proverbs can be considered to belong to a broad family of European traditions of observing animals' emergence from hibernation as a signal that winter had come to an end, especially around the day of Candlemas, shortly after Heikki's day on February 2 each year (Santino 1994:58).

Henrik's day falls in the period of the Finnish agricultural folk calendar known as *jakoaika* (dividing time) when "the agrarian fertility and future realism reached its peak" (Sarmela 2009:46). This, then, clearly ties the Finns of the Copper Country with their sayings of *"Heikki heinät jakaa"* and *"Talven selkä taittuu"* to an ancient tradition of accounting for the rations necessary to last the winter, and the sense of relief that the season when foraging was impossible was half over for the livestock, and the season between harvests was one-third complete for humans.

[64] Author's translations.

Bears, Carnivalesque, and Ritual

Though, outside of the cult of the saint, Heikki's day seems to have had little to no association with festival behavior, one example of such behavior was included in Hautala's collection of saint's day proverbs (1948) from an informant in Perho,[65] though no clues are given revealing when this practice is known to have taken place:

> Heikinpäivänä annettiin lapsille sellainen vapaus, että saivat hypätä ympäri kylää iltasella pimeällä ja soitta kelloilla. Oli lehmänkelloja, hevosenkelloja, lampaankelloja, kulkusia ja peltiastioita, ja niitä rummutettiin, jotta: "Heikinpäivänä talven selkä katkeaa." Vielä monta kertaa löivät kurikalla seinään, jotta: "Nyt talven selkä katkesi." Talossa joskus kun oltiin juuri iltasta syömässä, lusikat putosivat käsistä, kun niin kovasti ulkona paukahti ja alkoi kova elämä. [On Heikki's day, we gave children certain freedom to jump around the village in the dark of the evening and ring bells. There were cowbells, horse bells, sheep bells, sleigh bells, and tin cans, and they banged those, saying "On Heikki's day, winter's back breaks." Still many times they cast with clubs into the wall, saying "Now winter's back is broken." In the house sometimes when we were just eating the evening meal, spoons would fall out of one's hand, when it stormed so hard outside, and thus began a difficult life] (Hautala 1948:39).

Though no other mentions of such activities of the saint's day feature prominently in collected folklore, it is apparent that carnivalesque behavior, though perhaps quite minor, was still a feature of the day's observance. Though certainly connections exist between this activity and carnival behavior associated with Lent (see Santino 1994), another interesting possibility also exists.

In Finland, apart from its role in the midwinter proverbs as prognosticators of the coming spring through their hibernation behavior, the bear has a longstanding role in Finnish and broader Finno-Ugric pre-Christian beliefs as the original father of the people, and as a creature that must be ritually hunted in order to maintain important relationships with the cosmos (see Pentikäinen 1999:166-170, Haavio 1967:15-41, Sarmela 2009:79-94, DuBois 2009:33). Of particular interest, both with regard to the anecdote from Perho of having children engage in very noisy activity,

[65] Perho is a community in the region of Ostrobothnia, in western central Finland.

and the tradition of the bear hunt ritual itself is that, according to Sarmela, (2009:82), a bear's soul, while the body is in hibernation, may be engaged in spirit travel. In order to properly hunt a bear, according to this tradition, hunters woke the sleeping animal and drew it out of its den, giving time for the spirit to return to the body before being killed. This meant that a wandering soul could not seek vengeance because it would be ritually handled in the appropriate way.[66]

Returning to the carnivalesque activity in Perho,[67] we see that children engage in noisy activity while repeating that "winter's back is broken." This can certainly be seen as a method of coaxing the bear to roll over by causing the spirit to return to the body, and possibly effecting a quicker end to hibernation.

Bears, too, have great importance in Heikinpäivä in several ways: one of the earliest t-shirts designed for the festival incorporated a bear, apparently rolling over. Additionally, each year, a white bear (polar bear) and a brown bear are costumed figures in the parade. Though they are not recognized generally among Finnish Americans for this ancient mythological connection, bears do still maintain symbolism in this new festival through their connection to the midwinter proverbs.

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[66] This ritual practice, known as bear ceremonialism, has parallels in many cultures, especially across northern Eurasia and in North America (see Black 1998, DuBois 2009:33, Haavio 1967, Hallowell 1926, Pentikäinen 1999, Sarmela 2009). The bear hunt ritual is featured as an episode in the Kalevala (Runo 46), though the impetus for killing the bear is not generated by the hunters themselves but because the bear was sent by an enemy of the community to attack them and their livestock (Lönnrot 1989). In the poem, though, the action becomes consistent with records of the ritual in that, as the bear is being killed, the hunters tell the bear that they did not kill him, but that he tripped and was accidentally killed (an act meant to prevent the bear's soul from seeking vengeance). The consistency continues as the bear's body is brought to the village, where a female community member is presented as the bear's bride, and a feast is made of the bear's meat. His bones are then ritually placed in a location outside the village so that his soul may return to his ancient home in the Ursa Major constellation and later reincarnate as a new bear on Earth, thus continuing his connection with humans. A bear hunt in a Sami community is also represented in the modern film, *Ofelas* (Pathfinder), based off of a traditional legend found in Sami and Finnish communities (dir. Nils Gaup, 1989).

[67] Sarmela (2009:79) shows in a map that, within the parish district that includes Perho, bear bones have been found placed in trees, which is a sign of the bear hunt ritual having taken place. No data on when this is known to have happened is provided.

Heikki Proverbs and Winter in the Copper Country

On immigrant homesteads throughout the Copper Country, producing meager but miraculous potatoes from the earth year after year, folk sayings referencing the martyred bishop may have maintained great relevance within their agricultural context until very recently.[68] In the Copper Country we inhabit now, with our infinitely replenishable store-bought harvests, it is the relentless snow season that counts our time. We adjust our work schedules for it, we build contraptions that help to manage the snow on our own property, and we simultaneously love and loathe it (see Penti 1987). By the time Heikinpäivä comes, we are halfway through the onslaught with just three months to go, if it is a good year.

Though the direct association with harvest calendars has come to an end, folklorist Lisa Gabbert sees a continuity with this tradition, as revealed in her own fieldwork in an Idaho community's winter festival, coincidentally also bearing a local Finnish ethnic population:

> Winter Carnival can be classified as a calendrical harvest festival associated with the yearly seasonal cycle and communal meanings of work and play because harvest festivals mark the changing of seasons and tie people into annual natural rhythms (2011:6).

It is in this context of maintaining ties with "annual natural rhythms" that Jim Kurtti remembers hearing these proverbs growing up. In Bruce Crossing, his family seemed to have particular affinity with proverbs associated with Erkki (Erik, May 18), but Heikki proverbs were also exceptionally common. As a student at Suomi College in the late 1970s, Jim was made to realize how rare this tradition was becoming in modern Finland:

> I think what really piqued my interest in paying attention to [midwinter proverbs] was when I was a student at Suomi, there was this woman, Ritva Heikkilä, who was here from the National Theatre and she was our Finnish teacher and she came in one day, and she said, "Oh! It's like I stepped into the *Kalevala!"* She said, "I ran into Seth Mikkola" who was a maintenance man here, and she said that he said, *"Karhu kääntää kylkeänsä,* [the bear rolls over] and that's just like out of the *Kalevala!* It's so old!" And so, every time I

[68] Jim Kurtti recounts many instances of proverbs concerning Heikki and several other saint days (interview, April 3, 2014), as will be discussed below.

> heard them, it meant something, and after that, I paid attention to them (interview, April 3, 2014).[69]

Realizing that these expressions, everyday to many in the Copper Country, were dying out in modern Finland brought them into a new light for Kurtti, who says there are still community members who know some of these sayings separately from their revitalization through festival. Even as many in the area turned away from agriculture, the severity of winter in the region provides a practical reason for remembering the proverbs.

In the Copper Country today, the local economy is still intensely dependent on weather conditions and their relation to work. Timber harvesting, supplemental berry picking, fishing, and the summer, autumn, and winter tourism seasons rely, sometimes desperately, on the correct amounts and timings of sun, rain, snow, cold, and heat. When conditions are bad, they can spell disaster for any number of people employed in these industries, from those who own the means of production to those who perform the actual work and rely on regular (and fully-paid) paychecks. In the summer, considerable time is spent, for instance, in waiting for the berry season to begin in order to earn fast cash,[70] and there is a waiting period in late fall and early winter during which those who rely upon it anxiously await a snowfall that will bring with it tourist dollars. In good years, Heikinpäivä is celebrated in Hancock in the midst of a productive

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[69] Heikkilä's reference to the *Kalevala* relates to her recognition of this proverb, in a modern Finnish conception, as one that has receded into the past. The *Kalevala* is a body of traditional folk poetry known to be many centuries old, and compiled into a formal epic with a linear plot structure in the 1830s and 1840s by Finnish doctor Elias Lönnrot. This epic was important to the development of Finnish language and culture, including the development of an independent Finnish state (see Wilson 1976). To associate something with the *Kalevala* in this sense, is to acknowledge that it is a practice that is disappearing, and to recognize it for its ancientness. That a maintenance worker in Hancock, Michigan in the 1970s would recite a proverb such as this would have been quite remarkable to someone from Finland.

[70] Berry-picking is an economic activity that requires no formal employment. Those who wish to make money doing it simply bring their picked, cleaned and frozen wild fruits to any of several small industries that purchase these fruits by the pound and make a number of fruit products. I have performed fieldwork concerning the local berry-picking economy in Keweenaw and Houghton counties, and have observed, and even personally felt, the sense of anxiety that comes with an uncertain period of waiting for the ripened fruit, and knowing how central it is to a survival strategy (Virtanen 2005). Berries and wild fruits are also gathered for personal and family use (often for making jams), either as an intensive strategy of food production, or as a more leisurely activity less related to economic need.

snow season: enough falls to impress but not endanger, the weather is warm enough to be comfortable without snow melting, and as a result, streams of weekenders from downstate, Wisconsin, and Illinois fill hotel rooms, spend their evenings at bars, and fill their gas tanks at the local pumps. Heikinpäivä is, in this sense, very much a local harvest festival.

Project 34

The impetus for creating the Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival was, of all things, an annual traveling conference known as Project 34, which was scheduled to take place in January 1999 in Houghton and Hancock:

> Project 34 is an effort to develop long range strategies for perpetuating Finnish culture in America to the third and fourth generations of Finnish-Americans and beyond. This ad-hoc group of American and Canadian Finns meet annually, rotating the conference sites to facilitate a broader participation by Finnish-Americans (Project 34 n.d. [1998]).

The group, self-described as "ad-hoc," was essentially used to connect Finnish Americans active in their communities with one another in an effort to share ideas and best practices for creating programs encouraging heritage maintenance. The group did not necessarily have a formal membership, but rather depended on the strong leadership of a few to organize the annual meeting and encourage participation. Most notable in this work was John Laine, a Finnish American from the Dallas, Texas area active in the Finlandia Foundation on the national and local levels.[71]

Jim Kurtti, who worked full-time at the Houghton County Courthouse in the juvenile courts division, had been an active member of the area's Finnish community by this time through his genealogy work, participation in previous FinnFests, and perhaps most notably, teaching

[71] The Finlandia Foundation is a federation of 42 chapters across the United States with a national headquarters in Pasadena, California. Founded in 1953, the Foundation serves to foster local community connections among Finnish Americans, as well as a nationally-based grant and scholarship program to support Finnish cultural activities and students either of Finnish heritage, or studying aspects of Finnish culture in college. See http://www.finlandiafoundation.org for general information and Saari (2003) for a history of this foundation, which also includes a brief history of Project 34 (pp. 124-126).

Finnish language in the high schools over his lunch hour since 1995. Not yet active in the Finnish Theme Committee, Jim had spoken at Project 34 conferences in 1997 and 1998. These conferences took place in Minneapolis and Washington, D.C., respectively, and they notably lacked an element of Finnish culture within them. As Jim Kurtti describes it in interviews (2004 and 2014), the idea to hold the conference was rather sudden: a fellow attendee from a longstanding Finnish community in Ohio announced, "The problem with this Project 34 is you never have it in a real Finnish community. You should have it in the Copper Country," then waving at Jim Kurtti, implying that Hancock would be an ideal location.

This declaration, that the conferences were not held in "a real Finnish community," highlighted the idea among the descendents of early Finnish immigrants that such a community was found not in the urban centers one is more likely to find recent Finnish immigrants, but rather in the ethnic enclaves of the Upper Midwest. These communities, though less connected to modern Finland, are considered among many Finnish Americans—those to whom Project 34 was geared to address—to be the real centers of Finnish American life.[72]

At first in disbelief that he could carry out such an event, Jim Kurtti did eventually agree to work on planning it. In discussion with Project 34 leader John Laine, he agreed that the conference would be best held in January, considered to be an off-season for both conferences and festival events in the area, and soon, Jim began to work on planning the event:

> In my mind, I was thinking, "Well, what's the point of coming to a Finnish American community, and have this if they don't *see* the community?" One convention center looks like the other, and so I thought there needs to be some way they can have an experience

[72] Minneapolis is one urban center that has attracted Finnish Americans descended from the early immigrant population as well as new immigrants from Finland. It certainly can be considered in many ways to be "a real Finnish community," though it does not have the high concentration of ethnic Finns or the clear presence of Finnish ethnicity that a rural enclave such as Hancock and the surrounding area possesses. The attendee at the 1998 conference appears to be making this point with his statement.

> in the town. So I had this idea, maybe the Finnish Theme Committee[73] I'd been hearing about would do something. So I went to FinPro and I talked to Arja-Leena and Pekka Karstu about it, and they said, "Well, yeah, we haven't succeeded with this Laskiainen. We just can't get it to grow, so maybe we should try something else." And I said, "Well, we're looking at having this come in January. It could be Heikinpäivä." It was almost immediately agreed that that would be worth a try because both the Karstus and I had experienced these older Finnish Americans who, especially with the funny snow years, they would bring up these *sananlaskuja,* these proverbs. And so the idea started to form right there (interview, April 3, 2014).

The Finnish Theme Committee also proved receptive to the idea when Jim brought it up at the next meeting. Jim laughs at this initial interaction with the committee because at that point, he imagined that he was just contacting them to collaborate on an isolated project, but in reality, "I was signing my life away" to the committee. He has been an active member, and indeed, a co-chair of the group for much of the time ever since.

The collaboration with the Finnish Theme Committee allowed the plans to come together quickly, with a parade, a plan to serve traditional Finnish foods, and an indoor market at the Finnish American Heritage Center put in place. Plans for musicians at the indoor market, as well as the Polar Bear Dive, the banquet and dance, and the Sami encampment also came together, bringing with them a cohort of organizations and individuals that would set a stable course for future incarnations of the festival, though, of course, at the time, they did not know this yet.

The conference and festival, though certainly attended by Finnish community leaders from all over the United States and Canada, were showcases of the ways in which Finnish American cultural vitality could be seen in many aspects of Copper Country public and private life. Conference presentations, primarily delivered by local and regional community experts, addressed subjects ranging from cultural resource preservation and genealogical research on the increasingly available internet to the role of the Finnish Theme Committee as an arm of the City

[73] The Finnish Theme Committee is a group affiliated with the government of the City of Hancock, and, over the past decade, the Finlandia Foundation. The group was originally founded to help foster economic growth through highlighting the community's ethnic character. The history and structure of the group is discussed in Chapter Four.

of Hancock's government structure and Finnish cultural education in the public schools and at Suomi College (now Finlandia University).

These presentations illustrated the vibrancy of Finnish culture in each area examined, with special emphasis on how the community in and around Hancock had made lasting contributions to these aspects of public and private life. Presentations also highlighted the internally diverse nature of Finnish ethnicity, including examining the role of Sami, Finland-Swedish, and Karelian Orthodox heritages within the broader construct of Finnish culture. The conference also included tours of the Finnish American Heritage Center and International School of Design at Suomi College, illustrating the ways Finnish culture was connected both to the past and to a future through the college's institutions.[74]

Figure Eight: Project 34 leaders Robert Selvälä and John Laine in the parade line-up at the first Heikinpäivä, January 30, 1999. Photograph courtesy Jim Kurtti.

[74] Project 34 held its last meeting in January 1999, with many of its functions being filled by sessions at the annual FinnFest USA festival, as well as through the activities of local Finnish ethnic organizations nationwide.

During the second day of the festival, Heikinpäivä itself was folded into the conference program. Following two morning panel sessions, attendees were invited to a parade and winter market, which included "a hearty Finnish-style lunch" (Project 34 registration brochure). The first Polar Bear dive took place on the Portage Canal at Porvoo Park, a green space named for Hancock's sister city in Finland. An afternoon panel session was followed by the tour of the Heritage Center and the Art School at Suomi College, and then a public evening event, including a social hour, music program, buffet, and dance once again united community members with conference-goers. The final Sunday of the conference, a breakfast was followed by a bilingual Finnish-English Evangelical church service.

Promotional language for the festival drew heavily on language invoking the traditionality that would be conveyed through its activities: "As our ancestors did, we commemorate Heikinpäivä's arrival as the halfway mark of winter, when 'The bear rolls over onto its other side' and 'Winter's back is broken,' according to ancient Finnish folklore." This tradition nearly forgotten will be augmented with similar other practices nearly lost: "The traditional Finnish *vipukelkka* (whip sled) will also be constructed by area men, who remember them from their youth" (Project 34 promotional statement, ca. 1998).[75] The overall sense is one of rescue and revival, consistent with some aspects of American folklife festival presentation.[76]

During this first year of the festival, Sami culture was immediately established as an important cornerstone of the event's identity. In promotional language for the conference and festival, it is noted that "The Sami Siida of North America[77] will be the special guests of the City

[75] Jingo Viitala Vachon, of Toivola, describes a whip sled and its use in *Finnish Fibbles* (1979:49-50).
[76] Though on a larger scale, and incorporating multiple cultural groups and presentation formats, the National Folk Festival has often focused on tradition revival (see Williams 2006, Wilson and Udall 1982).
[77] The Sami Siida of North America is an ethnic association created by Sami Americans, with regional chapters in various areas of the country that have substantial communities of people with Sami heritage. Notable chapters are found in the Seattle, Minneapolis, and Duluth areas, and there has been discussion in Hancock the past several years about founding a local chapter as well.

of Hancock" and festival-goers are told "The colorful Sami will be bringing eight reindeer with them, which will be yarded on the lawn of the Hancock High [School]. Be sure to stop by and ask the reindeer herders questions" (Project 34 n.d. [1998]). Though perhaps the wording of the announcement may appear to promote the Sami as curiosities to ogle, a desire to increase recognition of the strong presence of Sami ethnicity among Copper Country Finns was the driving force behind this emphasis.[78]

The day of the festival itself was, initially, a nerve-wracking experience for its organizers. The schedule for the conference was arranged so that, in the morning, attendees would meet in Houghton for the conclusion of the presentations, and then ride together into Hancock to join the festivities as they started. This meant that festival organizers including Jim Kurtti would not know whether attendance would be high until they arrived at the event themselves. As Jim Kurtti says,

> So everything started around noon, as I recall. So Project 34 went on all day Friday, and then began on Saturday, and we went till noon, and then we had transportation to bring the participants over to Heikinpäivä, and I was thinking, "Oh, this could be an absolute embarrassment if no one shows up." And it turned out that, on that day, it was 32 degrees and sunny, and we came into Hancock and the street was *full of people* (interview, April 3, 2014).

Attendance was higher than anticipated, though there was no concrete number of people that the festival organizers had aimed for. In a 2004 interview with Jim about that first Heikinpäivä, he marveled at the number of people outside, lining both sides of Quincy Street to watch the parade, which he simply numbered at "Hundreds and hundreds." The flow of attendees along the street in Hancock and into the Finnish American Heritage Center did turn out to be somewhat

[78] This focus on Sami ethnicity coincided with a broader recognition of this unique ethnic community, both inside and outside of it, in the 1990s, in no small part due to positive exposure to this indigenous community through cultural programs of the 1994 Winter Olympics. Held in Norway, a nation boasting the largest Sami population in the world, the Olympics contributed to a growth in the number of individuals made aware of, or gaining pride in, their heritage. For more on the place of Sami ethnicity in the U.S., see Jensen 2012.

problematic, though; upon entering the building, all visitors had to go past the soup and bread station in the lobby, which certainly slowed the flow in and out.

Figure Nine: View of Quincy Street on the first Heikinpäivä festival, from the top floor of the Finnish American Heritage Center, January 30, 1999. The snow-covered area to the left is the former Hancock High School lawn, now known as Quincy Green. Photograph courtesy Jim Kurtti.

The festival, with its outdoor activities on Quincy Green and its indoor activities at the Finnish American Heritage Center, drew such a huge crowd in part due to great coordination with media outlets, a factor Jim Kurtti is quick to point out. The winter market (now known as the *tori,* using the Finnish word for market) was, according to Kurtti, "standing room only" (interview, August 15, 2004), and the evening banquet and dance also became important mainstays of the festival from the very first year:

> In the early years, the banquet was a big deal. I know the very first year, we had it at the American Legion and we had to run to a funeral home and get chairs, and we were

> getting card tables from all over and I remember I knelt [laughs]. By the time I ate, there wasn't much food left (interview, April 3, 2014).

The Polar Bear Dive, in which participants dove into a hole chopped into the frozen-over Portage Canal in Hancock, was also a popular event, drawing "a whole different crowd of people" to the festival's events that might not have ordinarily come. Unlike some events known in the U.S. and Canada as "Polar Bear" events, participants dive, full-body, into water that is too deep to run into even when it is completely thawed. There is no room for a participant to decide once their feet have touched the water to not continue.

This aspect of the festival is one that, over time, has become immensely popular but also has faced some great challenges in the past few years as the event's longstanding venue, the local Ramada Inn, discontinued its relationship with the festival in 2012 and other venues do not have the desired, and even necessary, amenities that the Ramada provided. These challenges resulted in the event being cancelled for the 2013 festival, and being reinstated in 2014 in a smaller capacity, which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

In the end, Heikinpäivä was a success in its first year because it provided opportunities for entertainment for a wide audience, opportunities for local merchants to sell their wares during the dry period after Christmas, and a chance to participate in a celebration of the area's most influential ethnic group. A well-constructed plan in combination with a barrage of media attention to the event was what made Heikinpäivä such a hit. With such an accomplishment on their hands, there was no question among Finnish Theme Committee members that they would do it again: "we realized it turned into an annual event" (Kurtti interview, August 12, 2004).

Conclusion

The Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival references several key aspects of Finnish folk culture and history that, over time, have lost or shifted significantly in meaning. The historical

figure of Bishop Henrik, martyred and remembered in folk religious practices as Finland's patron saint, shifted in context from a meaningful Catholic figure after the Reformation, to a name associated with the ancient Finnish agricultural calendar and, now, the modern Finnish name day calendar.

These proverbs, keeping the name of the saint alive, also kept alive references to bear-related traditions long important to Finnish and broader European and Eurasian traditions, including midwinter prognostications involving hibernation patterns and the bear's relationship to the proximity of the coming spring, which also connect, much more distantly, ancient origin myths surrounding the bear and a ritual hunt developed to maintain sacred relationships with this animal.

