

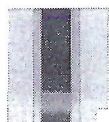
MARGARET SEPPONEN  
INTERVIEWED BY SUSAN HARDWICK  
SEPTEMBER 29, 1983  
ROCKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"THIS IS SUSAN HARDWICK OF THE SACRAMENTO HISTORY CENTER. I WILL BE INTERVIEWING MRS. MARGARET SEPPONEN TODAY. WE ARE AT THE ROSEVILLE LIBRARY. IT IS SEPTEMBER 29, 1983. WE'RE GOING TO BE DISCUSSING MRS. SEPPONEN'S MEMORIES OF LIFE IN THE ROCKLIN AND LOOMIS AREA AND THE FINN COMMUNITY THERE."

"MRS. SEPPONEN, WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOUR MEMORIES OF YOUR EXPERIENCES THERE IN THE LOOMIS AREA. TELL ME ABOUT BEING A FINN ON THE WEST COAST, FIRST OF ALL, WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND HOW YOU ENDED UP IN A PLACE LIKE LOOMIS"

THAT'S INTERESTING. I WAS BORN IN AN AREA VERY DIFFERENT FROM LOOMIS AND ROCKLIN AREA. I WAS BORN IN THE PRAIRIE AREA OF GEBO, WYOMING AND AT THAT TIME MOST OF MY DAYS WERE SPENT IN THE COMMUNITY OF FINNS, WHO MADE UP A GREAT BULK OF THOSE WHO WOULD DIG COAL IN THE COAL FIELDS OF WYOMING. THE FINNISH PEOPLE WERE QUITE WELL ORGANIZED AMONG THEMSELVES. BESIDES THAT, HOWEVER, THEY CONTRIBUTED TO THE COAL MINING CAMP IN WHICH WE LIVED. THEIR HOLIDAYS, OUR HOLIDAYS, BECAME SOMETHING THAT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WOULD CELEBRATE. JUST AS THE MINERS WOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE FOURTH OF JULY. THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY WOULD ALSO TAKE AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE FINN'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS WHICH WOULD BE HELD DOWN AT THE COAL COMPANY COMMUNITY HALL.

IT WAS INTERESTING, IN THAT THE COAL COMPANY BROUGHT SOME OF THE FINEST THINGS FROM THE EAST TO THE COAST AREA WHERE THEY HAD HUGE MINING INTERESTS. THESE THINGS INCLUDED PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT SECOND TO NONE. THEY WERE IMPORTED FROM THE EAST. A SLIDE, THE HEIGHT OF WHICH I HAVE NOT SEEN SINCE AS I AM A TEACHER AND I HAVE SEEN MANY PLAYGROUNDS. THEY BUILT THE COMMUNITY HALL, BOARDING HOUSE, COMMUNITY STORE AND THEY DID CONTROL A GOOD DEAL OF THE LIVES OF THE MINERS, AND IN THAT RESPECT, THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN TOO, BECAUSE WHAT THEY NEEDED, THEY PROVIDED. BUT THEY COULD NOT PROVIDE THOSE THINGS THAT MADE UP THE FINNISH HERITAGE. INSTEAD, THEY WANTED TO PARTAKE OF WHAT THE FINNS HAD. THEY REALIZED THAT WE WERE A WELL ORGANIZED COMMUNITY, A HAPPY COMMUNITY. WE HAD SOMETHING THEY DIDN'T HAVE. THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PEOPLE HAD SOMEWHAT THE SAME KIND OF HERITAGE FOR THE ENRICHMENT OF THOSE CHILDREN WHO WERE BORN IN THIS COUNTRY WHOSE FOREBEARERS HAD COME YEARS AND YEARS AGO FROM SCOTLAND, IRELAND AND OTHER PLACES. THEY SENSED THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAKIANS AND THE FINNISH HAD SOMETHING THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE. THAT MADE US FEEL ALL THE MORE GRATEFUL THAT WE DID KNOW OTHER WAYS TO CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS, THAT WE DID HAVE OTHER TRADITIONS. WE HAD SUCH THINGS, I GUESS YOU WOULD CALL THEM IDIOSYNCRASIES. WE, AS CHILDREN, HAD GAMES WHERE YOU WOULD JUMP OVER A CRACK IN THE SIDEWALK, IT WOULD MEAN BREAK YOUR BACK IF YOU STEP ON A CRACK, ALL THOSE KINDS OF THINGS. MY MOTHER, BEING A TEACHER IN FINLAND, HAD COME TO THIS COUNTRY WITH A NUMBER OF TECHNIQUES THAT WERE USED BY HER IN TEACHING SCHOOL AND INCLUDED GAMES, SONGS, WHICH I LEARNED EARLY AS A CHILD AND IN TURN, TAUGHT MY TWO SISTERS AND BROTHER. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WOMEN, THE FINNISH WOMEN, WAS A VERY CLOSE ONE. AS FAMILIES, IT WAS NOTHING TO GO INTO A SAUNA, ALL MEMBERS OF ONE FAMILY AND TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF ANOTHER FAMILY IN THE SATURDAY NITE SAUNA.



IT WAS TOTALLY RESPECTFUL, IT WAS THE APPRECIATION OF THE HUMAN BODY, THE PERSONIFICATION OF CLEAN LIVING. ALL OF THAT LATER, I FOUND, EXISTING IN OF ALL PLACES, THE AREA WHERE I MET MY HUSBAND-TO-BE, IN ROCKLIN, CALIFORNIA.

