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FROM FARMLAND TO COALVILLAGE:

RED LODGE'S FINNISH IMMIGRANTS 1890-1922

By

Erika A. Kuhlman

B.A., University of Montana, 1983

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

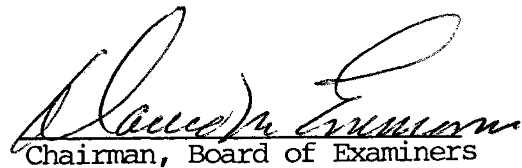
for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Montana

1987

Approved by



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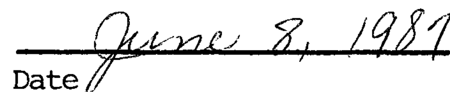

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Kuhlman, Erika A., M.A., June 1987 History

The Finnish Community of Red Lodge, Montana: 1890-1922.(142pp)

Director: David M. Emmons

The Finnish immigrants of Red Lodge, Montana are the subjects of this study. The basic problem addressed is the assimilation of the Finns into the larger community of Red Lodge. The study includes a social portrait of Red Lodge and of the Finnish community, and the activities the Finns engaged in to adapt to their new home. The industrialization of the United States and Finland is the historical period chosen because it represents the peak years of immigration to the US and because the Finns immigrated to secure employment in developing United States mining industries. The study attempts to discover how rural Finnish immigrants adapted to an industrializing nation.

Primary sources used to investigate this problem include the letters of an immigrant miner who came to Red Lodge from rural Finland. This collection of letters, a two-way correspondence between the miner and his mother in Finland, provides information on Finnish culture and how the miner adjusted to life in the US generally and Red Lodge specifically. Correspondence of the coal company in Red Lodge revealed company attitudes toward immmigrant workers and the friction between the miners' union and the company, indicating the problems the immigrants faced in the mining towns they inhabited. The 1900 and 1910 censuses showed statistics on Red Lodge's Finnish community.

The Finns of Red Lodge transferred their customs to the US by forming various organizations that also existed in Finland. The close-knit enclaves they lived in set them apart from American society. The socialism that attracted Finnish workers, heightened by the Red Lodge coal company's paternalism and political activities, alienated the miners from Finnish businessmen and farmers, creating a rift within the Finnish community. War-time hysteria during the First World War created an atmosphere in Red Lodge that further divided the socialist Finns who crusaded against the war, and the Finnish American patriots. World War I, and the "war" for patriotism that Red Lodge's citizens fought, forced the Finns either to accept American society and renounce their ethnicity, or to reject the US's economic system and become socialist agitators.

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[There are] two kinds of epochs in the history of the human spirit: epochs of habitation and epochs of homelessness. In the former man lives in the world as in a house, as in a home. In the latter, he looks out upon an open field, and there are not even four pegs with which to set up a tent."

Martin Buber

If only now all the Finnish people
would pray together for the end of the war
and peace for all people.
At night in peace we sing; in war all wail.
Joy breaks forth in peace;
in war...nothing but complaints.

Emilia Aronen

The author wishes to thank translators Sirpa Kari-Nano and Leona Lampi Hassen, and family and friends for their love and support. This study is dedicated to the memory of Mikko Marttunen and Emilia Marttunen Aronen.

INTRODUCTION

The early 20th century Finnish immigrants left a legacy of strife and struggle in the industrializing community of Red Lodge, Montana. They faced an urban culture in a foreign country that differed from the rural society they left behind. The Finns adapted to American culture in different ways. Some "Americanized" by renouncing their ethnicity. Others wanted to change American society to reflect their idealistic view of mankind. At least one immigrant in Red Lodge retained his ethnicity, survived the transition from rural to urban living, and worked for justice in an unjust world.

Fredrik Mikael Marttunen, born in 1884 in Karijoki, Finland, had dreamed of immigrating to the United States since his Lutheran church confirmation in his adolescent years. He sought to make his fortune, realizing that as a tenant farmer in Finland, he could not fulfill his ambitions. Being a student of nature, as his friends called him, it was not outdoor living that disagreed with him. He desired his own land, and a chance to make a better life.

Mikko's intellectual activity went beyond the natural world. An avid reader of books, he also bound books at an agricultural school in Finland. After his arrival in the United States he began reading socialist literature, selling Lenin's works to Finns in Butte. His own letters to his mother revealed an immigrant farmer caught between the

rural values of his homeland and those of an urban, working-class socialist.

Talented with numbers, he served the co-operative Finnish eating establishment "Reintola" in Red Lodge as a bookkeeper. But mining became his primary source of income once he left Finland. Although the work did not appeal to him, he plied his trade in hopes of saving enough money to purchase a farm in Finland. He admitted that working hard all day in the mines led him to "temptations" such as card-playing and drinking, activities he had refrained from in Finland. Mikko's lifestyle, the low wages and unsteady employment at the mines, and the high cost of living in Red Lodge made his goal seem unattainable. His failure also affected his mother's dreams.

Emilia Aronen, born in 1852, had a son Fredrik Mikael Marttunen named for his father who died in 1903. Emilia remarried a year later, a union that brought her grief. She cared for her husband and his son Fiilus, living as a tenant on her stepson's farm. Emilia missed the closeness she had felt with her son, and his departure to America broke her heart. Her second husband died in 1919, leaving her homeless. She stayed with various friends and family until her death in 1926.

Emilia begged Mikko to return to Finland so she would have somewhere to live and someone to care for. She did all she could to this end, employing guilt and proposing to widows in Kauhajoki for him, knowing he wanted to marry a Finnish woman. She warned him against the vices she believed Americans engaged in, and, as his native surrounding was flat farmland, wondered if he didn't fear the tall mountains of Red

Lodge. In her letters, she told Mikko that every time he promised to return, she knitted him a pair of socks. She had over a dozen when she realized she could not count on his words.

Mikko kept his mother's dream alive by pledging to repatriate. His letters from 1910 to 1918 claimed that he had not yet saved enough money to buy a farm. During the war, and especially Finland's Civil War in 1918, Mikko underwent a change that dimmed his desire to return to his homeland. He became a part of the working class struggle for justice in an economic system, as he saw it, that manipulated workers for the sake of higher profit. The Marxists' goal to liberate the proletariat spanned all nations, reducing the importance of ethnicity. When he spoke of Finland in his letters after 1918, it was not with the nostalgia he had expressed before the Finnish Civil War, but with bitterness over the defeat of Finland's workers at the hands of that country's bourgeoisie.

Mikko's letters to his mother reveal an immigrant unable to participate fully in either his adopted culture or in the society of his homeland. He believed in the Marxist proletarian revolution, but did nothing to persuade his fellow American workers in Red Lodge to become socialists. He spoke little English, and did not become an American citizen. He corresponded with several other Finnish immigrants living all over the United States, but never made contact with anyone but his own native countrymen. His reluctance to break out of the ethnic enclave impaired his ability to improve his life, the goal he believed immigrating to America would allow him to achieve.

His new vision became the improvement of the working class. But here too, his isolation reduced his ability to communicate his ideas to others.

The working class movement in Red Lodge suffered likewise from isolation and an inability to communicate. The foreigners that supported socialism in Red Lodge lived in separate ethnic enclaves. Many of Red Lodge's immigrants were not US citizens. As they could not participate in the electoral process, the immigrant workers were inclined toward radical unions, such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) that advocated the use of violence to affect change. This radical approach alienated many in the community. During World War I, the IWW members in Red Lodge spread anti-war literature throughout the city. Red Lodge's zealous patriots began harboring a distrust of all union members, and, because most of the IWW agitators were foreigners, of immigrants in general. Fear begot misunderstanding, which in turn produced hatred. The hysteria generated by both the patriots and the IWW created an atmosphere of mistrust, reducing the socialists' chances of gaining the support they wanted from their fellow-workers.

The isolated ethnic enclaves the Finns inhabited preserved their culture by maintaining the Finnish language and customs, while at the same time keeping them from the economic improvement they came to America to gain. Adverse situations existing in the mines they worked in also kept them from reaching their goals. Accidents in the mines killed many Finns, while countless others were left incapacitated, unable to work. The Finnish Americans that did assimilate into

American society retained pride in their Finnish heritage, but forsook their communal existence for American individualism.

Chapter 1

RED LODGE: A SOCIAL PORTRAIT

The community of Red Lodge, Montana lies in the southern portion of Carbon County, at the foothills of the Beartooth mountains. The town draws pristine water from Rock Creek, tumbling down from snow-capped mountains. Although the soil in and around Red Lodge is rocky, just north grassy plains afford prime sheep and cattle pasturage, with ample drainage for irrigation.

Much of what is now Carbon County lay originally within the Crow Indian Reservation. The Crows' love and respect for their native territory in Carbon County contrasted sharply with the exploitative attitudes of the coal developers. The Crow Chief and medicine man Arapooish expressed sentiment for his native country, finding that the Rock Creek valley and its seasons complimented each other. When summer heat radiated on the plains, the Crows retreated into the cool mountains to hunt an abundance of fresh game. In autumn, their horses pastured in the mountains while buffalo grazed on the plains. The Crows lost their idyllic existence in a series of treaties, each paring

down further the land alloted to them. In 1882, a treaty ceded the fertile panhandle of Carbon County to the white settlers. Finally, ten years later, the reservation moved to its present home near Hardin.1

Early explorer James George discovered rich coal deposits in the Beartooth foothills in 1866. He interested two Bozeman men, Walter Cooper and N.B. Black, in purchasing the coal fields. In 1887, the promise of endless profits from the fields lured the owners to form the Rocky Fork Coal Company. Within a short time, gold and silver prospectors in the Beartooth mountains abandoned their claims and flocked into Red Lodge to earn a steady income at the mines. A timber camp provided the logs needed for mine shaft contruction. Hastily constructed shacks soon appeared, sheltering weary miners, while sturdy saloons housed the camp's liquor supply.2

Mine production necessitated increased transportation. Railroad promoters began constructing a Billings-Cooke City line through Red Lodge, but this proved futile: the promotors went bankrupt, stalling coal production. Rocky Fork lured railroad magnate Henry Villard to build between Laurel and Red Lodge, forgoing (wisely) the Cooke City extension, which required tunneling through or building over the majestic Beartooths. Train loads of European immigrants soon arrived from other industrial villages. The mining camp became a community when the Northern Pacific Railroad assured the miners a steady supply of food and clothing. Downtown Red Lodge, developing on either side of a dirt road consisted of wooden builings and sidewalks with hitching

posts, railings and water troughs. By 1890, the town had grown from a population of one to nearly one thousand.3

The primary force behind Red Lodge coal development came from the Northern Pacific Railroad's demand for locomotive coal and from the coal fired mining operations at Butte, Montana. To appease objections that Red Lodge was too far off the main route, the NPRR constructed an arterial branch to the coal town. The line from Billings to Red Lodge confirmed the suitability of developing Red Lodge coal: transportation was efficient, as heavily laden coal trains used the force of gravity to descend, while empty cars climbed back to the camp.4

Another force behind railroad construction was ease of transportation. Before NPRR constructed the Laurel-Red Lodge route, freight teams brought supplies from Billings. The Yellowstone River and Rock Creek posed transportation problems for horse teams especially during the winter months and spring thaws. The Railroad purchased Rocky Fork coal, and provided much needed transporation for Carbon County's agricultural products. Rocky Fork coal enjoyed a reputation as an efficient source of domestic heat for Montana and Dakota homeowners. One over-confident western journalist exulted that "[T]hese facts show that here at Red Lodge is the greatest permanent coal producing center of the Northern Rockies capable of supplying all possible future demands..."5

Entrepreneurial interests in Red Lodge went far beyond the coal fields. E.V. Smalley, writing for Northwest Magazine in 1892, promoted the area's other natural resources. He predicted a bountiful harvest

for farmers willing to till the fertile soil near Red Lodge. Smalley's remarkable vision enabled him to forsee gold and silver mines beneath the forested mountains. He suggested that a tidy sum invested in the asphalt springs at the head of the Stillwater River would someday pave western towns. Presently, capitalists bought homes to rent to coal miners. Future investors, Smalley hinted, would find their fortune in tourism.6

Property rights disputes temporarily postponed these rosy forecasts of commercial development. Initially, Rocky Fork Coal Company could not develop the land surrounding the railroad property. Carl Edick, the first homesteader in the valley, owned a good portion of what later became Red Lodge. Edick had surveyed the lots and aquired a title to them. During months of litigation, miners were unable to buy lots, accounting for the haphazard character of the town's early development, and for the lack of permanent structures near the coal mines.