While agricultural life among Finnish immigrants created a space for maintenance of a body of folk proverbs concerning the passage of the winter season and associated work, the severity of winter,[79] and particularly snowfall, in this new homeland created the potential for new meaning in these sayings. As farming reduced its presence as a way of life among Finnish immigrants and the presence of Finnish as a native language died out in subsequent generations, the memory of midwinter as a point of importance for work prescriptions and omen prognostication faded away, too. The proverbs, however, found applicability among some as a marker of the midwinter point removed from agricultural context because of the region's harsh winters.

Use of these proverbs as a nominal theme for a festival and conference in 1999 resulted in the first Heikinpäivä festival, which was considered by its organizers to have been highly successful and well-attended. With a series of successful event components to use in future

[79] Though Finnish winters are certainly quite cold, the amount of snowfall in the Copper Country was not a familiar feature to many Finnish immigrants.

festivals, organizers began to build upon this first year and to expand and contract the festival in future years according to the interests of festival goers and organizers, the availability of potential programming, and the need among festival organizers to work in correspondence with other local Finnish cultural programs, including FinnFest USA 2013, which also significantly involved Heikinpäivä organizers and the structure of the festival itself.

Chapter Four: Anatomy of a Festival: Heikinpäivä Midwinter Festival over the Years

Introduction

Following the first Heikinpäivä, organizers decided to hold a second, expanded festival in 2000. Though also only lasting a day, without the added burden of organizing a Project 34 conference, the festival was significantly expanded, not only retaining such features as the well-received inclusion of Sami culture, but also adding winter sports and other new components.

In 2014, after 16 variations of the festival, noticeable rhythms have developed, as has the incorporation of remarkable non-repeatable events. Over all, many aspects of the festival have become relatively easy to manage due to their annual occurrence, and as new activities are incorporated or old activities disappear, the festival both affirms its core audience and draws in new, and even outsider, participants (Lavenda 1997:79).

As Lavenda points out, festivals do not "[spring] full-grown from the minds of community members without reference to any other festivals" (1997:4). Heikinpäivä, as we saw in Chapter Two, drew from aspects of the Laskiainen festival which it supplanted, including the use of the Hankooki Heikki honorific title, and aspects of sledding, among other features.[80] Structurally and thematically, Heikinpäivä bears relation to the *community festival* as described by Stoeltje (1983) and also to the more recent phenomenon of the *folk festival*, as described by, among others, Bauman, Sawin and Carpenter (1992), Williams (2006), and Wilson and Udall (1982). These structural models provide us with the ability to analyze Heikinpäivä as it relates to evolving uses of festival in the life of a community.

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[80] Marsha Penti (1988:482) reveals interesting connections between Heikinpäivä and the Palo, Minnesota Laskiainen festival. In addition to sledding and other winter sports, a 1937 list of festival components includes mention of "folk legends and superstitions told regarding Laskiainen" (similar to the proverb traditions of Henrik's feast day), "authentic Finnish foods" at a smorgasbord-style event, "exhibits of Finnish arts, crafts, and heirlooms," folk dance and Finnish music, the "use of Finnish language in various program segments," an essay contest on the festival for school children, and a "historical explanation of the Old World celebration" (similar to the Heikinpäivä website features on Bishop Henrik).

According to Wilson and Udall (1982:6), the term "folk festival" came into use around the turn of the 1900s, significantly, by institutions including the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University, a historically black university) and the Hull House, the settlement house serving poor immigrants in Chicago. These institutions are significant to me because both served marginalized populations that, at the time, were not considered to be a part of what America was. Use of the term "folk" removes these groups from the category of "other," inviting all to see these performers, and possibly themselves, as "folk." Later use of this term was used to highlight Appalachian music in a tourism context (Williams 2006:11, Wilson and Udall 1982:6). By 1934, the National Folk Festival was founded in the context of developing trends toward multicultural, middlebrow entertainment that was intended to help preserve and revive aspects of American folk cultures while also sharing these unique cultural features with outside audiences (Grieve 2009:113-114, Williams 2006, Wilson and Udall 1982:7).

Wilson and Udall present a spectrum of festival types that reveal how festivals can move "the materials of folk culture away from the people who created them to people of the larger society" (1982:3). In other words, on one side of the spectrum are "indigenous festivals" that are inclusive only to the community that practices them and may even forbid outsiders from attending, and on the other end of the spectrum are festivals that Wilson and Udall dub "multicultural folk arts festivals" that include such events as the National Folk Festival and the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife (pp. 4-6).

Closest to the "indigenous festival" is the "evolving indigenous festival," which is produced by and for a specific culture, but unlike the "indigenous festival," does "consciously attempt to adapt cultural material to persons not of the group" (p. 4). Heikinpäivä seems to best fit this model because festival presenters rely upon their own understandings as community

insiders to make decisions on festival programming and because festival programming itself often comes from people considered to be a part of the cultural community.

Over time, the festival has partnered with various community sponsors, incorporated and discontinued certain activities, and responded to the changing needs and interests of festival sponsors, attendees, willing volunteers, and numerous external matters. The constant driving force behind Heikinpäivä, however, has been the Finnish Theme Committee, an organization with multiple functions and a unique status within the city government structure, which will be described below.

This festival work is done not by anonymous members of "the folk" but rather by individuals with their own strengths, weaknesses, interests and aversions, and their own interpersonal relationships with one another (see Vennum, Penti and Köngäs-Maranda 1986). The Finnish Theme Committee consists of people who have ties with one another and with the broader community as coworkers, family members, neighbors, fellow church and social organization members, among others (see Gradén 2003:118). As a group, they are united in their dedication to bringing Heikinpäivä to the community each year.

The Hearts and Souls of the Festival: The Finnish Theme Committee

The Finnish Theme Committee was founded in 1983 as a part of the government of the City of Hancock in response to resident suggestions that the city foster economic development using aspects of the community's Finnish identity (Kurtti 2001). At first limited to residents of the City of Hancock proper,[81] this committee made some important contributions to the face of Hancock in the 1980s, including adorning Quincy Street with Finnish flags and street signs

[81] Though the committee concerns itself with presenting a Finnish ethnic theme within the City of Hancock, membership has certainly never been limited only to ethnic Finns.

bearing both their original English and newly-added Finnish street names.[82] The committee developed an outdoor farmers market known as the Tori Market, established a sister city relationship with Porvoo, Finland, and has collaborated on visits between prominent residents of each city. As Kurtti (2001) highlights, however, this committee did not have the economic impact that had been hoped for,[83] and so by the time Heikinpäivä was founded, this festival became the perfect opportunity for the Finnish Theme Committee to place its focus in another direction.

In 2006, the Finnish Theme Committee took the important step of becoming a local chapter of the national Finlandia Foundation. This group, with 45 local chapters across the country, adds further support to certain activities of the Finnish Theme Committee through grant programs to which the group is eligible to apply. It also allows the Committee to voice support for Finnish cultural initiatives in the Copper Country not implemented by the committee itself; this is due to the fact that applicants to the grant program, when not members of the Finlandia Foundation, are encouraged to seek letters of support from a local chapter. This not only helps the grants program determine whether an applicant's proposed program will be perceived as beneficial to the community, but it also helps the local chapter to keep appraised of local activities pertaining to Finnish culture.

The majority of the committee's membership is female, and many are retired, though men, parents with children at home, and members who have outside employment are also

[82] The Finnish street names are sometimes direct translations, for instance, in the case of Ravine Street, which is called *"Kurukatu,"* and sometimes based on Finnish words that represent a topographical or locational aspect of Hancock, such as Quincy Street, Hancock's main street, which is called *"Valtakatu"* (Main Street) on the Finnish part of the sign. Sabina Magliocco (1993:118-119) describes a similar process of "rechristening" otherwise American foods in an Italian American festival in Clinton, Indiana.

[83] In both his 2004 and 2014 interviews, Jim names the city of Frankenmuth as one model of such a redevelopment. A city in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, Frankenmuth has incorporated a German heritage- and a Christmas theme into its development over the past several decades. Lindsborg, Kansas (see Gradén 2003, Danielson 1991) is another example of such incorporation of ethnic identity, based in this instance, on a strong Swedish ethnic presence in the community.

represented in the group. Some members do not even have Finnish heritage, and there is a wide diversity of political and religious backgrounds within the group. Regardless of factors of difference, though, members bring their longstanding passion for Finnish culture and a vast variety of talents, professional experiences, and avocational interests into the committee. On a practical level, this means that the active membership can often provide the know-how and ability to complete tasks from within its own ranks. This diversity also allows for group members to be able to consider the feasibility and potential success of a given activity from a wide variety of perspectives.

Long accepting of members from outside of the City of Hancock, the Theme Committee has a working membership of approximately 20 people, many of whom actively participate in various aspects of Finnish American life, and whose work overlaps with other community and ethnic organizations and local businesses, creating useful connections upon which the Theme Committee can draw. All employees of the Finnish American Heritage Center, for instance, are members of the committee.[84] Other members include Kay Seppala, director of the Kivajat Finnish American Dancers, the Ilon Kaiku Kantele Ensemble, and the new Loistavat Finnish American Dancers; Mary Pekkala, retired executive at the locally-based Superior National Bank, an archives volunteer at the Finnish American Heritage Center and active booster at Finlandia University; Esther Pekkala, sole charter member of the Finnish Theme Committee still active in the group; retired elementary school teacher Maija Stadius who developed Finnish culture curriculum in her classroom and whose students have sung and danced for the entertainment of

[84] It is understood that this association is voluntary, but it could be questioned whether employees of the Center are free to *not* join. Personally speaking, I felt it was only natural to join the committee, knowing I would be a de facto member for at least a few months each year. I have, however, felt free to miss meetings when needed and to not volunteer for any doings of the committee that I felt I was not yet well-versed enough to contribute to, or that I was not interested in. Sometimes, however, necessity and directives from higher offices than my own adjusted my workflow in this regard.

no less than the President of Finland; Edith Maki, former restaurateur and frequent Heikinpäivä baking workshop instructor; Mary Brunet, treasurer of Franklin Township, just adjacent to Hancock; Debbie Kurtti, social worker, Jim Kurtti's tireless wife, and frequent Heikinpäivä *juusto* and *piirakka* workshop instructor; and Becky Hoekstra, also a leader in the annual Toivola Juhannus and Jamboree celebrations at Agate Beach, to name a few.

The Finnish Theme Committee meets monthly from September to March or April with summers free, barring occasional special events that may involve the group.[85] Many of the committee members have worked on a particular aspect of the festival for many years (if not the entirety of the festival's history), and so much of the work has become seemingly automatic over time. At the first few meetings I attended, I was amazed at how often the response, "Yup, that's already done," was given when asked what stage a certain component of the festival was at. The committee is responsible for reserving the festival's key sites and ensuring that space setup needs for each facility are arranged; for coordinating a budget plan and ensuring that plans to spend funds received from the City of Hancock meet with the city's approval; ensuring that each individual component of the festival is properly scheduled and provided the necessary equipment; soliciting enough volunteers to make the festival run smoothly; procuring the proper permits and public safety support from the local health department, sheriff's department, city police department, and the department of transportation; and engaging local media and businesses with a broad-based publicity campaign and sponsorship opportunities.

Often, one committee member will handle an entire aspect of the festival with little assistance from others. Debbie Kurtti, for instance, coordinates all aspects of the festival's marketplaces. She solicits and accepts applications from vendors, assigns each vendor a

[85] The only special event that has needed help from the Theme Committee since I moved to the area in 2011 has been FinnFest USA 2013. The group provided volunteer docents to help greet and assist visitors to the Finnish American Heritage Center. Many members additionally volunteered on their own with other aspects of the festival.

particular space, collects their fees, works with the local health department to ensure the food service operations are in compliance with regulations, and troubleshoots on behalf of vendors as they set up for the festival, and during the festival itself.

Other times, multiple members will collaborate on aspects of the festival. In publicizing the event, Jim Kurtti and Dave Maki use their ethnic and local media contacts to share information, ensuring that Finnish ethnic organizations and regional news outlets (print, television, and radio) will share the information with their audiences. Sometimes, however, scheduling television and radio interviews requires bringing in other committee members, either to highlight a particular aspect of the festival that may be of special interest that year, or because of a schedule conflict that doesn't allow Jim or Dave to give the interview themselves.

In addition to Heikinpäivä, the committee provides support for other Finnish cultural activities in the area, particularly those held at the Finnish American Heritage Center. In my time in public programming at the center, I could always rely on Theme Committee members to provide hospitality for events ranging from the annual Finnish Independence Day celebration to periodic lectures and music performances. An impressive table, laden with traditional *pulla* bread, prune tarts, open-faced sandwiches, and even miniature *piirakka* tarts, all served with hot Finnish coffee, was the invariable result.[86] Committee members also take tickets at paid events, and serve in other similar functions. Their participation at such events not only puts this arm of both the Finlandia Foundation and the city government into the public eye, but it expands the reach of the group's activities in ways that benefit both the Finnish American Heritage Center and the committee itself.

[86] *Pulla* is a traditional sweet bread flavored with cardamom, while *piirakka* tarts, also described in Chapter One, are open-faced savory wheat tarts filled with a rice and milk filling. These and similar foods, along with strong coffee, are considered hallmarks of Finnish hospitality, both on casual, home-based levels, and at more formal affairs in Finnish American communities. See Roberts 1989, Ojakangas 1964:32-33, Kaplan, Hoover, and Moore 1986:155-156). Foodways in festival culture will be discussed further in this chapter.

The transition of the committee's work from a focus on economic development to a focus on cultural development has helped the committee to survive and to even thrive. The City of Hancock, in response, has maintained financial support for the committee, primarily for delivery of the festival each year. As we will see later, though, this does put some unique constraints on how the festival is executed, which are intended to keep the city as the focal point of the festival itself. Overall, though, the committee and the City are beneficial to one another. Because of the Finnish Theme Committee, Hancock—and much of the rest of the Copper Country—marks the midpoint of winter in a way that also marks the continued presence and importance of Finnish heritage in the area.

Jim Kurtti

If the working force behind Heikinpäivä comes from the members of the Finnish Theme Committee, the creative force behind it is very much Jim Kurtti, who is currently co-chair of the committee. As I have illustrated, without Jim Kurtti, Heikinpäivä would not have been created, but too, perhaps, without Heikinpäivä, Jim also would not be the force in the Finnish American community, locally and internationally, that he is today.

Jim is a person who very consciously lives in ways incorporating his Finnish heritage into many aspects of his everyday and celebratory life. Like many local residents, he has a sauna in his home. He has national dress models representing both his Finnish and Sami roots, which he wears alternately at appropriate ethnic celebrations. His Finnish language skills and his broad understanding of many aspects of the culture and history of Finland are also impressive. His knowledge of not only his own genealogy but of the genealogical connections between longstanding local families is phenomenal, and he often surprises individuals with his ability to connect to them through knowledge of their relations. He has become a popular attendee and

presenter at national and regional Finnish ethnic festivals, where, when he is walking through the crowd, he is typically stopped every few feet by another acquaintance, happy to see him.

A native of the farming community of Bruce Crossing in southern Houghton County, Jim Kurtti grew up in an environment where being an ethnic Finn was not as marked with stigma as it is in other Copper Country communities, and so Finnish ethnic practices, including language use, craft traditions, and more, could be performed, un-self-consciously, both in private and public spheres (interview, April 3, 2014). Though he has come to be identified strongly with his Finnish heritage (which also is considered to include his Sami ancestry), Jim's own family tree also bears German, Irish, and French Canadian roots, all of which also interest and engage him in various ways.

From a very young age, Jim was fascinated by the culture of the immigrant and post-immigrant generations in Bruce Crossing, not limiting himself just to Finns, but also Germans (and Russian-Germans), Irish and others. He took notice of cultural practices such as the use of agricultural proverbs, and even recorded oral histories with elders in his community as a young adult (Waters 1990:44-46). Over time, his vast understanding of local culture and the ethnic communities that created it has made him an asset to many in the broader community (see Pulera 2004).

He attended Suomi College, then a junior college, where he witnessed some of the last aspects of the institution's traditional Finnish daily life, including staff who spoke Finnish amongst themselves. He went on to study at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where he incorporated Finnish Studies into his bachelor's program, even studying in Helsinki, before graduating and returning to Upper Michigan to take a job in the juvenile court division at the Houghton County Courthouse.

Even with a day job and later a young family, Jim incorporated his interest in Finnish American and Finnish cultures, again, among others, into his avocational pursuits, engaging in genealogical research and participating in FinnFest in 1990 as a presenter, among other things. By 1995, the Hancock Public Schools determined to offer Finnish language coursework to high school students after a student interest survey revealed that adding this class to the curriculum was the top pick among students. Jim was hired to teach this class, using his lunch break from the courthouse each day to do it.[87] That same year, a distance learning classroom had been installed at each of the high schools in Houghton County, and Jim taught at Hancock, while broadcasting to students in Houghton, Lake Linden, and to me in Painesdale.[88]

Jim was also active in other areas of the Finnish American community, including such conferences as Project 34 and certain FinnFests and online genealogical forums, but Heikinpäivä brought Jim onto a wider stage, which has grown ever since. He has generally come to be considered a key player in many aspects of Finnish ethnic life in North America (see Pulera 2004), and this expansion of visibility has helped him to expand his body of work within the community. This has also allowed him to expand his persona as a traditional Copper Country Finn who simultaneously engages in the worlds of Finnish American and Finnish cultures, successfully navigating their nuanced differences. Not only does this deep understanding allow him to participate in these areas of culture for his own enjoyment and benefit, but, as we have seen with the development of Heikinpäivä, he is also able to work elements of tradition into

[87] In this development of skills and continued connections with others in the Finnish ethnic community, Jim reveals skills similar to those of Wisconsin based Norwegian American artist Oljanna Venden Cunneen who "gradually incorporated aspects of her heritage culture into her economic strategies," which brought her esteem in her community both as a traditional artist and as a culture broker (Gilmore 2008:31-32).

[88] I fought to be enrolled in this class, which was scheduled at the same time that senior English and speech, required classes, were offered, and the principal and superintendent at Jeffers both saw, perhaps, that this would lead me on a lifelong path, and so they finally agreed to create alternate English work for me.

forms that have renewed meaning both for him and for others. The results of his work draw people both inside of the ethnic and regional community, and outside of it, making him comparable to other culture brokers.

In 2000, Suomi College changed its name to Finlandia University, and completed a transition into a four-year college. At the same time, a remarkable transfer was in the works. The *Finnish American Reporter*, a newspaper created by the Työmies Society, publishers of the recently-defunct *Työmies-Eteenpäin*, sought a new home and editorial staff for the monthly, general interest ethnic paper, and Finlandia University appeared to be the most reliable institution to do this.[89] Dave Maki was hired first to serve as staff on the paper, and Jim joined him shortly after as the paper's editor, also serving as the director of the Finnish American Heritage Center, and the two have worked together ever since.

In this new career as both editor of the paper and director of the center, though of course much administrative and detail work is required, Jim has really allowed himself to dream big ideas and then to make them happen. Just as, when he was a language instructor, Jim designed imaginative activities that really taught the students about Finnish culture (including arranging for *kantele* performances, and even staging a traditional *Sankta Lucia*[90] morning ritual at his own home), he has overseen the creation and delivery of highly successful programs that engage both

[89] This is remarkable because of the history of the paper and the university: from 1904-1914, the editorial offices and printing facilities of *Työmies* had been located in Hancock. During the Copper Strike of 1913-1914, *Työmies* had been a leading voice in support of the striking workers while Suomi College came out in opposition of them (see Kaunonen 2009, Hummasti 1977, Puotinen 1977). With the end of the strike in 1914, *Työmies* relocated to Superior, Wisconsin, but with a change in the role of ethnic journalism and a need to find a stable home for the paper, Finlandia University became the Työmies Society's choice.

[90] This celebration, based on the December 13 saint day of Lucia, is popular among Swedes, Finland-Swedes, and their ethnic communities in America. As Kurtti presented it, the ritual consisted of the eldest daughter serving the eldest woman of the house in bed on the morning of this saint's day, followed by younger children who sang the carol associated with her. This constructed event incorporated students and local community members. The saint is currently presented in the Heikinpäivä parade as one of the costumed folklore characters. For more on traditions of this saint in America, see Danielson 1991. Leea Virtanen and Thomas DuBois (2000:54-55) and Österlund-Pötzsch (2010:203) offer a description of this festival among Finland-Swedes in Finland.

Finns and those outside of the ethnic community alike, including the Nordic Film Series, the annual Finnish Folk Music Camp, and occasional lectures, exhibits, and more.

My favorite times as an intern and employee at the Finnish American Heritage Center were when Jim told stories about elders and their lives, and when we would brainstorm about ways to create dynamic, interesting programs for the community. His aptitude for really getting at the heart of Finnish identities in the Copper Country and his ability to plan programs that acknowledge, celebrate and expand upon these identities is quite remarkable. During my first few months at the center, while planning the fall schedule of programs, we agreed that a recent documentary, *Suddenly Sami,* would be an excellent film to show, but it was rather short to be considered as a stand-alone selection for the Nordic Film Series. After a brainstorming session, in which Jim made connections with Becky Hoekstra's work securing appropriate materials to hand-sew a *gakti* for herself, and the weavings of Eileen Sundquist, then a student in the art school at Finlandia. Jim also felt the event could serve as a forum for the discussion on whether to form a Copper Country chapter of the Sami Siida of North America, and so we decided to create an event incorporating all of these elements.

The film, which tells the story of a Norwegian woman who gradually comes to understand that her mother is of Sami ancestry, was an excellent springboard from which we could invite the audience, facilitated by Jim, Becky, and Eileen, to discuss the role Sami heritage plays in local Finnish ethnicity. Jim wore his *gakti* to the event, Becky brought her *gakti*-in-progress, focusing largely on the process of selecting an appropriate dress model representative of her localized Sami heritage (in Finland) and procuring the necessary materials, and Eileen brought a wide array of items she had woven, discussing how she had come to understand her own Sami and Finnish heritage and to incorporate it into her weavings, both hand-made and

using CAD software. Audience members also brought their own items to the event, to contribute to a discussion on discovery and acknowledgment of Sami culture in their own lives.

These gifts of imagination, persuasion, and activation are probably Jim's three greatest qualities as a worker in general and as a culture broker. By "activation," I mean that Jim recognizes the opportunities that others may present, and he actively works to bring them into the inner workings of the festival, the Heritage Center, or to other projects that he sees as connecting people to the work he does. In the instance of the film and discussion session described above, we can see these three factors very clearly. Jim came up with an *imaginative* way of incorporating a film we knew was too short to stand alone with recent interests in Sami culture that had been expressed by others, namely Becky Hoekstra and Eileen Sundquist, who were equally invited to take part in the discussion. By persuading each to take part in this presentation, and by opening the discussion to the audience, with the possibility of forming a new local Sami organization, Jim casts a wide net that invites everyone to take part in the conversation.[91]

For some, it is hard to see the places where Jim's imagination goes as a given program is being designed, and he has discussed this with me several times, including in one interview (April 3, 2014) when we discussed initial misgivings among some toward creating Heikinpäivä: "[I saw] how difficult it was, not to talk people into it, but to get them to envision what I was saying. I found that without an experience, people couldn't really imagine what you're talking about. […] Once they did it, it got to be so much easier." Since talking Finnish Theme Committee members into instituting Heikinpäivä, he has also secured commitments from Finlandia University administration to grow and renovate the Finnish American Heritage Center,

[91] This event was open not only to those of Sami heritage, but also those who were simply interested in the culture, which many Finnish Americans are. Some with no Sami heritage even brought in their own mementos of trips to Sapmi as material focal points to discuss their own understandings of Sami culture.

and he somehow convinced the entire Copper Country to host FinnFest USA 2013, which was a terribly daunting proposition for most of the time we worked on it.