HOW DID WE ARRIVE IN ROCKLIN? IT WAS DURING THE DEPRESSION, WHICH CAUSED THE COAL MINES TO HAVE LESS AND LESS EMPLOYMENT AND WHICH RESULTED IN FAMILIES LEAVING, FINNISH OR CZECHOSLOVAKIANS, WERE LEAVING THE AREA. SOME FINNS WENT TO KALAMA, WASHINGTON BUT MY FAMILY HAD PURCHASED THIS LOT ON THREE ACRES, AN APRICOT ORCHARD, BY MAIL ON THE STRENGTH OF BELIEVING THAT IT EXISTED BUT THE SMALL AMOUNT THAT WAS SENT BY MONEY ORDER WHICH I USUALLY SENT AS A CHILD, WROTE OUT THE MONEY ORDER AND WENT TO THE COMPANY POST OFFICE. HE BELIEVED THAT AN APRICOT ORCHARD WAS WAITING FOR US IN CALIFORNIA.

WE ARRIVED THERE, HAVING GONE THROUGH ROCKLIN AND ROSEVILLE WHEN I WAS AGE 14. RIGHT ON THROUGH SACRAMENTO, STOCKTON AND TO CASTRO VALLEY TO SEEK OUR FORTUNE OF APRICOTS. BUT AS WE PASSED THROUGH ROCKLIN, THERE WAS AN AREA THAT IMPRESSED MY MOTHER. HOWEVER, WE KNEW WE HAD TO PROCEED ON TO THE RANCH AND FARM AND SHE SAID THAT MAYBE, SOMEDAY WE MIGHT COME BACK TO THIS AREA. "I LIKE IT." IT WAS A MIX BETWEEN WYOMING AND CALIFORNIA AS SHE HAD KNOWN, HAVING BEEN TO CALIFORNIA ONCE BEFORE.

I DROVE, AT AGE 14. I DROVE A CHANDLER, A FOUR-DOOR, PULLED A TRAILER IN WHICH ALL OF OUR GOODS TO START HOUSEKEEPING WITH, WERE PACKED. MY TWO SISTERS AND BROTHER IN BACK ON TOP OF THE REST OF OUR BELONGINGS. DAD HAD TO STAY BEHIND IN THE MINES TO WORK ONE, TWO OR THREE DAYS A WEEK. HE EVENTUALLY JOINED US AT THE END OF THE YEAR. WE DID LIVE THROUGH RATHER DIFFICULT TIMES IN CASTRO VALLEY. I





WALKED TO SCHOOL, LIVED IN A TENT. WE NEVER ENTERTAINED BECAUSE IT WAS NOT EASY TO DO IN A TENT. PRETTY SOON WE GOT RICHER AND COULD HAVE ANOTHER TENT. IN ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS WE HAD A CABIN BUILT. I HELPED TO SHINGLE THE CABIN. I WAS 15 AT THE TIME. MOM WORKED IN THE PICKLE WORKS. I WORKED IN A . . . . . WE BOTH WORKED IN A CANNERY. I BABY SITTED FOR MY SISTERS AND BROTHER. I BABYSAT FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDREN. IN FACT, WHEN I WAS 16, I WAS A CHAPERONE FOR A FAMILY OF CHILDREN AT THE RUSSIAN RIVER. I LIVED WITH THEM WHEN I WAS 16, CARING FOR THEIR FOUR CHILDREN DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. IT'S INTERESTING HOW MUCH OF MY BABYSITTING TECHNIQUES HAVE BEEN LEARNED BY TAKING CARE OF MY SISTERS AND BROTHER IN THE WAY THAT THE FINNISH PEOPLE HAVE TAUGHT US. WE CARED FOR THE FAMILIES AND WE CARED THAT THERE WAS HARMONY IN THE FAMILY. THAT THERE WAS HONESTY, ALL OF THOSE THINGS THAT INCULCATED INTO OUR LIVES. IT WAS HELPFUL WHEN I WAS ADJUSTING TO CALIFORNIA AS A TEENAGER WITH WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN HARDSHIP BEHOND ENDURING BUT IT DIDN'T KEEP ME FROM ENJOYING LIFE EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T ENTERTAIN. I WALKED 5 MILES TO SCHOOL AND BACK AGAIN UNTIL FINALLY SOMEONE AMONG THE PEOPLE WE GOT TO KNOW, ALSO MADE TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE TO US.

WE MOVED FROM THE APRICOT ORCHARD TO ANOTHER HIGHER, I WOULD GUESS YOU WOULD CALL IT SLIGHTLY ELEVATED TOWARD THE FOOTHILLS AREA. WE BEGAN TO PLANT TREES. WE WATERED THOSE TREES BY HAND. WE HAD NO WATER ON THE RANCH. WE HAD TO TAKE THE CAR DOWN TO THE NEXT RANCH, FILL THE TUBS, BROILERS, BARRELS WITH WATER WHICH WAS USED FOR DIGGING AS WELL AS TO WATER ABOUT 150 TREES THAT MY MOTHER AND I SET OUT BY HAND. THE IDEA WAS TO GET THAT PIECE OF PROPERTY TO, IN VALUE, EQUAL TO SOMETHING THAT WE MIGHT TRADE FOR SACRAMENTO VALLEY PROPERTY,





MY MOTHER WAS WELL-VERSED IN REAL ESTATE, HAVING LEARNED IN FINLAND OF THE VALUE OF LAND. WHEN WE CAME TO CALIFORNIA SHE CONTINUED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT REAL ESTATE FROM THE PEOPLE WHO HAD FIRST SOLD US THAT LITTLE APRICOT ORCHARD. SHE REALIZED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING TO BE GAINED BY IMPROVING THE PROPERTY SO WE TRADED THE PROPERTY IN CASTRO VALLEY FOR THE LOOMIS PROPERTY. I WAS ALREADY IN THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE.