In 1889, just as the railroad neared completion, Rocky Fork Town and Electric won the court case. Platting followed, heralding the beginning of Red Lodge as a company town. Streets were laid out and named for railroad owners Henry Villard, Samuel Hauser and L.B. Platt. In a flurry of activity, the company built homes and an eating establishment near the mines, with company offices just across the creek. Several mine officials and their families built homes on the bluff overlooking Red Lodge, with the master mechanic living just below him, while the foreman's family resided just beneath him. Red Lodge

changed dramatically from disorderly to hierarchical in appearance with the coming of the railroad. The coal company and railroad dictated Red Lodge's development.7

The social lives of all the inhabitants changed with the arrival of the railroad. The Spofford Hotel, Red Lodge's first brick structure, named for Rocky Fork Coal Company President Charles A. Spofford, boasted in 1893 a barber shop and public bathing facilities. Community events such as dances and concerts were held in its ballroom. Situated mid-way between the passenger railway depot and the business district, the Spofford meant "civilization" for weary train travellers and Red Lodge inhabitants alike.8

Men and women occupied separate worlds in Red Lodge's early days. Entertainment for the male population centered around liquor, gambling and the saloon. Denied these diversions, the housewife kept a one-room house, about fourteen by twelve feet in size. Four or five pieces of crude wooden furniture stood on a dirt floor, covered by an earthen, leaky roof. Frontier life had other surprises in store for the uninitiated miner's wife: curious Indians pressed their noses against windows, while bolder natives occasionally entered a home, sat down and conversed, then left as quickly as they came.9

The primitive structures of Red Lodge's poorer neighborhood contrasted sharply with the opulence of the rich. Dr. J.M. Fox, first Rocky Fork Coal Company manager, built the grandest Victorian style home in Red Lodge. The doctor's lifestyle differed dramatically from that of the miners. The townfolk stared wide-eyed as he and his

servant drove about town in a buggy drawn by white horses. His three daughters received their education elsewhere, while their father used their empty rooms to entertain such guests as the famous Henry Villard. The Foxes kept their distance from the rest of the community, as if their differences were simply too wide to bridge.10

As Red Lodge grew, neighborhoods took on distinctive characteristics, as "Finn Town" and "Little Italy" appeared near the coal operations. These ethnic enclaves symbolized the relationship between the mines and the lives of the immigrant miners who earned their bread there. Though originally lured to the area by the promise of steady work, the immigrants soon found that "steady" usually lasted only a month or so, when a lay-off would occur. The immigrant sections of town held their breath in expectation of the next shut-down at the mines. For "High Bug" town residents, where the affluent lived, the economic boom-and-busts were not so devastating. Businessmen and mine officials, these American-born neighbors owned the shops on Billings Avenue, and the Red Lodge Picket, which during these years gave little press to immigrant activities.11

The intellectual activities Red Lodge's inhabitants pursued fell along religious and ethnic lines. Lutheran, Congregational, Episcopalian, Methodist and Catholic priests and pastors admonished their communicants on Sunday morning for their sins of Saturday night. The laity responded by organizing temperance societies, pledging abstinence from alcohol. A Literature Society met in the Congregational Church to present papers on such heady subjects as

capital punishment and religion in the home. Religious practices in Red Lodge divided along ethnic lives, with the Irish and Italian worshipping at St. Agnes, and the Finns at the Finnish Evangelical Church.12

Throughout its history, Red Lodge's ethnic enclaves have engaged in activities separate from the rest of the community. The Finns exemplified this pattern until the 1920s, when they began integrating into the rest of the community. The K.R. Kalevaisen Maja (the Knights of Kaleva), a secret society, offered mutual aid only to its members. Rauhan Toivo (The Finnish Temperance Society) built an opera house in 1897. Mikko Marttunen joined this group when he first arrived in Red Lodge. It was not until the 1920s that the opera house held performances in English. The Finns then offered entertainment for the general public. Beginning in the 1920s, the opera house held such community functions as high school graduations.13

The Finns first disembarked in Red Lodge's train station in the early 1890s. They came seeking employment at Rocky Fork Coal Company. Finnish immigrants learned of job opportunities available in industrial towns through other Finnish immigrants. The Finns became the most populous immigrant group in Red Lodge, and at times, the Finns made up a majority of Rocky Fork's coal miners. Their activities had a significant impact on Red Lodge's history.

The Finnish immigrants ventured across the Atlantic for a variety of reasons. Most came, as Mikko had, from rural regions of the Finnish

province Vaasa, where they engaged in tenant farming. Economic betterment bekoned their adventurous spirits, and they scrapped together their savings and headed for America. The promise of steady income in the coal mines of the US strengthened the prospective immigrants' resolve to abandon the homeland. Few could accept forsaking forever their birthplace; many planned on making their fortunes, and then repatriating. The young single men that formed the bulk of the immigrant population often lived a transient existence, searching for their fortunes.14

Mikko Marttunen, immigrating in 1910, first came to Bessemer, Michigan. When the iron mines there began laying men off, he and his compatriots fled to Red Lodge. When Mikko finally got a steady job, he did not want to return immediately to Finland. His plan was to save money, although that too presented a challenge: "As they say in America," he explained to his mother in 1916, "you can get anything at all if you have money, but another truth is that in America you can't get anything unless you have money."15 Economic improvement posed the most common reason the Finns immigrated. The Finns disagreed on how best to achieve that goal, reflecting their differences on such issues as religion and politics.

The first wave of Finnish immigrants, arriving between 1890 and 1905, came most frequently from the tenant farms of rural Finland. They retained their conservative political and religious attitudes. The immigrants arriving after 1905 came more often from urban Finland, where industrial workers engaged in radical political organizations.

These differences would cause the divisions within Red Lodge's Finnish community.16

The Finns of Red Lodge engaged in a variety of political and social activities. Many politically liberal Finns supported socialism, while the more conservative tended to be church-goers and temperance advocates. The line dividing the two sides was obscure. Disruptive events such as strikes and world wars were periods when Finnish communities divided most sharply.

During the pre-World War I years, the distinctions were muddled. An awe-struck Mikko, writing to his mother in 1912, indicated a strong interest in church activities when he exclaimed that the Finnish church in Red Lodge held no Christmas Eve service. "What do you think," he asked his mother, "isn't this is a pagan place?"17 In the same letter, he gloated that only the American Socialist Party truly cared for the worker.

To ease the pain of leaving their homeland, Finns of all political persuasions brought with them their native customs and beliefs. One familiar practice consisted of formally organized social activities. In their native land, organizations had religious or political purposes. Similar groups formed in the US, that served additionally as social controls. Due to the absence of family life, especially for young unmarried miners and those who had left their wives at home, the Finnish societies helped define social roles and norms.

The first priority for any group of first-wave Finnish American immigrants was the formation of a Lutheran church to baptize, confirm

and marry. Frequently these churches met outside or in someone's home, as these rituals could not await construction of a building. For Finnish peasants, the rituals performed in Finnish State Church confirmed the phases of its communicants' lives. The Finns went through the same passages of life in the U.S. as they did in their native land. The Finns brought the beliefs practiced by the Lutheran Church at home to the new world, although with modifications.18

Because the US government did not control religion, the Finnish Americans had the freedom to worship as they pleased. This freedom accounted for the development of three different synods of the same Lutheran church. The pietistic Laestadians formed a rural "folk" church, with lay-centered Sunday services. The two remaining sects, the Apostolic and Suomi Synods, diverged over the issue of clerical privilege.19

The Suomi Synod, the most lay-centered and wide-spread, organized in Red Lodge in 1891. At dedication ceremonies in 1902. Reverend Erland Wikkuri outlined the role of the Finnish American Christian. He encouraged his flock to aquire American citizenship, proclaiming it their duty to lead a Christian life and provide an example for other immigrants to follow. The Church had 600 members in that year. Red Lodge's Finnish church was most active when it had a pastor, from 1900 to 1906, and again in the 1920s. Services in the early years were held in Finnish, until declining membership forced the church to cater to the Finns' English speaking children.20

Declining membership resulted from a reluctance by the post-1905

wave of immigrants to enter the church. This second group of immigrants came from Finland's urban centers, where they had experienced a political awakening and labor class radicalism. These Finns found their niche in socialism rather than church activities. However, not all post-1905 immigrants were "pre-radicalized" before they immigrated, nor were all socialists atheists. Mikko immigrated after 1905, but did not become a socialist until after he settled in the US. Although Mikko espoused socialism, he retained a belief in God, yet he never spoke of attending church.

Temperance advocates also established an organization in the US. The Finnish National Temperance Society formed in Hancock, Michigan in 1888. The founding of temperance societies in Finnish American communities coincided with the national cultural awakening in Finland, an era of self-improvement. Temperance Finns brought their belief in abstinence from alcohol with them from the "Old Country." Mikko had been a member of the temperance group in his Finnish village, though he was not a tee-totaler. Once in America, he promised his mother that he would convert his fellow immigrants to total abstinence. He became the secretary of the temperance group in Bessemer, and joined the local group in Red Lodge when he arrived there in 1910. With time, his zeal faded, and he confessed to his mother that though he took a drink now and then, it was nothing she should worry over. Two years later, the Workers' Society built a meeting hall, and Mikko bought stock in this venture. He never mentioned the Temperance Society again.21

In Red Lodge, as in America generally, the socialist Finns and

temperance advocates often shared a common building. The first split among Red Lodge's Finns occurred in 1893, in the membership of the temperance society. Two factions appeared, battling each other in court over the recently built Finnish Hall. The socialists defected from the Temperance Society, supporting greater political rather than moral activism. They wanted to change the economy so all could achieve more productive lives, rather than waste these lives on alcohol. They wanted to eradicate the source of the problem, which they saw as the capitalist economic system. The socialists lost the case, and decided to build their own headquarters.22

Battles over buildings were waged in other Finnish American communities such as Diamondville, Wyoming. There, temperance advocates owned the Finnish Hall and although they allowed the socialists to use their facility, they charged exorbitant rents, trying to weaken the socialists' influence. Ironically in Red Lodge, the Finnish Lutherans converted Workers' Hall (built by the socialists who lost the court case) into a church. Most members of the Workers' Society by this time had left the church.23

The Knights of Kaleva first formed in 1898 to enhance the reputation of the Finns as an ethnic group. This was the first instance of an organization that had no parent group in Finland. A branch of the Knights appeared in Red Lodge in 1900. The Kalevans, one of a handful of immigrant secret societies at the turn of the century, were voracious readers. They maintained a library at the Finnish Hall.24

Among immigrant groups, Finland had a reputation as the most literate nation. 350 Finnish language newspapers were in print during peak immigration years, enhancing this notion. In 1900, Tyomies (The Worker), a paper of the Finnish American Socialist Party, pioneered efforts to maintain the Finnish language. The paper printed news from Finland and the US as well as local organization announcements. In the west, Toveri (Comrade) became the party's voice. Raivaaja (Pioneer) and Industrialisti (Industrialist) offered differing socialist perspectives. The Suomi Synod lent its presses to the conservative view.25