This vision is paired with an uncompromising perfectionism, and in the end, Jim Kurtti has never been associated with a failed program, and many individuals and organizations in the region are better off for his work. Even when the office is a fluster of activity, Jim will take the time to relate a story he remembered about the funeral of my socialist great-great-grandfather or to wonder about the origins of a song game practiced by Germans in Bruce Crossing, which appeared to be a method of circumventing prohibitions against dancing. Just as he can focus on a big picture project and work intensely on carrying it off flawlessly and insisting that we all do the same, he also stops to reflect on the true *stuff* of our work, and the reason we do it. It winds up connecting us all.

In addition to his career at the Finnish American Heritage Center and the *Finnish American Reporter* and his co-chair position in the Finnish Theme Committee, Jim is also a board member of the Salolampi Finnish Language Village and Honorary Consul of Finland to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He makes effective use of the networks that exist across the Finnish American and Finnish ethnic community, and proves himself useful to them in many ways. For him, life, work, and heritage are often inseparable aspects of his whole self.

From Year One to Repeat Performance

In the fifteen years since the festival was founded, Heikinpäivä organizers have experimented with new programs and variations on established programs in order to maintain and expand interest in the festival over time, with some events being resounding hits, some being less than popular, and some only available for inclusion during a given year. A proper balance of recurring activities and novel events must thus be planned each year. While some years' success

or failure can be measured on the merits of these activities themselves, additional factors including weather, competing events, business decisions, and the unforeseen can also affect attendance and general outcome.

In 2000, the second annual Heikinpäivä festival took place, also in the course of one day, but with a greatly-expanded roster of activities, primarily in the area of winter sports. This development came as the result of a single volunteer who offered to plan and coordinate a series of winter games on the Hancock waterfront, including dog sled racing, skijoring,[92] snow shoe racing, cross-country ski racing, and snowshoe *pesäpallo*, a wintertime variation on Finnish baseball. The Polar Bear Dive also took place along the waterfront, creating a cohesive program of activities that complemented the more culturally-focused program taking place among the Finnish American Heritage Center, First United Methodist Church, and Quincy Green.

This level of sports programming, however, would not continue as the volunteer who created and managed this strong program soon moved to Alaska, and, as will be seen with other aspects of the festival, a strong replacement volunteer was not found to maintain all aspects of this component, particularly skijoring, which required suitable dogs and a clear track for the skiers. The cross-country ski race did remain in various forms for quite awhile, and a foot race was incorporated for several years. A program of family-friendly sledding and games was later incorporated (as described below), but aspects of this, too, are difficult to maintain over time as no additional leadership and new activities have been introduced in many years. As will be seen below, the festival has expanded and contracted in response to a number of developments, both beneficial and detrimental to the event. Within a few short years, however, the festival would expand from a one-day affair based solely in Hancock to a constellation of events sprinkled across the month of January in several area communities, with shifting focuses adding to an

[92] Skijoring is an activity in which people are pulled on cross country skis by dogs.

established roster of activities that would become traditional to the event itself. Heikinpäivä was here to stay.

Mainstays and Fluctuations

The Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival, in a basic sense, remains true to its original design as one day of extensive activity, which has been normalized to take place on the last full weekend of January each year. On the Saturday of that weekend, known as "Heikinpäivä Big Day" among festival planners, attendees can expect a parade, winter games and sledding on Quincy Green, tori markets in the Finnish American Heritage Center and the First United Methodist Church, the Polar Bear Dive held along the waterfront, a banquet of traditional Finnish foods, and a dance featuring regionally-popular Finnish American musicians. Before this day, however, a number of activities have also become important components of the festival, both as a result of direct activity through Finnish Theme Committee members, and as a result of collaborations between members and other organizations to which they may belong and even organizations with no ties to the Theme Committee at all.

Beverly Stoeltje (1983) recognizes essential features within a given festival event including: a set time and place, an opening ceremony, ritual, drama and contest, a concluding event, music and food, outside performers, and participation (241-243). These features correspond to the pattern of core activities that are presented at the festival's "Big Day" each year. As has been described above, this final day of the Heikinpäivä activities takes place each year on the last full weekend of January.

Parade

The parade, as the "official opening ceremony," both "displays the existing social structure and confirms the values" of the community (Stoeltje 1983:241) and "initiate[s]

energies" and "organize the celebrants for mutual fun and profit" (Abrahams 1982:167). The parade, starting at 11 am, features a regular roster of official Heikinpäivä costumes as well as the inclusion of individual float and participant entries, including youth organizations, families, and local businesses, among others. The Heikinpäivä costumes include characters drawn from Finnish and Finnish American folklore and were created in 2001 as a collaboration between Becky Weeks, a student in Finlandia University's School of Art and Design, and the Finnish Theme Committee (see Chapter Five). The parade offers three cash prizes to participants, excluding the Finnish Theme Committee costumes, and thus offers a small impetus for community members to be creative participants in the event. Participants dressed in either the Finnish Theme Committee's folklore costumes or their own creations ideally contribute what Stoeltje calls "drama and contest," both through enacting the stories that the costumes represent (as illustrated in the Introduction to this dissertation) and the "social conflicts" and "reverse orders" that these figures represent (1983:241-242). Those eligible to compete for cash prizes, too, participate in the structure of "contest" within the event, a structure which we will also see elsewhere.

Other participants include marching bands from Finlandia University and Michigan Technological University, an honor guard from a local high school ROTC, and of course, Hankooki Heikki, in full regalia. Often, Hankooki Heikki has ridden in a special sleigh or a horse-drawn wagon, but in 2012 and 2014, the honoree rode along the route in the seat of "Big Louie, arguably the world's largest kicksled." This kicksled, created by Ed Sauvola of Chassell, is usually kept on Quincy Green, where tourists often take portraits with it, but, mounted with tires, the sled is paraded down the street each year, often carrying Hankooki Heikki.

Upon being built and placed on Quincy Green, the sled was named after legendary giant of the Copper Country, Louis Moilanen (1885-1913). Big Louie is remembered to this day in local lore, and "relics" of the giant are found in local museums, including one of his family farm's out buildings at the Houghton County Historical Museum in Lake Linden, and one of his shoes at the Finnish American Heritage Center. The Heritage Center is also home to a black granite monument stone that stands eight feet three inches tall, Moilanen's height. Located just outside the entryway to the center, the monument bears a photographic etching of Moilanen, and details of his life in both Finnish and English.[93] Because we had heard that there might be a similar Texas-sized kicksled in Norway, Dave Maki ordered a banner alluding to the possibility that the sled was not the biggest. The kicksled, called a *potkukelkka* in Finnish, is very traditional in the Nordic countries, and it is very popular at Heikinpäivä.

The parade also expands and contracts, depending on a number of factors, often most influential of which is weather. At the 2014 parade, it was noted that the vast majority of marchers consisted of Finnish Theme Committee costumes, and that there were no businesses, which is highly unusual and, at the festival's wrap-up meeting, was attributed to the poor weather the day of the parade (notes, February 4, 2014).

Tori

The Tori market is one of the festival's strongest components, and a major factor in its long-term success.[94] Taking place as it does in one of the slowest seasons for craft vendors, the

[93] Both objects are highly prized by the curators of the institutions that own them. At the Houghton County Historical Society Museum, the Moilanen outbuilding is made known with prominent signage. While Moilanen's shoe at the Finnish American Heritage Center has no signage but, due to its immense size, often, if staff do not make a point of showing it to visitors, the visitors will ask unsolicited. Louie Moilanen is discussed briefly in Kaunonen (2010:3).

[94] Robert Lavenda, describing festivals in Minnesota, particularly highlights the appeal that festival shopping has for attendees due to its "unpredictability" (1997:59). Although certain vendors come annually to Heikinpäivä, and thus, their general merchandise can be guessed, the fact that they are crafters and home producers contributes to the great variability of merchandise from year to year.

festival serves to boost the local economy at the same time it provides attendees with entertainment, including music and craft demonstrations. Attendees can enjoy such entertainment either while warming up from outside, or as a complete alternative to outdoor activity. As we will see, these settings provide one of the key venues for music and food at the festival, other components Stoeltje also lists as one of the important event structures (1983:242).

Food at these markets is provided by several local vendors, including the First United Methodist Church, the Kangas Café, and the Finnish Theme Committee. Some of the food offered is portable and can be eaten while meandering through the market, but most requires the eater to enjoy it in the seating areas. While the role of food will be discussed in much more detail throughout the dissertation, feasting is yet another element of festival structures that Stoeltje highlights as key: much of the food offered "[expresses] the identity of the group" and thus has far deeper meanings beyond merely eating (1983:242).

Within a few years of its foundation, the popularity of the Tori demanded that it be expanded to two locations, and so the First United Methodist Church became a convenient location as it is on the east end of Quincy Green, and does not require attendees to leave the general area. The Tori at the Finnish American Heritage Center is still considered to be the primary location, contrary to the wishes of festival organizers, and sometimes this is reflected in vendors' space requests. In 2014, one vendor refused to participate unless being stationed in the Heritage Center.

Overall, both run smoothly and receive ample foot traffic. Key considerations for the markets include ensuring that adequate and varied foods are available at each location, that musical entertainments and craft demonstrators are provided at each site, and that a suitable variety of vendors are represented at each site. While the vendor application privileges vendors

that sell Nordic and regional products over others, a variety of products that do not represent these identities are also available. Vendors regularly sell handmade knit items, jewelry, home décor items (often incorporating typical Northwoods motifs), rag rugs, locally-produced jams, or self-published books of local interest, to name a few. Finland is represented most strongly in two booths, both operated by native Finns who relocated to the Upper Peninsula. Finnsight offers Finnish baked goods, Finnish language-learning materials, and gifts, while Tanja Stanaway offers imported Finnish coffees, candies, and gift items, in addition to CDs of her own Finnish folk music performances.

Figure Ten: Kivajat Dancer Audrey Stewart (left) takes a break with family following a performance at the First United Methodist Church Tori, Heikinpäivä 2012. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

Family Fun Day Games

Following the parade, spectators either enter one of the toris or attend and participate in games on the lawn of Quincy Green. Initially featuring only the Finnish whip sled *(vipukelkka)* built by Stuart Olson of Toivola and Arvo Onermaa of Hancock, the games have served to fill

the void left by the reduction of the waterfront winter games, and to increase family participation in the event as a whole. This event is called "Family Fun Day," and allows for both competitive and free play. In addition to the free play offered on the whip sled, a wife-carrying race and a kick sled race take place.

These events provide more elements of "drama and contest," according to Stoeltje's model (1983:241), which highlight aspects of opposition between participants through competition, which Stoeltje stresses, is directly related to components of competitiveness in modern American culture (242, see also Gabbert 2011:165-167).

The wife-carrying race, along with a now-discontinued boot-throwing contest using a real Nokia rubber boot (one of several products of the Nokia corporation before the cell phone), was introduced to Heikinpäivä after Jim and Debbie Kurtti attended a Canadian Grand Festival in Thunder Bay in 2002. Both games enjoyed a level of popularity in Thunder Bay, and so Jim and Debbie recommended that both might be good additions to the roster of games.

The wife-carrying contest (as well as the discontinued boot-throwing event), though incorporated by Jim Kurtti based on his experience at a Canadian festival, actually does have roots in Finland. The Heikinpäivä website[95] features a section on games which acknowledges Finland's Wife-Carrying Championship (held in Sonkajärvi since 1992) and also mentions that this competition is tied to a wife-stealer named Rosvo-Ronkainen (Ronkainen the Thief) who lived in the late 1800s and took women for his own. The phenomenon appears in ballads such as "Isontalon Antti and Rannanjärvi," a song long maintained by Finnish Americans that tells how two violent young men kidnapped the wife of the Sheriff of Härmä (a community in Western Finland) and is based on a true story.

[95] http://www.pasty.com/heikki/games.html, accessed May 30, 2014.

Marjorie Edgar (1949) details the persistence of these songs in Minnesota in the 1940s, but they still can be heard today, though not often at Heikinpäivä. Several years ago, a friend from high school recalled the visit of famous Finnish musician J. Karjalainen in 2007, who made three concept albums based on Finnish American traditional music. He claims he found himself and a handful of others, likely drunk, singing this most famous of the knife fighter ballads with J. Karjalainen behind the Mosquito Bar in Toivola.[96]

Figures Eleven and Twelve: Audrey Stewart (left) in the traditional vipukelkka built by Stuart Olson of Toivola and Arvo Onermaa of Hancock. Heikinpäivä 2008. Anneli Stewart and Timothy Gary (right) use a potkukelkka. Heikinpäivä 2012. Photographs by Hilary Virtanen.

The sporting components, then, both tie to traditional culture in Finland and among Finnish Americans and create unique connections to modern Finland. Interestingly, this activity takes a negative stereotype of Finnish men, that of being knife-wielding thugs, and neutralizes the imagery associated with it through playful competition.

[96] Isontalon Antti and Rannanjärvi do figure into the parade, where, as part of the miniature dramas staged within, the two can be seen immediately behind a traditional crown wedding party, which they heckle and "threaten" throughout the parade route. For Heikinpäivä 2012, Houghton County Sheriff Brian McLean marched in the parade in uniform with the knife fighters in shackles, presenting the second half of the story of the bride thieves, in which they are captured and imprisoned.

Polar Bear Dive

The Polar Bear Dive is another aspect of broader winter festival popular culture that has been incorporated into Heikinpäivä quite successfully, though with some speed bumps the past few years. At first this event was sponsored and carried out by the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity of Michigan Technological University. This event requires a lot of deep planning, as the most dangerous of festival events. Jim Kurtti remembers his anxiety as he attended this event for the first time: "I remember the first year, we were walking down to the ice, and all of a sudden I had this moment of clarity. I thought, 'Oh my god, I've led these people to their death'" (interview, April 3, 2014). In that first year, approximately 25 participants dove into the canal, and the event grew significantly for several years, with over 200 divers participating for several years in the mid-2000s.

This event, too, fits into Stoeltje's structures of "drama and contest" (1983:241-242) as well as "ritual" (p. 241). For this event, participants may either dive for the joy of it or dive competitively, with prizes for categories including best dive and best costume. A small fee is paid for both categories of diving, and judges watch the proceedings. Drama is also employed in the use of costuming, and even dramatic, and amusing performances that divers stage before jumping into the water to complete the act.

Ritual in this sense is not associated with such categories as "rituals of affliction" that help to manipulate luck or "life-crisis rituals" that bring an individual from one important stage of life to another (Turner 1967:7-9). According to Stoeltje, "modern secular festivals tend to situate the ritual privately where a limited group attends" (1983:241). Examples of such rituals in a modern context include festival queen coronations and even religious activities that are less formal in scope than religious events outside of the festival context. At the Polar Bear Dive,

aspects of ritual exist in the fact that some participants dive in for deeply personal reasons, despite the large audience that witnesses the event.[97]

Additionally, many of these participants can be considered to be "outside performers" (see Stoeltje 1983:242). The Polar Bear Dive is the sole aspect of Heikinpäivä that has no direct connection to Finnish traditions, and as such, the event attracts many who do not come to the festival for its Finnish elements; for some, the Polar Bear Dive is the only component of the festival that they will attend or participate directly in. Conversely, many who come especially for the cultural aspects do not attend the Polar Bear Dive, even as spectators.

Early in its history, the event was moved to the Ramada Inn, just down the street from Porvoo Park in Hancock. This arrangement was ideal for spectators and divers for several reasons. First, divers had an opportunity to change clothes and warm up in the Ramada's pool and sauna. Additionally, spectators often filled the bar at the Ramada, contributing to food and beverage sales.[98]

When I first started work at the Finnish American Heritage Center, and began to help on Heikinpäivä 2012, it became apparent that the Ramada Inn was not going to let the Polar Bear Dive take place with their support anymore. According to management, speaking on behalf of distant owners,[99] the cost incurred by divers using the swimming pool and sauna area during the event was too high. The water apparently became so dirty that the pool had to be drained and refilled. With only a few months until the festival was to take place, Finnish Theme Committee

[97] Elements of ritual in the Polar Bear Dive will be explored further in Chapter Six.
[98] As will be shown, restaurant patrons were clearly not enough of an impetus for Ramada owners to continue sponsoring the event through use of the facilities. The restaurant within the Ramada is under separate management than the hotel itself, and so it is also possible that management of each respective establishment had opposing views on the costs and benefits of the Polar Bear Dive.
[99] This incident was the subject of much dismay among Finnish Theme Committee members, and discussions surrounding it often centered on the fact that the facility's owners live in California and have no ties to the community, making them less approachable and their decisions less debatable than might have been the case had locals or perhaps ethnic Finns been the owners.

members had to look to other locations for this event. The Super 8 motel, just across the canal in Houghton and similarly conveniently located on the waterfront, was suggested as a possibility, fortuitously owned by a local, active businesswoman of Finnish American descent.[100] The problem with this suggestion was the fact that, because the festival's central elements are expected to be held in Hancock, a location in Houghton was out of the question.

Figure Thirteen: A group dives into the Portage Canal in the 2009 Polar Bear Dive. Note the MTU Aquanauts stationed in the water and next to it, with attached tether. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

The problem was solved for 2012 when the owners of the Copper Island Beach Club, a waterfront bar and restaurant next to the event's original site at Porvoo Park, offered to allow divers to use their establishment as a warming and changing area.

Unfortunately, the day of the event, the owners realized that their location was not the ideal site for the Polar Bear Dive: between the large crowd of spectators who packed the place as well as the 150 divers running, soaking wet, into the building to change, the beautiful wooden floors of the Beach Club were covered in nearly an inch of water in some areas. The event was

[100] The Super 8's owner, Ruth Wisti, is a friend of the Finnish American Heritage Center in many aspects.

not invited back in 2013, and indeed, due to a lack of feasible solutions, the Polar Bear Dive was cancelled that year, to the dismay of many who had come to consider the event a rite of passage for local college students and others incorporating themselves into the area.

By 2014, the Finnish Theme Committee determined to hold the event once again, and with cooperation from the owners of the Copper Island Beach Club, a compromise was made in which warming tents were set up inside of a covered outdoor pavilion on the tavern grounds, and just off of the docks. Though it was a far cry from its peak, the event attracted 46 divers, and a large audience ready to reincorporate this event back into the festival.[101] While it is certain that aspects of this event still need to be finessed, the fact that it has returned to the festival schedule is remarkable and brings hope that the Theme Committee will be able to find reasonable solutions for a sponsoring venue.

Banquet

Related perhaps more closely to Stoeltje's discussion of food and music structures in the festival is the banquet, where a scheduled feast is offered for attendees to come together for food that is tied strongly to beliefs about group identity, and that serves as "a metaphor for the closeness of the community" (Lavenda 1997:43). Building on the success of the first banquet, or *seisovapöytä,* subsequent Heikinpäivä festivals have kept this as an indispensible feature, though aspects of it have changed over time. In the early years, the banquet was so popular, that over 200 tickets would often be sold, and people were turned away who had not bought tickets on time. During these first few years, caterers (often associated with Finlandia University) submitted bids for providing the dinner, and offered elaborate menus, including such traditional Finnish dishes as Karelian ragout, cold-smoked salmon, multiple root vegetables, prune tarts and

[101] Overall, attendance at the 2014 festival was observably lower than previous years, but the cancellation of the 2013 Polar Bear Dive did contribute to an air of uncertainty toward the 2014 Dive, despite attempts by the Finnish Theme Committee to advertise its reappearance on the roster far and wide.

strawberry cream cakes, and much more. This aspect of the festival has certainly contracted, largely because of the great expense of providing such a menu, but even in a reduced capacity, local Finnish American Norma Nominelli provides an excellent—and traditional—feast each year, using the licensed kitchen at Zion Lutheran Church as the site of the banquet.

Aspects of the menu that speak to traditionality include the emphasis on foods associated with holidays and special occasions, and the use of a menu that features both Finnish and English-language names for the dishes.

Figure Fourteen: Heikinpäivä banquet 2014, Zion Lutheran Church. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

For several years, the banquet and dance were both held on the campus of Finlandia University in the dormitory hall's cafeteria. Following renovations to the cafeteria in 2011, the banquet moved to the church. This caused one small complication in that, as an Apostolic Lutheran Church, Zion Lutheran is not a location where dancing is permitted.[102] Overall,

[102] Musical performance is permitted, however. *Kantele* classes in 2014 were scheduled to take place in the church's sanctuary, and at the banquet in 2014, Finn Hall, a popular Finnish American band from Minneapolis, performed informally at the end of the meal.

however, the church provides an excellent cooking and dining facility, and it is one more way to broaden community participation in the festival as a whole.

The banquet and the dance both serve as "concluding events" and as "rituals" according to Stoeltje (1983:242). As the day wears on among participants of the "Big Day" events, more and more start to leave the event. By the time of the banquet, many festival attendees have left the event, and so a much smaller number of participants will attend the banquet and dance events. At the banquet, regular attendees are more common than casual visitors, and patterns for eating are well-established among this group. The most noticeable aspect of this is, though the banquet starts at 6 pm, arriving even 10 or 15 minutes past the hour puts one at risk of missing some of the food. Most of the banquet attendees arrive early and are not made to wait for their food, but rather, invited to dig right in. Norma Nominelli knows to expect this.[103] Following the banquet, some attendees conclude their participation in the festival. Often, elderly attendees are concerned about long rides home in the dark and typically snowy night. Others also may not enjoy dancing or may not participate in the dance for religious reasons.

[103] Early arrival at events such as the banquet and at regular events at the Finnish American Heritage Center is fairly common among many regular attendees. During my time at the Finnish American Heritage Center, it was not uncommon for attendees to start arriving up to 40 minutes before a program was to begin and I learned quite fast to make sure that all my major preparations for programs were complete about an hour before they were to start. Anecdotally, Finns are known for being perfectly on schedule or slightly early and so I tend to associate this behavior with attempts to conform—and possibly exceed—this positive stereotype.

Figure Fifteen: Members of Finn Hall Band from Minneapolis and Roger Hewlett (second from left) perform at the Heikinpäivä 2014 banquet as attendees leave for the dance. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

Dance

The role of the dance has also stayed quite consistent over the years, while aspects such as venue have shifted, similarly to the banquet. Dance is an important feature of many festivals, connecting to Stoeltje's recognition of "music and food" as important components of a festival event. In a Finnish American context, dancing relates to the fact that Finn Hall dances were an important aspect of socializing and courtship for many years (see Luoma 1994), and so aspects of "ritual" can again be seen here. At Heikinpäivä as well as at FinnFest USA and other festivals, the enthusiasm for dance is undeniable, and the floor is usually populated by couples who dance the entire evening.

