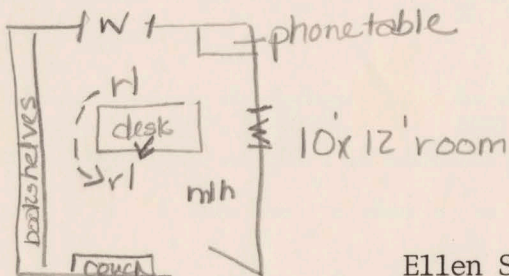


June 20, 1979

Marina L. Herman - Collector

Rev. R. V. Lanseth - Informant

Faith Lutheran Church
Calumet, Michigan 49913
(between Calumet and Laurium)



Ellen Stekert (ES), Sara Poynter (SP) and I (MH) left the Parkside Restaurant in Calumet around 10:30 a.m. this morning. I had called Rev. Lanseth (RL) to confirm our morning interview prior to our leaving. The church was located midway between Calumet and Laurium. We got there within 5 minutes. As I was explaining the reel-to-reel equipment to Sara and Ellen, Rev. Lanseth came out to greet us. I perceived he was the Pastor, so I introduced myself, EJS and SP. I told RL they were going to interview Eva Koopikka that morning. EK is one of the parishioners to which he referred us to.

RL walked back into his church and said he would meet me there when I was through with EJS and SP. A couple minutes later I walked into the church. I noticed from the outside that a new addition has been recently constructed (I found out it was done in 1973). His office was carpeted in brown and white shag carpet. A bookshelf lined the west wall as I entered his office, with a desk, 2 chairs and a couch comprising the other furniture. RL was playing a small cassette recorder as I walked in the office. (RL appears to be quite a busy pastor. Pleased RL had time for interview). He shook my hand and asked me what I wanted to talk to him about. I told him that after I reviewed my notes from our telephone conversation last night, I wanted to interview him on his church, area music and ethnic traditions of the area. He said it was fine. As he pulled his chair around in the front of his desk, I asked whether I could tape the interview. He consented, so I set up the recorder on his desk. (He seemed pleased that I wanted to interview him).

Tape On

I announced the tape. I outlined for him the questions I would like to ask him and then asked whether there were any questions he had of me. He asked what would become of the tapes once they were collected. I told him they would be archived and made available to area communities. (He was pleased with the answer).

We then began the formal interview. I asked him to tell me a little bit of his own history and how he came to be affiliated with this congregation. (At this point he took off his shoes and tucked his feet under the cushion of my chair. He was quite relaxed, so in turn, I was). He gave

Folk Symbol a brief sketch of his early life from being schooled in a one room schoolhouse (he likens himself to being an Abe Lincoln) to singing for the Women's Temperance Organization as a young boy; explaining he now thanks his mother for his "gift of music". He then spoke of his pastorship in Unity, Wisconsin and said "we had Trinity Church in Unity, if only they had unity in Trinity."

Folk Expression

Joke

RL then spoke about his ethnic background. He said his grandmother "brought something of a royal atmosphere to our family." (Appears to have sense of eliticism regarding himself and family).

RL then explained how he got to Calumet, Michigan. He came to the congregation in February of 1965. He said he didn't expect to be here this long. He said he was the first pastor of a merged congregation - the Swedish Calvary Lutheran Church and the Finnish Bethlehem Lutheran Church. I mentioned to RL that that church I belonged to merged six years ago. RL said the merger caused much pain and he tried several "risky" things to form a "community of love".*

Folk Expression

I asked RL if there were separate music traditions in the two congregations. He indicated there were definite traditions. RL noted that today Finnish hymn singing is more prevalent in the Apostolic Churches and Swedish hymn singing died out in the 1930's.

Tape Off
2-3 Minutes
Tape On

(A phone call interruption which mentioned Eva Koopikka). I asked him about other hymn singing traditions. He began to talk about the Apostolic Lutheran Churches, saying that their Finnish tradition was much stronger - traditions, and mores. (I felt I should go talk to their pastor to get closer to their tradition). When I asked about hymns from the old country, RL mentioned that the organist from the Apostolic Church told him to cut the tempo to 3/4. RL said this is more in tune with their style of liturgy.

We then began to talk about other ethnic churches, of which RL said there were many in the early days of Calumet, imitating that the churches were a focal point for the various ethnic cultures. (MLH felt team should go hear and see this mass; perhaps record it).

Folk Expression

As we continued to talk about ethnic churches, our conversation drifted into the bicentennial festival. RL was quite proud of their activities, said Calumet was way "ahead of the game". RL was pleased and excited that Calumet was able to get musicians from Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Yugoslavia to play in their celebration. (I was disappointed to hear that music was imported rather than rely on local musicians).

* - RL talked briefly about the Norwegian Church, which at one time was part of the congregation (originally).

From the bicentennial celebration, we went on to talk about the Calumet Theatre as "the ethnic and cultural center" for national tours in its heyday. He then talked about the Calumet and Hecla mining band and its successor, The Community Band.

From the community band, we went on to talk about other music in the area (polka's are big; rock 'n roll for teenagers). He reflected on the future in the area and how they'll be "increased taste for each other" (I was shocked by this comment because it implied the different ethnic groups didn't have taste for one another. I didn't know whether it was language barrier, music, personalities or what).

Tape Off
2-3 Minutes
Tape On

(Telephone Interruption). (Our conversation was winding down, so I only asked about 2 or 3 more questions. It was getting near lunch time and he had a one o'clock appointment). I asked RL what/who were the leading forces behind the ethnic activities. RL said that ethnic prides, roots, the chamber and the church all play a role. RL expanded on the church's role as the entity which kept the language and songs alive.

As we ended the formal interview, RL paraphrased his philosophy regarding ethnic music and cultural heritage by saying, "Part of the rich history that's up here that just has not been mined yet ... richest export is not the copper but the people." We ended on a positive note - with RL expressing appreciation for the project.

After the interview, RL played a portion of an interview he had conducted with a 1919 immigrant (Finnish woman). The interview described her fleeing Finland from the Russians and her trip to America. She had a heavy accent, intermixed with Finnish. Her daughter interpreted where she could. I asked RL if I could listen to them my next trip up here. He said I could tape them, too. Apparently he's done 17-18 such interviews with members of his congregation.

On my way out, he handed me a centennial booklet on Faith Lutheran Church and took me to the Churches Archives where he showed me their bicentennial activities booklet (2" thick)! He asked if I wanted a tour of the church, to which I was delighted. Their church sits on the foundation of an old school. The chapel itself is part of the old structure. The kid's rooms are decorated in kid's art, the bathrooms (all 3) have different decorations - stars and ships, flowers and bright colors. RL is quite proud of them and all the rooms. He says you can really tell what a congregation is like by the way they decorate their building. (I agree).

It was about 12:15 now. I said I'd go to the Coppertown Library to get those names. He gave me a ride over there. I thanked him both for the interview and the ride.

Additional comments: Thought it went well.
Forgot consent form.