In the first years of the century, some of Red Lodge's Finns gained prominence within the community by operating businesses. A Finnish saloon opened, offering refreshments to weary miners. Andrew Saari and T. Renlund began a general mercantile store, later converting it to a "temperance saloon," poking fun at their pro-temperance neighbors across the street. The Harri Ditch Company begain irrigating lands near Rock Creek. Back in 1893, Albert Budas, Herman Hannula, Alex Dalman and Matt Bell began the Co-operative Mercantile Association, typical of co-ops in other Finnish communities.26

The co-operative movement began contemporaneously in Finland in the late 1890s. There, the Finns were schooled in thrift, resourcefulness and communal efforts, producing in them an apprehensive attitude toward selfish business practices. Co-ops did not evolve from the ranks of the lower classes but through the efforts of the public-minded middle and upper classes. In less than two decades,

co-ops flourished in the Finnish economy. Reasons for their success were twofold: their lower and middle class patrons were motivated to save money by utilizing the stores, and their educational efforts sustained their growth. Co-ops in the US developed as a result of miners' strikes, when private stores refused to sell to strikers. They attracted and retained the miners' patronage after the miners returned to work. The co-ops were a natural addition to the ethnic enclave, where the immigrants lived a communal lifestyle.27

By definition, a co-op belonged to the people who utilized its services. Control rested not in one or a few owners, but in all who became members. Profits were distributed equally among benefactors, in proportion to how much was purchased. The purpose of the co-operative method was to put the consuming public in control of prices and products, while operating on an at-cost basis. Membership was open to all, regardless of religion or political persuasion. The co-operators saw the potential to make the economic system run on a democratic basis. For the socialists that ran co-ops, the goal was to liberate workers from the capitalist system.28

The Finns in Red Lodge opened several co-operatively run stores, including two general stores, a pharmacy and a boarding house diner. These enterprises ran smoothly until the Finnish community dwindled in the 1920s. Although the co-ops created unity and common purpose behind an often quarrelsome community, they too had inherent contradictions. They were accused of promoting class antagonisms when they aided striking workers. Socialists accused them of abandoning the laborer's

cause when they adopted "business" practices, such as catering to American consumers for the sake of higher profit.29

In 1903, Red Lodge gained another familiar characteristic of Finnish American communities: a boarding house and sauna. Many homes in Red Lodge took in boarders, but boarding houses were built especially for the purpose of sheltering unmarried miners. Henry Honkala purchased a lot from Rocky Fork Coal Company in 1902, and completed construction of the home the following year. Finnish houses retained the customs of the Old Country, offering their renters sauna baths and co-operatively run dining facilities. The sauna was one place where all Finns, regardless of political persuasion, came together. The sauna consisted of three levels of benches across from the source of heat, usually an old stove surrounded by small rocks, all encased in sheet metal. A fire blazed in the stove and when the rocks were hot, water splashed on them created a steamy environment.30

Red Lodge's Finns increased their political activity in the new century. In 1902, the Red Lodge Miners' Union nominated their candidates for city offices. Three Finns found their names on the ballot. C.O. Grandstrom, Jacob Kivikangas and John Bakki had played prominent roles in the Finnish enclave, and were now ready to branch out into the larger community. All three were active in the Finnish Church, the Temperance society and the Knights of Kaleva.31

Finnish political activity was destined to dig deeper than merely offering candidates to municipal offices. Although the socialists were in the minority, not yet numerous enough to keep up the payments on the

building that the Lutherans had taken control of, they would regroup in the next decade, when the second wave of immigrants would swell their ranks. The census manuscript of 1900 and 1910 revealed the increase and change that the Finnish community experienced during that decade.32

The 1900 census manuscript showed a population of 2,152 living in Red Lodge. Over half the adult population were foreign-born. The ratio of males to females was 1.2 : 1. Nearly half the adult males in the community were single. Red Lodge at the turn of the century did not represent a typical mining community, as it did not have a large population of transient workers.

Finnish-born immigrants and their children made up 24% of the population. 334 Finnish-born adults and 194 children of Finnish descent found their homes here. The ratio of males to females among the Finns was 1.8 : 1. There were 105 married couples with both spouses living together in Red Lodge. As is sometimes the case with immigrant marriages, 6 married men had come in advance of their wives to find work with the mines. The single Finnish male population did not quite reach the percentage of single males in the community as a whole; only 32% of the Finnish males were single, as compared to 43% of all Red Lodge males. In 1900, the typical Red Lodge Finn had taken marital vows and produced offspring. In all but three cases, Finnish immigrant marriages were endogamous: Finnish-born men married Finnish-born women. In the case of the "mixed" marriages, the spouse that was not Finn had Finnish parents.

Mining the coal-rich foothills of the Beartooths meant a

livelihood for nearly 500 men in 1900, or approximately 65% of the adult males. A variety of occupations existed at the Rocky Fork Coal Company. The vast majority mined coal, while the remainder cut timber, or assisted in hauling the coal from the mines to the trains.

Although Finnish adult males made up only a quarter of the Red Lodge adult male population in 1900, their proportion at the mines rose dramatically. 46% of all miners at Rocky Fork were Finnish immigrants; 84% of the Finnish males in Red Lodge made their living shoveling coal. Other occupations of Finns included farmer, laborer, store clerk, blacksmith, tailor, saloon keeper, carpenter and dressmaker. The lives of most Finnish immigrants thus depended on coal production at Rocky Fork.

Rocky Fork furnished homes for their employees, but the option to buy or rent elsewhere was available. The decision to buy depended on marital status, economic well-being, and an affinity for one's community. Generally, families who intended on remaining in a town purchased a home. In Red Lodge as a whole, 268 families owned their own homes, either free and clear or with a mortgage. Homeowners in Red Lodge comprised about 33% of all household heads.

The fact that only 17% of the Finns owned the roof above their heads may be due to several factors. Although mining was not the most remunerative job, the majority of Finns who did own were miners, so employment underground did not preclude the ability to buy. A better explanation stemmed from the fact that they were migrant workers. Many wanted only to make a certain amount of money, and then repatriate.

Most Finns came to Red Lodge nearly peniless, requiring a period of saving before they could purchase a home.

Whether or not an immigrant set up housekeeping at a particular locale hinged on his citizenship status. An immigrant who became a US citizen planned on staying in the country. The rate of citizenship within an ethnic group indicated a sense of compatibility with their adopted homeland. Red Lodge Finns voiced their affirmation in this regard, as 79% had become citizens.

In 1910, Red Lodge had blossomed into a bustling town of 4,860 persons. People born in the US slightly exceeded those born on foreign shores. The ratio of men to women was 1.7 : 1 . Although these facts did not change signigficantly in ten years, the city's growth did alter the lives of its residents. More economic opportunities became available, especially to those who had been in Red Lodge since 1900.

More Finns detrained in Red Lodge than had in earlier years. They now made up 25% of the population. Not including children, the Finns comprised 28% of the population. The reverse was true in 1900, when including children increased the overall percentage of Finns, thus indicating that fewer families arrived in Red Lodge between 1900-1910.

Among the Finns, males still exceeded females by a ratio of 1.7 : 1, signifying an influx of men between these years. Most of the newcomers were probably single, as 52% of Finnish men were unmarried. 63 out of 273 married men lived in Red Lodge without their wives. Endogamous marriages made up 97% of the total.

The proportion of Finnish miners was greater than in the community

as a whole. 43% of Rocky Fork miners were Finns. The percentage of Finnish men engaged in mining dropped slightly in 1910 to 78%, as compared with 87% in 1900. More Finns began to make a living above ground during these years. Four Finnish entrepreneurs found Red Lodge's business climate profitable, one selling dry goods, while the other sold miners' supplies. The two remaining had special skills; one was a butcher, the other, a jeweler. Three professional Finns, a doctor, bookkeeper, and a machinist offered their services to the community.

In 1910, 15% of Red Lodge heads of households owned their own homes. 27% of Finnish males had made similar purchases. This rise in the number of Finnish homeowners corresponded with the entrance of Finns into the permanent occupations and professions. If home ownership was a sign of economic well-being, the Finns had done relatively well.

The percentage of alien (unnaturalized) Finns rose to 31% in 1910. While one segment of the ethnic community was advancing, the more recent arrivals from Finland continued to charcterize Red Lodge as a transient community. Single men without families were more likely to retain their Finnish citizenship.

Ten years into the twentieth century, those Finnish who stayed in Red Lodge through the decade were beginning to settle down, buying homes and businesses. Still a mining town, Red Lodge retained those characteristic features: a large single male population and many immigrant workers. The Finns, especially those who had remained in

town during the decade, began to find other, safer, more lucrative positions than mining. Some gained prominence within the larger community, taking on political and socially active positions, and forming connections outside the Finnish enclave.

The ability to speak English enhanced an immigrant's ability to make those outside connections. In 1900, only three Finns indicated they could not speak English. In 1910, this number jumped to 415, or nearly half the Finnish population. Finnish housewives and miners, living in Finnish boarding houses, did not have to communicate in English. An immigrant could work in the mines all day, come home to a house full of Finns, shop at a store owned by a compatriot on payday, and never speak a word of English. Yet among those who claimed they could not speak English were businessmen: a plumber, baker, dry goods merchant and a hotel proprietor who had even acquired citizenship and had immigrated 25 years earlier! As literacy in English was a prerequisite for becoming a US citizen, this man must have learned some English before acquiring citizenship. This indicates the isolation of the Finnish community during these years, if the hotel owner spoke English when he first immigrated in 1885, but could no longer speak English in 1910. The dramatic rise in English illiterates indicates that many of the Finns that arrived between 1900-1910 interacted very little with the community outside the ethnic enclave.

An immigrant's ability to function in a modern industrialized society depended on reading and writing skills. For immigrant miners, the inability to read danger signs in the mines could be fatal (until

1907, when laws were passed requiring multi-lingual signs). The Finns had a high rate of literacy, due to the education efforts of the Lutheran church in Finland. The 1900 reflects this generality. For Red Lodge as a whole, 26% could neither read nor write. Only .8% of Finnish adults were illiterate. Ten years later, an alarming drop occurred in the literacy rate among Finns: there were 505 illiterates, or 40%. The literacy rate among all immigrants was 48%; for Red Lodge as a whole, 26% of the population could neither read nor write. Compared to other immigrants in the community, the Finnish rate was only slightly below all foreigners. Such a drastic discrepancy between 1900 and 1910 indicates a change in the Finns who immigrated during these years. The Finns who came after 1900 were urban industrial workers with litte education, compared to the first wave of immigrants who were better educated, and in 1910, began owning businesses and forming connections with the larger community of Red Lodge.33

Education contributed to an immigrant group's ability to participate in its adopted society. The children learned English first in the public schools, then taught their parents. The children of poorer families often had to sacrifice schooling for employment. Among immigrants and natives alike, the impoverished needed the income a working child could provide.

In 1900, of those children who responded that they either went to school or were employed, 31% of Finnish children, ages 13-18, attended school, while the remaining 69% earned a wage. More children attended school in the community as a whole, where 75% were becoming educated,

while a quarter of the children went to work. In 1910, the Finns sent their offspring to school more often. 54% of Finnish children attended school, while the remaining half earned a wage; The figures for Red Lodge children are slightly higher, or about 70% school attendance. The increased emphasis placed on education for their children reflected Finnish ventures out of the mines and into the business world, where the Finns began to realize the advantages of an education for their children. The vast majority of all Finnish children who worked were daughters or sons of miners or laborers, both in 1900 and 1910. The parents' ability to provide for their children's education hinged on whether the family could do without the extra income.