IN THE TRADITIONAL WAY THE SEPPONEN FAMILY CALLED ON THE NEW FINN FAMILY, THE MACKY FAMILY. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I MET MY FUTURE MOTHER AND FATHER-IN-LAW, WHEN THEY CAME TO CALL. WE WERE TO RETURN THE CALL WHICH WAS DONE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS. THAT'S WHEN I MET MY FUTURE HUSBAND TO BE. I NEVER REALIZED IT THEN. MY SISTERS AND I HAD RETIRED TO OUR BEDROOM WHEN WE REALIZED THAT THERE WERE STRANGERS COMING UP THE DRIVEWAY. WE SAID, MOM, DON'T BRING ANYONE IN. WE WERE IN OUR SUN-BATHING CLOTHES, WE DIDN'T WANT TO BE INTRODUCED TO ANYONE AT THIS TIME.

THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT HAPPENED BECAUSE, IN A FEW MINUTES, MR. AND MRS. SEPPONEN GOT TO OUR GIRL'S BEDROOM, AND MR. SEPPONEN LOOKED IN SAID IN FINNISH, . . . . WHICH TRANSLATED MEANS, THREE BEAUTIFUL, CHARMING GIRLS AND I HAVE TWO BOYS AT HOME. SIGN OF THINGS TO COME.

WHEN I MET MY HUSBAND-TO-BE FOR THE FIRST TIME, KNOWING HE WAS A HAM RADIO OPERATOR, ALSO THAT HE WAS SHY. I HAD LEARNED THAT AHEAD OF TIME, ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD MIND IF I LOOKED IN ON HIS RADIO SHACK OPERATION BECAUSE HE WAS INVOLVED IN WORLD-WIDE HAM OPERATORS, I GUESS YOU WOULD CALL IT, COMPETITION. HE HAD NEVER HAD A WOMEN COME AND LOOK IN, IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. I WAS QUITE TAKEN WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF AS A HAM OPERATOR. CONSEQUENTLY IT

WASN'T TOO LONG BEFORE I WAS LEARNING MORSE CODE. ONE BY ONE THE FINNISH FAMILIES IN THE AREA BECAME OUR ACQUAINTANCES. THE USUAL KIND OF CELEBRATIONS THAT WERE HELD IN THE AREA WERE ONES TO WHICH WE WENT IN SOME MANNER WE PARTICIPATED. HOWEVER, I WAS AT SCHOOL MOST OF THE TIME SO I COULDN'T DO AS MUCH AS I WANTED TO. HOWEVER, MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS. I GRADUATED ON JUNE 15 AND WE WERE MARRIED ON JUNE 20.

"WAS THAT UNUSUAL FOR A GIRL WITH YOUR BACKGROUND TO GO TO COLLEGE LIKE THAT IN THOSE DAYS?"

YES. OF ALL OF MY CLASSMATES IN WYOMING, AND I RETURNED TO WYOMING FOR REUNIONS, I AM ONE OF THE FEW WHO WENT ON TO COLLEGE.

"HOW WAS IT YOU WERE ABLE TO GO ON?"

WELL I MENTIONED, I THINK, THAT MY MOTHER WAS A TEACHER. MY MOTHER WORSHIPPED EDUCATION. SHE REALIZED THAT THE WORLD WAS MADE OR BROKEN ON KNOWLEDGE. MY DAD HAD VERY LITTLE EDUCATION AND HE DESIRED IT. HE HAD A DEEP-SEATED LONGING TO BE ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH THE EDUCATION HE HAD MISSED. HE HAD THIS NEED TO ALMOST BE A SERVANT KIND OF STUDENT. HIS LESSONS WERE SECONDARY TO THE AMOUNT OF WORK THAT WAS REQUIRED OF HIM. THEIR POVERTY, IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE CHILDREN ADD TO THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE FAMILY. IT WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE WAY IT WANTED IT, BUT THAT WAS THE EXPECTED WAY. SO WHEN HE CAME TO THIS COUNTRY HE REALIZED THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FINNISH EDUCATION, AND OF COURSE, LACKED ALL OF THE ENGLISH, BUT HE MADE UP HIS MIND EARLY ON THAT HE WOULD DO ALL HE COULD IN A SELF-TEACHING WAY TO CATCH UP ON THE FINNISH AND TO PURSUE THE ENGLISH. HE AND MOM BOTH HAD A VERY, VERY STRONG DESIRE TO BECOME AMERICANIZED, TOOK THEIR CITIZENSHIP

