

JENNIE MINKKINEN 5/21/02 ORAL HISTORY

Name: Jennie Minkkinen, age 97, 5130 High Street, Rocklin.

My father's name was Victor Wickman and my mother's name was Otilia []Wickman. My father worked at the quarry and my mother worked for Anders Wickman (Victor's brother). Both, my father and mother came from Finland. I had one brother and he lived to be 5 years old and he died of typhoid pneumonia. I had 4 sisters. What became of them, 3 of them have passed away and Ilona and myself are located in Rocklin.

I went to grammar school and the middle school and we went to the two-story building there in Rocklin. The schools were located on Pacific Street. Here are the dates. I graduated from grammar school in 1919. Dr. Fletcher was our doctor. Alice West was postmistress. I worked at the Pekuri store for 7 years. I took care of the library at the city building [now Rocklin City Hall] and then we moved [across the street] to the old church [at Rocklin Road and San Francisco Streets]. When I was 65 I had to retire. I have been retired I don't know how long now.

Family pictures, we didn't take many. There was the Pekuri general store and then across the railroad track was Kelly's store. Mary and Jim Bottomly bought the [Kelly ??] store and they had it for I don't know how many years and then they both retired. The store was taken over after

they retired, and it was still there because they had the upstairs and they lived upstairs [currently site of Crossroads Church].

How did I meet my husband? Well, we both were from Rocklin and we all went together as a kind of a picnic.

Remembrances related to mother and father's kitchen wood range in the kitchen. All I can remember is that Dad had a rocking chair by the stove and he would tell us all these stories, and Ilona still has that chair. My dad was good to tell us stories.

We had picnics during the summer, but I don't know just when. That didn't have anything to do with school, but the school had picnics but that was different. They had graduation and they usually took the graduation pictures at the family home. Then they had the doings at the hall. They had the graduation itself at the hall and we were all dressed up. Good coffee, that was the main thing, because the Finnish people like their coffee. I guess other people do too. We always had coffee.

My dad was at the quarry and then he owned the quarry. There were 4 partners, Sanford Wallin, Nick Alexson, Matt Palo, and my dad. Then Matt Palo and Sanford drew out of there and Nick Alexson and my dad continued with the quarry. Then Nick had an accident and fell in the quarry hole and he passed away and my dad was left with the quarry. He had the quarry for I don't know how many years by himself. Then my dad bought the ranch and he

farmed. Then he had an accident with a tractor and so he had to give up the farm. He raised fruit and grapes. We picked grapes and packed fruit.

Christmas was always a big deal for us. We had a tree and we made a big deal of Christmas. They always had a Christmas program and my dad was Santa Claus too. Then years later my husband was Santa Claus. They had this big tree and they had candles and there never was an accident. Those candles were lit and the pine tree, before they ever had electricity, and never had an accident, no fire, no nothing. They fixed those candles.

Who owned the Wickman house before you did? Jack and Ilona would know because they have all the papers. I don't know when they moved the little house from downtown by Levison's Store. Then my dad made it into a little house and we lived there while they were building this, because he had this built for us. I have lived in this house 70 years I guess. I've never moved!

My dad was a gymnast. He did all that on those rings. They had those rings and they had the bars and all that at the hall. My dad was very active in that. Then finally he got to be so that he was you know.???????

I was on the grand jury for one year, the Placer County grand jury. I said I didn't want to be in it and Albert Hecker [Beckett???], who was the supervisor then, said "you're going to be a go" because he knew me, Broyer, I knew both him and his wife. You forget those things, this was all long ago.

We had picnics out there where you live now, in that area Woodside, and they had the picnics and of course we didn't pay any attention to it.

Well my dad moved there [the Wickman house on High Street] and we lived there and it was real nice. We had a kitchen and we had a living room. Enlarging the big house, Elihim?? made that and lowered the ceilings and made the kitchen. It was just an old fashioned kitchen. He made a nice kitchen out of it and a breakfast nook. It was two stories. He added one more bedroom. There were 4 bedrooms upstairs. They were good sized too. My bedroom was right at this window and the front bedroom was when we were smaller when we had 2 beds in there.