The census revealed that the Finns who stayed in the community between 1900 and 1910 tended to establish other means of making a living, outside the mines and in the business world. They formed connections through businesses and politics (as Grandstrom, Kivikangas and Bakki had done) which led them out of the ethnic enclave and into the community of Red Lodge. Those immigrants arriving between 1900 and 1910 were less well-educated, less likely to engage in business activity and more inclined to stay in the ethnic enclave. These immigrants became the "radicals" that joined the IWW and demonstrated against World War I.

One question the census did not answer was how the Finnish Americans dealt with the contradictions of individual betterment (material gain through the free enterprise system practiced in their adopted country) and their customary communal existence in the ethnic

enclave.

The two groups of Finns, those immigrating before 1905 and those immigrating after, assimilated into American culture in different ways. The first wave of immigrants followed a path of American individualism by starting businesses and rejecting the ethnic enclave by becoming American patriots. The second wave of labor radicals advocated the overthrow of American capitalism by the working class. The disharmony produced by such diverse opinions shook the Finnish community, particularly as the events surrounding World War I sharpened the differences between the two groups.

Mikko Marttunen faced the problem of individual betterment while he mined coal in Red Lodge. He immigrated to the US to make enough money to establish a farm in Finland. He stuck to his plans until the First World War broke out. It was then that the socialistic ideals he had learned about in the US from his Finnish co-workers took root. He poured out his sympathy for the workingman's plight and his support of socialism in letters to friends and family. He joined the Finnish Workers' Club, although there is no evidence that his activities ever went beyond meetings at the Workers' Hall. Unlike many of his Finnish neighbors, he was not accused during World War I of membership in the IWW. After his mother's death in 1926, he became an agent of Tyomies, spreading socialist literature to the Finns of Butte, Montana. In the 29 years he lived in the US, he did not correspond with any non-Finnish people, befriending only members of his own ethnic group. Marttunen seemed stuck between his desire for a better living and his reluctance

to break out of the close-knit Finnish group.

Mikko did not undertake his search for a better life alone. Like most prospective immigrants in Finland, he did not forsee the harsh economic situation in Finland getting any better.The reasons the Finns came to America revealed their desire for a better living. Finland's history shaped the circumstances the Finnish Americans chose to leave behind, and the extent to which circumstances in the United States matched the dreams they hoped to find there.

ENDNOTES -- CHAPTER 1

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Chapter 2

THE REMEMBERED FINNISH PAST

Finland's history shaped the immigrant communities that dotted America's landscapes. The economic, political and social realities existing in Finland encouraged the immigrants to leave their homeland, bringing with them their perceptions of the ideal conditions they hoped to find. The reasons the Finns came to the United States illuminates what they expected to find there, and the extent to which they changed conditions to match their dreams. The Finnish Americans brought with them a culture rich in folkways and traditions, shaped by their rural past.

In the mid-19th century, Finland experienced a nationalist awakening in response to the industrial revolution, which affected its history and the lives of its citizens. The awakening represented a cultural adjustment to industrialization. The awakening occurred after Sweden lost its Finnish possession to the Russian Czar. Napoleon's attempt to re-define Europe's balance of power resulted in Finland's inclusion into the Russian Empire. Napoleon and the Russian leader Alexander I each agreed to defend the goals of the other, and when Sweden refused to join Napoleon's fight against England, Alexander invaded Finland. Sweden retreated, ceding Finland to the Czar.

Finland became a part of the Russian Empire but enjoyed the status

of a self-governing, constitutional state. Alexander agreed to convoke the Finnish Parliament, the Diet, based on the four estates of nobles, clergy, bourgeoisie and peasants. The Diet answered directly to the Czar, by-passing the ministers of Russia's bureaucracy. The Finns reacted favorably, as Alexander had protected their constitution and form of government.1

The period of Russian rule coincided with the industrialization of Finland. The government supported free enterprise, ending the guild system and the restrictions limiting factory and mill construction. Railroad construction, begun in 1858, enabled quicker transportation to Finnish ports. In 1860, a new process to convert wood into pulp modernized the forest products industry and increased Finland's export rate.2

Agriculture took on the characteristics of a modern state. Scattered land-holdings were consolidated, and productivity began supplying an international industrial economy. Dairies requiring fewer laborers replaced grain farms in many areas, forcing farmers to grow cash crops and work part-time in lumber camps.3

The rural class structure began to change as a result of industrialization. In 1815, landowners comprised nearly one-half of all household heads in rural Finland. By the close of the nineteenth century, that figure dropped to one-fourth. Those who had lost their land through consolidation found new lives as renters or factory workers, or by immigrating to the US.4

Discontent spread throughout rural and urban Finland. In 1901, 43

percent of the agricultural population labored on farms, without hope of land ownership and little control over their future. Work for the agricultural laborer seemed never ending. Many had nothing left but their sense of humor, exclaiming that "in the evening as I went to sleep I threw my trousers over the rafters, and they were still swinging when I was awakened in the morning."5 No laws were enacted to safeguard interests of the tenants. Owners raised rents arbitrarily, and failed to honor leases with out penalty. The urban provinces of southern Finland could not absorb all the landless farmers. Even Helsinki reported unemployment, particularly during the famines that devastated farms in the 1890s.6

Finland's awakening represented a cultural adjustment to the economic displacement brought about by industrialization. Three areas of Finnish society were affected: literature, religion, and politics. Finnish authors ignited nationalist fervor during the turbulent period of industrialization. Elias Lönnrot began this trend with his collection of ancient oral folk songs and poetry. The Kalevala, published in 1835, became a symbol of national pride in Finnish culture. The epic reveals the strength of heroes and the power of magic.

The Kalevala begins with a world creation myth, which introduces the four main characters: Vainamoinen, a wise minstrel; Ilymarinen, the thrifty smith; Aino, an idealistic dreamer; and Lemminkainen, a reckless romantic. Nature weaves goodness and folly throughout the tale. The story relates the rivalry between two tribes, the Karelians

(Finns) and the Lapps engaged in battle win the Sampo. or magic mill, which grinds out all of man's needs. Vainamoinen succeeds, winning immortality through his musical genius.

The epic is Lonnrot's interpretation of the folk runes, chanted by pagan Finns. The incantations promise romantic and maternal love to those who recite them. The myths told in The Kalevala speak to the plight of human suffering throughout history, and he glory in mastering one's own fate and the fate of the nation.7

The Kalevala embodies the wisdom and folkways that characterized the Finns' ancient rural existence. Kalevalan heroes use thrift, love and musical ability against the power of nature. The Kalevala differs from other national epics by the absence of royal or noble characters. Kalevalan heroes are uncompromisingly plain, tilling the soil or forging tools. The Finns' pride in their rural heritage, as told in this epic and in the literary offspring that followed The Kalevala, contributed to the growing tide of nationalism.8

The religious awakening coincided with the profusion of nationalistic literature. Myths are the traditional stories, ostensibly historical facts, that reveal the values held by a nation's people. Religion is a commitment or devotion to a set of beliefs relating to the supernatural. Finnish mythology speaks of the plight of an anguished people. The Lutheran faith wrestled with why people must suffer, the ultimate inquiry all humans face. Both Christian and pagan Finns prayed to their gods for help to a better understanding of their existence. "Ukko Ylijumala" heard the pagan prayers of the

ancient Finns. "Ukko" symbolized an old man or thunder, while "Ylijumala" meant "high or supreme being." The Finns explained bad and good times by this deity, who sent storm and thunder but also seed-time and harvest.9

The Christian God added a human dimension to Finnish religions. Jesus Christ embodied the suffering of mankind, while His death (and the belief in that act) meant divine forgiveness. The nineteenth century revivalists and evangelicals differed on the problem of suffering and the reasons for it. Lars Laestadius, the father of Finnish revivalists, preached in Finland's Oulu provinces until his death in 1861. The Laestadians were disciples of his pietistic practices. These Christians believed in emotional responses as the key to spiritual cleanliness. Laestadians concentrated on repentance and faith, and a return to the sentiment found in runic poetry. Finn mythology, based on similar sentiment, explained man's identification and at the same time his separation from the natural world. The industrializing world polarized man and nature, which, according to the revivalists, produced the alienation that caused man's suffering. The Laestadians reasserted the connection between themselves and God's creation through renewed faith.10

Although the emphasis on emotional responses and personal experiences of the pietistic worshippers differed from the worldliness and the hierarchical organization of evangelical Lutherans, the Laestadians did not withdraw entirely from the church. Laestadians simply altered the way in which they practiced the traditional Lutheran

themes of attonement, divine wrath and sanctification through grace. They, like all Lutherans, sought truth in the Word of the Gospel.11

Urban Finns tended toward evangelical practices, concentrating on works rather than faith. They saw human suffering as an environmental problem, rather than a fate that man must simply endure. They believed in the ability of man's intellect, and that humans, through God-given reason, could right the social ills of an over-crowded, fast-paced urban industrial life. The evangelists dealt less with mythology and more with the realities of modern life. The religious revivals of the period reflected the values of rural living that The Kalevala symbolized, while urban dwellers tended towards evangelism to ameliorate the problems they encountered. Revivalism and evangelism characterized religious responses to Finland's industrialization in the cities and in the rural hinterland.12

Secularists responded to industrialization by demanding a greater role in Finland's political affairs. Of special concern to both the religious and the secular was the tightening of Russian control over Finland, during the period of "Russification." The secularists, desiring political control, left the church. Their departure left a vacuum filled by the revivalists and evangelists. Russification resulted in a desire, on the part of the religious Finns, to protect the Lutheran Church from Russian autocracy. These rural, politically conservative believers were among Finland's first wave of immigrants to the US.13

Finland's urban lower classes became aware of their increasing

size and relative political paralysis. The traditional Finnish Diet, which did not represent the majority of the laboring Finns, seemed anachronistic. Discontented urban workers created the Finnish Labor Party, a socialist group, in 1899. Politically liberal, increasingly urban Finns characterized the second wave of immigrants to the US.14

The process of Russification began in 1899 with the February Manifesto, placing Finnish legislation under the surveillance of the newly created Russian Imperial Council. The appointment of Nikolai Bobrikov as Governor General began a new era of hostility between the two countries. The Governorship General was traditionally the only Russian position in the Finnish government; the appointee acted as the Czar's representative in Finnish affairs.

Bobrikov mandated Russia's domination over the Finns, believing that the two countries should have more in common than the same sovereign. He took several steps to this end, insisting that Russian be the national language, and merging Finland's army with that of the Czar. The Finnish Diet refused to dissolve its constitutionally mandated army, which Alexander had promised to uphold.

The Finns petitioned Nicholas II, asking him to rescind the February Manifesto. The Manifesto remained in place, although it was not enforced. In 1903, the Czar endowed Bobrikov with dictatorial powers. The Governor General met his death at the hand of an assassin in 1904, the victim of Finland's intense nationalism. Many nationalist Finns immigrated as a result of Bobrikov's Russification policies.15

The conscription law passed by the Imperial Council caused inner

turmoil in Finland. Two-thirds to three-fifths of the eligible males refused to register for the draft. The Czar allowed resisters to pay a tax rather than serve. No Finnish soldiers fought in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war.

Russification drew varied reactions from Finland's government. The Constitutionalist Party formed, pledging to defend and uphold Finland's constitution. The second party, the Compliants, promised fidelity to the Russian Empire and Czar. The working class comprised a third faction. In 1903, the Labor Party began espousing Marxian ideals. A fourth party, the Socialists, were committed to national autonomy and universal suffrage.