EARLY. SO, MAMA BEING A TEACHER WITH BOOKS THAT SHE HAD BROUGHT FROM FINLAND, USED THOSE TO TEACH DADDY. THEN I WENT TO SCHOOL. I SAID YES AND NO. I WENT HOME THE FIRST DAY AND I TOLD MAMA I LEARNED TWO MORE WORDS, SIT DOWN. HOWEVER, THE LANGUAGE CAME TO ME VERY FAST. AND IN TIME I WAS TEACHING MOM AND DAD. I CAN RECALL, AND THIS IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL RECOLLECTION, THAT THE TEACHER WAS ALSO THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMBINED. THE OTHER TEACHER, WHO WAS MY PARTICULAR FIRST GRADE TEACHER, TOOK TIME TO COME TO THE HOUSE. I WOULD SIT ON THE LAP OF ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAPPENED TO BE THERE AND I CAN SEE NOW AND I CAN FEEL NOW, HOW I WOULD REACH BACK AND STROKE MY TEACHER'S DOUBLE CHIN. (LAUGHTER) IT WAS SO SOFT, THOSE FOLDS WERE SO SOFT AND MY MOTHER HAD NO KIND OF TROUBLE HERE, ALSO, I WOULD REACH BACK AND TOUCH HER HAIR. SHE HAD THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, THICK, GIBSON-GIRL HAIRDO. BOTH THEM HAD IT, IN FACT. MY MOTHER'S HAIR WAS VERY THIN AND SILKY AND FINE. I HEARD THE LANGUAGE AS IT WAS TOLD. I HEARD THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY, THE SOCIAL STUDIES COMING FROM THE LIPS OF THESE TWO EDUCATED WOMEN.

VERY EARLY I DECIDED THAT I WOULD BE A TEACHER BECAUSE I LOVED THOSE TWO PEOPLE ESPECIALLY. IN FACT, MY MOTHER WAS A TEACHER. THE FIRST THINGS I HAD LEARNED WERE FROM MY MOTHER. I HAD LEARNED FROM THE NEWSPAPERS, THE FINNISH NEWSPAPERS THAT CAME TO US FROM DETROIT, MICHIGAN. BUT DAD AND MOM LITERALLY WORSHIPPED EDUCATION AND THEY HAD NO OTHER THOUGHT FOR ME EXCEPT THAT I WOULD LOVE SCHOOL, TO BECOME WELL EDUCATED AND GO AS FAR AS I COULD. I MADE THE CHOICES TO WHAT I WOULD BE. THEY WERE VERY HAPPY THAT I CHOSE TO BE A TEACHER AND A SOCIAL WORKER, BOTH OF WHICH I REALIZED.



BUT MY DAD, TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF HOW MUCH EDUCATION AND LEARNING MEANT TO HIM: IN HIS 92ND YEAR THAT HE DIED, THE LAST THING HE ASKED FOR US TO BRING TO HIM, TO THE CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL, WAS THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE US WORLD NEWS. WE ASKED HIM THE POPULATION OF COUNTRIES, OF STATES; ASKED HIM THE NUMBER OF SENATE BILLS, HOUSE BILLS. WE ASKED HIM WHO THE REPRESENTATIVES WERE OF VARIOUS STATES, IN THE CASE OF OUR STATE, THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES. SO HE DID LEARN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

IN HIS 86TH YEAR HE ASKED TO RETURN TO FINLAND. MY MOTHER DIED SHORTLY BEFORE THAT. HE WANTED TO RETURN TO FINLAND TO TRY TO ESTABLISH A FEW MORE THREADS BETWEEN HIM AND THE REMAINING SISTER. HOWEVER, HE SAID, "I WANT TO COME BACK TO MY COUNTRY, AMERICA." IT MEANT SO MUCH TO HIM TO COME HERE. IT MEANT SO MUCH TO MY MOTHER THAT SHE WAS AFRAID TO GO BACK TO FINLAND IN CASE SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HER. SHE WOULDN'T BE BURIED HERE. SHE WANTED TO DIE IN AMERICA.

"YOUR PARENTS MOVED THEN TO LOOMIS WHILE YOU WERE A STUDENT AT SAN JOSE HIGH SCHOOL." WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE THERE? WAS IT REALLY A SHOCK FOR YOU TO MOVE FROM CASTRO VALLEY?"

OH YES. THERE WERE 25 IN HIGH SCHOOL IN GEBO, WYOMING. TWO THOUSAND IN THE HIGH SCHOOL IN HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA. I HAD NEVER WORN P.E. OUTFITS. I HAD NEVER SHOWERED IN A COMMUNITY SHOWER. I DIDN'T KNOW ONE GAME FROM ANOTHER EXCEPT BASEBALL. IT WAS A SHOCK. BESIDES THAT, I HAD TO WALK 5 MILES TO SCHOOL. BEFORE I COULD START OFF TO SCHOOL, IT WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF MY SISTERS AND BROTHER AND GET THEM OFF TO SCHOOL BECAUSE MY MOTHER WAS OFF TO THE PICKLE WORKS OR THE CANNERY.

WHEN YOU GOT TO LOOMIS, WAS LIFE REALLY DIFFERENT FOR YOU THERE?"

YES, WE LIVED IN TENTS IN CASTRO VALLEY. UNTIL WE GOT A SMALL HOUSE, WHICH WAS ONE BIG ROOM AND EVERYTHING TOOK PLACE IN THE ONE, BIG ROOM. SLEEPING, EATING, BATHING, PARTYING, SICKNESS, HEALTH, DANCING, READING, LESSONS, WHATEVER. IN ONE, BIG ROOM. IN LOOMIS, WE HAD TWO BEDROOMS, INSIDE BATHROOM, WHICH WE HADN'T HAD. I DIDN'T HAVE INDOOR PLUMBING UNTIL I WENT TO SCHOOL. THAT WAS IN THE 30'S. THERE WERE MANY ADJUSTMENTS FOR ME. SOMEHOW, THE HUMAN ANIMAL HAS PROVIDED THE WHEREWITHALL, SO I WAS ABLE TO ACT THE PART, EVEN THOUGH I MAY NOT HAVE COME FROM THAT ENVIRONMENT OR THE SURROUNDINGS, I WAS STILL ABLE TO FIT IN.