For those not accustomed to the vigorous traditional paired dances that Finnish Americans love so much, participating can be a terrifying experience. During my first Finnish dance at a St. Urho's Day party at the Finnish Cultural Center in Farmington Hills, the local folk band Soittoniekat performed a traditional roster of music, which to my then-untrained ears,

sounded like polka after polka. I agreed to dance with the man crowned as St. Urho that evening, who brought me out to the floor to teach me the schottische. This dance, incorporating traditional dance poses (one set of hands clasped, other arms on a back, shoulder, or waist) with side-by-side skipping steps, was a poor choice for my first attempts on the Finnish American dance floor, and I nearly took St. Urho 2004 down by tripping him. It took quite awhile for me to dance much again, and though I still won't *schottische,* I did dance the *raatikko* (another rather complicated dance) and the tango at the Heikinpäivä 2014 dance.

For quite awhile, two dances were on the schedule at Heikinpäivä: that which took place following the banquet, and another dance the previous evening known as the *Karhun Tanssit* (Bear's Dance). This event was held for most of its run at the South Range Community Hall, about five miles south of Hancock, but during its last year in 2011, it was sponsored by the Michigan Tech Social Dance Club and held on the campus of Michigan Tech.

Styles of dance include typical Finnish American styles including polka, *raatikko, jenkka,* and even the tango, still exotic among the traditional base of Finnish Americans, but increasing in popularity due to exposure through visits to Finland, the influence of Finnish-born snowbirds and musicians, and other factors. Several times, dance lessons have been offered to increase the number of attendees proficient in the dances themselves. This is considered especially important as those on the dance floor continue to age, and younger community members do not typically join in.

Live performers recognized for their talents in Finnish American folk music are selected for this event each year, many of whom have been recognized by the Michigan Traditional Arts Program for their talents. The regular participants in the dance expect particular songs long popular among Finnish Americans and well-known by these performers (see Leary 1987, 1994).

While many of these songs are Finnish American (including songs by Hiski Salomaa, Arthur Kylander and the legendary Viola Turpeinen), others are originally from Finland. Rarely, performers also draw from the broad interethnic base of dance music popular in the Upper Midwest to present songs of French Canadian, Irish, and even Croatian origin.

At Heikinpäivä 2013, the PasiCats, a band with a repertoire incorporating Finnish American favorites with tango and pop hits from Finland, performed at the dance. As a younger band (most of the members are under 40) led by a Finnish national, Pasi Lautala, the PasiCats expand the potential for intergenerational participation in the festival's dance by incorporating music that can appeal to both old and young.[104]

Figure Sixteen: Rosann and Eero Angeli of Ironwood, Michigan at the Heikinpäivä 2014 Dance, Finnish American Heritage Center. The Angelis frequently offer dance workshops at Finnish American events, as well as a wide variety of other programs for Finnish ethnic communities across the Midwest. Note Rosann's shoes, which are traditionally worn among Finnish folk dance groups, and as a part of Finnish national dress ensembles. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

[104] Though this particular dance was rather poorly attended due to bad weather, I have seen the PasiCats perform at a folk festival on the campus of Northern Michigan University in Marquette in 2009, where the audience was composed largely of college students who all seemed to really enjoy the mix of traditional and modern dance music. Some of the students even knew how to dance the proper steps.

When the banquet was moved to the Zion Lutheran Church in 2012, the dance was necessarily relocated to accommodate the fact that it would be inappropriate to hold the dance in the church too. In 2012, the dance was moved to the Little Gem Theatre, a venue in Lake Linden over 10 miles from Hancock. The event was arranged so that dance lessons were offered and then a main dance started an hour later. The distance between the banquet and the theatre made it obvious that this would not work in the future.

In 2013, Heikinpäivä was, through sheer necessity, envisioned as an event complementary to FinnFest USA 2013, and as such, many activities were either reduced in scope to defer to the grandiosity of our coming festival in June, or tailored to highlight the coming festival and many of its unique attractions. As a result, the dance was conceived as a FinnFest Kickoff and held at the Brownstone Hall in Atlantic Mine, a facility owned by FinnFest USA 2013 Managing Director Susie Landers.[105] At this event, door prizes, silent auctions, unique foods including reindeer sausage catered by the executive chef at Portage Health, multiple musical performers and the first taste of the Keweenaw Brewing Company's special FinnFest beer, Kippis, created an atmosphere of excitement. The event attracted a number of regular attendees, as well as community members associated with various aspects of FinnFest, though not typical attendees at Finnish cultural events.

In 2013, the issue of appropriate space for future dances was resolved when the entire theatre of the Finnish American Heritage Center was refloored in wood and made perfect for dancing. This meant that the entire Tori layout would have to be removed and the room reconfigured and tidied up for the evening dance. At Heikinpäivä 2014, the Finlandia University

[105] Because the dance was held outside of the Hancock city limits, the funds made available to the Finnish Theme Committee through the City of Hancock were not applicable to underwriting this event, and so it was officially a FinnFest event embedded within Heikinpäivä.

men's baseball team volunteered to assist the university's maintenance department in this rapid turnover, and the dance went off flawlessly in a venue now perfectly equipped for this occasion. As long as such cooperation continues behind the scenes, the dance will likely continue to be held at the Heritage Center in coming years.

Expanding the Base

Just as the events listed above have been considered indispensible elements of the festival since its beginning, additional events have, over time, added to the expected roster of activities. This expansion has involved other community entities, and a good deal of trial and error. These components move beyond Stoeltje's *community festival* model into the model of the *folk festival.* Such an event typically presents elements of the festival as described by Stoeltje as well as elements that demonstrate aspects of folklife not typically incorporated into mainstream community festivals. Examples of such activities include demonstrations of occupational folklife and traditional foodways, exhibitions, academic presentations or conferences, and even films, and other such events (see Bauman, Sawin, and Carpenter 1992:5, Williams 2006:24-26, Wilson and Udall 1982:17). As we shall see, Heikinpäivä incorporates all of these.

Workshops and Demonstrations

Beginning in 2002, educational opportunities were added to the roster, with classes in birchbark weaving, cooking, and a Finnish language workshop being offered.[106] This development has resulted in a steady exchange between artists in many traditions and festival attendees. Since this time, workshops have primarily focused on traditional crafting, music, and cooking. This has also increased the visibility of traditional artists at the festival itself, where

[106] The Finnish language workshop was offered by the Salolampi Finnish Language Camp, which is one of the language schools offered by Concordia College in Bemidji, Minnesota. This collaboration is a reflection of the ways in which regional cooperation at festivals have developed.

they often also serve as demonstrators in areas adjacent to the markets and provide generalized information on the traditions they practice and their place in Copper Country folklife.

Figures Seventeen and Eighteen: Peter Olson of Tapiola is a frequent educator and demonstrator at Heikinpäivä. Left: Olson carves a fan bird at a workshop at the 2004 festival. Photograph by Jim Kurtti. Right: Close-up of displayed fan birds at the 2012 festival. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

This addition has been especially popular, resulting in a number of innovative and beloved classes, including musical performance, craft-making, dance lessons, weaving, cooking, and more. One of the more interesting factors of this component of festival program is the deliberate inclusion of traditional artists recognized by public folklorists in the Michigan Traditional Arts Program, points of contact that are also found with many of the festival's regular musical performers.[107] Wood carver Peter Olson, for instance, has served as a master artist in state-sponsored apprenticeships, as have several of the festival's regular weavers and musicians. Their presence not only increases their public visibility, but also allows for these artists and performers to share, and even teach, aspects of their traditions. This may lead to others taking on

[107] The important role of the Michigan Traditional Arts Program in promoting such artists and providing models for folk festivals will be explored in Chapter Five.

that tradition in the future, or at the very least, recognizing its historic and ongoing place in the community.

Figure Nineteen: Negaunee resident Midge Waters shares her Finland-Swedish tradition of wheat weaving as a demonstrator at Heikinpäivä 2008. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

Food Demonstrations and Workshops

As will be discussed below, foodways provide an entrance into cultural explorations both within a given group and for those who do not belong to it, or, as in the case of many who have heritage in the Copper Country but did not grow up in the region, those who are both inside and outside of the community at the same time. Cooking classes are popular mainstays, with workshops being frequently offered on certain specialties, including *nisu (pulla,* a cardamom-spiced bread), *piirakat* (Karelian rice pies), and *leipäjuusto* (baked cheese). While often Finnish Theme Committee members Debbie Kurtti and Edith Maki teach the classes, occasionally

special guests have been brought in, including Harri Kurtti, a cousin of Jim Kurtti's from Thunder Bay, Ontario, who owns a popular bakery.

Film

Films have also become an important aspect of Heikinpäivä, through two separate events. Since 2005, the Finnish American Heritage Center has offered a Nordic Film Series in which a film is screened monthly. Most often, these films are from Finland, but broadly conceived, Nordic cinema, and documentaries on Finnish culture are all acceptable.[108] This film, shown the second Thursday of the month during the academic year, is now considered one of the very first events of the festival, followed the next day by an event in nearby Calumet known as Club Finndigo.

Club Finndigo is the January presentation of Club Indigo, a monthly dinner-and-a-movie event held at the Calumet Theatre featuring international cinema and cuisine. Arranged by retired Michigan Technological University professor Joe Kirkish, Club Finndigo is also advertised as a part of Heikinpäivä, and Kirkish selects his Finnish films from among the collection kept at the Finnish American Heritage Center. While I worked in public programming, I selected and previewed films with both the Heritage Center and Club Finndigo in mind, and typically, a film first airs at the Heritage Center, and then may be shown at Club Finndigo a year or two later. While often, the Heikinpäivä film at the Heritage Center draws from children's cinema (which is considered much more subtle and generally enjoyable than American children's cinema),[109] or

[108] The Nordic Film Series has shown a wide range of titles, including films that have received a level of acclaim in America (for instance, the films of Aki Kaurismäki), and those determined to best resonate with the event's regular audience (recent favorites have included *Havukka-Ahon Ajattelija* [Backwoods Philosopher] and *Steam of Life).* The films of director Klaus Härö, a Swedish-speaking Laestadian, have also proven to be consistently popular.

[109] Jim Kurtti has often commented, while assisting in selecting suitable titles for the Nordic Films Series, that he finds Finnish children's films to be more palatable than their American counterparts because they "do not talk down to children."

films highlighting the experiences of children, Kirkish does not impose such a strict guideline for Club Finndigo.

Family Fun Night

Family Fun Night is another expansion that has had staying power. Hosted by Kay Seppala, director of the area's two youth Finnish folk dance groups, Family Fun Night is an opportunity for families to learn traditional Finnish dances, to hear stories based on the *Kalevala,* and more, depending on each year's roster. Often, the families of dance troupe members invite friends and relatives, and so the event is an opportunity to learn many of the steps that members of Kivajat learn. At my first Family Fun Night, my daughters and I attended. Dancing games and a reading from the children's book *Canine Kalevala,*[110] with accompanying actors wearing Heikinpäivä parade costumes pantomiming the action, were the primary activities. In general, this event serves to connect multiple generations through festival, which Robert Lavenda connects to notions of "rites of passage," which seek to incorporate members of a community through sequences of festival activities appropriate to their age (1997:37-38).

Religious Folklife

In other areas of the festival, however, celebration of Finnish religious life is the central focus. The annual hymn sing, *"Oi, muistatko vielä sen virren?"* ('do you remember the hymn'), is an opportunity for community members to come together and sing traditional Finnish Lutheran hymns in the Finnish language. This program connects to the last generation that did practice their religion in Finnish, as well as to a broader base of locals who enjoy choral music and religious music more broadly. This particular event fits directly with Stoeltje's conception of

[110] This book, written by Finnish children's author Mauri Kunnas, reimagines the *Kalevala* as being a story of love and war between a community of cats and a community of dogs, with illustrations that reference some of the most famous paintings of Akseli Gallen-Kallela depicting scenes of the *Kalevala.* This book, and several others by Kunnas, are popular enough to have been translated into English.

"ritual" in a secular community festival: it is very much a "religious service in which lay leaders figure prominently" (1983:241). The recent inclusion of two rituals associated with the local Russian Orthodox Church also bring aspects of minority Finnish spirituality to light, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. While for some, the connection is very personal, for others, it is artistic and educational.

Exhibit and Lecture

Other regular expansions have included occasional lectures (in 2012 folklorist Carl Rahkonen lectured on music of the *Kalevala,* and in 2013 I lectured on Heikki Lunta) and exhibits by Finnish and Finnish American artists in the Finlandia University Gallery, as well as an annual exhibition at the Copper Country Community Arts Center in Hancock. Open to submission by community members, *Art from the Kalevala* reflects the ways in which the epic continues to inspire arts among a broad base of the local population, some of whom do not have Finnish or local roots.

Celebrating the Mundane and Marginalized

Within the framework of celebrating Finnish culture in America, and particularly the Copper Country, an exploration of Finnish minority ethnicities has always been an important aspect of Heikinpäivä. While Sami culture is highlighted in the festival annually, many other cultures have been a part of this dialog too. In the first year of Heikinpäivä, at the Project 34 conference, a presentation on Finland-Swedish and Finnish Orthodox culture was part of the conference roster, and of course, the Sami Siida of North America set up an encampment area on Quincy Green. Exploring these marginalized ethnicities within Finnish American culture takes individuals that might ordinarily be classified as "outside performers" in Stoeltje's terms

(1983:242) and repositions them as insiders with relevant and authentic claims to belonging within the broader local Finnish ethnic community.

Sami Ethnicity

The Sami encampment is a common aspect of Finnish American festival exhibit, and has been seen in some variation, for instance, at Laskiainen in Palo, Minnesota (Vennum, Penti, and Köngäs-Maranda 1983), and at multiple FinnFest USA celebrations, and likely at other events. As I will discuss later, though it is a means for high visibility of an often unknown heritage group within Finnish America, and Nordic America more broadly, the representation of Sami as reindeer herders and traditional crafters provides an interesting arena for considering the meanings of this representation, as well as of the audience's gaze upon it.

Anecdotally speaking, Jim Kurtti and many others observe a strong proportion of Sami and northern Finnish ancestry than is found in general among Finnish Americans, whose roots are considered more likely than not to originate in Finland's Ostrobothnia province (see Kero 1974). On the wall of the office in the Finnish American Heritage Center that Jim shares with *Finnish American Reporter* assistant editor David Maki and newspaper interns is a large map of Finland, mounted so that toothpicks with small paper Finnish flags stick into the map. While a smattering of toothpicks are found in the traditional emigration region of Ostrobothnia, the plurality of them are found much farther north on the map, primarily in the Swedish border region of the Tornio River Valley, and then further north, including the Norwegian region known among Finns as *Ruija* and other points in Finnish Lapland. Each toothpick represents the home parish of one of Kurtti's former high school Finnish language students' ancestors, and each was placed on this map in connection with family history projects completed in the class.[111] During my internship at the Finnish American Heritage Center in 2004, Jim had explained this map's

[111] Some of these genealogical stories can be viewed at http://pasty.com/crhm/pages/Kuurti/stories.html

significance to me, and while I worked at the Center in public programming nearly a decade later, the map was a useful tool in discussing Finnish immigration to the Copper Country, as well as eliciting family immigration stories from the Center's many visitors.

Figure Twenty: Becky Hoekstra, Finnish Theme Committee chair, in her Sami *gakti* that she made herself. Toivola Juhannus, FinnFest USA 2013, June 21, 2013. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

Many locals have, in the past few decades, recognized a Sami identity within their own family, as a result of genealogical research, family stories, and passed-down traditions, which has increased the profile of Sami culture in general. Knowledge of this heritage presents an individual with the opportunity to use it in an ethnic presentation of self (Waters 1990:57). This identity is internalized differently for each individual. Among some, it is a fact that they acknowledge but may not use in public ways. For others, this identity contributes to a sense of ethnic self—often in connection with an existent Finnish identity, in the Copper Country. Some, such as Jim Kurtti and Becky Hoekstra, have gone so far as to acquire their own *gakti*, that serve to identify them as having roots in the northern Finnish Sami communities of Kuusamo and

Sodankylä (*Soađegilli* in Sami) respectively. Heikinpäivä is one venue for a small but potentially growing number of ethnic Sami to signal their identity through dress.

Finndian Ethnicity

While Sami may be the most visible of Finnish ethnicities in the Copper Country, it is by no means the only one. At Heikinpäivä 2009, an exploration of what is known as Finndian culture was explored, through an exhibition of the art of Carl Gawboy, a Minnesota artist of mixed Finnish and Ojibwe heritage. This aspect of Finnish American interethnicity is one that fascinates many, from national Finns themselves, to Finnish Americans, whose broader narrative in generalized terms details a sense of affinity between early Finnish settlers and their Ojibwe neighbors which resulted in this unique cultural group. In addition to this event at Heikinpäivä, Finndian culture has been a strong component of FinnFest USA 2008 in Duluth, and across the Iron Range in Minnesota (see Alanen 2012:68), it is perhaps less exoticized than it can be in other Finnish American communities, because it is a normal, lived reality.[112]

[112] One creative non-fiction source that illustrates the Iron Range's interethnic world well is the book *Down from Basswood* by Lynn Maria Laitala (2001). Finndian artist Carl Gawboy illustrated it, as well as the 2013 reprint.

Figure Twenty One: Priests of the Russian Orthodox Church of Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam conduct the Theophany water blessing ceremony on Portage Canal. January 19, 2013. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

Eastern Orthodoxy

In recent years, activities recognizing Eastern Orthodoxy within Finnish communities have also been incorporated into Heikinpäivä. A few miles south of Houghton, in the community of Atlantic Mine, is the Russian Orthodox church of Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam. Established in 1995, the church is named for two saints associated with the Finnish Orthodox monastery of Valamo (Valaam in Russian), located on an island in Lake Ladoga, and one of Finland's few Orthodox monasteries.[113] The fact that it is named for two saints of Finnish Orthodoxy is a connection I made after several instances of hearing Jim Kurtti talk about Valamo and certain individuals associated with the church; indeed, according to the current priest of the

[113] The community of the original Valamo monastery was evacuated during the Winter War to a new location within the Finnish border and thus, a New Valamo monastery exists, in addition to the original Valamo monastery which has, following use by the Soviets for military purposes during the World War II era, been fully restored as an active Eastern Orthodox cloistered community (see "Valamo Monastery Significant…" 2013).

church, Hieromonk Innokenty, this name was chosen specifically for its Finnish connection (Maki 2013).

In 2013, Innokenty held the first Theophany blessing of the Portage Canal waters, which was listed as an official event of Heikinpäivä. This ritual commemorates the baptism of Jesus and is celebrated on the Gregorian calendar, coincidental to Heikinpäivä, on January 19 each year. In 2014, the blessing ceremony was joined by the divine liturgy for Theophany in the festival roster, bringing an often ignored and misunderstood aspect of Finnish religious cultures into the public arena. In his interview with Finnish Theme Committee member and *Finnish American Reporter* assistant David Maki, Innokenty reveals that in some Orthodox communities, following the blessing of the water, in which a hole is made to provide access to water, some opt to "dip themselves three times under the water, honoring the Holy Trinity, to symbolically wash away their sins from the past year, and to experience a sense of spiritual rebirth" (2013:13). Though the congregation of Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam do not do this, the fact that this is a practice among some provides an interesting ritual mirror to the secular ritual offered by the Polar Bear Dive, just across the canal. While the ritual activities of the religious congregation create "liminal" moments, in which a participant, in the moments before completing the ritual, stands at the threshold of transition, the ritual activities of the Polar Bear Dive are considered to create liminoid moments because they result from elements of play which has the power to democratize and transform aspects of society (Turner 1982:120).

Material, Marginal and Mundane

While marginalized identities that prove exotic to outsiders and provide for a greater sense of inclusivity within Finnish America are strong features of the festival, the mundane is celebrated in a number of ways too. Part of Heikinpäivä's appeal is in its ability to draw

participants in through connecting with everyday experiences from the past that may or may not have a continuing role today. Part of this examination has included material culture traditions, often with gendered and generational connotations, practiced in Finnish American communities.

Rag Rugs: Celebrating "Women's Work"

The role of the rag rug as a traditional item and the rag-rug weaver as a traditional artist in Finnish American culture was examined in an exhibition brought from the Michigan State University Museum to the Finlandia University Gallery in 2005. Curated by folklorist Yvonne Lockwood[114] (of Finnish American heritage herself), the exhibit celebrated the artistry of a set of weaving and aesthetic traditions brought over from Finland and practiced by Finnish Americans—primarily women[115]—to this day, with an especially strong presence in the western Upper Peninsula. For this exhibition, the rugs were figuratively taken off the floor and put on the wall, highlighting the sheer artistry that the best weavers achieve.

This exhibition brought recognition to weavers who are local community members in unique ways. Though such weavers as Lorri Oikarinen[116] were already known as excellent traditional artists, and good folks to whom to bring old cloth for weaving, this exhibit represents an elevation of their standing as artists through the inclusion of the exhibit itself.

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[114] Lockwood is extensively involved in the Finnish American rag rug weaving community of Michigan, and her work has resulted in the publication of an excellent book on the subject (2010), as well, as doubtlessly, attention to the maintenance of this tradition as a whole among Michigan's public folklorists, primarily working at the Michigan State University Museum, where Lockwood herself worked. The Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program has provided awards for no less than 13 apprenticeships in Finnish American rag rug weaving and four in rag rug braiding (Michigan State University Museum 2014). Lockwood's work in many aspects of Finnish American folk culture resulted in her being named the Finlandia Foundation Lecturer of the Year in 2013.

[115] As Lockwood highlights in her book (2010), men participate in the art of rag rugs, either as weavers themselves or as loom builders and repairers.

[116] I mention Oikarinen by name here simply because she is one of the rag rug weavers that I have the strongest acquaintance with. I briefly met her in 2009 at the Upper Peninsula Folklife Festival in Marquette, Michigan, where she demonstrated rag rug weaving and her husband demonstrated ski-making. In the spring of 2012, my oldest daughter Audrey took a weaving class with Oikarinen through an after-school program, making a series of "mug rugs" on small looms, as well as learning the basics of color aesthetics and trying out the big looms housed at the Calumet Arts Center. We have since had contact, primarily concerning FinnFest USA 2013, where she served as a traditional arts demonstrator with several other weavers.

Men's Ingenuity: Tools, Gadgets and Gizmos

Men are not left out, of course. At Heikinpäivä 2002, an informal exhibit organized by Vern Simula celebrated the hand tools of Finnish American men—many of them handmade or hand-altered—and some which were difficult to guess as to their intended purpose. Area men were invited to bring materials from their own tool sheds to share in the exhibit, which was held in the outdoors. The inspiration for this exhibit is found in a flier seeking contributions for the 2002 display. Headlined as "an invitation…to the men of the Copper Country," the flier announced,

> A one-day "Museum of Homecrafted Tools, Gadgets and Gizmos" will be held in conjunction with the Hancock Heikinpäivä Celebration […] This outdoor museum will pay tribute to the ingenuity and inventiveness of Finnish immigrant men (as well as men of other nationalities) and their sons who settled or homesteaded in the rural areas of the Copper Country in the late 1800s through the first half of the 1900s. […] Still scattered in the rural homesteads of the Copper Country are hundreds of these fascinating, self-invented, home-made tools and gadgets. This is an invitation to citizens of the Copper Country who still happen to have some of these home-made tools, gadgets or gizmos in their garage, shop, or barn.