The Constitutionalists, the Socialists, and the Labor Party each broached the question of Finnish independence. Increasing displeasure with Russian rule and its weakness resulting from the Japanese victory in 1905 made the moment ripe. Agitation in the form of a general strike errupted in 1905, encouraging Nicholas II to rescind the February Manifesto and remove the Govenor General's dictatorial powers. The Constitutionalists, having gained legitimacy, replaced the Compliants in Finland's Diet. The capitulation of the Czar led the Finns to view violence as a successful weapon against established power.16

The general strike of 1905 represented a watershed year in Finnish history. It was during this strike that labor realized its potential. The strike induced the Czar to make concessions to the Finns. The labor class gained strength, and the workers that departed for American

shores had a deep-rooted belief in the laboring class's potential to effect change. These post-1905 immigrants carried their advocacy of socialism to the United States.

In 1906, the Czar prevented further violence by making another concession: the granting of universal suffrage. A unicameral Diet was proposed, elected by male and female voters. The elections of the following year sent representatives from five different parties to the Diet. Only the upper classes supported the Constitutionalists, while the laboring and agricultural classes formed parties based on their political views. The primary issue of concern for all branches of the electorate was Finland's relationship to Russia.

Permission to convene an elected Diet represented the last favor granted to the Finns by the Russian government. In 1910, an act passed authorizing all legislation to be delivered to the Russian Duma for approval. Renewed Russification increased with Russia's entry in the First World War.17

"So far," wrote Emilia Aronen from her cottage in Kauhajoki to her son Mikko in Montana, "we haven't suffered any great need [due to World War I]. If only now all Finland's people would pray together for the end of the war and peace for all people. At night in peace we sing; in war, all wail; joy breaks forth in peace; in war, nothing but complaints." Thus Emilia expressed, in 1915, the emotional stress created by the war. In the rural landscapes of Vaasa province, where Emilia lived, the war itself did not have much impact. Farm horses

were sold to aid Russian soldiers. Finnish men were not conscripted, but there were many volunteers. Economically, the war brought a recession to Kauhajoki's wood product industry, due to commercial blockades.18

Of more concern to Emilia was the war's impact on her immigrant son. Correspondence between the US and Finland was censored. News of captured returning expatriates contributed the most to war-time stress. Mikko mentioned returning to Finland often during the war years. Elated by the prospect of her prodigal son's return, Emilia at the same time froze with fear, thinking that Mikko may have been on one of the ships docking at Haaparanta (Lappland) that Russian officials searched, seizing immigrants and imprisoning them in St. Petersburg.19

Throughout Finland during the First World War, the Russian government levied taxes and authorized an increase in the Russian police force patrolling Finland's city streets. Finnish citizens were arrested without reason and tried under Russian law. Finland became a subject province, governed from the Russian capital. Only the removal of Nicholas II would alleviate the autocracy of Russian rule.

The Finns did not have to wait for this event. Nicholas II was assassinated in 1917. In that same year, the provisional government voided all acts pertaining to Finland that had been decreed by the monarchical Russian government. This in effect restored Finland's original constitution. Finland recommenced Parliamentary sessions, having regained self-determination.

The Constitutionalists were not satisfied with their former status

under Russian rule. The goal of constitutional restoration achieved, representatives now worked toward full independence. This desire united political parties, but visions of Finland's future as a self-governing nation were subject to factional differences.20

The elections of 1916 had sent Social Democrats and Labor Party representatives to Finland's Parliament. On July 18, 1917, this coalition asked for political independence from Russia, albeit allowing foreign affairs to remain in Russia's hands. In Moscow, Kerensky's provisional government balked at this proposal and declared the Finnish Parliament dissolved. Helsinki accepted the disintegration, and prepared for new elections the following year.

Meanwhile, the Bolshevik overthrow of the provisional government led to an alliance between Lenin and the Reds, or Finnish radicals. In 1917, the Socialists found themselves a minority when the radical element usurped power from the moderates, polarizing the radicals and conservatives. The revolutionary elements wanted to bring the downfall of the present Finnish government and replace it with a Marxist regime. The labor party and unions coordinated a strike that ensued in November, 1917. In reaction to violence, the government legislated a strong police force, over the objections of the Social Democrats.21

The Bolshevik victory in Russia was by no means secure. The instability encouraged the Finns to make another declaration. This time, Parliament did not ask permission. They renewed their declaration of independence on 6 December 1917. Lenin recognized Finland's independent status, compatible with his policy of national

self-determination. Independence from Russia did not secure freedom for the Finns. Soon after the momentous declaration, Civil War broke out between the White (bourgeois) faction and the Red (Marxist) element to determine the future of the nation. The Reds took control of Helsinki in January 1918. The legal government moved to Vaasa, where it stayed throughout the war. The Whites solicited the aid of the German Imperial government; together, the Whites and the German forces re-captured Helsinki on April 13, 1918.22

From the farm she worked on in Kauhajoki, Emilia Aronen described the devastation of the civil war, from the conservative point of view: "There have been alot of riots in South Finland. It has been destroyed and burned down. They've murdered priests. The church has been profaned. But now Finland has been purified, and we have an independent White government, but it did take alot of sacrifice. There are 40 war heroes lying in the graves at Kauhajoki cemetary."

The Finnish Americans divided along the same lines as did their relatives in the Old Country. "Church" Finns, temperance advocates and The Knights and Ladies of Kaleva supported the Whites, while the socialists and union activists sympathized with the Reds. War time atrocities, such as conditions in prisoner of war camps and the persecution of the imprisoned Red forces, evoked the sentiment of socialists. Mikko's mother expressed the opinion that Finnish immigrants were overly critical of the Whites. The sorrows, she acknowleged, were many; but, in keeping with her political conservatism and her desire to lure Mikko back to Finland, she claimed that the

White victory would bring prosperity and order.23

Emilia's opinion was, in one sense, justified. The facts printed in the Finnish American papers were distorted. The socialist paper Tyomies reported that the Soviet government had sent troops to aid the Finnish workers. But in truth, the only Russian soldiers involved were former Czarist troops. Fights, in fact, had broken out between the Reds and the Russian soldiers. The socialists displayed a faith in the Russian Bolsheviks that would ultimately lead many Finnish Americans to leave the US and relocate in Soviet Russia. The socialists may have expressed an unjustified faith in the Bolsheviks, but the cruelties the prisoners of war experienced that Emilia's friend Fanni Simonen described were real.24

Fanni described her war-time experiences in a letter to Mikko in 1920.

> My husband was one of the thousands who suffered a tortuous death in Tammisaari prison, with many others, innocent. He did not participate in the riot, he did not want to kill his brother [fellow man] but still he was imprisoned while enroute home in Viipuri [Karelia] in April 1918. He wrote to us at once that he's been taken a prisoner. He asked if we could send him a permit from the Civil [White] Guard, or if father could pick him up, because nobody there knew him. Father took off to Viipuri, thinking that he could bring him home. But no, he was told that some prisoners had smallpox, so all prisoners must be quarantined. So he wasn't allowed to see him at all. He couldn't even send a food parcel to him via a guard. They promised to send him home as soon as the quaratine is over but we heard nothing from him. The only thing we heard was that he had been sent to Tammisaari [South Finland] where he died July, 1918, due to lack of nutrition.

Circumstances such as these led Mikko and other Finnish immigrants to

revile white Finland. The Republic of Finland followed the defeat of the Red forces in May, 1918.

The radicals' bid for a new economic order in Finland failed. In August of 1918, Red leaders fled to Russia and formed the Finnish Communist Party. The Marxist Workers' Party organized to create a socialist state by working with Parliamant. Their party won many seats in government, until 1923, when an Agrarian party government declared communism illegal. Communists were seen as a threat to national independence, due to Finland's geographic location and the Socialist workers' ties to the Russian government.25

Finland's history shaped the characters of those men and women who chose to leave its marshy landscape for the mountainous terrain in Red Lodge. The political and social outlook of the immigrants depended on the experiences they had in the Old Country. Generally, immigrants before 1905 came from rural Vaasa province, where the Social Democratic party was weakest. After 1905, more Finnish immigrants came from southern Finland, where the socialists' constituency was greatest. The immigrants who espoused socialism were actively involved in spreading their philosophy in the US. Thus their individual history determined, at least in part, the impact the Finns had on American society.26

ENDNOTES -- CHAPTER 2

1. For an explanation of Napoleon's role in the secession of Finland to Russia, see J. Hempden Jackson's Finland (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), p. 46. Jackson discusses Alexander I's agreements to maintain Finland's autonomy, Ibid., p. 51.

2. Hoglund, p. 73.

3. John I. Kolehmainen, "Finland's Agrarian Structure," pp. 44-48.

4. Hoglund, p. 5.

5. Michael G. Karni, "Finnish Immigrant Leftists in America: Golden Years, 1900-1918," Struggle A Hard Battle (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University, 1986), p. 204.

6. Hoglund, p. 7.

7. Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Materials for the Study of the Kalevala," Finns in North America, p. 33.

8. Hoglund, p. 19.

9. Puotinen, Finnish Radicals and Religion, p. 300.

10. For a discussion of the Laestadians, see Ralph J. Jalkanen, ed., The Faith of the Finns: Historical Perspectives on the Finnish Lutheran Church in America (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), pp. 90-103.

11. Taito A. Kantonen, "Finnish Theology on the American Scene," Finns in North America, p. 186.

12. For a discussion of the evangelicals, see Jalkanen, Faith of Finns, pp. 99-102.

13. Michael G. Karni, "Finnish Immigrant Leftists," p. 204.

14. Eino Jutikkala with Kauko Pirinen, A History of Finland, trans. Paul Sjoblom (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 228; Gedicks, "Social Origins of Radicalism," pp. 1-31.

15. Karni, "Finnish Immigrant Leftists," p. 205.

16. Jutikkala, p. 237.

17. Ibid., p. 246.

18. Appendix, Letter #15; Jutikkala, p. 248.

19. Appendix, Letter #21.

20. Jutikkala, p. 253.

21. Ibid., p. 251.

22. Ibid., p. 258.

23. Auvo Kostiainen, "The Tragic Crisis: Finnish American Workers and the Civil War in Finland," For the Common Good (Superior, Wisconsin: Tyomies Society, 1977), p. 219.

24. Ibid., p. 224.

25. Jutikkala, p. 269; Appendix, Letter #27.

Chapter 3

TOWARD THE FUTURE: FINNISH IMMIGRANTS

Regardless of politcal persuasion, the decision to immigrate altered a person's life in many ways. Human emotions of fear and uncertainty plagued the adventurers. Even for the poorest immigrant, life in Finland at least followed a familiar path of toil, rest and holiday celebrations. Finns who left their surroundings faced an unfamiliar environment and an uncertain future.

Generally, the immigrants were landless peasants looking for a better life; they had no particular skill, only their labor to sell. Many immigrants were second- or third-born sons or daughters of small farmers, whose land had gone to the first born male, under Finland's system of primogeniture. In 1893, 77.5% of Finland's immigrants were rural dwellers, while in 1913, that number was only 62.7%, reflecting an increase in immigration among Finland's urban working class.1

Industrialization contributed to the droves of immigrants leaving the country between 1890 and 1920. The economic displacement of propertyless farmers created a large pool of prospective immigrants; men and women who had no land or skill with which to make a decent living. Yet those who immigrated also had the desire to move. Prospective immigrants weighed

the factors that encouraged them to leave (the possibility of a better life and the adventure of travel) and the conditions existing in the US that lured them to uproot -immediate and steady employment- and they decided to risk the possibility of failure and make the commitment.2

Although US immigration officals listed economic reasons as the most prevalent, social and political problems also pushed the Finns abroad. Many immigrants wanted adventure and a chance to live in a modern city, escaping rural seclusion and parental domination. Many others left to escape conscription and political persecution during Bobrikov's regime. Especially after the Civil War, which claimed the lives of soldiers, women immigrated in hopes of marriage.3

One factor pulling immigrants to America was the industrial revolution. The US experienced a period of industrial expansion that required unskilled laborers willing to work for low wages. Constructing and operating new factories required power, as did transporting new goods to sprawling cities. Growth meant a steady demand of unskilled laborers to dig the coal that kept American industry and expansion going. Much of this work was done by foreigners.