I THINK THAT IS SOMETHING THAT IS PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTIC OF THE FINNISH PEOPLE. YOU GET BY, YOU GET ALONG, YOU DO MORE THAN THAT. YOU ARE MASTER, MISTRESS OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. YOU DON'T ALLOW PEOPLE TO CAUSE YOU TO BE LESS THAN YOUR BEST OR AT LEAST GOOD. SO GOING TO THE HOME IN LOOMIS WAS VERY DIFFERENT.

"WHAT FINNISH ACTIVITIES DID YOUR FAMILY TAKE PART IN, IN LOOMIS? DO YOU REMEMBER ANY SPECIAL EVENTS GOING ON?"

PRIMARILY IN THE ROCKLIN AREA. OTHER THAN GOING TO HOMES WHERE THEY WERE STILL WEAVING, MAKING RUGS IN THE LOOMIS AREA WHERE THERE WOULD BE PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS, COFFEE CAKE AND WE WOULD EXCHANGE GIFTS WITH OTHER FAMILIES, PRIMARILY, TO THE SAUNA OR TO COFFEE KLATCHES.

"WAS THERE A PUBLIC SAUNA THERE?"

THERE WERE A NUMBER OF SAUNAS, DIFFERENT SIZES. I DIDN'T GET TO VERY MANY OF THEM BECAUSE I WAS AWAY AT SCHOOL SO MUCH.

"BUT THEY WERE PUBLIC, YOU COULD GO VISIT THEM?"

WE WENT MOSTLY TO PRIVATE ONES. MY SISTERS AND BROTHER HADN'T HAD AS MUCH EXPERIENCE AS I HAD AND THEY DIDN'T FEEL AS MUCH AT HOME. TRANSPORTATION WAS A PROBLEM. WITH ONE CAR, IF MOM WAS WORKING IN THE PACKING SHED, THERE WASN'T GAS. THERE WAS STILL ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION.

"DID YOU EVER GO TO ANY FINN PICNICS?"

I WENT TO MOST OF THE FINNISH PICNICS AFTER AFTER I BECAME PART OF THE SEPPONENS.

"TELL ME ABOUT THE PICNICS."

THEY WERE EITHER AT THE . . . GROVES OR PICNIC AREAS THAT HAD A STREAM GOING THROUGH IT, GRASSY KNOLL, LOTS OF SHADE, ORGANIZED GAMES, SHARING OF . . . RACES WITH THE CHILDREN, STORY-TELLING, SOMETIMES STAYING HOURS AND HOURS; OTHER TIMES JUST HAVING TIME TO RUN IN AND OUT, AT LEAST ASSOCIATING AND FEELING THE COMMUNAL KIND OF SHARING OF HERITAGE.

"WAS THE FINNISH LANGUAGE ALWAYS SPOKEN AT THE PICNICS?"

YES, PRIMARILY. HOWEVER, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BECAME MORE AND MORE THE MODE OF THE DAY. THE DESIRE TO SPEAK ENGLISH BETTER BECAUSE A NUMBER OF FINNISH PEOPLE WAS DECREASING



WHICH MEANT WE HAD MORE PEOPLE MY AGE SPEAKING WHICH CARRIED ON TO GENERAL, EVERYDAY LIVING. AFTER WE MARRIED, WE CONTINUED TO GO TO THE PICNIC GROUNDS, HOWEVER, WE ALSO HAD CONNECTIONS IN SACRAMENTO WHERE THERE WERE ALSO PICNICS. ONCE IN A WHILE, RELATIVES ON MY HUSBAND'S SIDE LIVED IN BERKELEY, SO WE BEGAN TO GO THERE. SOME OF THE ROCKLIN PEOPLE HAD VERY CLOSE TIES WITH BERKELEY. IN FACT, ALSO WITH SAN FRANCISCO, EUREKA, FORT BRAGG AND THE FINNISH PEOPLE HAD THEIR COMMUNITIES IN THESE PLACES.

"WHERE IN SACRAMENTO DID YOUR HUSBAND, ARMAS, AND HIS FAMILY LIVE?"

THEY CAME TO THE CITRUS HEIGHTS AREA FROM OAKLAND. AT THE AGE OF 8, ARMAS AND HIS MOTHER AND HIS BROTHER JOINED HIS FATHER, WHO HAD COME AHEAD FROM OAKLAND, TO CASTRO VALLEY. THEY HAD PURCHASED LAND THROUGH SOME MUTUAL FINNISH REAL ESTATE FRIENDS. HIS FATHER HAD BUILT THE FIRST KIND OF HOME WHICH WAS LIKE A TWO ROOM GARAGE ON THEIR PEACH ORCHARD. I WAS TOLD OF THE TIME WHEN HE AND HIS MOTHER AND BROTHER CAME FROM OAKLAND ON THE STAGELINE. THEY WERE DEPOSITED AT MARIPOSA AVENUE OFF OF GREENBACK AND HAD TO WALK ABOUT ONE MILE TO WHERE THEIR GRANDPA WAS TO BE WAITING FOR THEM AFTER HE GOT BACK FROM HIS JOB. HE WAS DOING CARPENTRY IN THE AREA, LIKE BUILDING HIS OWN HOUSE. HE DID CARPENTRY IN THE AREA OF SACRAMENTO. HE HAD WORKED ON MOST OF THE MAJOR BUILDINGS THAT WERE PUT UP IN THE 30'S AND 40'S. HE WAS A VERY FINE CARPENTER. SO THAT'S HOW THEY GOT TO CITRUS HEIGHTS.