This exhibit provided a chance for visitors to connect realistically to the folk ideas (including stereotypes) surrounding Yooper and Finnish ingenuity, which today is often emblemized by such things as the enthusiastic use of duct tape among Yoopers to repair nearly everything.[117] The stereotype of such backwoods inventiveness finds its apex at Da Yoopers Tourist Trap museum in Ishpeming, where visitors are treated to a number of whimsical contraptions meant to reveal how, despite deep poverty and other such preventative factors, Yoopers (and particularly men, as presented at the Tourist Trap) can make useful things out of what appears to be garbage and can enjoy the quirky aesthetic that is required of one while using these objects. While Da

[117] References to such "ingenuity" among Finns and Yoopers in this respect pertains to everyday responses to necessity with few available resources, and so naturally can be assumed to have parallels in many other cultures.

Yoopers stretch these images into fantasy, Vern Simula brought forth everyday examples of inventiveness that re-instill a sense of respect over deprecation.

Not Just Kids' Stuff: Traditional Finnish Sleds

Commonplace entertainments that have been disappearing from the everyday are also a key part of Heikinpäivä. The use of the two traditional sleds, the *vipukelkka* (whip sled) and the *potkukelkka* (kick sled), are two aspects of this attempt to reclaim and reinvigorate commonplace practices that would otherwise die out. While the kick sleds are movable and must be put away following the day of festivities, the whip sled is affixed to poles, one of which is driven deep into the ground, and so it is able to be left out for several days after the festival, allowing children who frequent the Quincy Green as Hancock's most popular sledding hill to reap the benefits of this aspect of the festival, whether they could attend it or not.

Foodways

Finally, marginal and mundane are celebrated in the foodways that are presented at the festival. At Heikinpäivä, as at many festivals, the foods offered provide another glimpse into symbols of ethnicity and local culture, as well as the elevation of foods that in one sense are rather quotidien into special dishes associated with festival and holiday.

While some foods do not bear much examination due to their basis in American traditions (for instance the pie slices sold at the First United Methodist Church Tori each year), some are specifically traditional to Finnish Americans and Yoopers more broadly, and these are certainly worth a look.

Each year, two Tori booths in particular, as well as the banquet dinner, provide foods that are considered to be symbolic of Finnish American and Yooper foodways: the Kangas Café and the Finnish Theme Committee booths. Several merchandise vendor booths, particularly those of

Anna Leppänen (Finnsight LLC) and Tanja Stanaway, additionally sell *pulla* and imported Finnish candy and coffee.

The Kangas Café, an establishment known for excellent pasties, is located in the Jutila Center on Finlandia University's campus, and enjoys a high level of business from the university as well as from the general community. At Heikinpäivä each year, pasties as well as a scalloped potato and salmon dish known as *laxlåda* are sold in their booth. The *laxlåda,* Swedish for salmon casserole, is a rare treat that appears to be getting more recognition in the Copper Country in recent years, while the Cornish pasty, though highly appreciated by tourist and local alike, is the most emblematic of Upper Michigan foodways, where it has gained considerable attention from folklorists (see, for instance, Lockwood and Lockwood 1991), travel and culinary writers (Sokolov 1980), legislators,[118] and many more.

[118] Carl Levin, current senior U.S. senator for the state of Michigan who introduced the legislation that brought the Keweenaw National Historical Park into existence, sticks out in my mind best because, at the grand opening of the park's Calumet Visitor Center in 2011, he addressed the crowd on the importance of such a center as a place for all to learn about regional heritage. In exemplifying how historical contexts inform us today, he asked the crowd, "Why am I eating a pasty? And where do pasties come from?" (field notes, October 27, 2011).

Figure Twenty Two: Finnish Theme Committee members pose with a batch of Karelian rice pies (Karjalan piirakat) made for sale at the Heikinpäivä 2014 tori booth. From left: Maija Stadius, Barb Worrall, Kay Seppala, Mary Brunet, Deb Kurtti and Gary Worrall. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

The Finnish Theme Committee regularly offers a menu including a beef and vegetable stew, a variety of traditional Finnish breads including rye breads and *rieska* (an unleavened bread using a mixture of coarse flours), and the popular Karelian rice pastries (*Karjalan piirakat,* or *piirakka* in the singular). The *piirakat,* with an accompanying side of *munavoi* (egg butter: hard boiled eggs mixed into softened butter to put on the top of the pastry), are among the most popular items to purchase, and very often sell out early. Interestingly, this item is rather exotic and did not come to America with the early immigrants. These pastries, a specialty of the border region in Finland and far northwestern Russia known as Karelia, were introduced in the past few decades, partly due to interactions with Karelians of the refugee and post-refugee generations following the World War II era, and partly due to their appearance at Finnish ethnic cultural events as a result of their increased visibility in Finland in general.

It is the stew that is a celebration of the mundane, though this hasn't been fully imbued with a deep sense of Finnishness until quite recently, when Jim Kurtti suggested that from now on, the stew sold at Heikinpäivä be called *mojakka,* a Finnish American word for stew that is not used at all in Finland.[119] The decision to consciously use this word is one reflection of the ways in which festival organizers, and particularly Kurtti himself, seek to fill the entirety of the event with a deeper meaning, and to create a highly authentic experience for the attendee. While a beef stew with potatoes, carrots, and onions is something enjoyed by many Americans and indeed, many Finns, *mojakka* is something familiar only to Finnish Americans and thus, the act of eating this stew is presented as a deeper act of participating in the Finnish American ethnic life offered

[119] The origin of this word is debated, with no real clear winner for this argument. In *Amerikansuomen Sanakirja: A Dictionary of American Finnish* (1992), the definition offered by informant Amelia Baier of Menahga, Minnesota is that the word came from the English word "mulligan stew" (pp. 125, 229). Kaplan, Hoover, and Moore (1986:150-151) speculate on several theories as well, tied to possible origins assumedly from Minnesota.

throughout the festival (Magliocco 1993). You can eat stew any day, but *mojakka* is only available for many once a year.

Finland is often viewed as a nation where cuisine is non-existent, with international leaders including Jacques Chirac and Silvio Berlusconi taking pot shots at Finnish food as being among the worst in Europe (Winer 2008). This erases the fact that Finns, like anyone else, can eat very well using local ingredients, and that sometimes, they actually do. Finnish cuisine has been cast in a new light in Finnish America at least since Finnish American cookbook author Beatrice Ojakangas released *The Finnish Cookbook* in 1964. Ojakangas, a recipient of the James Beard Award, has enjoyed immense popularity, serving as a regular on the FinnFest USA circuit. In her book, she includes recipes familiar to many Finnish Americans (in particular, *pulla, rieska,* and other well-known breads), as well as recipes that were more exotic to the descendents of Finnish immigrants, such as *piirakat,* Karelian ragout, and the malted Easter treat, *mämmi.* Cookbooks such as hers, and others, helped to reinforce Finnish Americans in participating in Finnish foodways familiar from family kitchens, and adding new recipes to the stock of foods served in a Finnish context. The Heikinpäivä banquet has offered a mix of familiar and exotic (or extremely festive) foods over the years, informed both by the existent foodways known in the post-immigrant family and the rise of Finnish and pan-Nordic cuisine.

For Heikinpäivä 2000, the winning bid for the banquet included the following menu, arranged as a *seisovapöytä,* or *smörgåsbord,* with a cold table, hot table, and dessert table:

> Cold table: cucumber salad with dill sauce, chilled beet salad with onion, smoked fish (trout and herring), sliced tomatoes and cucumber tray, sliced dark bread, assorted cheeses, assorted breads and rolls.
> Hot Food: Finnish meatballs in onion gravy, baked ham glazed, mashed potatoes with gravy, mashed turnip with butter, gold corn with butter sauce, scalloped potato casserole with salmon and onions *[laxlåda]*.
> Dessert table: prune tarts, *nisu* with butter and jelly, warm rice pudding, Finnish cheese. (Weekend Catering Company, Jim Kurtti's personal files).

By 2012, the banquet menu[120] still featured three tables arranged similarly, but the number of items offered had changed considerably:

> Cold Table and Beverages: *Suolakala* (pickled herring in wine sauce), *punajuuri salaati* (beet coleslaw), *rieska leipa* [typically an unleavened bread, but a menu note mentions this one is made of coarse wheat and has yeast in it], Finn coffee, lemonade, ice water
> Hot table: *pottusose* (mashed potatoes), *Karjalanpaisti* (beef-pork ragout), *liha-mureke* (mini meatloaves), *juhlakinkku* (holiday ham), *maissi* (corn), *lanttusose* (mashed rutabaga)
> Desserts: *riisipuro* (rice pudding), *pikkuleipa* (Finnish cookies), Finnish butter prune tarts, *juustoa* [Finnish baked cheese]

Though the breadth of the menu has narrowed over time, the juxtaposition of very special foods including cold-smoked salmon and Karelian ragout (another treat made known following World War II) with such foods as rutabaga casserole and *leipäjuusto* (a Finnish baked cheese often referred to as *juustoa,* literally "some cheese") reveals several separate estimations of the meaning of special foods.

The first estimation of special foods is, of course, high class or fancy and perhaps a little exotic. At Heikinpäivä in the early years, part of the bidding process included offering several dishes that were chic or exotic. This, however, could only be part of the package offered in the bid, and in recent years, these dishes have not been a part of the banquet spread, revealing that having such foods may not be the most important aspect of the banquet in the eyes of the banquet's regular attendees.

The second estimation of special foods includes those foods that Finnish Americans associate with special holidays, and particularly with winter holidays including Christmas. At the

[120] The 2012 menu list often includes Finnish names for each dish, but some are not spelled as they would be in Finland, and some dishes have different names than those more commonly used in Finland. I retain the Finnish menu translations here to reflect the fact that community members like Norma Nominelli do maintain aspects of Finnish linguistic heritage that may maintain unique aspects of the language, but does, however, change over time in certain respects, including spelling and breadth of vocabulary. The menu reflects colloquial words (for instance, *pottu* for 'potato') and spelling shifts (the absence of umlauts in words such as *leipä,* stemming from their absence in the English language). See Chapter Six for a discussion of authenticity and correctness in Finnish American culture.

Heikinpäivä banquet, several menu mainstays include root vegetable dishes such as beet salads, mashed potatoes (Finnicized as *pottu sose*[121]) and rutabaga. These dishes, though certainly simple to make, and in the case of mashed potatoes, common to American and Scandinavian cuisine, have an association with Finnishness that runs very deep. To omit these items from the menu would doubtlessly cause a riot. These are the items that are remembered as special foods from the immigrant past, and that, though they certainly connect to a generalized American holiday cuisine (as well as the cuisines of Scandinavia and Russia),[122] they bring banquet attendees back to memories of their own *Finnish* families.

These foods became special in Finland at around the time immigration to America was beginning. According to Talve (1997:127), "oven casseroles are a more recent invention" that spread from Western Finland in the late 1800s "to begin with on festive occasions and later for everyday use, especially potato, fish, and swede [rutabaga] casseroles." Karelian ragout has retained some of its cache, and "is nowadays served even in restaurants" (122). Coffee, too, is held in legendary esteem among Finns and Finnish-Americans with numerous statistics, anecdotes, and items of lore surrounding its high rate of consumption and the "ritual" that surrounds its use (see Kaplan, Hoover, and Moore 1986, Ojakangas 1964, Roberts 1989). Barring Karelian ragout, which was likely not widespread in Western Finland at the time of mass immigration, these foods were special, though in Finland today, their status is no longer marked by their rarity or novelty, and so have become somewhat standard. In America, however, these

[121] This word for potato is the one I have known since childhood, and the one I most frequently encounter when Finnish words for potato come up either in conversation or in my Finnish language enrichment classes. In my formal Finnish studies, though, the word *peruna* is the one commonly used, and one that I sadly always confuse my students with.

[122] Kaplan, Hoover and Moore begin their chapter on Finnish foodways in *The Minnesota Ethnic Cookbook* by describing the sense of indistinctness that Finnish Americans feel about their own traditional foods because of the commonalities these foods have with neighboring cuisines (1986:145). What gives the Finns their distinctiveness is there great attention to thrift (including hunting and gathering activities) and the "great variety of Finnish breads" (pp. 146-147).

foods, though also no longer rare or novel, maintain an appeal due in part to the fact that these were special to the immigrant generation, and thus remain worthy of a special reverence today.

The third area of special foods, and one that has great bearing with relation to the cooking workshops offered at the festival, are those foods that, for reasons of modern life, are too difficult for many average folks to make. Some of these foods include *leipäjuusto*, which requires a good deal of time, a lot of milk, a certain amount of kitchen equipment, and, when made right, either the first milk from a cow that has just given birth (known as beestings), or at the very least, raw milk, which is exceptionally hard to come by, and even illegal in certain states and serving situations.[123] Baked goods, such as *nisu* or *pulla*, are also time-consuming delicacies that many people simply cannot make under normal circumstances. These items, then, become associated not only with the very everyday contexts in which they are traditionally served, but also with the fact that, to make or share some of these items with another reflects a sacrifice of time on the part of the maker, and commitment to seeing the process through successfully. To have the ability to do these things, though, demonstrates belonging in the community in interesting levels. As Lockwood and Lockwood (2000:238) illustrate, entire networks surrounding sources for viili starters and the best juusto makers in an area spring up. Knowing who is a worthy source demonstrates belonging in the community, as well as an understanding of local authenticity with regards to these specialized foodways.

Together, these foods represent a celebration of tradition, and a public affirmation of the worth of these humble dishes. As at other local ethnic festivals, foods recognizable and nostalgic to the in-group and palatable to those unfamiliar have important functions for the event as a

[123] In Michigan, it is not illegal to have raw milk for one's own use, but it is not allowed for such consumption and use as is necessary for the festival's cheese-making class, and so certain allowances have to be made with regard to the recipe in order to accommodate this prohibition. Rennet is also part of the recipe for this cheese, but this is not as hard to find as the milk.

whole. As Humphrey, Samuelson, and Humphrey (1988:2) point out, "the sociological and semiotic aspects of foods are especially significant in festive contexts, events in which the intention is not principally to satisfy physical hunger and the need for nutrition […] but rather to celebrate." As we will see in the next chapter, these foods serve to create an authentic local Finnish experience for the community and to educate initiates into this world as well.

Conclusion

The Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival is the work of the Finnish Theme Committee, a group with members both professionally and personally committed to the continued presence of a Finnish ethnic community in Hancock and the surrounding area. Though initial attempts by the committee to harness its energy toward economic development based on local heritage failed, the committee has served the community through its annual production of Heikinpäivä. This work has also led to the organization becoming affiliated with the Finlandia Foundation and increasing its impact as a local organization dedicated to the area's expression of Finnish culture.

Central to these developments is Jim Kurtti, who serves as a culture broker for the local Finnish community. His lifelong interest in his interethnic heritage, particularly his Finnish and Sami roots, and his talents for imagining programming, persuading others to contribute, and activating the interests and talents of others help to make his work relevant to the community and to create greater visibility of local Finnish culture overall.

Over time, organizers of the festival have developed a set of elements that are featured annually (under normal circumstances) and incorporated periodic explorations into new areas that dovetailed well with the festival as isolated events. Continued dialog between the Finnish Theme Committee, the City of Hancock, local businesses and festival attendees themselves

allows the festival to respond to changes as needed and to incorporate opportunities that may present themselves.

The Heikinpäivä festival has already been classified as a seasonal or agricultural festival because of its core foundational elements. The festival structure, however, is hybrid as it can be described both using Beverly Stoeltje's structural model of community festivals, as well as Joe Wilson and Lee Udall's models concerning folk festivals. The next chapter will focus more closely on Heikinpäivä's educational uses within the folk festival model, detailing how the event seeks to educate through its programming. Central to this examination will be the works of folklorists who participated in the 1987 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C., where Michigan was the featured state, and the Festival of Michigan Folklife, which utilized much of the programming created for the Smithsonian festival, and took place later that same year in East Lansing. As Wilson and Udall point out, "although festivals with a national scope do not provide realistic examples for smaller, indigenous and community-based festivals, they have created an impetus in regional presentations of folk culture" (1982:9). The model of folk festivals in general, and the work of the folklorists responsible for the Michigan content of both festivals in 1987, will prove useful to examining Heikinpäivä's educational functions.

Chapter Five: The Educational Function of Heikinpäivä

Introduction

At the heart of many of the activities of the Heikinpäivä festival is the expressed desire among the Finnish Theme Committee to present the City of Hancock as a center of Finnish ethnic culture and to provide community members of all ages, ethnicities, and interests with opportunities to take part in this unique culture and to relate it to their own experiences, whether based in Finnish ethnicity or not. Because of this, education has always been an important component of the festival.

Already benefitting from a committee that boasted several members familiar with education through folklife in classroom and performative settings, Heikinpäivä, as well as other presentations of local culture, has also made use of the extensive ground laid by large scale folk festivals, and most especially the Michigan programming at the 1987 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C., and the subsequent Festival of Michigan Folklife held in East Lansing later that year. These events resulted in a deeper incorporation of public folklore programming within the state of Michigan, which has brought many Finnish American traditional artists to the attention of the general public, and their own communities.

Articulating Intentions

At the February 2014 wrap-up meeting for Heikinpäivä, Finnish Theme Committee members engaged in discussion of an aspect of the festival that we all recognized as being important and that we had all discussed to varying degrees before: the educational function of Heikinpäivä. Already working on this element in my dissertation, I was pleased to see the direction of the discussion and to gain more spontaneous insights from committee members on the subject. Education through the festival and its intended outcomes reflect both what the

committee wants to impart to the audience, including what the committee sees as an authentic experience of this festival, and through it, an authentic experience of local Finnish ethnic life.[124]

The discussion began as we reviewed the flow of the various aspects of the festival, and the question came up as to how the parade went this year. Several difficulties had been noted: local businesses had not been a presence in the parade at all, and on the morning of the festival's "Big Day," it was learned that the high school ROTC unit that traditionally bore the flags of Finland, Michigan, the United States, and Sapmi were not allowed by their school to participate in the parade because the weather was below the permissible threshold for outdoor activities. In fact, it was quite likely that, had it been a school day, school would have been cancelled. The victory in the parade, however, was that, despite the cold, participants wearing the traditional *Kalevala* and Finnish folklore character costumes did not barrel down the parade route in a shivering, indistinguishable mass, anxious to reach the warmth of the Methodist church or the Heritage Center. This had been an issue in past parades, which made it difficult to announce the costumes by name over the loudspeaker at the end of the parade route.

Jim Kurtti mentioned the fact that the whole purpose for these costumes was to acquaint community members with the basic stories behind the characters. In previous years, each character was accompanied by a marcher carrying a white sign with blue lettering, providing the name of each character. This element, he said, needed to be reincorporated. Mention was made that a student drama troupe was interested in wearing these costumes the next year, and could practice these personae beforehand in order to boost the elements of performed drama at the parade. This possibility made committee members excited.

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[124] The role of the festival planners and fieldworkers in establishing useful surveys of the state's folklife, determining what is considered to be authentic and appropriate for festival presentation, and securing the appropriate performers, is a major topic of discussion among public folklorists, and, particularly related to the 1987 festivals, considerable work has been published on this subject (see Dewhurst and MacDowell 1994, Leary 1994a, Sommers 1994, Wilson and Udall 1982).

Figure Twenty Three: Parade participants dressed as Louhi (left, holding Heikki Lunta's sign) and Heikki Lunta (right) await parade lineup. Heikinpäivä 2008. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

Included in the garment bag with each costume is a brief description of the character it depicts, and some aspects of the character's story intended to aid the wearer in enlivening the costume along the parade route. These instructions for the wearer serve as the only "script" for performing as the character in question, which aids parade attendees in recognizing and gaining a context for these characters. While some who wear the costumes understand this, others do not, and so they simply march down the middle of the street, possibly waving, but often heading for the end of the route and the warmth it offers.[125]

The other aspect of education that committee members discussed was the student essay contest. A fixture at the Hancock Public Schools, and under the direction of Maija Stadius, the possibility of including more schools in this contest was discussed. One of the major factors behind this stemmed from the fact that, often, students who won were members of the Old

[125] A common background understanding of these characters is nonexistent as many of the folklore figures represented are no longer part of everyday folklife, and most Finnish Americans (and even many native Finns) have a limited knowledge of the *Kalevala* at best.

Apostolic Church, and though they were certainly allowed to accept the cash prize, they were not allowed to participate in the festival itself, somewhat defeating the purpose of both the contest itself, and, in a sense, the festival too. Essay contest winners were expected by Theme Committee members to ride in the parade in a wagon and to be publicly recognized for their achievement. For some, though, this act is seen as too worldly, and neither the students themselves nor their parents dare participate. Allowing other schools to take part in the contest may also allow greater buy-in in the broader community, and potentially, more attendees to the festival. It does, however, require more work on the part of Theme Committee members, and so we will see if this develops in the future.

These concerns for the reach of education were timely as I concluded what would be the fieldwork used in this dissertation, and as I considered the intentions of those who designed these aspects of the festival in the first place. As I will illustrate, education is a key component of the festival, and one that serves to highlight numerous aspects of Finnish American culture past and present.

Educating Insiders and Outsiders

For some, Heikinpäivä is an opportunity to ameliorate the image of Finns, both inside and outside of the community, and to impress upon a wide audience how relatable this culture can be. As has been previously discussed, Finns, though constituting the largest proportion of the population for decades, have remained the object of much deprecation, scorn, mistrust, and general unease.

Many factors play into this complex, some brought over from Finland and others developing in the Copper Country and across Finnish America as a whole. The theory that Finns originated in Asia and thus could be classified as part of the "Mongolian race" is one aspect of

this (see Holmio 2001:17; Virtanen 2006b). Their pivotal role in the Copper Strike of 1913 and strong participation in 20th century leftist politics also contribute to this image. Stereotypes as depicted by Richard Dorson (2008), linguistic features, and cultural elements considered a little too weird, such as sauna bathing, blood cupping, and other health and wellness traditions (see Wargelin-Brown 1994, Lockwood 1977, Vachon 1973:77-80), play into a broad image of the Finn that, whether sober or church-going, relatively prosperous or in abject poverty, make them into caricatures, wittingly or not. Educational aspects of Heikinpäivä can not only help reduce the prejudice through creating a ground for understanding, but also allow insiders and outsiders to take part in the activities of being Finnish and to take in an individualized experience of it.

As George Lakoff illustrates, stereotypes can prove useful in that they "define normal expectations" of a given category of people (1987:81). Whether a stereotype is seen to have negative or positive qualities (or both), it can be used "to make judgments and draw inferences" (p. 86). Normal expectations of Finns, as defined by their negative stereotypes, place them among the ranks of knife-fighters, drunkards, troublemakers, and agitators, all of whom eat bland and indistinguishable food. Positive stereotypes exist, however, too. Finns were stereotyped as hard workers, for instance, before becoming known for being politically troublesome (see Laitala 2014). They are also often seen as being honest, self-reliant, courageous (related to the word *sisu),* and appreciative of education (see, for instance, Hillila 1997, 2002).

Folklore at Play

For many, the parade is the primary means of familiarization with the festival, and perhaps even the only event they will attend over the course of the nearly month-long celebration. Present since the beginning, the parade was strengthened early on by strategic relationships with a talented homegrown costume artist, former Finlandia University student

Becky Weeks, who was able to realize the visual potential of a set of costumes meant to both educate and dazzle.

Finlandia University art and design student Becky Weeks was selected in 2000 to create over 20 costumes which would illustrate characters in Finnish American and Finnish folklore, from the Snow God Heikki Lunta and the shaman of the *Kalevala*, Väinämöinen, to the martyred Saint Henrik and even the knife fighters of Härmä, Isontalon Antti and Rannanjärvi. Becky proved infinitely talented in this capacity, and has created costumes that are not only visually appealing, and very representative of images that are associated with each character, but also very durable over the course of the years.