Farming methods in America also differed, and many Finns wanted to learn new practices, planning to bring the knowledge back to Finland. Mikko replied to his mother's pleas to come home by exclaiming that he could not return to Finland without experiencing farming on a large scale. "Land fever," or the desire to return to agriculture, beset Red Lodge's Finns after World War I.4

The first challenge the immigrants faced was in securing a passage on

a steamship bound for America. About one-third relied on relatives or friends already settled in the US to provide the means to emigrate; others had to at least have enough funds to pay for a ticket, which in 1912 came to about 500 Finnmarks, or $100 dollars. Passage secured, the immigrant travelled to Hanko, a port near Helsinki. From there, he boarded a steamship bound for Hull, England. He then travelled from Hull to Liverpool by train, and again by steamship to New York.5

The transatlantic voyage usually lasted about three weeks. Conditions on board were unpleasant, as most Finnish immigrants travelled steerage, riding in the ship's bottom for the duration of the trip. Upper class passengers rode above. If the ship reached American shores on the weekend, steerage passengers had to wait until Monday to disembark as the immigration offices were closed and the foreigners could not be examined.6

At Ellis Island, each passenger went through medical examinations, which Mikko, traveling in 1910, considered the worst ordeal of the voyage. If an immigrant failed to pass his exam, he could be turned away and forced to return to his homeland; even poor eyesight could ruin a peasant's future.7

Officials at Ellis Island examined the financial health of the travellers as well. In 1903, the average amount of money that immigrants carried with them to the US was $28.95; Finnish immigrants possessed a little less, or about $22.67. Finns traveling to the industrial Great Lakes region, as Mikko did, spent about $28 on a train ticket. Immigrants who depleted their funds before arriving at their destination depended on a job being there for them right away. Many started their American

adventure in debt, relying on their companions to tide them over.8

Often conditions worsened by the time the month-long voyage to America was over; the unwelcome news that there were no jobs available meant the newcomers faced either staying and hoping for employment or moving on again. For Mikko, such circumstances put an end to the misty-eyed dream of discovering riches in America. His new goal was simply to find a steady job. Once he secured employment his plan to return to Finland became fuzzier. "One of these days" replaced "when I make enough money to buy a farm" as responses to his mother's pleas to come home.

Immigrants chose their destination within the US according to their economic and social needs. The Finns formed a literary network in the US, exchanging letters that described the social climate of the company towns that hired immigrant laborers. The letters Mikko received from friends listed wages, working conditions and a report on the local socialist group's activities. The correspondents announced whether or not the particular town had more "church" (conservative) Finns or more socialists.

The literary network also reached back to Finland. As Mikko acquired information through the network, he sent word back to Finland. He warned Kauhajoki women that in Michigan, work for females was hard to come by as the mining camps were not employing many men, and there were no dishwashing jobs available at the boarding houses. Correspondence between the two countries helped determine where prospective immigrants would settle.9

Mikko left Bessemer with his traveling companions for Red Lodge two

months after his oceanic voyage. He had worked in the iron mines for 14 days in the two month period. At that rate, he discovered, he would never make his fortune. He and his friends had heard that prospects looked better in Red Lodge. There, work was less dangerous. There were three other families in Red Lodge from his home village. He told his mother that they prevented him from becoming homesick.10

Immigrants, especially those who could not speak English, depended on their fellow countrymen to help them make the adjustment to a foreign land. Living in a neighborhood of Finns or in a Finnish boarding house allowed them to continue familiar customs and folkways. Mikko expressed dismay at American culture in a letter home: "Here one doesn't know that its Sunday, whether it's a holiday. It is always work and restless activities, so one doesn't follow the calendar very much." "I didn't work today. I don't think it's too much to take two days off for Christmas since in Finland celebrations last a week. Here, no one notices holidays."

Life in America altered the immigrants, regardless of how they felt about their adopted country. Commenting on how his attitudes changed, Mikko wrote on November 23, 1923, "When you're in America long enough, you don't remember how to be thrifty." Card-playing and increased drinking prevented Mikko from saving his money. He confided to his mother that even married men engaged in this vice in Red Lodge. Emilia worried that American culture may corrupt her son: "Be careful so you won't get lost there among all those temptations."11

Complaining did not alter the fact that adjustments had to be made to

survive in a society different from the one the Finns left behind. Those who worked in mines and timber camps had to learn to communicate with bosses and fellow workers who spoke many different tongues. Rubbing shoulders with others required the Finns to modify or even discard traditions. Miners could no longer celebrate Finnish holidays the way custom dictated at home. Whether or not they were able to observe traditional holidays depended on if they were employed; the mines could not close every time an ethnic group had a holiday to celebrate.

The Finns were not satisfied with simply assimilating into the American culture. Some wanted to change conditions existing in the US to match their expectations. The Finns' idealized what America would bring them, and they wanted to remake the country to match their visions. Collective action through labor unions and socialism became the vehicle some Finns used to change economic and social situations in the US.12

How effective they were in altering the economic order depended on the degree to which they assimilated into American society. To attempt to create a new economic and political system in a foreign country (and one which was rapidly becoming the strongest nation in the world) required a serious commitment to change, and faith in that possibility. Each individual approached the situation differently, but there were similar conditions that all faced. Converting both their own countrymen and their fellow laborers in the US to socialism required intensive communication.

The immigrants that did change conditions in their towns neither retreated behind the ethnic community they lived in nor alienated themselves from the enclave by becoming completely absorbed in the new

culture. Balancing the two cultures meant finding similarities between the two, modifying old habits to fit new situations, and changing new situations to incorporate old customs. The active immigrant developed an overriding belief system that made the differences seem irrelevant. The socialists believed changing the economic order would benefit all nationalities; religious Finns maintained that trusting God would would ensure justice for all mankind. During the First World War, some Finns shed the isolation of the ethnic enclave that separated them from other Americans, and integrated into American society.13

The socialist Finns attempted to change conditions through unions, strikes, educational efforts and political parties. Although the Finnish American socialists failed to create a new economic order in the US, their socialist activities did provide them with a belief system which allowed them to stay in the country and incorporate their brand of socialism into American society.

The Finns tended to make socialism a lifestyle, rather than simply a set of political beliefs. They looked askance at "bourgeois" American culture as a means of keeping the worker subjugated. The socialists departed from the temperance movement because in their opinion, abstaining from alcohol was simply a way for the company to keep the workers orderly, thereby increasing productivity. In fact in Red Lodge, the coal company attempted to increase productivity by asking the city council to close saloons at 10 p.m..14

The Finns took a holistic approach to socialism, cultivating a person's mind and body. This method was especially evident in local

groups, where literature cultivated the mind and athletic clubs improved physical strength. The ethnic enclave encouraged uniqueness; the immigrants developed their own culture within a broad, relatively unrestricted American society that allowed them free expression. The First World War would destroy that freedom of expression within the ethnic communities.

The socialist Finns organized formally in the 1890s. In 1904, the Finnish socialists joined the Socialist Party of America, when they realized the futility of becoming a political party of foreigners. They wished to have a voice in the political affairs of their new country, making the changes they thought were necessary. Yet they also remained isolated. Participants at a 1906 convention in Hibbing Minnesota formed the Finnish Socialist Federation, discussing domestic issues, as well as the turbulent political situation in Finland. The socialists divided over the syndicalist methods employed by the IWW. Some approved of violence to force change, while others took exception to this approach.15

The Finnish Americans expressed dubious feelings towards other socialists, both in Finland and in the US. Because the immigrants were caught between both countries, they created their own unique brand of socialism. They charged Finland's socialists with provincialism, and ignorance of capitalism as it existed in the US. In return, Finland's socialists criticized the Socialist Party of America (SPA) for its lack of discipline and petty bickering. Despite this acrimony, the connection remained binding: Finnish Americans owed their leadership to Old Country socialists, such as Antero Tanner and Eero Erkko. Voluminous pamphlets and

literature crossed the ocean and were read in Finnish halls.16

Neither were the Finnish Americans satisfied with their counterparts in the US. Criticisms of the SPA stemmed from lack of practical results: too much arm-chair philosophizing and electioneering. The Americans criticized the Finnish Socialist Federation for being too isolated, more interested in their workers' hall activities than in furthering the socialist cause.17

The Finnish Socialist Federation's contributions to the SPA were negligible. They pushed for platforms supporting co-ops, temperence and women's rights, but these ideas did not bear fruit. In truth, the Finns were none too eager to break the ice. The language barriers held some back, but mostly they suffered from the longing to work out their own problems with a minimum of interference from the outside - much to the chagrin of their leaders. Mikko expressed admiration and faith in the American Socialist Party, but, as he remained locked in to his ethnic group, his activism did not stray from Red Lodge's Finnish neighborhood.18

The Finns also became involved in unionism as a way to change the economic system and their working lives. Adverse working conditions and wage levels that were too low in relation to the cost of living motivated the immigrant workers to engage in collective action against employers.

The copper strike in Hancock, Michigan in 1913-1914 left many radical Finns disillusioned with unionism. It also caused divisions within the community. The strike was directed by the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), a union founded in Butte, Montana, in 1893. The strike was only partially successful; the miners gained wage concessions, but the company

refused to recognize their organization. Many hailed the WFM as a success because of the wage increase. Others saw the gains as inadequate. The results within the Finnish community of Hancock were worse still; the "church" Finns waged their own war against the strikers, creating hatred on both sides. The turbulence created by strikes left Finnish American communities divided.19

Differences within the Finnish Socialist Federation erupted again during the Finnish Civil War. Radical left-wingers wanted to drop membership with the SPA and join the world-wide workers' revolution that they believed was occurring in Finland (through the erroneous Tyomies reports). They had lost patience with the politics of the SPA and the failure of the WFM to secure recognition of the legitimacy of their cause. These radicals began placing their faith in the "one big union" concept. The Finns believed the IWW could overthrow the system of capitalism, seen as the root of evil in Finland and in the US. They felt oppressed by low wages that did not keep up with the cost of living, and, as most were aliens, they were unable to participate in the electoral process. Direct action became their only recourse.20

The Communist movement, with its aversion to politics, attracted radical Finns who could not or did not want to dabble in American politics; destruction of the democratic political system motivated them. In 1929 the communists sought finanacial backing from the successful Finnish co-operatives. The co-ops declined the request, shying away from any involvement that went against their principle of political neutrality. The communists launched campaigns to boycott the co-ops,

condemning their managers as fascists. These activites led even communist co-operators to refuse funding.21

The rejection of an alliance between the Communist Party and the co-ops resulted in the co-op adoption of increasingly business-like attitudes and ultimately, a complete detachment from the labor movement. The co-operators realized that their policy of neutrality was incompatible with existing conditions. Reality required dealing with politicians and bureaucrats, not just consumers. In order to survive in American society, the Finns found themselves modifying some of their more idealistic institutions. The co-ops began including American businessmen and consumers in the co-operative venture.22

Divisive tendencies also plagued the church. The Finnish American Suomi Synod retained some semblance of clerical authority, while the incorporation of certain democratic features made it a different institution than the state church the Finns had left behind. The Synod faced problems that did not touch the church in Finland. In the 1920s, the language controversy troubled the Synod. The issue was whether to "Americanize" and hold services in English, strengthening membership among the young, or to encourage ethnic expression.23

Socialism stirred the most controversy in Finnish American parishes. "Church" Finns called the socialists atheists; the radicals complained that the clergy's resistance to change delayed the coming revolution. The two groups found little common ground. Both sides dealt with the existence of God and the fate of mankind in their belief systems. Both sides wanted converts; both required an element of faith in an invisible

phenomenon. Not all Finnish Americans took sides in the struggle. Many Finns ignored questions concerning life after death or a workers' revolution. Their concerns were to find a steady job, a place to live and a Finnish man or woman with whom to spend their lives. Many workers knew that the wages that fed and clothed their children came from the company, and were unwilling to interfere with the arrival of a paycheck.24

Yet many Finns sought the social justice promised them by the democratic system. Practically, social justice simply meant liveable working conditons and wages. Finnish churchmen were concerned with fairness, and some approved of strikes to gain a better earthly existence for their parishoners. Other clerics told their communicants to endure suffering, and wait for God's forgiveness.