Were you married here at your father's house? No, we were married in Roseville at the Presbyterian Church. Who was your bridesmaid? The girls went with me, you know. It was just a marriage that we went through. The reason we got married so fast is because next month they would require that you have an examination, and I didn't want to go have an examination. That made up my mind. My father would have gone on and on, but we didn't. I was engaged. My husband died in 1964 on Mother's Day. We were supposed to go out and he didn't feel right and I said, "Well, we'll wait and we'll go another time." Noreen and their family were going to go with us, and I said, "No, we'll wait and when he feels better we'll go." But we never went. Then I walked out to the car with them, and Buck said "Where's Dad" and they said he went to lay

down. I flew in and he said he didn't feel good, so they came back and they were going to go get the doctor and that's where he went. He died so suddenly and at that time I didn't have a phone and I ran over there and then Pete Mallowner??? came over and it was all so fast. You know he wasn't feeling good, and I said "I'll call your men." He had always had passengers, and he said, "No, I'll be all right." But he never was all right.

Did you go to the mountains to ski? No, we just went as a trip. Of course my gambling started after. Did your father have an automobile? Oh, yes. He bought a two-seater Dodge and that was really a nice car at that time. We have pictures of that too. Did you used to go to Sacramento or San Francisco on the train. As I got older, I always went, I had to go on the train to get family's and our Christmas shopping in Sacramento. The stores were Weinstock's and Hale's were the main stores and of course they had Penney's. Then they had dime stores. They had two dime stores. I think the trains ran 2-3 times a day. They would go in the morning and come back at a certain time. I can remember one time I went Christmas shopping and I carried all that stuff.

I never had a nickname. I remember my teachers. My favorite teacher I think was Miss Hanson. She used to come to the Old Timer's and she was my fourth grade teacher. They Miss Sharp was the fifth and sixth grade teacher and she was sharp. I think I learned a lot from her. Then Mr. Jacobs was the seventh and eighth grade and we got to go upstairs. The stairs were the fifth and sixth, then the seventh and eighth was next door. There was no

kindergarten back then. First you had to be 6 years old in first grade. Evelyn Halinen took me because Ray???????? couldn't talk at that time. I guess when Nelma went then I went to school. I remember and Mrs. Smith and she passed away not too terribly long. It has been quite a while now, but we kept in touch.

I worked 29 years at the library at the City Hall, then we moved over there and I think it was just for a few years that I worked there.

What can you remember about the Historical Society house down there, do you remember when Dr. Fletcher owned that house? No, when we were small that was our doctor anyway, Dr. Fletcher. He was general practice. We would see him when we were ill. I don't remember anything about the Historical Society house until later years, the Moons. I knew the Moons, Mr. Moon, and even when she passed away he always brought me vegetables. There was a bakery, I don't remember the proprietor, but I know the Massey?????? may have baked, whether they owned it I don't know, the Marcus?????? brothers. They baked cakes and pastries. Then Beanie's?????? store, they were friends of ours. They had the variety store or grocery store right on the corner, where the AM-PM is. I have a picture of Beanie's?????? where they had the barrels and the stuff. They were friends of ours and then they moved to Long Beach. May and I were real close and she got put out at us because we were going to go there, Nelma and I, and we didn't go.

I don't remember my grandparents, they were in Finland. My grandmother died the day before she was 100, my dad's mother in Finland. Who was the oldest person you remember in your family as a child? My father's brother. He was a lot older than my father. My dad was next to the youngest and there were 16 children. Were there other people than those two here in the United States? Yes, Mrs. Pekuri was a sister. Then they had relatives in Alameda that they used to visit. They are all gone. I guess they did discuss the old politics. They were Republicans and they all voted, even my mother. I guess they did talk about world events and they got the Finnish newspaper and my dad was great for that.

We didn't have too much festivals until later years. I went to dances at Finn Hall when I was younger. They had Verner Kokila and Dell Alexson, Verner played the piano and I don't know what Dell Alexson did. It was really good and we enjoyed it. We could just walk across the street.

How is the world different now? It is so different. Did many people have automobiles when you were you were younger? Not too many. They use to have races. Did your father have horses to race? No, some of his friends did. They had the racetrack back of Tuttle's there. Beyond Racetrack Road. I don't remember if it was on Saturdays or Sundays, I think it was the weekends. I can remember that we went there, but that is all I can remember, we were kids.

Did you have an ice cream parlor here in town? Yes, Elma Kokila's folks. They had an ice cream parlor down by the railroad on this side. We could go there and they had those chairs I can remember. I don't know if they made the ice cream themselves, but it was good. A nickel for a cone.

Is there are particular happening in your life, other than your marriage and your children's births, of course, that stands out, and your retirement party. I went to your retirement party, Jennie. That was quite a big deal. Everybody in town was there. There must have been 75 or 100 people there. I've got the box of that.