For Jim Kurtti, the educational function of the parade is quite important. The rationale behind commissioning the costumes was to connect stories of the *Kalevala* and of Finnish American folklore characters to festival attendees in order to keep them relevant in the community and to support other public activities that use these images.

Since at least the early decades of the 1900s, use of Finnish and Finnish American folkloric imagery has become a common feature of community life. The *Kalevala*, of course, has a particularly strong role in such imagery (see Wargelin-Brown 1994). Places, such as the farming community of Tapiola, bear names from the epic. The Knights and Ladies of Kaleva take their association and individual lodge names from the epic, also incorporating elements of the epic into rituals. The Kaleva Café, opened in 1913, was named in a community contest. The annual art exhibit at the Community Arts Center in Hancock produces new interpretations of and inspirations from the epic each year, all made by community members. In the early 1990s, a special program brought the *Kalevala* into local public schools as a part of high school literature curricula (Manty 1991).

Finnish Americans have expanded beyond the *Kalevala,* though, in order to share new aspects of cultural symbols with the broader public. Every winter, songs pertaining to Heikki Lunta, especially "Heikki Lunta's Snow Dance Song," are played on local radio stations. At polka dances throughout the broader region, including the Upper Peninsula and neighboring regions in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Finnish American folk music is performed alongside the tunes of other ethnic traditions, as well as American popular and country standards. More generalized aspects of Finnish and Finnish American folk culture, such as the sauna, and rag rugs also have a strong presence throughout the community. In many, many ways, Finnish American and Finnish folk culture is seen throughout the area. To have physical representations of the characters in the Heikinpäivä parade is to ensure that aspects of them are known by a wide range of the population, both "insider" and "outsider."

To bolster this educational function, particularly among children, for several years, Heikinpäivä organizers offered the Costume Scavenger Hunt. Children were given a checklist of the costumed characters to assist in identifying as they watched the parade and to further internalize the characters and some basic story elements surrounding them. Each character was described for noticeable visual features, as well as for their essential behavior and their place in the canon of folklore. Children who filled out these sheets were entered into a drawing for a prize. This educational tool did not prove popular and so has been discontinued. Likely reasons for this are many, but most obviously, the top reason is the difficulty of filling out a paper sheet while watching a parade outdoors, often in harsh weather conditions. Issues with distributing the sheets before the parade also severely limited the reach of this activity.

More broadly, awareness of Finnish American community organizations comes out of the parade. In earlier years, groups such as the Marquette Chapter of the League of Finnish

American Societies, the Mass City chapter of the Ladies of Kaleva, and other sent representatives to march with banners in the parade. Though these two groups in particular face the challenge of traveling great distances to participate in the event and are no longer regulars in the festivities, other groups do march in the parade under banners. Represented groups include the Finnish Theme Committee, the Finnish American Heritage Center, the *Finnish American Reporter*, FinnFest USA 2013 (for several years in the lead-up to the festival), Finlandia University, and the Salolampi Language Camp in Bemidji, Minnesota.[126] Each of these banners highlights the idea that upstanding community organizations exist to support the continuation of Finnish heritage in various ways. They also, of course, serve as invitations for the community to connect with these groups directly.

Though not as overt, individual and other group entries into the parade add to the discourse offered in this educational function. Some of the entries present a boisterous image of Yooper and Finnish American traditional culture (which will be discussed below), others draw on history, and still others on external aspects of Finnish culture itself, for instance by wearing Finnish national costume and traditional Sami *gakti*. In one of the earliest parades, members of Becky Hoekstra's family represented their ancestors' path to the Copper Country from Finland with an entry consisting of family members in costume meant to resemble early immigrant wear (long skirts and shawls primarily). Signage illustrated the family's origins in Sodankylä, Finland, their first move to Cokato, Minnesota and their final relocation to Toivola, where many descendents were born, or still live today (field notes, 2004). While engaging in the playful act of marching in the parade, the Mattilas highlight the family's roots, educating others in a subtle way.

[126] As a member of the board of directors for this group, Jim Kurtti keeps a banner at the Finnish American Heritage Center for volunteers to march with.

Public art as an element of play has also been included at Heikinpäivä. In preparation for the 2006 festival, artist Mary Biekkola Wright created the Mittens! Mittens! Mittens! public arts project. Wright worked with metalworker Rick Kauppila, who built four-foot-tall metal frames on stands in the shape of mittens, which individuals and groups covered over in artistic ways. This project was immensely successful, and countless mittens were decorated, carried or driven through the Heikinpäivä 2006 parade, and later affixed to their bases up and down the streets of Hancock to brighten up the outdoors during the long, snowy months. Creative works include one piece consisting of a mosaic made from jellybeans and covered in lacquer (too heavy to move, it is permanently displayed in the stairway leading to Jim Kurtti and Dave Maki's office), a mitten frame covered in a variation of a rag rug, a mitten with a cut-wooden piece in the shape of the Upper Peninsula suspended above it (the Lower Peninsula is commonly called "the mitten" due to its shape), and many more.

Though certainly, mittens are not exclusively Finnish, their inclusion at the festival made sense because it is a winter festival. This arts project had enthusiastic response among community members, and though I do not know for certain exactly how many of these pieces were created, I have personally assisted in moving more than 50 of them into permanent storage. Others are still maintained for display at the Finnish American Heritage Center and still more are known to be in storage in other locations in and around Hancock.

Mary Wright is perhaps best known for her public installations known as the "FinnFest Chairs," in which the public was encouraged to purchase paint in the blue and white shades of the Finnish flag and to decorate any available chairs, stools, benches, and other such seating as a symbol of welcome for FinnFest USA 1996 and FinnGrandFest 2005, both held in Marquette, Michigan, 100 miles from Hancock. Her approach is to design a mass project, build enthusiasm

for individuals and groups to execute individual works, and bring these works together in acts of public display. Most of her work in Upper Michigan communities focuses on themes of family history, and as such, her projects often dovetail well with events such as Heikinpäivä.

Exhibit and Display

The role of display is of importance to many aspects of the festival, from the costumes in the parade, and the dress of musical performers to exhibits of both stationary objects and living beings. On the exhibit side, apart from the obvious occasional museum exhibitions, are the crafting demonstrations and Sami camp. These performative displays are very analogous to displays used in folklife festival models, which pull items of ethnography from their static, decontextualized, museum contexts and reveal the items and the people that make and use them in approximations of their living contexts (Sommers 1994:186). Wilson and Udall point out, however, that "festivals present performers and products out of context, and the products best received are those developed as performing arts by the groups that evolved them" (1982:15).

Crafters are typically dressed in ways that mark them as different from the everyday. Pete Olson, for instance, will often wear a Sami "four winds" hat, both highlighting his Sami heritage and marking him visually as distinct from the observers who meander past his table. Pete is very straightforward in communicating his needs, preferences, and presentation style as a crafts presenter, and he has well-developed talking points for those that linger, or for audiences at Road Scholar sessions. Midge Waters, a Finland-Swedish wheat weaver, wears her traditional *folkdräkt* (national dress) at her demonstration table. Both she and Pete provide numerous examples of their art, showing both their own personal excellence in these traditions as well as the variety that exists within that particular form.

Many demonstrators are often placed in the entry hall of the First United Methodist Church and in one side of the Finlandia University Gallery, removing them from the bustle and noise of the musical venues and markets just next to them, and creating a quiet space for exploration.

The crafting demonstrations also feature spinners who may or may not have Finnish heritage. This not only brings in additional members of the community as paid participants and traditional cultural experts, but it creates connections between traditions that cross Finnish, European, and mainstream American boundaries. For the most part, festival attendees may hustle past the spinners and carvers, but often, these crafters' friends and family may stop by, or interested individuals will sit with them and learn more about the craft. It is a subtle general attraction for the festival, but due to its intimacy, it does allow for unique interactions.

The Sami camp has allowed for such interactions too. Often comprised of the pen containing reindeer that are tended to by the actual herder and a *lavvu* (traditional Sami tent often compared to a tipi) in which sits its own proprietor, this area is an interesting descendent of 19th century European ethnological displays popular at early anthropology museums and World's Fairs. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes one such display in London, which bears eerie resemblance in some ways to the camp at Heikinpäivä, FinnFest, and other similar events:

> [I]n 1822, [William] Bullock had a Laplander family and live reindeer perform at Egyptian Hall, where they drove their sledge around a frosty panorama fitted out with their tents, utensils, and weapons. The Laplanders had been brought to care for the reindeer, who, it was hoped, could be introduced into England, but when this proved impractical, the Laplanders were recycled as ethnographic exhibits (1998:45).

The tableau of having Sami people perform their lives in an approximation of their Scandinavian traditional reality is what happens in one sense at Heikinpäivä. This is not meant to be seen in the same light as Bullock's exhibit. In the original 1999 Project 34 conference program, the

inclusion of the Sami camp is explicitly described as an opportunity for locals to learn more about their own Sami heritage: "The Sami Siida will have an informal gathering at the Winter Market, reconnecting Copper Country Sami with their Sami roots." This Sami Siida, composed entirely of Sami Americans who have embraced their unique ethnic heritage, provides a very visible alternative image of what it may mean to be Finnish American for some. The group itself consists of an incredible diversity of members, some of whom are unabashedly New Age in outlook, some of whom are very conservative Laestadian, and many somewhere in between these two extremes.

For many who have this heritage, participating in the display activities creates community itself; though most do not herd reindeer themselves, live in a *lavvu,* or even wear a *gakti* very often, to participate on this level is not only to educate those outside the group, and to present this small culture as being part of a broader sense of Finnish ethnicities. It also creates a sense of deep belonging within the ethnic community. As Mary Waters reveals, ethnicity in America is often very much bound up in images of physical, concrete, distinct communities as represented in images of the ghetto or small towns (1990:153). For the Sami, a distinct, and reasonably available representation of the "bricks and mortar" of such a community is the *lavvu,* and to sit in it, often with fellow ethnics, is to create the neighborhood they never had.

Figure Twenty Four: Chris Pesklo of St. Paul, Minnesota sits in the *lavvu* he has constructed and set up, in his traditional gakti, at Heikinpäivä 2009. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

The Sami camp has not been held at the festival since 2011, and the reindeer have not come since 2012, due mostly to scheduling issues, as well as to the fact that the only regionally-available reindeer are in Wisconsin, and DNR regulations make a cross-border visit unmanagable for the Finnish Theme Committee. In 2013, Heikinpäivä again went without a Sami camp, partly due to the legal restrictions and partly due to considerations for the coming FinnFest, and the possibility that a Sami camp would be held there. Though a camp was not held at FinnFest either (also due to reindeer border crossing issues), Sami lecturers, musicians, and booth vendors had a strong presence. As recognition of Sami culture has taken hold among Finnish Americans, it may be that such exotic displays as the *lavvu* and reindeer are not needed for education to a broader community, and if these activities do reappear in the future, they will

indicate a continued interest in these displays and enacting them among Sami Americans themselves.

Elementary Education

As has been indicated by the presence of Finnish language classes in the local high schools and Maija Stadius's incorporation of lessons on Finland in her elementary classroom, Finland has been a topic of interest in the public schools to some degree for quite some time. We have seen that high school students read the *Kalevala* as part of their literature curriculum in the 1990s, and today, Finlandia University and South Range Elementary School collaborate with the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland on the *Hei Suomi* project. In this program, two student teachers from Rovaniemi spend a month teaching Finnish curriculum to South Range Elementary School students, continuing the tradition of keeping Finland in the schools.[127]

Heikinpäivä has provided multiple opportunities for youth education, including the Costume Scavenger Hunt, Family Fun Night, and the student essay contest concerning the festival itself. Several unique programs have also provided additional opportunities for students to learn about specific aspects of Finnish ethnicities and cultures. In 2009, the festival was able to provide classroom learning opportunities to local schools with Nathan Muus, an ethnic Sami from California active in the community and a regular at annual FinnFests, and with Wilho Saari, a Finnish kantele player from Washington State.[128]

School visits brought the benefits of the festival to the classroom, additionally providing for the possibility that parents would gain interest from what their children learned in the classroom and perhaps bring the whole family to the festival for more. Just as with Maija

[127] See http://heisuomiprogram.blogspot.com/p/about-program.html. Accessed May 31, 2014.
[128] Nathan is an active member of the Sami Siida of North America, as well serving as longtime editorial staff on the Sami ethnic journal *Baiki*, and Wilho Saari is not only honored in his own state for his kantele traditions, but he is also the great-grandson of Kreeta Haapasalo, a well-known kantele player in Finland.

Stadius's class curriculum, in which students both Finnish and otherwise may participate on an equal level, this curriculum brought lessons for children within and outside of the ethnic community.

Youth education and folk festivals are not a new combination. Marsha Penti (1988:482) highlights that youth essay contests were an early feature of Laskiainen festivals in Palo, Minnesota in the 1930s. Sarah Knott, too, incorporated local schools very deliberately into the audiences of the National Folk Festival, with curriculum, special performances, and other considerations designed just for children (Williams 2006:68).

Adult Education

Adult education is also an important aspect of Heikinpäivä. For many in the region, being an ethnic Finn was not a popular thing, due to the social stigma it brought in certain communities, and this festival provides the first real opportunity for some to explore and express this side of their heritage (Jim Kurtti interview, April 3, 2014). For others, such as myself, life as a Yooper expatriate meant that many aspects of the culture were not practiced in the everyday, and the traditions that did keep were sometimes observed sporadically. For others at the festival, the interest in trying their hand at learning an aspect of traditional culture comes not from ethnicity, but from the craft itself. Indeed, these participants may have no Finnish ancestry at all.

At Heikinpäivä 2014, I had the opportunity to attend several of the workshop sessions, including an event at Zion Lutheran Church, at which kantele, baking, and weaving were offered simultaneously, after which, students would come together to share some Finnish coffee breads and discuss their workshop experiences.

This evening, I joined Finnish Theme Committee members Jim and Debbie Kurtti and Mary Pekkala at a table while students went off to their respective classes. Among the students

were people I knew personally from other Finnish community programs, college students from Finlandia University who attended the workshops as part of class assignments, and several who did not belong to the ethnic community but who wished to learn either about Finnish culture in general, or a specific cultural practice. At the bread-making workshop, several of the participants discussed their memories of the smell of cardamom loaves baking at their grandmothers' homes and the nostalgic feelings that participation in the class brought forth. In addition to connecting these students to the class instructors and to the personal connotations of culture that each workshop brought forth, these students also connected with one another. The community—and communitas—only grow.

During Heikinpäivä, the *juusto*-making workshops underwent some severe technical difficulties, largely pertaining to the milk used and so, in March, I was invited to a makeup session led by Debbie Kurtti at the Finnish American Heritage Center. The session included three males and four females (not including myself), and was a great interactive experience, as, though much of the activity was by necessity framed as a demonstration in which we were spectators, other parts of the demonstration allowed us to participate, for instance, in separating the curds from the whey in the cheese-making process.

Figure Twenty Five: Participants watch—and document—Deb Kurtti's *juusto*-making class. March 6, 2014. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

At this session, three participants were not of Finnish heritage and had come because of their broader interests in learning how to make such foods as cheese. They would have considered coming to this event no matter what ethnicity the cheese represented. All of these participants were graduate students at Michigan Tech, and one had attended other Heikinpäivä workshops, including the weaving workshop attended by my student. For her, these workshops were deeply tied to community participation, and she was quite cognizant of her place in this community to which she had moved for study. Having purchased a home in Hancock, she knew quite a lot about the previous owners, elderly sisters who would have been referred to as spinsters, and about whom a small body of folklore still exists in the neighborhood. After the official end of the workshop, she and I lingered to help Debbie squeeze more curds from the whey buckets, talking about interesting points of local history, her field research at a remote DNR station, and other similar topics.

For the two other graduate students, the workshop represented an opportunity to learn yet another unusual food-making skill. This was not their first experience making cheese, and

indeed, one had been experimenting with making his own cottage cheese outside of such workshops. Both had also made beers and were interested in these food-making processes that had aspects of chemistry involved. It was the food-making experience that brought them to the event, and not necessarily the community aspects that were an implicit component, and they did not linger after the end of the workshop.

The four other attendees, three females and one male, all had Finnish roots in the area, and had eaten homemade *juusto* at various instances. All had their own local sources for purchasing *juusto* and all came to the class with an interest in carrying on this tradition too. These participants shared stories about foodways and other local traditions during lulls in the action, and all connected this experience to their lives as local Finnish Americans. They made observations concerning local adaptations in making this cheese, from the man in South Range who had made it with USDA powdered milk, to the availability of raw milk as a factor in the making of the cheese, and a vast discussion of alternative types of milk to use.[129]

Debbie's utensils were a part of a story of traditionality too. The metal buckets used for the reaction between milk and rennet were 60 years old, and used by her own mother. The use of such things as round pizza pans, not a staple of the immigrant generation, but certainly common now, also illustrated how she adjusts this tradition to her own life.

[129] Cheese is not the only milk product beloved as a traditional Finnish dairy food. A type of clabbered milk, *viili,* is also still found among Finnish Americans who share "starters" amongst themselves. William G. Lockwood and Yvonne R. Lockwood (2000) detail the esteem these—and other dairy products—have in common in Finnish American communities.

Figure Twenty Six: Debbie Kurtti shows juusto-making workshop participants the curds, caked onto a pizza pan and ready for the oven. March 6, 2014. Photograph by Hilary Virtanen.

In the end, Jim Kurtti and I made coffee to go along with the warm, sweet "squeaky" cheese and attendees drank the coffee from cups imprinted with the name of their original owners: the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church. In the atmosphere of the Finnish American Heritage Center, with its massive himmeli ornament hanging from the ceiling, a painting celebrating the Finnish settlers of New Sweden, and a traditional Finnish boat made by Finnish Americans in 1990, a deliberate space for Finnish ethnicity is made, and in this space, the workshop attendants were able to think back to their own grandmothers and hometowns and lived ethnicities, and to celebrate the similarities they have with the stories of others.

In this aspect of festival education, the workshop, Heikinpäivä builds deeper connections to its audience than can be accomplished in such large-scale events as the Smithsonian and Michigan State University festivals because the audience can get at least partially involved in the actual process of work that is being demonstrated and performed. Indeed, this is specifically what attendees pay for. Bauman, Sawin, and Carpenter (1992) delineate five frames of presentation observed at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, including

"demonstration" and "instruction," which each serve to educate the audience more tangibly than the frames of "performance" and "exhibition" (both of which often omit the processes involved with production) and "work," which is the unmarked, typically un-self-conscious labor that takes place in preparation for and during the festival in order to present to the audience (p. 28).

Conclusion

The educational function of Heikinpäivä is one of the most important aspects of the entire festival, and from the start, it has built off of other developments in the creation of a public Finnish ethnicity, and today, it exists as the most visible aspect of it. Through the creation of educational opportunities targeted to many groups, the festival serves as a place of learning, often from an outsider's perspective.[130] For community members who opt to participate, the assumption is that they are re-learning or reclaiming from an insider's perspective, though often, non-Finns will also attend—and indeed, are heartily welcomed to do so—in order to learn about a specific craft or about Finnish folklife in a broader sense. The end result is that all learn, and all celebrate. In the next chapter, we will see more on how these aspects of Heikinpäivä are used by participants.

[130] This, of course, is a clear connection to my classification of Heikinpäivä, using Wilson and Udall, as an evolving indigenous festival (1982:4).

Chapter Five: Uses of the Heikinpäivä Festival

Introduction

The organizers of festivals such as Heikinpäivä, the 1987 Michigan folklife festivals, and other similar events often seek to educate the public on very tangible aspects of folk cultures, often with the aim of creating a common body of knowledge about these practices among academics, practitioners and laypersons (Dewhurst and MacDowell 1994:270-271) and strengthening the role of these practices within their communities (Sommers 1994:185). While these organizers often hope for tangible results (i.e. the continuation of certain traditional practices within a group or the development of curriculum based on folklife education), attendees often highlight more symbolic outcomes of the festival that connect once again with structural features of such events as described by folklorists (see Stoeltje 1983:243, Gabbert 2011:220).

In this chapter, these symbolic uses of the festival as revealed by attendees will be explored, both for the ways in which they complete this tangible-intangible duality that is seen in the festival, and for the ways in which these uses appear to give meaning to the festival itself.

A Rite of Passage

Following the end of Heikinpäivä 2012, word trickled back to me that 80-year old Marie Tuohimaa, a lifelong Copper Country resident, had participated in the Polar Bear Dive, which would make her the oldest known competitor in this activity. I arrived at the Copper Island Beach Club shortly after her dive, and though I had seen a wet, bundled woman who looked a little older than her fellow jumpers, I had no idea of the significance of her dive till Jim, Dave, and I recounted personal highlights of the festival the following week at the office.

Because Jim and Dave are the editors of the *Finnish American Reporter,* it is common for them to always think of new story ideas, and so they quickly decided this would be great for the

next issue. Although I rarely wrote for the paper, Jim thought I would enjoy meeting Marie and so I arranged with her to meet for an interview, and a few weeks after the festival, we met at her apartment in Houghton.

Figure Twenty Seven: Marie Tuohimaa is lowered into the waters of the Portage Canal by family members at the 2012 Heikinpäivä Polar Bear Dive. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

Marie, who had turned 80 shortly after Heikinpäivä 2011, had jokingly been asked by family members each year if she intended to participate in that year's Polar Bear Dive, and each year, she replied, "when I get to be 80, I'll do it" (see Virtanen 2012b). That year, she did indeed sign up for the Polar Bear Dive, and was joined by her son, grandson, and her grandson's friend in a group entry for the dive.

As with past Polar Bear Dives, Tuohimaa was joined by scores of divers, many of whom marked the occasion with outlandish outfits, even creating themed jumps that played out as miniature dramas that ultimately resulted in a dive into the frigid waters. One woman used the

dive to symbolically become a Yooper.[131] A group of divers in business suits portrayed the then-numerous field of candidates for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination, swinging at each other in a pantomime of the debate cycle and its resultant media frenzy before "falling" into the canal as a result of their behavior. Still others dove as they performed an ecologically-themed drama, dressed as loggers, frogs, and trees. Amid all this carnivalesque behavior, Tuohimaa and her family went down to the diving hole together, where they dipped Marie in before each diving into the water themselves, and then went into the warmth of the Copper Island Beach Club as a group, where I caught a glimpse of her upon my first arrival at the venue.

For Tuohimaa, her participation in this activity wasn't as dramatic as it seemed to some. The Aquanauts, among others, were greatly concerned for her throughout the whole diving process. Spectators seemed scared to engage her afterward, as though talking with her might cause her to go into shock. Marie laughed as I listened, wide-eyed, to her story. "I knew that the water temperature would be warmer than the air outside," she explained when I asked how she prepared herself mentally for the dive. True, I agreed. But still, it's so cold!

Marie continued on, telling me about how, when she used to ice fish, an activity she really loved, sometimes she would get wet and cold out on the ice. The cold, potentially dangerous conditions never bothered her, though. She laughed as she recalled being seen by family, out on the ice with a broken leg, dancing. The cold of the lake, to her, was an attraction, and not a deterrent. To jump willingly into the canal, then, was not that big a deal. But still, she agreed, it was special. Immediately after the dive, she called her brother to let him know that she had completed it. "I felt like I had really gotten something off my shoulders."