The socialists referred to these clerics as lackeys of the capitalist system. Pastors were accused of accepting money from mining companies to build churches and halls, thus creating a strong ethnic community and preventing the incursion of socialistic ideas and working class consciousness. The conservatives claimed that socialist agitators were costing the Finns a bad reputation among companies that employed immigrants, forcing many to find employment outside their parish.25

Few saw Christianity and socialism as complementary. Christianity offered a spiritual dimension to daily living, while socialism worked to improve men's daily working lives. Socialists placed their faith in man's ability to create good, while Christians believed that good things come only from God. Churchmen were not unaware of the working man's struggle. To ameliorate the situation, they suggested tolerance and understanding to

achieve peace between the classes. The socialists wanted to eliminate social classes, rather than create harmony.25

Finnish communities fragmented over the political and religious questions that tormented other Americans during the period of industrialization. Everyday realities in the mines, however, often intercepted their intellectual arguments. On at least one occasion, in 1906, the injury and death suffered in the mines drew the entire community of Red Lodge together. For many immigrants, mining meant a source of income, but it was also where they learned of the greed that corrupted all men.

ENDNOTES -- CHAPTER 3

1. Kolehmainen, "Finland´s Agrarian Structure"; Gedicks, "Social Origins of Radicalism," table on p. 27 shows the following percentages: 1893 -- 9.5% farmers; 24.8% children of farmers; 6.2% crofters; 7.9% children of crofters; 29.0% cottagers. 1913 -- 4.0%; 24.4%; 1.6%; 9.2%; 23.5%, respectively.

2. Walfrid Jokinen, The Finns in the United States: A Sociological Interpretation (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1955), p. 14.

3. Jokinen, p. 60.

4. Hoglund, p. 78; Appendix, Letter #12.

5. Jokinen, p. 72.

6. Appendix, Letter #3.

7. Appendix, Letter #3.

8. Jokinen, p. 66; Appendix, Letter #10.

9. Appendix, Letters 5, 19, 23, 29.

10. Appendix, Letter #10.

11. Appendix, Letters 14, 13 and 9.

12. Karni, "Finnish Leftists," p. 207; Hoglund, p. 57.

13. Jalkanen, Faith of Finns, p. xi.

14. Jokinen, p. 150; NWIC Correspondence, Northern Pacific Railway Company, Minnesota State Historical Society, C. C. Andersen to Thomas Cooper, 19 August 1918; Robert Pettigrew to Mayor and City Council, 19 August 1918.

15. Arne Halonen, "The Role of Finnish Americans in the Political Labor Movement" (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1945), p. 52.

16. John I. Kolehmainen, "The Inimitable Marxists: The Finnish Immigrant Socialists," Michigan History, 36 (December 1952), pp. 395-405.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Hoglund, pp. 74-75.

20. Jokinen, p. 153.

21. Pinola, p. 197.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

23. David T. Halkola, "Kielikysymys: The Language Problem in the Suomi Synod," in *Faith of Finns*, p. 275.

24. Puotinen, "Ameliorative Factors in the Conflict Between Socialism and the Suomi Synod," in *Faith of Finns*, p. 237.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

26. Puotinen, *Finnish Radicals and Religion*, p. 300.

Chapter 4

WORK IN THE COAL MINES

Most of the Finns that settled in Red Lodge from 1890-1920 made their living shoveling coal. Their quality of life depended on their wages, working conditions in the mines and the health of the coal industry. Wages and working conditions hinged on relations between those who worked below, and those who watched them work from above. How favorably management responded to the workers' needs depended on the profitability of the coal industry, and on the managers' sense of morality.

The miners worked to achieve their goals by communicating among themselves and with management. Red Lodge's miners were not always unified on the goals they wanted to reach, nor on how best to acquire them. The cosmetic changes they achieved pleased some, while those who sought fundamental alterations remained frustrated. The union's inability to broaden its power- base stemmed from its multi-lingual membership (making communication difficult) and from lack of unity on the degree of control the miners should attempt to gain over industry. Workers utilized the strike in an effort to convince the company to give in to their demands. The town of Red Lodge, with its coal-based economy, endured several stormy strikes that threatened its mountain tranquility.

From the time Red Lodge miners first unionized in 1898 until the beginning of mine closures in the 1920s, the Red Lodge Union joined both regional and national unions, according to the kinds of changes the workers sought. Some individuals within the union wanted higher wages, while others desired the transfer of mine ownership from the railroad magnates into the hands of those who made the mines productive: the workers themselves.

Revolutionary unions revealed a desire to overthrow the existing economic order, substituting proletariat ownership of industry in the place of free enterprise. Class-conscious radicals perceived that an unequal distribution of wealth created injustices that could be eradicted through socialism. Radicals differed on how to overthrow capitalism. Moderate socialists called for reform through the legislative process, while communists advocated violence as the only way to ensure a victorious proletariat. Adverse working conditions and paternalistic company policies increased the level of class consciousness and, therefore, the degree of change sought by the union. Both these conditions existed in Red Lodge's mines.[1]

Owners of Rocky Fork Coal Company often ignored the problem of mine safety and inadequate wages, proving resistant to miners' desires for better working conditions and higher wages. The company had obvious advantages especially after 1900, when the coal company united with Northern Pacific Railroad Company (NPRRC). Ownership of other mines in Montana and Washington enabled NPRRC to stockpile coal for use

during strikes. Rocky Fork's other investments accrued higher profits than did its coal mines. Therefore, it did not depend on coal production to the same extent that workers depended on their paychecks.[2]

Rocky Fork Coal's financial problems in the late 1890s led to the partnership with the NPRRC. The operators had experimented with new labor-saving machinery, without compensating miners for lost wages. A resulting strike was one of several in the years 1898-1903. Due to labor difficulties and poor management, Rocky Fork's owners were ready to sell their stock to Northern Pacific. In 1900, NPRRC bought out Rocky Fork Coal Company, now referred to as Northwest Improvement Company (NWIC). The Vice President of the railroad proposed two goals for NWIC: increased productivity and the dissolution of the Red Lodge union. He believed productivity could be raised if striking ceased. NPRRC only achieved one of these goals. Productivity did increase, but the union in Red Lodge remained. The east side mine in 1891 had 400 miners averaging 800 tons of coal a day. After NWIC formed in 1900, production increased by one-fourth, and 50 more men found work with NWIC. In 1907, the new West side mine opened.[3]

Northwest Improvement operated shaft and slope mines in Red Lodge, producing subbituminous and lignite coal. Slopes followed veins of coal from the surface, or from veins starting beneath the earth's surface. Shaft mines dug below the earth's surface to a bed of coal. Both types required pumps to keep water out of the tunnels leading to the "rooms" or areas where miners worked to extract coal. Miners

descended beneath the surface by the same mule-drawn cars that hoisted the coal out of the rooms. Pipemen straddled the edge of the cars, signaling with a rap pipe when the cars were full of coal. Each miner worked with a partner, hauling timber down to the rooms to keep the walls and ceiling of the area from caving in. Miners used picks and shovels to extract the coal. They bought their own tools, paying for the services of a company-employed blacksmith to make repairs. Blasting powder broke the surfaces of the rooms; this made picking the coal easier and faster, increasing productivity. Miners were responsible for the safety of their rooms. Once the coal reached the top of the shaft, it was loaded into trains and shipped by Northern Pacific from Red Lodge.4

In 1910, NWIC made changes in the mines, increasing productivity and improving working conditions. New fans increased ventilation and decreased the possibility of poisonous gas inhalation. Miners could wash soot and mud off themselves in washrooms before returning home in the evening, enabling them to walk home in the winter without the filth freezing on their clothes. New carbide lamps created less smoke than the old beeswax candles.5

Montana mine owners obtained a low rate of profit from their coal operations, requiring them to expand into other economic ventures that adversely affected their miners. Many companies made a considerable profit renting houses and selling merchandise to their employees. NWIC built homes for its workers beginning in 1892, and sold tools to their miners. Northern Pacific instituted paternalistic rules and

regulations that miners followed when occupying company homes. The miners depended on the company for their homes and equipment, reducing their autonomy as consumers.6

NWIC attempted to make coal extraction more profitable by encouraging competition among nationalities, and through political activity. During the First World War, "slacker" denoted a person who did not register for the draft. The company, believing that the different ethnic groups competed with each other, posted the names and nationalities of those "slackers" who did not work regularly. As part of war efforts to increase productivity, NWIC lobbied the mayor and city council to pass an ordinance closing bars after 10 p.m., attributing consumption of alcohol to miners' absences and low productivity. NWIC political involvement did not end with lobbying. The company supported political candidates and had paid the court costs of a politician who found himself in trouble with the law. With its political involvement and its ability to store coal reserves during strikes (after the sell-out to NPRRC), NWIC presented a strong resistance against Red Lodge's union.7

Despite improvements made by the railroad, the NPRR take-over adversely effected the miners in Red Lodge. Industrial consolidation denied the union access to owners of the mine to air greivences. Together, the coal industry and the railway could store and ship coal to lessen the effects of union strikes. Since NPRR bought most of Red Lodge's coal, the company determined the price it paid for its own

coal. Workers thus found their wages tied to the economic health of the railroad company, over which they had no control.