"YOU MENTIONED GOING TO THE SAUNA WITH HIS FAMILY AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN SACRAMENTO. WERE THERE QUITE A NUMBER OF FINNS IN THAT CITRUS HEIGHTS AREA?"

NOT SO MANY RIGHT IN CITRUS HEIGHTS. THEY WERE SPREAD FAR APART. BY THAT TIME THEY DIDN'T GET TOGETHER QUITE AS MUCH AS THERE WERE MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES GOING ON THROUGH THE SCHOOLS. THE FINNISH PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHOOLS QUITE A BIT. ARMAS' MOTHER WAS A CHAMPION PIE BAKER. TO GET A SEPPONEN PIE WAS REALLY A TREAT OR TO GET A SEPPONEN POTLUCK ITEM WAS QUITE A TREAT FOR THE FINNISH PEOPLE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

THE SEPPONENS WANTED TO PARTICIPATE VERY MUCH IN THINGS IN WHICH THEIR SONS WERE INVOLVED. THE BOYS WORKED ON THE FARM. IT WAS VERY HARD, FROM LITTLE BOYHOOD UNTIL THEY BECAME OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE JOBS AWAY FROM THE HOME. THEY LIVED THERE UNTIL THEY MARRIED. GRANDPA PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ARMAS TO HAVE HIS FIRST JOB AS WATER BOY ON SOME OF THE LARGER BUILDING PROJECTS IN SACRAMENTO, MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM, THE . . . ALHAMBRA THEATER, THOSE KINDS OF BUILDINGS. GRANDPA PUT UP QUITE A FEW OF THEM.

"WHAT KIND OF WORK DID YOUR HUSBAND GO INTO?"

HE BECAME A RAILROAD MAN. HE WENT TO COLLEGE, HOWEVER, OR THAT AND HAD BEEN GOING TO PHARMACY BUT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM. IN THE MEANTIME HE HAD BEEN IN LOVE WITH THE RAILROAD AND TRAINS. HE MADE A CHOICE TO GO INTO RAILROADING. HE WAS WITH THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC FOR 45 YEARS BEFORE HE RETIRED. A VERY TRUSTED EMPLOYEE, VERY GOOD WORKER, A UNION MAN.

"YOU STAYED IN THE ROSEVILLE THEN, BECAUSE OF THAT?"

WE COULD HAVE HAD WHAT WAS CALLED A LOWER 40 OF THE PEACH ORCHARD LAND IN CITRUS HEIGHTS BUT WE CHOSE TO (SOUND STOPPED)

I WORKED AFTER THE YOUNGEST WAS IN SCHOOL. PREVIOUS TO THAT, IT WAS SUCH A NATURAL THING FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. I VOLUNTEERED FOR A TIME, DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF MARRIAGE, I WAS ALREADY VOLUNTEERING FOR THE CHURCH TO WHICH WE WENT, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

I VOLUNTEERED IN CAMPFIRE, IN MARCH OF DIMES, IN VARIOUS BUILDING PROGRAMS. GETTING FUNDS FOR BONDS, HOSPITAL, THINGS LIKE THAT. IT WAS A WONDERFUL WAY TO GET TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY. WHEREVER I HAVE BEEN, I HAVE WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND THE PEOPLE, THE HISTORY. I MADE IT A POINT TO DO THAT. AND BY VOLUNTEERING IN THESE THINGS, YOU HAVE RESOURCES RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS. WHEN YOU HAVE THINGS THAT SUGGEST SOME OF THE HISTORY, THE HERITAGE OF THE AREA.

WHEN THE YOUNGEST WAS IN FIRST GRADE, THEN THE FAMILY TOGETHER DECIDED THAT SINCE I WANTED TO GO INTO THE PROFESSION FOR WHICH I HAD TRAINED, SOCIAL WORK. HOWEVER, IT HAD TO BE OUT OF ROSEVILLE BECAUSE THERE WAS NO SOCIAL WORK THERE. AND THERE WAS NONE TO SPEAK OF IN THE AUBURN AREA. MOST OF THE WELFARE WORK OR THE WELFARE DEPARTMENT THINGS WERE TAKEN CARE OF IN SACRAMENTO. SO CONSEQUENTLY MY FIRST JOB WAS WITH THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT. VERY INTERESTING WORK. I LICENSED HOMES FOR CHILDREN AND SENIORS, DAYCARE HOMES, PERMANENT CARE HOMES, WARDS OF THE COURT, DROVE ABOUT 200 MILES A DAY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF SOUTH SACRAMENTO COUNTY.

HOWEVER, COMMUTING WAS NOT MY BAG OF TEA. I FELT THAT IT WAS TOO TIRING. I HAD TO LEAVE THE FAMILY TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING. I GOT HOME LATE IN THE AFTERNOON. HOWEVER, WE DID HAVE A REMARKABLE, BEAUTIFUL ARRANGEMENT. AN ELDERLY FINNISH





LADY WAS LIKE A MOTHER TO ARMAS AND ME OR A GRANDMOTHER TO OUR THREE DAUGHTERS, LIVED WITH US, SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST FRIENDS WHO HAD BEFRIENDED US WHEN WE, AS A FAMILY, MOVED FROM WYOMING TO CASTRO VALLEY. AND SO WHEN HER HUSBAND DIED SHE CAME TO BE WITH OUR FAMILY IN LOOMIS. AND WHEN MY MOTHER AND FATHER MOVED TO ALASKA, SHE HAD TO FIND OTHER PLACES, EVENTUALLY HAD A LITTLE ROCKLIN HOME. WHEN SHE GAVE UP THE ROCKLIN HOME SHE CAME TO LIVE WITH US AND OUR DAUGHTERS AND THEY IDOLIZED THE FINNISH LADY. SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL PERSON,