[131] This, as we shall see is a playful variation on van Gennep's "rites of passage," (1999) which is a recurrent theme among divers.

Marie's words, interestingly, were echoed by 2014 participant Nick Vieau, who I heard on the local ABC news refer to the Polar Bear Dive as "a bucket list experience"[132] ("Heikinpäivä Festival Returns to Hancock," 2014). Though neither Marie nor Nick articulate a particular reason for undergoing this playful ritual, both felt a sense of accomplishment upon completion of the task. The dive is something that draws many regardless of their heritage or interest in Finnish culture. For Marie, her initial attraction to the festival as a celebration of heritage that she could share with her family brought her to eventually take part in this other aspect of the festival. For many of the divers, though, the attraction is in the dive itself, and many of the other Heikinpäivä events may be uninteresting. It is in this broad scope of activities that part of Heikinpäivä's success lies: this festival is many things to many people.

Playing with Symbols

As has been seen, Heikinpäivä Finnish Midwinter Festival attracts many participants for a wide variety of reasons. The festival is not so esoteric that only Finns and others with a vested interest in this culture will want to attend, but it is also not so non-specific that it entirely blends in with the numerous other midwinter festivals that sprinkle the Upper Midwest and other notable snowy regions. Its reach is broad and specific at the same time.

Like many festivals, Heikinpäivä creates a ground on which people can play with identities and explore aspects of culture that may or may not necessarily connect directly to traditions they recognize or practice themselves. It is an opportunity, like many festival events, to indulge in behaviors not seen in the everyday including feasting, costuming, and generally frivolous behavior that would be out of place under normal circumstances. Similar to the powwows Barre Toelken describes (1991), this festival *selects* aspects of a Finnish and Yooper

[132] The phrase "bucket list" refers to a list of experiences one makes that they would like to do before "kicking the bucket," i.e., before dying. The phrase has been frequently used in popular culture since the release of the 2007 film, *The Bucket List*, starring Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson.

identity that are deemed worth presenting, and then *intensifies* them into a modern ritual that simultaneously puts everyday aspects of these identities on a pedestal for admiration, and allows for other aspects to be engaged in play, and even deprecation. It enforces positive stereotypes while allowing for the negative (though in small doses) to come into the open and be available for public comment, "ritual laughter" (Bakhtin 1968:6) and ultimately, reimagination (Stoeltje 1992:262, Turner 1982:120, Gradén 2003:197).

Figure Twenty Eight: Linda and Kris Kyro in their "U.P. Brrrmaids" costumes, Heikinpäivä 2014. Photograph by Jim Kurtti.

Raucous displays come each year from Kris and Linda Kyro, sisters and members of the Nyt Naura Suomalainen Sisters comedy act. Kris, with a rich contralto voice, is a popular performer in local music groups, plays, and at the annual "Red Metal Radio Show," a live radio production that takes place at the Calumet Theatre and is produced by local Finnish American musician Oren Tikkanen. At Heikinpäivä, Kris and Linda, as well as their sister Sherry, have dressed in simple yet inventive costumes that play on many images relating to wintertime and the carnivalesque, including, in 2013, a snowball fight in which Kris dressed as a giant snowball wielding a copper pot, marching menacingly down the street, and occasionally shouting at

spectators. In 2014, Kris and Linda dressed as "the UP Brrrmaids," creatures from the frozen local lakes, taking a cue from Mardi Gras, and incorporating green masks and many streaming strands of beads.

The appearance of such behavior as shown by the knife-fighters and Kris and Linda Kyro and others is related to the concept of "symbolic inversion," in which festival participants "present an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary, or artistic, religious, or social and political" (Babcock 1977:14). Symbolic inversion at Heikinpäivä includes taking both negative and positive stereotypes and using them for inverse purposes. The quiet, stoic, unflappable Finn is converted into the loud, slightly menacing "snowball fight" while Isontalon Antti and Antti Rannanjärvi, usually representative of stereotypical behavior Finns try to deny, are brought out for the parade, as figures to be remembered. These characters march in the parade and Polar Bear Divers use the event to incorporate themselves into the Yooper world as representations of "rites of reversal" (Abrahams and Bauman 1977:194-195) that, though, only involving a minority of the festival's participants, nevertheless account for major aspects of the event's important symbolic properties.

For the most part, these acts of playful challenge take place during the parade and Polar Bear Dive, because they are the places that are most appropriate for this behavior. This is one of the rare stages of the festival where social tensions can play out. In the instance of Isontalon Antti and Rannanjärvi, negative stereotypes of drunken, menacing men are brought to the front, for everyone to see, and for everyone to interpret or to relate to their own experiences and understandings of these characters and the stereotypes they represent. To some, these two could be any drunken, knife-wielding Finns, whether in 1860s Härmä, Finland, or just down the street at a pub in Hancock. To others they are two named drunken Finns who became famous for

reasons they don't understand, and to others still, they are remarkable—and recognized—precisely because they were two named and remembered Finns who, long after their deaths, have somehow continued to live on in a Finnish language folk song in a remote community in America where Finnish language and culture still matter. Their inclusion in the parade is a challenge to the idea of acceptable image presentation but it is also a confirmation of the deep place such traditions still have in this place. These two may not be "straight out of the *Kalevala,"* but they were straight out of Finland, and as such, they are a legacy of the lives the immigrants left behind in Finland.

While researching the character of Heikki Lunta in 2004, I was struck by a newspaper description of the snow god in the festival's first parade (Anderson 1999). Heikki Lunta marched down the street, and occasionally parade viewers on the sidewalks responded to his appearance with calls for him to go away. This imagery, of being told to leave while maintaining the parade route was an interesting one for me. Around the same time, Jim Kurtti and Dave Maki shared a photo of Heikki Lunta with me, as portrayed by Kenny Svenson. In this photo, Svenson wears a crown of cedar boughs with snowflakes suspended over the crown by wires, which was designed by Becky Weeks. He wears clothing emblematic of Yoopers in the winter: boots known commonly as *swampers,* snow pants, several layers of shirts and yarn mittens and a torn, ragged red and black flannel shirt. He carries a large Finnish flag.

This has always struck me because of the starkness of the imagery involved: he is the epitome of poor, backwoods Yooper Finn, dancing in the faces of all around him, wielding the Finnish flag. He doesn't hide what he is, and he doesn't apologize when he is told to go away. Strangely, despite all the educational opportunities the festival provides, despite all the nostalgia and despite all the overt positive, non-challenging festival behavior, *this,* to me, is the heart of

Heikinpäivä. These displays of performance bring acknowledgment of the negative stereotypes of being a Finn—and a Yooper to the front—and they give a chance for a concealed dialog about being part of these groups.

To me, the end result is pride. There is no instance where a voiced, direct confrontation happens, but this subtext is always present. The parade places side-by-side images of respectability (the folk-costume-clad child folk dancers, members of local ethnic fraternal orders, Hankooki Heikki, the characters of the *Kalevala)* with images of stereotype and self-deprecation (the knife-fighters, Heikki Lunta, the Kyro sisters' entries, and other entries poking tongue-in-cheek fun at Yoopers and Finns). It shows, in a dramatic, spectacular way, images of many experiences of the people within these overlapping groups. By controlling the images themselves and using them in their own ways, the end result is pride (cf Magliocco 1993).

In the end, Finns, Yoopers, and those that belong to neither circle in that Venn diagram are able to gather and to interact with the festival on their own terms, and in as large or as small a dose as they like. Whether for education or entertainment, the festival provides a way to engage in that which is ritualesque and carnivalesque: the carnivalesque comes from the aspects that bear similarity to full carnival, including acts of symbolic inversion, feasting, dancing, costume and the like while the ritualesque is found in "the performative use of symbols—images, music, movement—to effect social change" (Santino 2011:62). This defines many aspects of the festival activities, including as discussed above, the Polar Bear Dive, and the drama of the parade.

Discovery and Reclamation

For ethnic Finns and non-Finns alike, the festival's discovery function is of central importance. Combining the social aspects of the festival with the educational aspects that

attendees chose to take part in provides them with a starting point for creating or affirming friendships and other connections with locals.

In many ways, being part of these festivals has reintegrated me into the community in ways that I have wanted. I am surrounded by people who know that I like to hear their stories and to see the work that they do regarding heritage and local culture, and they often seek to include me in it. I am invited to join groups concerned with preserving aspects of heritage, to speak at local events, to write letters in support of grant applications for various projects, and to attend and simply enjoy local cultural projects. I am also given information about my family tree from other family members, told stories about the people that I come from (some people do this as soon as they realize who I am), and given suggestions for various projects that I should do, "when I have time."

None of this reverses the fact that I am still a Yooper Finn woman with grandparents all originating from towns called Tapiola, Toivola and Liminga. There is still prejudice attached to all three of these things, and these three things together make for a rather lethal combination in the world of stereotype and folk esteem. Heikinpäivä is part of a progression of the increase in esteem toward Finns and Yoopers, though the work is quite slow. In a newspaper account of the first Heikinpäivä, Becky Hoekstra and her mother Marge Mattila were interviewed, and each presented interesting images of what being Finnish meant for them growing up:

> Referring to being caught speaking Finnish as a child, especially at school, Mrs. Mattila said: "They'd rap you on the knuckles in some places."
> Becky's experience was that "When I was a kid, if you told someone you were Finnish they'd laugh at you. You were from out in the boonies." (Flesher 1999:8)

Becky's daughter (and Marge's granddaughter) Joanna Chopp is now the archivist at the Finnish American Heritage Center. Graduating from Jeffers High School three years after me, Joanna also studied Finnish language with Jim Kurtti, also resolved to include Finnish Studies in

her curriculum somehow in college, and also gave up on it in undergraduate study for a variety of reasons. Though Joanna did not incorporate Finnish Studies into her graduate program, she was employed as the archivist about six months after I started at Finlandia myself, in the early stages of her online archives sciences program.[133] We have both somehow broken away from the internalized stigma of Finnishness, and Finnish womanhood, in many ways, though we know others do project it upon us in certain ways. Visitors to the center, for instance, have frequently mistaken us for clerical help, not realizing we're the most highly educated staff in the building.

Jim Kurtti's experience, in the more isolated, less stigmatized community of Bruce Crossing, was quite different: "I didn't grow up with that [stigma], because we had this, it was okay in our family, but in Debbie's [his wife's] family, it was thought that to embrace the Finnishness meant that you were embracing something that should be over" (interview, April 3, 2014). For Debbie, it was clear that there was such a thing as being "too Finnish" and that having a strong accent and other features that marked you made many aspects of life difficult. As she and Jim grew more involved in Finnish ethnic activities, though,

> "she discovered just how Finnish she is. A lot of the foodways, and a lot of the stuff she did, a lot of the stuff her mother and her grandparents did were…they were really almost like artisans. With things that they could make, they made skis, they made baskets and her mother made *juustoa* and all this stuff, and she didn't necessarily put that together with being Finnish" (Jim Kurtti, interview, April 3, 2014).

Debbie's recognition of her family as having Finnish ethnic traditions that were not highlighted as such allows her to rewrite her story. She is one of the most Finnish people I know, with her beautiful Karelian *kansallispuku,* and her seemingly tireless ability to whip up a batch of *laskiaispulla* (a cardamom bun filled with sweet cream traditionally eaten for Laskiainen) or prune tarts for programs. For people like her, Heikinpäivä provides a chance to shed the stigma

[133] The previous two archivists at the FAHC were also around our age, Finnish American by heritage, with interests that brought them into this job for both professional and personal reasons.

of being “too Finnish” and to fully appreciate all the unspoken aspects of this heritage that did remain in practice within her family because they were conducted without scrutiny from the outside. By bringing these aspects of culture into the open, Debbie helps to increase the position of Finnish culture in the area as something relatable to other cultures. In her own way, she helps others to shed this negative imagery too.

Despite all this, negative imagery and both subtle and overt displays of prejudice toward Yooper and Finnish culture will continue to show themselves. The dialect is one aspect of cultural life that is still considered to be a detriment to locals seeking to get ahead in life (Remlinger 2007, 2009). In February 2014, I saw a newspaper advertisement for a new service offered through the local hospital that infuriated me, and, when I posted information about it on my Facebook page, many of my Yooper and linguist friends who were familiar with our dialect and the issues of social prestige it carries.

The Accent Modification Program was advertised as a service to both “native and non-native English speakers, especially those in education, business, and medical professions,” to help them learn how to more clearly present in English (“Accent Modification can Improve Confidence” 2014). Though publicity for this program insisted that no accent should be privileged over any other, for many, myself included, the subtext that perhaps we do have incorrect, even detrimental, forms of speech production was read loud and clear. For many who have the thickest Yooper brogue, upward mobility will not happen due to features other than their accent. Additionally, such services are largely inaccessible to these same populations due to cost, even when individuals have health insurance. Information on this program has since been removed from the website of Portage Health, though internet searches still reveal the webpages on which it was once posted. I am not certain if this means the service is no longer offered, or if

it is merely hidden within the website. It appears, however, that these removals were deliberate and unusual, as other programs announced around the same time still have all of their pages functional. I can't help but hope we caused enough of a stir that the hospital decided to downplay this particular service.

Heikinpäivä as a Copper Country Festival, Heikinpäivä as a Finnish American Festival

Heikinpäivä 2009 "Big Day" proved to be bitterly cold as I sought a parking spot on Quincy Street in advance of the parade. Jim Kurtti had once told me about an early Heikinpäivä parade in which marchers began to procede up the street in horror at the fact that there was no one standing out on the frigid, snowblown streets to watch them only to realize in relief that the cars that lined the street on each side nearly all had occupants who were watching the parade in comfort and warmth. I would use the same tricks, folding down the seats of my SUV so my kids and my nephew had room to sprawl out and watch the marchers go by.

I stood outside of the truck with a camera to photograph each marcher as they walked by. After several had gone past, I recognized Nathan Muus, a nationally-active member of the North American Sami community who I had met at FinnFest USA 2006 in Oregon and at FinnFest USA 2008 in Duluth. He and Chris Pesklo, another prominent Sami community member, marched together in their *gaktis.* Coming toward the midpoint of the parade route, I could tell that both were miserably cold; Chris, at that moment had his head down with his chin tucked into the collar of his tunic and he covered both ears with his hands.

"Hey, it's Nathan Muus!" I shouted. Nathan looked up and scanned the street before his eyes landed on me and his grimace turned into a smile. While he continued on his route, St. Urho and his grasshopper stopped by my truck and knocked at the window, waving at the kids inside. Though, in my own community, I should have recognized locals marching in the route, it was

Nathan's appearance that connected to me as someone I had met at other festivals. It made complete sense to me that we should both be at this parade.

This is but one of the occurrences during my years of fieldwork that illustrates the interconnections created through the network of Finnish American festivals nationwide. At prior festivals, I have met my first cousin twice-removed (FinnFest USA 2008 in Duluth- she threw down her walker and picked me up in a bear hug), a man who left Toivola with my great-grandpa and a few others for the copper mines of Bisbee, Arizona in the late 1930s and never came back (FinnFest USA 2011 in Tucson), and multiple former residents of the Tapiola-Pelkie area who had gone to grade school with my grandfather and his siblings (St. Urho's Day 2004 in Detroit). I have also seen many of the same merchants, musical performers, artisans, and lecturers at these events. Similar perhaps to many traveling folk festival circuits, Finnish and pan-Scandinavian ethnic festivals create a network around which commerce is generated, seasonal vacations are planned, and side events are incorporated (such as family reunions or smaller group events for Sami, Laestadians, or others).

As we have seen on the local level in Chapter Two, Heikinpäivä is a part of a constellation of celebrations that populate the Finnish American holiday calendar. Typically, Finnish Americans who are active in the ethnic aspects of the festival have attended many other festivals, from local events such as the Toivola Juhannus to the grand, national celebrations of FinnFest USA. Musicians in Minnesota, the Detroit area, and across the U.P. certainly include the festival as a part of their performance circuits. Crafters and Finnish specialty stores include it in their circuit of marketplaces. Others include the festival as one to attend for the enjoyment of it, fitting it into their own personal circuits of other annual events they keep in the realm of possibilities. It is, especially in the Finnish American context, a part of bigger circles.

In the office at the Finnish American Heritage Center one fall day in 2011, Jim Kurtti remarked on a couple, the man living in California and the woman in Marquette, who met up for an extended date just once a year at Heikinpäivä. I was pleasantly surprised to meet this couple in November of that year at the FinnFest in Tucson (two dates in the same year!) and have since also seen them at subsequent Heikinpäivä celebrations. The festival circuit is useful in many surprising ways. Like I had done at Laskiainen in Palo and FinnFest in Tucson, Finns come to advertise other festivals, ethnic publications, crafts and other products, music, social organizations, educational programs and even Lumene, a line of Finnish beauty products. They also go to take vacations, meet up with friends and family, and just take in festival life in a Finnish community different from their own.

Though only among a small group, Heikinpäivä is used as a heritage tourism destination. For the 2013 festival, I gave a lecture on Heikki Lunta as part of the event roster. After advertising this and other components of the festival, including posting information on the festival's Facebook event page, I received a message on my personal Facebook account. The sender was a man named Kyle, from the Chicago area, about my age, who had roots in the Copper Country, and whose family still maintained a camp in Jacobsville, a small community east of Hancock. Kyle had developed an interest in learning more on his heritage, and, with his wife Jen, planned to attend the festival that year as one aspect of this interest. He detailed his explorations in genealogy, language lessons, history, and music, and clearly wanted to know more.

I met Kyle and Jen at my lecture, and later that weekend, we attended the banquet at Zion Lutheran Church and a night of music and dancing at the Copper Island Beach Club featuring Oren Tikkanen and the Backroom Boys. Kyle, a musician and songwriter, and Jen, a writer and

editor, have used their talents to deepen their explorations of Finnish and Yooper culture in unique ways: Kyle has been learning to perform Finnish music in tandem with Finnish language lessons, and Jen has even written a book on Keweenaw County for the Images of America book series. Kyle and Jen represent the ways in which my generation connects with heritage. We don't schottische and we may not already know how to make *piirakkas* or *juusto* without keeping instructions and cookbooks close at hand. But we can still learn from it, and we can still develop our own relationships out of these things. Growing up far from the center of Finnish culture, and knowing much of it in very different context from that of parents and grandparents, visitors use heritage tourism as an important strategy for learning about roots and culture.

Kyle and Jen are not alone. Though not all who come to Heikinpäivä do so for the same reasons that they did, the Copper Country often plays host to people of many ethnic backgrounds who come to learn more about their ancestors, and to experience the places they lived and worked in. At the Finnish American Heritage Center, I have met many individuals who came in to learn what they could about their family's story, often using the archive's genealogical records. Many other facilities in the region, particularly those affiliated with the Keweenaw National Historical Park, also help to contribute to the available knowledge on the people of the region, be they Finnish, French Canadian, Cornish, and more. I have worked with, or given tours to, people from Norway, Minnesota, Ohio, and many other places and for each of these people, another piece of their own family history is revealed.

While the opportunities for exploration are quite different between attending the festival, and coming to the area for genealogical research, the end result is usually quite similar. Heikinpäivä presents a context for those who want to better understand the Finnish culture that has developed in the Copper Country over time, and to relate it to the lives of their immigrant

and post-immigrant ancestors now gone. Lavenda provides insight into reasons behind this aspect of festival when he states that "festivals are recurring community events, and as a result, people's memories of their towns as communities accumulate around festivals" (1997:5). Though of course, this creates meaning for community members through the festival, the use of the festival by these locals over time also provides a representation of these memories that others may interpret. Sometimes the stories these tourists come to find leave dead ends and visitors are left at the "last known" work place or home location. The Copper Country, though, with its continued engagement with the past, is one of those places where an unfinished story can still be augmented by others. Additionally, the intricate kinship system of the area often means that such visitors are left being somehow incorporated into the community despite the fact that they did not find what they were looking for. People around here remember others who have been long gone.

As it was for me, Heikinpäivä is a place where individuals with varying levels of connection to the community can enter in an accepting and friendly environment and both contribute to the festival in their own unique ways, and take any variety of experiences, ideas, and feelings out of the event. This festival creates community in many senses, among locals, among tourists, among Finns and among countless others. Though it is created with the intent of celebrating the Finnish heritage, it is arranged to be flexible to the needs and interests of many all at once.

Conclusion

Symbolic uses of Heikinpäivä by festival participants are revealed through the ways in which these participants use the events and structure of the events and the responses that they have to these elements. For some, particularly participants in the Polar Bear Dive, images of the

"rite of passage" are playfully used to imbue deeper meaning into the event than would be present if it was represented as merely jumping into a hole in the ice. For others, examination of issues of stereotype and prejudice are explored in a carnivalesque manner in the parade. Others use the festival to claim or reclaim their heritage and to bring themselves into the community.

While certainly tangible benefits could be connected to each act—for instance, overcoming fear in the Polar Bear Dive, creating a socially acceptable space for oneself through inversion and overthrowing of stereotypes, or integrating oneself with the community or with one's own previously-unacceptable heritage—many of these results are enacted through symbolic action.

In the final chapter, the ways in which the festival is regarded as an authentic, traditional representation of local Finnish American culture will be explored. The continuing influence of cultural evaluations by national Finns will be an important aspect of this discussion.

Chapter Six: Authenticity in the Finnish American Festival

Introduction

Throughout the course of this study, we have seen how Copper Country Finnish American culture is a result of mixing immigrant culture with interethnic culture in the U.P. and mainstream American cultural products. Copper Country Finns have not only a fascinating blended tradition that still presents strong, recognizable aspects of Finnish culture, but also a strong sense that this culture is a legitimate and authentic representation of their lives and heritage at this point.

Professional folklorists who design and implement large scale folk festivals consider themselves to be accurate judges of authenticity and traditionality (Sommers 1994:182-183), due in no small part to years of fieldwork within the given community and sincere efforts at collaborating with their informants. They are trained to at least attempt to recognize their own cultural assumptions and to examine issues of culture through the eyes of their field community.

Finnish, Inside and Out?

In the fall each year, I typically work with my colleague Terri Martin at Finlandia University, as she simultaneously coordinates two annual outreach programs in the same week: the Road Scholars week-long experience of Finnish American culture in the Copper Country, and the Sibelius Academy Music Festival, an event that brings two musical acts from Helsinki's prestigious music school for a series of concerts to the U.P. One of my favorite activities in connection with these two events is to drive with the musicians and the Road Scholar participants to tour sites or event venues and to discuss their reactions to the high visibility of Finnish culture in the area. As they marvel over the mailboxes with Finnish surnames painted on them, the saunas that dot the Portage Canal between Houghton and Chassell, and of course,

Hancock's Finnicized streetscape, these people come to realize that Finnish culture is something that exists both on a lived, daily, almost unmarked level, and on a very deliberate, self-conscious level. It is through both lived and symbolic ethnicity that Finnishness continues to thrive here.

At the same time, however, and particularly among Finnish nationals, it becomes clear that the Finnish culture that is celebrated in the Copper Country is not always the same as that which exists in Finland today. Sometimes, Finnish Americans maintain practices and language (for instance, the midwinter proverbs pertaining to the feast day of Bishop Henrik) that are dying out or completely gone from Finland today. Other times, Finnish Americans practice traditions, such as those associated with St. Urho, that have no basis in Finland at all. And these things place Copper Country Finns in a unique position with regards to the idea of authenticity within their lived culture.