SO WE DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE CHILDREN WHILE I WAS WORKING, I WOULD NOT HAVE GONE TO WORK, I AM QUITE SURE, IF I COULDN'T HAVE INSURED THAT THE CHILDREN WERE PROPERLY CARED FOR, NOR DID ARMAS WANT THAT TO HAPPEN. SO SHE WAS A GODSEND. HOWEVER, THE COMMUTING WAS TOO MUCH FOR US, THE WHOLE FAMILY RECOGNIZED THAT. THEY KNEW THAT I HAD WANTED TO BE A TEACHER TOO.

SO, WITH JUST A FEW UNITS I SAT FOR MY AND THE FAMILY WERE IN ON ALL THAT PLANNING. I HAD MY TEACHER'S CREDENTIAL. MY FIRST JOB WAS IN ROSEVILLE AND THAT'S WHERE IT BEGAN, 15 YEARS OF TEACHING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FIRST SECOND, AND THIRD GRADE, PRIMARILY SECOND. DURING ALL THAT TIME, HOWEVER, THERE WAS MUCH VOLUNTEER WORK THAT WAS GOING ON. I HAD THE CAMPFIRE GIRLS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, EVEN AFTER I WAS TEACHING. I TAUGHT SUNDAY SCHOOL. I HAD VARIOUS OFFICES IN DIFFERENT CLUBS,

"TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK NOW IN PRESENT DAY. FIRST OF ALL, WE COULD TALK ABOUT THE FINLANDIA CLUB."

OH, THE FINLANDIA CLUB, EXCITING. I'M SO HAPPY THAT I MARRIED

INTO A FINNISH FAMILY. AND THAT IS FOLKS HAD ROOTS IN THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION, EARLY FOUNDATION IN SACRAMENTO. MR. AND MRS. SEPPONEN WERE MEMBERS OF THAT FOR A LONG TIME WHEN THEY FIRST CAME TO SACRAMENTO.

"WHAT WAS THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION?"

THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION IS AN INTERNATIONAL, ACTUAL ORGANIZATION BY THE HOOVERS, HOOVER OF THE VACUUM CLEANER, WAS ONE OF THE INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE THAT FOUNDED THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION. IT'S TIES WITH FINLAND ARE VERY, VERY CLOSE, TO THE POINT WHERE SCHOLARSHIPS ARE GIVEN, EXCHANGES OF PEOPLE TAKE PLACE, GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE IS EXCHANGED. IT'S A FINE ORGANIZATION. VERY WELL ORGANIZED WITH IMPACT, I WOULD SAY, HIGHLY RECOGNIZED BY OUR COUNTRY AND BY FINLAND.

HOWEVER, IT IS INTERESTING TO SEE HOW AS THE NEW FINNS CAME IN WITH THEIR DESIRE TO BECOME VERY MUCH AMERICAN AND TO BELONG TO AN ORGANIZATION WHERE THEY COULD FOSTER THEIR TIES WITH THE HOMELAND, AS WELL AS CREATE NEW TIES IN THEIR NEW HOMELAND.

IT APPEARED AS THOUGH THERE WAS A NEED FOR AN ORGANIZATION THAT CONCENTRATED ON LESS THAN HAVING MONIES GO TO FINLAND, SUPPLIES GOING TO FINLAND. INSTEAD, SUCH THINGS BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE IN THEIR MINDS AS SCHOLARSHIPS APPLIED LOCALLY, GIFTS OF BOOKS AND RECORDS TO LOCAL LIBRARIES, TEACHING OF THE FINNISH LANGUAGE LOCALLY INSTEAD OF THROUGH THE FOUNDATION NETWORKING FARTHER DOWN OUT OF THE AREA.

AND SO, IN TIME, THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION AS SUCH, BECAME INSTEAD, A NEW ORGANIZATION. WE SHOULD SAY THAT THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION WAS TERMINATED AND THE FINLANDIA CLUB TOOK ITS PLACE. ITS LEADERS WERE AMONG THE NEW FINNS. IT WAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF OPERATION. IT MET A NEED OF THE

TIMES. I PERSONALLY FEEL THAT THERE WERE MORE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN ENRICHMENT TO THIS PRESENT ORGANIZATION, HOWEVER, THAT WAS NOT THE WAY IT WORKED OUT. WE TRIED TO MAKE, IN THOSE KINDS OF TIES, BY SENDING MONIES TO A COLLEGE IN MICHIGAN OR BY GETTING MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS, BUYING BOOKS, ETC. AND FURTHER, BY BECOMING QUITE INVOLVED IN THE AREA, WHICH IS A CENTERPOINT FOR FINNISH PEOPLE NOW IN THE SONOMA AREA.

"TELL ME ABOUT THAT CENTERPOINT, WHAT IS THAT?"