Having studied Heikki Lunta for my MA thesis at Indiana, I know this only too well. Ethnic Finns on both sides of the Atlantic are often quick to display their contempt for a character created outside of the borders of Finland (and Karelia), especially considering that he was invented as a radio commercial jingle! This issue comes up time and again with Heikki Lunta (or I should call him "Hank Some-Snow"), St. Urho, and other aspects of Finnish American culture that I have studied, including Finnish American dialect and use of Finnish ethnic dress, *kansallispuku,* in an American context.

Others who have worked with Finnish American folklore have noticed the same issue. James P. Leary, interviewing Mass City accordionist Art Moilanen (1916-2005) about an upcoming appearance at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival in Finland, describes Moilanen being unsure as to whether the corpus of music he played—a broad body comprising traditional Finnish immigrant songs, the immigrant songs of neighbors in the Upper Midwest, American

music, and even his own compositions—was what his audience of Finnish nationals would expect from him: "My speculation and Art's uneasiness owed plenty, I believe, to contradictory meanings implicit in the phrase 'traditional immigrant music'" (Leary 1987:206). This is a valid point to raise. Among Finnish Americans, his music was so authentic to the experience of his community,[134] and his talent so good, that he was elevated to the ranks of best among American "tradition bearers," and honored by the National Endowment for the Arts as a National Heritage Fellow in 1990. This does not, however, necessarily connect with national Finns.

This disjoint, of course, stems from over a century of separation from Finland on the part of the immigrants and their descendents. In that time, Finland has gone from being a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, to a small independent nation that managed to emerge from the Cold War with a highly modern, progressive, and affluent society, which is consistently praised for its excellent educational and healthcare systems. As Finland shifted from a primarily agricultural, rural society to one that is primarily urban and industrialized, the Copper Country stagnated in a post-industrial bust, and the Finns who remained lived in conditions often not much better than those of their immigrant ancestors. The bodies of folklore created by Finnish Americans and Finns over these decades have gone on decidedly divergent paths, though certain historical continuities remain, and cultural borrowing between the groups also occurs. In the context of the changes faced by each group, the lore of each is certainly authentic to the needs of the group it represents.

One concrete example of this divergence is seen in the development of the American Finnish dialect, Finglish. While there are many factors behind the development of this dialect that mixed aspects of Finnish and English (and also, sometimes possibly Swedish), one of the more telling factors was a need to create usable words for innovative technologies that were

[134] For more on the interethnic dimensions of local authenticity in performance, see Leary 1994a:202-203.

either not yet invented at the time of migration, or so new as not to be known across Finland.[135] One such innovation, the airplane, was of course, adapted in both countries. In Finland, the word for this machine was established as *lentokone,* (flight machine,) while the word in Finglish was established as *ilmalaiva* (air ship) (see Virtaranta 1992:71). Each group responded to the need to describe this new device using the base of Finnish language, but each came up with a different word with which to do it.

According to Regina Bendix, "Authenticity […] is generated not from the bounded classification of an Other, but from the probing comparison between self and Other, as well as between external and internal states of being" (1998:17). Authentic folklore was to come from an unnamed mass, the folk, who were imagined to be the peasant remnants of a supposed original population of a given area. Though folklorists came to recognize the role of individuals in carrying on folk traditions, and even reshaping them for modern use, the words used to describe authenticity, Bendix explains, remain much the same: "original, genuine, natural, naïve, noble and innocent, lively, sensuous, stirring" (15). These terms, under the umbrella of authenticity, give folklorists license to appraise aspects of folk culture as worthy or unworthy of study. This same set of ideals can also be seen in appraisals of folk culture by those who are not folklorists.

Throughout my time researching, I have come across individuals who found certain activities within the Finnish American cultural sphere to be not traditional because it was not a part of their own experience. This basic appraisal of activity as traditional or not really illustrates the subjective nature of the process. Though Finnish Americans are often close-knit and homogeneous in certain ways, there are differences that separate us, and so for many of us, we find items that are not traditional to us, and therefore, contradict the very idea of tradition.

[135] Virtaranta (1992) gives a detailed explanation of this dialect's history and the many factors that contributed to the development of Finglish words.

We also have unique developments within our own family structures that shift the nature of these traditions. When I was a child, I grew up understanding that, though I didn't attend church, and have only taken one of the sacraments, I was essentially born Catholic and came from a Catholic family, (which I later learned was due to my Finnish immigrant great-grandfather's in-marriage with my French Canadian great-grandmother). Being also raised to understand that I was Finnish, I came to the assumption that Catholicism was the typical religion of Finns, and thus, I was quite surprised to learn in the eighth grade that Lutheranism was the state religion of Finland, as well as the most typical faith among Finnish Americans. For others, who grew up in atheist homes often connected to leftist political ideology, religion was not traditional at all. These things color an individual's understandings of what is authentic to Finnish American culture and what is not.

Between Finnish and Finnish American

If authenticity is negotiated by the individual in relation to self and other, in which that which is authentic calls to the self, the distinction between Finland and Finnish America comes into sharp relief.

In 2005, the Karelian folk band, Sattuma, from Petrozavodsk, Russia came to the Copper Country to perform as part of a broader tour including FinnGrandFest in Marquette, and smaller dates in the Midwest, including a kantele-playing workshop at the Finnish American Heritage Center, and an informal performance at the home of Jim and Debbie Kurtti, with local musicians including Oren Tikkanen. Jim and Debbie had invited a number of people, including several Finnish nationals who lived in the Hancock area. I knew quite a few of the guests, and spent the afternoon chatting with former high school teachers, the parents of former classmates, and people I had met during those first two summers of fieldwork.

After awhile, I found myself at a table with several Finnish nationals, one of whom had a number of disparaging things to say about Finnish American culture. She was annoyed by the barrage of Finnish symbols—bumper stickers, street signs, Finnish flags, t-shirts—that she saw on a daily basis, and she was doubly annoyed by the fact that we were not doing it right. We did not always pronounce or spell Finnish words correctly, and we always insisted on trying our poor skills out on Finnish nationals. I was surprised at the vehemence with which this person spoke. Strangely, her next comments were based in error, and though ordinarily I might have sputtered out an outraged retort, I was so surprised, I could only listen. "They probably do not even know that *'Satumaa'* is the name of one of our most famous tangos." Though she was clearly confusing the name of the band Sattuma, meaning "happenstance" in Finnish, with the name of the tango, "Satumaa," or "fairy tale land," as well as mistaking this band for being Finnish-American, her questioning of my ethnic culture was very troubling to me. Certainly, having studied Finnish language and learned a little about Finnish American dialect, I knew there were differences. But it had never occurred to me that these differences could offend the native Finn.

For Finnish Americans, too, aspects of Finnish culture today are not traditional to what we understand Finland to be. Many in the generations after immigration grew up with stories of Finland as a poor place with no opportunities for the landless and frequent famines thinning the ranks of the poor (see Losure and Olson 1997). Though with increased media, including the internet, as well as an increase in travel to Finland among Finnish Americans, knowledge of Finland's current condition—greatly improved since immigrant times—is generally known. Among many Finnish Americans, however, the first visit to Finland a generation or two ago was a surprise because Finland, too, had changed.[136] A modern, well-educated, generally comfortable

[136] This gap in perception of "the Old Country" is seen in many post-immigrant groups, including Swedish Americans (Gradén 2003) and Norwegian Americans (Emch 2011).

society rewarded the descendents of the Finns who stayed behind. "I wish they [the immigrants] could have held on just a while longer" is something many Finnish Americans think, having led very difficult lives and having not achieved the level of comfort of their Finnish cousins. In high school, upon learning about Finland's social democracy and its welfare state system, I thought the same thing.

Finnish American culture and Finnish culture have taken separate trajectories since the time of immigration. Though contact has continued between the two since these times, Finnish Americans and Finns are two different cultural groups, and the authenticity of one does not match evenly with the authenticity of the other. In Finland, for instance, the use of "ethnic kitsch" that is so common in America among a number of ethnic communities would be redundant in most circumstances, and possibly even uncomfortably nationalistic in others.[137] In America's multicultural context, though, such markers of ethnicity are valued for the ways in which they rapidly communicate elements of an individual's heritage through visual cues. In the Finnish American context, much of this material is playful or casual: t-shirts for children that mark them as a *suomalainen tyttö* (Finnish girl) or a *suomalainen poika* (Finnish boy), knit winter hats that say *paha poika* (bad boy), license plate holders that read "*Mitä kuuluu?* Finnish American" (How are you/how is it going?), and t-shirts, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, and more with the simple word "sisu" (guts, tenacity, persistence).

Finnish Americans, too, use elements of Finnish modern design in presenting their ethnicity. At Finnish American festival markets held across the country, Finnish import stores from around the United States buy booths to augment their regular in-store and online sales.

[137] One colleague at Finlandia University, speaking of an exchange student from Finland, told me about how she had wanted to bring souvenirs from our university back for her family, but she found that much of the apparel, using images related to Finland's coat of arms, was too close in appearance to imagery used by Finnish nationalists, and particularly, by members of the Finns party (formerly known as the True Finns party), a political party famous for its anti-immigration stance, and for racism and homophobia on the part of many individual members.

Shops such as Touch of Finland in Marquette and FinnStyle in Minneapolis provide Finnish Americans an opportunity to purchase art glass by Iittala, clothing and home fabrics by Marimekko and Nanso, and jewelry by Aarikka and Kalevala Koru, in addition to the kitsch. Though in the Finnish context, such purchases may or may not have an element of ethnic pride involved, for many Finnish Americans, owning such items is a way to show continued connection to Finnish culture. Many Finnish Americans attest to the high quality of these items, give them to others for gifts, and display them prominently in their homes (see Wargelin 1990). Among Finnish nationals, the use of kitsch and the use of modern Finnish products together make no sense, but in the Finnish American context, this is entirely appropriate.

As James P. Leary's conversation with Art Moilanen previously highlighted, Finnish American culture often incorporates direct carryovers from the Old Country, interethnic mixings, and completely new inventions in the American context. Aside from music, this is found in language use (see Virtaranta 1992), foodways (see Lockwood and Lockwood 1991, 2000), oral traditions (see Dorson 2008 and Leary 2001), and more. Broadly speaking, the Finnish American lens registers authenticity as inclusive of the experiences the ethnic community has had both before immigration and after. It validates the creation of such things as an interethnic group known as Finndians, the use of words such as *gintas,*[138]and *mojakka,* and the marking of many objects with symbols of ethnicity, from mailboxes to t-shirts to the holiday dinner table setting. Finns and Finnish Americans very often mistake one another's culture as belonging to their *self,* when in reality, more often than not, they should evaluate one another as the *other*—close, but not always the same.

[138] This is a Finnish American word for thick mittens, usually made of leather that comes from the Finnish word for the same object, *kinnas* (singular) or *kintaat* (plural). The word *gintas* is interesting because it combines part of the formula for pluralizing the word in Finnish with the formula for pluralizing the word in English.

Jim Kurtti understands this only too well. Throughout the course of FinnFest USA 2013, we sought to maintain the distinction of presenting a Finnish American festival, as opposed to a Finnish festival, using wording that stressed the primary place of Finnish *America* and the rightfully secondary position of Finnish culture. This was important because we anticipated, and indeed hosted, many international guests and we knew that if we did not address Finnish American and Finnish as two often separate cultures, we would be criticized for implying these cultures were one and the same.[139]

In the years since I first started researching Heikki Lunta and Heikinpäivä, I have had to work to articulate just what this festival is, and how it both relates to Finnish tradition and expands upon it. Since I typically have a short amount of time in which to do this, the description rarely suffices, and often, I appear to claim that this festival is something that is also celebrated in Finland, which it is not. Other Finnish Theme Committee members have also provided similar statements for the media, under pressure during the festival itself, and without enough camera time to describe the complex relationship between Finland, Hancock, and Heikinpäivä. The difference, though, is coming to be understood over time. For Jim, this distinction is at the very heart of Heikinpäivä. This festival, like FinnFest and like St. Urho's Day, has allowed celebrants to break free from the Finnish model because it is invented. It has made itself authentically Finnish American by its very design.

Heikinpäivä as Authentic

The rise of expressions of third and fourth generation Finnishness, and especially in the realm of festival, has helped many to learn to express their heritage and to learn about Finnish American culture from the perspective of the outside in ways that have proven to have a level of sustainability for the future. As Jim Kurtti has said,

[139] Jim Kurtti also discusses this in an editorial in the *Finnish American Reporter.* See Kurtti 2014.

> I think you see a lot more expressions of the sense of being Finnish now than when I was young. You see it on a lot of people's license plates, and you see it on hats and you see it all over. That wasn't there before. St. Urho, I think, actually started a lot of that. Because people didn't have to do something very *specific.* They didn't have to be really embedded in Finnish, like say a Knight or Lady of Kaleva would be or something. And they didn't have to be a Finnish speaker. They could be Finnish American. Even now with FinnFest, I'm amazed at how many people I've known for decades who suddenly said, "Well, yes, I'm Finnish." Maybe they're a half, or one-quarter or whatever. Never knew it! They didn't wear it on their sleeve in any particular way and these events tell them that you don't have to be a hundred percent. You don't have to be Finnish-speaking to be Finnish American. But I think that's what Heikinpäivä did. And I think that's what St. Urho did. And FinnFest. Especially when FinnFest comes to your community, I think it actually releases a lot of people to…let them be Finnish or Finnish American however they choose (interview, April 3, 2014).

The creation of these festivals has created an open field for this culture to be explored that is welcoming of elders, young families, students, the religiously faithful, the secular or New Ager, and those from outside of the ethnic community. This leap toward a distinctive Finnish American cultural experience allows Finnish Americans to escape the orthodoxy of celebrations such as Laskiainen and Vappu and to not worry about celebrating them incorrectly. Heikinpäivä provides reassurance that "[participants] weren't doing anything wrong" (Jim Kurtti, interview, August 12, 2004).

Describing a Slovakian harvest festival in New Jersey that also draws from an Old Country agricultural ritual for its basis, Svatava Pirkova-Jacobson reveals that, in an American context, the means and the ends both will differ from those of the festival as practiced back in Europe:

> Imitating the model, the Heightstown Slovaks transformed it; and all their unintentional modifications converged towards the same end: the agricultural constituents and symbols of the ritual were weakened in favor of the socially communal manifestations. The arrangement of the mock-performance reveals a latent conflict in the peasant tradition of the Heightstown Slovaks, with the victory of this tradition as an emotional outcome of their action" (Pirkova-Jacobson 1956:273).

Individuals may or may not connect with the original purposes of the event, or indeed, even know or understand them (Pirkova-Jacobson 1956:268). The reconfiguration of the ritual to create community is what matters. This proves true for Heikinpäivä as well.

Jim Kurtti is very thoughtful about the design of Heikinpäivä and how it proves to be successful among multiple groups at once: "If you create a new Finnish American holiday or event, you can appeal to people on the popular cultural level, and then […] you need to give people an opportunity to attach this emotion to something" (interview, April 3, 2014). Breaking free from any sense of established tradition—while still drawing from an established body of lore within the community—allowed for Jim and the Finnish Theme Committee to pick from what they had available locally as markers of Finnish American culture that could be shared and celebrated, and also to incorporate the frivolous and wacky, including the Wife Carrying Competition and the Polar Bear Dive. No one would likely argue that wife-carrying is an actual traditional activity in Finland, though, as we have learned, it is related to historical events. But allowing this event at Heikinpäivä, a nod to modern Finland, allows the cultural dialog between Finland and multiple Finnish American communities to carry forth. This brings in the casually interested and those who have specific, or even unspoken, interests and are unsure what to expect. And then it is the other activities that provide that burst of connectedness and belonging that attendees may often need on the emotional level.

These festivals create a ground for the celebration of nostalgia. The ways of the old country are celebrated, certainly, but so, too, over time, are those early immigrant communities that laid the basis for the ethnic group in the present. Among Finnish Americans, terms such as "Finn Hall" are used in festival activities, and even as the name of a prominent Finnish American band, to reconnect to the earlier days when there were numerous community and organizational

halls, built just for Finns to congregate, learn, perform, debate, and connect socially and emotionally with others of a common background (see also Österlund-Pötzsch 2008:206-209). It is both a nostalgia for the beloved home of the original immigrants, as well as for the Finnish communities that existed in the past, that somehow evoke those terms of authenticity that may or may not be true.

Speaking realistically, no one really wants to go back to those days. The ancestors left for very compelling reasons, and when they arrived and settled in America, things did not necessarily get much better for them. It is not the famine and the hardship and the constant poverty that we want, but rather, it is the illusion of that pure, untainted spirit. That authentic immigrant who could deliver babies in a sauna and build a whole house without nails. That group of miners who stood up to their bosses and banded together to survive the swift and severe reaction. The church communities who, free from the scrutiny of the state churches of Finland and Scandinavia, created their own forms of worship in the atmosphere of religious freedom that America offered. It is that bold experience of what Victor Turner calls "spontaneous communitas," the thrill of feeling a meaningful connection to those around us and the possibilities that this feeling opens up, that we want (Turner 1982:47-48). We are, in one sense, trying to recreate that feeling, while in another sense, we are trying to reimagine and redefine it for our own needs. In celebrations of heritage, one finds the bases for social change (Lavenda 1997:8).

Tradition and Continuity

It may be strange, perhaps, that I have waited until the very end to really define and describe this term "tradition" that comes up so frequently when exploring ethnic cultures and

considering their role in American life. In one sense, I do this because, in all reality, Heikinpäivä is what many would consider to be *not traditional.*

Certainly, the ghost of folklorist Richard Dorson haunts me whenever I work on Finnish American folklore. A giant of folklore who is still remembered by many of my own teachers, I feel sometimes that I may be carrying his torch—or perhaps I carry the torches of Aili Kolehmainen Johnson and Ariane de Felice (Leary [in Dorson] 2008:xiv-xv; xvii-xix). I also feel, however, that I carry his scrutiny beyond the grave due to what I choose to study in this region that so thrilled him, and what connected me so tightly to my discipline in my first years of graduate school. In short, I run afoul of what Dorson called *fakelore*—of the "presentations of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim that they are genuine folklore (1971:9). For the people that recognize Heikinpäivä as authentic, and even Heikki Lunta and St. Urho, the emotions are real. These elements connect people to their heritage.

When I think of how I define tradition, I usually consider the words of Henry Glassie, who asks that we "accept […] that tradition is the creation of the future out of the past" (1995:395). I've always liked this one phrase because it is both simple and evocative. I like to imagine a rough, barely visible image carved on the grave of my great-great-great-grandfather Otto Wiideman of two hands clasped together. This motif, common in Finnish visual culture traditional and modern,[140] represents the clasped hands of two rune singers, held as they sing and repeat story songs, tying the practiced skills of an older singer with those of a novice who seeks to know more through song. In Glassie's definition, I see my family clasping hands in a chain,

[140] One of the most visible uses of this motif in Finnish America is its use as the emblem of the Finlandia Foundation National and its affiliated chapters.

with Otto, and his daughter-in-law called *Äiti*,[141] my great-grandfather Kaarlo, my grandma Fran, and skipping a generation through strange necessity, me and my own kids. My grandma pulls the ancestors into parts of the present for me, and I keep also pulling for Alex, Audrey, and Anneli.

This is what we do with Heikinpäivä. A future is being shaped out of the past. For Jim Kurtti, the festival was an opportunity to celebrate these everyday sayings that were gradually losing their place in our changing world—but that shouldn't have been. Snow and winter weather patterns still matter. They still drive our economy, letting our workers earn much needed paychecks. We still savor a good snowmobile ride and despair at the woes of frozen pipes and heat bills that bring on near-homelessness. We still marvel at the sheer beauty of this place we live in, calling it God's Country and knowing the worst will likely never drive us out. The words of elders still firmly belong with us.

We had to do more with these words, though. Heikinpäivä came to be because we needed to address our identity in a way that would assert our pride without alienating others—and ideally, to invite them to join in these celebrations and explorations. In the Copper Country, where many everyday interactions are informed by the family that one has and the company that one keeps, for better or worse, events like Heikinpäivä allow people from many walks of life to come together and shed the usual restrictions on who may socialize with whom. One has to be engaged in severely objectionable behavior to be unwelcome at Heikinpäivä, and everyone is welcome to approach the event at their own comfort and interest levels.

The Last of a Dying Breed

As an undergraduate, I became fascinated—and terrified by—the notion of language death and the effects that this process can have on small cultures, be they indigenous, minority,

[141] Äiti means mother in Finnish. From what I understand, this great-great grandmother of mine was called this by her children, and then, in the transplanted context of America, she came to be called this by her grandchildren as well.

or an isolated pocket. Maybe it's my neurotic nature at work, but I concern myself with cultural peril, even if it is just to marvel at it to myself. I hate to hear of the last ritual ever performed in a certain context, of the last speaker dying, of the last singer of a particular style no longer able to sing, of the last known soldier from World War I.

This used to keep me up, worried that we would have a last Finnish speaker in the Copper Country or a last reindeer herder in Sapmi. A student of mine, a member of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in nearby Baraga County, told me about meeting the last native speaker of Ojibwe from his community when he was in elementary school. Jim Kurtti once unwittingly brought it home to me when, after I commented on the 20 year age gap between me and the next youngest member of my lodge in the Ladies of Kaleva, looked at me seriously and said, "You might be the last one."

My anxiety over others—and myself—being the last has lessened with time. I have come to see that there are many, many people my age and younger who have a vested interest in their heritage and have ways of expressing this interest that are both extremely inventive, and "straight out of the *Kalevala."* I attended graduate school with a fellow Finnish American who has become a good friend. I was pleasantly surprised that far from the last of my kind, I wasn't even the only one in my generation. My son has learned to expect that Oren Tikkanen will hand him a drum or a set of spoons when we visit him each Christmas Eve so Alex can keep time to the Finnish, Irish, Slovenian, and American songs that will fill the night. My girls know if there's an emergency requiring a girl in a *kansallispuku* to show up on short demand, they are on call. Whether they choose to make these practices end later in life is up to them. While we spent my "education exile" in several large college towns, they came to wish for the pasties and *nisu* bread that we would stock up on, just like I did as a kid in way-out Wyoming. I can't worry about those

people ahead of and parallel to me that will be the last to do something, no matter how important I think it is to my own life.

Jim Kurtti has worked to stop or slow these last people from coming into existence. Through his career, he has likely prevented last speakers, last wood carvers, last cheesemakers, a last whip-sled ride. He has, along with members of the Finnish Theme Committee, also created firsts out of what remained—he reached into the past and created something valuable for the future. Much like James P. Leary has said, in referring to his own family's ways of honoring their Irish heritage, "Imperiled by dislocation, loss, oppression, adaptation, and assimilation, we necessarily let some old ways slip into oblivion. Yet we continue, modify, and create other traditions. Through them we assert our past heritage and present identity with an often fierce determination" (1998:51). I cannot worry anymore, about my place in this community and in my own family, about whether one of my kids will pick up that kantele I bought, about whether I will be the last one to send out the Ladies of Kaleva's official condolence card to the family of the second-to-last member of my lodge. We do what connects us to our heritage and our community now and trust that down the road, others will make their own appropriate choices.

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