IT'S THE HOME OF FAHA. IT STANDS FOR FINNISH AMERICAN HOME ASSOCIATION. IT'S AN OUTGROWTH OF SO MANY THINGS THAT BEGAN IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, BERKELEY, ETC. IN WHICH MEN AND WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS, FINNISH ORGANIZATIONS, BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOODS, THOSE THAT RELATED TO HERITAGE, ALL CAME TOGETHER, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATION, AGES, BACKGROUNDS, THEY ALL CAME TOGETHER AND WE MOVED FROM SAN FRANCISCO, FROM BERKELEY, FROM EUREKA, TO THE AREA OF SONOMA, WHERE THE PEOPLE PURCHASED LAND THAT HAD BEEN RESORTS, WHICH HAD POOLS, HOUSING, BANQUET ROOMS, LAND, CREEK, MANY THINGS THAT RESORTS WOULD HAVE, OLD RUNDOWN RESORT.

THAT OLD, RUNDOWN RESORT IS NOW A BEAUTIFUL SETTING. NEW BUILDINGS. THERE IS A BIG SAUNA, NEW HOUSING TO THE TUNE OF OR DONE WITH LOANS IN EXCESS OF A MILLION DOLLARS. HUD BEING A PART OF THE FUNDING SITUATION, GRANTS PROVIDED FUNDS. 75 PEOPLE AT THIS POINT, ARE BEING HOUSED WITHIN THE NEW FACILITIES.

A MEETING ROOM, A BANQUET ROOM, KITCHEN BEING PUT TO USE NOW. FURTHER HOUSING AND OFFICE SPACE AND THINGS LIKE THAT ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING BUILT. RECREATIONAL VEHICLE AREAS ARE PROVIDED. YOU CAN COME THERE FOR THE DAY, OVERNIGHT, A WEEKEND, COME THERE FOR THE FINNISH HOLIDAYS, COME THERE



FOR REUNIONS, FOR HERITAGE EXPERIENCES. HUNDREDS COME AT SPECIAL TIMES OF THE YEAR LIKE MIDSUMMER OR, AS IN THE CASE OF THE GRAND OPENING, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE OCTOBER 2, THIS YEAR.

"TELL ME ABOUT THE SUMMER CELEBRATION THAT TAKES PLACE THERE. WHAT IS THAT FESTIVAL, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

MIDSUMMER HAS THE BACKGROUND, EUROPEAN, HAS TO DO WITH THE COMING OF SUMMER, THE DYING OF WINTER, ALL THOSE THINGS, CELEBRATED BY MANY PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, NOT JUST BY FINNISH PEOPLE. . . . FINLAND HAS ITS KIND OF CELEBRATION, THE MIDNIGHT SUN, OF COURSE, IS NOT SOMETHING WE EXPERIENCE HERE BUT IT WAS CELEBRATED IN BERKELEY, REEDLY, ROCKLIN, BY FINNISH PEOPLE. YOU PARTY, PICNIC, EXCHANGE ARTS, CRAFTS, STORYTELLING, MUSIC, DANCING, ALL OF THESE THAT MAKE UP A GRAND HERITAGE. TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THAT FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION AND TO SHARE IT WITH OTHER PEOPLES, IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. I'M PROUD OF THE FINNISH PEOPLE, FOR HAVING BEEN ABLE TO SAMPLE THEIR FUN, THEIR RESOURCES, THEIR SKILLS, SHEER DETERMINATION AND GUTS. IT IS CALLED SISU, FOR GUTS, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THAT LEVEL, TO BUILD THE BUILDINGS, TO PLAN AHEAD. THE FUNDS HAD COME OUT OF THE POCKETS OF PENSIONERS. THEY HAD COME FROM ABROAD, AS I SAID BEFORE, FRANCE, AND LOANS. BUT PEOPLE HAVE HAD TO ENGINEER THOSE THINGS, IDEAS THAT TAKE FRUITION. AND THE END RESULT NOW IS A BEAUTIFUL . . . . I'M PROUD OF IT AND I THINK THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY OF SONOMA IS VERY PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO WITH THE PROPERTY.

"SO YOU AND ARMAS STILL HAVE A CONNECTION WITH THE FINNISH CULTURE? YOU STILL FEEL VERY MUCH A FAMILY?"



MORE. I THINK I FEEL IT EVEN MORE NOW BECAUSE IT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT TO HOLD ONTO, YOU GRASP IT, YOU REALIZE YOU HAVE SOMTHING VERY SPECIAL THAT COULD BE LOST OVERNIGHT, LITERALLY. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE FEEL WE HAVE NOT DONE TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY IS TO INCULCATE OR INCORPORATE AS MUCH FINNISH HERITAGE INTO OUR DAUGHTERS' LIVES, INTO THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES.

OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN SO BUSY, SO FULL. WITH ARMAS ILL, WE HAVEN'T HAD THE TIME OR ENERGY TO SHARE WITH OUR OFFSPRING AS WE MIGHT HAVE. I SEE THIS HAPPENING IN OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS BUT BY THE SAME TOKEN, I SEE A REAWAKENING TO THE VALUE OF HANGING ONTO A BUILDING, PRESERVING IT, SHARING IT AND ABOVE ALL, HAVING IT BE A CONTINUING LINE WHICH COMES FROM THE EARLY, EARLY FINNS WHO FIRST CAME TO THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN, WHO CROSSED THE OCEAN AND WHO RESIDE RIGHT HERE IN THE ROCKLIN, LOOMIS, ROSEVILLE AREA. IT DOESN'T STOP HERE. IT'S CONTINUING, A STREAM OF HUMANITY JUST GOES RIGHT THROUGH THE LAND, THE PEOPLE AND TO OUR GENERATIONS.

"MRS. SEPPONEN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SHARING YOUR MEMORIES WITH US TODAY."