To resist the company's political and economic manipulation, Red Lodge miners began organizing in 1898. Local #29 of the Western Federation of Miners formed in that year, under the leadership of Thomas Salmon, a veteran union man. The WFM's 1893 constitution insisted on fair remunerative compensation, an eight hour day, and health facilities for employees. The use of arbitration and conciliation to avoid strikes figured prominently.8

Shortly after the local formed, the union engaged in its first strike. The dispute involved the checkweighman and whether the company or the union would provide the position. The checkweighman confirmed the amount of coal that each miner extracted from the mine. Since miners were paid per unit, the position was important. The strike lasted only a month, but the repercussions were serious. When mine Superintendent William O'Connor returned from an absence, union President Salmon shot and killed him. Although the union abhorred Salmon's deed, it did not retreat. The Red Lodge local struck again in 1899 over the unexplained discharge of their second President from the mines. During 1900, WFM local #29 set about organizing three new locals in Carbon County.9

Red Lodge's union affiliated with the United Mine Workers of America in 1903, as local #1771. The union saw advantages to affiliation with a national union. UMWA enabled miners to engage in strikes nationwide, preventing NPRRC and other companies from storing

coal. Yet the locals also lost a degree of autonomy, no longer able to deal with their company individually. They became dependent on a national organization over which they had little direct control.10

The union's affiliation with UMWA caused considerable consternation among company officials. The superintendent of NWIC refused to deal with union officials from outside the local. Red Lodge miners had been told that they could act only through District UMWA officials; the Superintendent informed the local President that he would not treat with UMWA representatives. The company officials soon changed their opinions.11

Beginning in 1903, UMWA officials and Montana coal operators met at annual conventions to determine wage levels and working conditions. During these conventions, the company stored coal, in case a strike should occur. A strike did result in 1904, again over a checkweighman's dispute. The local had elected a weighman from their union, but the miner selected was not a NWIC employee, as stipulated by agreements reached between operators and UMWA at the 1903 convention. Because the Red Lodge Union had acted against convention agreements, the National Board of UMWA ruled against the miners, forcing local # 1771 to elect a new weighman.12

Other agreements reached at the 1903 convention included an 8 hour day for miners, with hours for outside men (those working above ground) to be set by the company. Black powder was sold to miners for 2.50 a keg. Local unions made doctor and hospital arrangements for miners. Blacksmithing prices were set below 1 1/3% of the miners' gross

earnings. UMWA members contributed 50 cents to the families of miners whose deaths were caused by mine accidents, while operators offered $25.[13]

The wage levels agreed upon by the companies and the union indicated the remunerative value of each occupation. In 1904, miners, timbermen and tracklayers were paid $3.60/day. Machine, pump, pipe and rope men received between $2 and $3 a day. The most lucrative positions were engineers, blacksmiths and head carpenters, their wages being $4/day. Miners netted more income, depending on the amount of coal they mined. The rate per ton differed according to quality of coal found in the various veins.[14]

Members of all nationalities worked in the mines. The 1910 census indicated that the most lucrative jobs were held by native-born Americans or English immigrants. Eastern European immigrants held the lowest paying and most dangerous jobs. Out of seven engineer's positions in 1910, two were held by Austrian immigrants. The remaining five were native-born. Two English immigrants were blacksmiths; the other three were native-born. Of twelve electricians, one Italian immigrant served Rocky Fork; the rest were native-born. Rocky Fork employed 21 machinists and motormen; all but six were American-born. The foremen employed were all natives except one Englishman and one Swedish immigrant. Of the five carpenters, three were immigrants, one Finnish; the rest were native. Thus it appears that the foreign born, especially those originating from countries other than England, did not obtain the higher paying positions. Both company officials and the

State Coal Mine Inspector expressed prejudice against foreigners, creating an environment hostile to an immigrant seeking a better job.15

Red Lodge miners struck for one week in 1912 until a suitable contract was reached; otherwise, the years from 1907-1917 were relatively quiet, reflecting well on the convention system.16

A small group of union radicals instigated the problems that did occur in those ten years. In 1910, after the annual convention of coal operators and district mine officers, the local endorsed their agreements; the radicals met and repudiated the convention. They picketed the mines, warning other workers to stay away. When District officers intervened, the local unanimously voted to return to work. Day men still complained, as they had received no increase in wages, but the company stood firm; the contracts had been signed, noted NWIC General Manager C.R. Claghorn, and workers would simply have to take their medicine. Claghorn heartily approved of the convention problem-solving method.17

When a strike threatened again in 1911, the company faced the potential strength of a nationwide union. When entire districts went out on strike at once, the company had to shift its coal reserves from other parts of the country. But, as Claghorn confided to NPRR Vice President Elliot, "it does not seem that this [the possibility of a strike] would hamper our operations. Eastern [US] coal could be moved west and our [NPRRC-owned] Roslyn, Washington coal, which is plentiful, could be moved east. This is a good time to give the men some medicine in the interest of future peace."18 At this point it became clear that

UMWA could not affect the kind of change that radicals wanted. Syndicalists began placing their hope in multi-industrial unions, which involved both railroad workers and miners, assuring worker control of industry by paralyzing both transportation and fuel producers.

But the radicals did not get their way. Relations between UMWA and company officials got cozier, which eliminated problems without really allowing the miners to make fundamental changes. Rocky Fork Superintendent C.C. Andersen began placing his confidence in UMWA officials. The miners in Montana, he claimed in 1917, "are restless and in a humor to strike, if they have a good excuse to do so, and it may take the District officers all their time to hold the mine workers to the agreement made. I think however, they can do so for the present..."19 The officers prevailed; no strike occurred.

Regional differences also caused the radicals, many of them Finnish-born, to threaten strikes. In 1917, western UMWA miners complained they did not receive the same increases as did easterners. Montana operators insisted that they could not grant the addition unless Wyoming also agreed to an increase. Against the wishes of UMWA District Officers, the Montana radicals voted to strike. The company did nothing to prevent the strike. "...[T]he district is proud of its record of sticking to agreements," explained Red Lodge Manager J.M. Hannaford, "We are being urged by [UMWA] officers not to grant the increase, as they feel it is being pushed by I W W. radicals who have secured a foothold among the miners."20 Hannaford admitted he would have been glad to grant the increase, but if the company did as the

radicals wanted, it would discredit the UMWA officers and put the IWW in power. The Company, as Hannaford saw it, should stand by the officers, even if it meant a strike. The radicals unwittingly prevented the union from receiving the increase.21

When it came down to a vote, the majority in Red Lodge did agree to strike, but the margin was slim: 380 in favor, 341 against. C.C.Andersen (NWIC Superintendent) was not moved by the numbers. He reasoned that Red Lodge's sheriff and police were friendly to the company and would protect property in the event of a strike. The company did not get a chance to test its power within the community. An increase was granted in Wyoming, and subsequently in Montana.22

The First World War shattered the period of relative peace between the company and the miners. Wages came under the control of the federal government. After the 1918 Armistice, war-time wages stayed in effect while the cost of living had risen dramatically, reducing miners' purchasing power. The UMWA called a nation-wide strike on 30 November 1919. The operators balked at wage increases, insisting that the nation was still at war until Congress ratified the peace treaty. UMWA demanded a 60% wage increase, overtime pay, a 5 day work week and more equitable distribution of work. They believed the government had extended war wage scales, allowing operator-manipulated prices of coal to rise.

Red Lodge's frigid cold winter made the strike a particularly tense situation. Coal brought in from Wyoming helped lessen the impact, but some businesses and schools were still forced to close.

Volunteers from Billings began working the nearby Bearcreek mines, while miners walked along the railroad tracks, gathering coal that had dropped off trains to heat their homes. Four companies from the 1st Infantry disembarked on December 6 to protect NWIC property, at the request of Governor Samuel Stewart. The troops quartered at schools and mine offices.

On December 10, President Wilson proposed a 14% rise in wages with no increase in the price of coal to consumers. UMWA accepted the proposal and ordered its locals back to work. Montana miners defied the order. Severe weather weakened them, and they returned to work on December 17. Within the next three days, federal troops were withdrawn. The town of Red Lodge had endured a difficult early winter; the miners had little to show for their efforts.23

The 1920s were a troublesome decade at the Red Lodge mines for both labor and management. Relations between the company and the local union, and between UMWA and local #1771, all deteriorated. UMWA began dealing regularly with company officials behind the backs of its locals. In 1922, the President of UMWA assured the company he would convince members of local #1771 to refrain from striking.24

Workers struck despite their president's assurances on April 1, 1922. UMWA miners wanted access to company records of production and and operation. The nation-wide strike lasted five months, the longest on record in Red Lodge. NWIC seemed hardly moved by the circumstances. Two weeks into the strike, the company was still operating, utilizing non-union miners. NWIC hired two special agents from the railroad to

supervise the guards protecting their property. Although operating at a loss, the company, according to manager C.C. Andersen, was getting along well; the strikers stayed quiet.25

Local miners and even district officials were crippled by the strike. UMWA officials arbitrated settlement in the east. District President J. Smethurst admitted negotiations were frozen until stored supplies of coal were depleted. Many miners could not wait that long. Almost half of them left to secure employment elsewhere, usually at lower wages than the NWIC offered. The Finns who left the community were forced again to leave their homes. Andersen noticed that miners with large families were getting hard up for the necessities of life. He claimed that the miners would return to work if the union would order them back. The majority of miners, he noted, thought more of UMWA than of their religion.26

Mikko Marttunen reflected these sentiments in letters to his mother during the 1922 strike:

> There has been no work in two months, and I have no idea when it will end. It's a splendid strike. All American coal miners stand united in this matter, which is this: they want a salary they can live with. The owners want to break the union and lower wages by half. But since living expenses have not gone down, it's impossible for workers to agree to lower wages. The coal barons stored alot of coal earlier this year so there's no shortage yet, even though there's hardly any digging.

By August of 1922, the union relented: Montana representatives signed agreements to former wage and working conditions. Only NWIC's miners stood firm. The union's executive board complained that NWIC

had hired a non-union man, C.D. Graft, to operate an electric hoist, against agreements reached with UMWA. The company, for its part, refused to re-employ the the union executive board, who had authorized extending the strike. Finally, on 27 September 1922, the union and NWIC reached an agreement. The union consented to the discharge of the four "radical" executive board members, and elected new leaders. A fine of one dollar a day was collected from every union man on strike. Mr. Graft found a permanent position on Northwest's payroll.27

Despite the discharge of the radicals, Mikko still retained the faith in the union he had expressed at the strike's inception. In October 1922, he wrote:

> Thus for almost 5 months all the organized miners of both soft and hard coal stood united behind the strike. 610,000 were involved. A couple hundred thousand nonunion miners dug the coal, but it was not enough to meet demand, so the coal barons gave in to demand and we were able to go back to work with old wages and conditions, despite the coal barons' plan to lower the wages by $3 a day and to break the union. The unanimity of workers prevented this.

If the discharge of the radicals dissappointed him, it did not shake his confidence in unionism. The unanimity of workers nationwide impressed him.

The aspirations of those miners seeking greater control over the coal industry went unfulfilled. The period of waiting had been too long. The company braced itself against lower productivity during strikes by stockpiling; they did not need to negotiate seriously until their reserves were depleted. When the radicals objected to the

company's offer of former wages and conditions, the miners revolted against them, wanting nothing more than their jobs back. They had waited long enough.

Safety conditions in the mines also affected the workers' lives. With the creation of the State Coal Mine Inspector in 1903, miners could air greivances concerning adverse working conditions, although the Inspector's sympathy generally went to the company. Every few years, the state coal inspector submitted a report to Montana's governor on conditions and the health of Montana's coal industry. The reports, published in Helena, contained the victims' names and the circumstances surrounding accidents at individual mines.

In his 1903 report, State Coal Inspector Howard Welsh noted that most accidents in the mines were the result of falling rock. This was the case in four out of seven deaths and injuries sustained at NWIC that year. Two miners were seriously injured by exploding dynamite. Five among the seven were Finnish-born.[28]

In 1906-1908, the report recorded only one native born miner injured. The remaining forty-two deaths and injuries were sustained by immigrants. In 1909-1910, two Americans were killed or injured, while twenty immigrants were victimized. The following years showed two Americans as opposed to thirty-seven immigrants. From 1906-1910, forty-four Finnish-born miners lost their lives. Thus it appears that it truly was the immigrants who mined the coal that powered America's 20th century industrial boom, often losing their lives in the

process.29

Prejudice against foreigners may have prevented the Inspector from taking a more sympathetic attitude toward the workers. Inspector J.B. McDermott speculated in his 1909 report that "It is not the foreigner alone that charges the holes with powder with utter disregard for the safety of themselves and their co-workers, but our English speakers as well."30 McDermott apparently assumed that immigrants were especially prone to careless behavior.

Coroners' inquests cited in the Inspector's report declared that mine fatalities resulted from the victim's carelessness, or by circumstances beyond human control. There were thirty-three fatal accidents in the state's mines from 1903-1904. Almost 80% of these were caused by "falls" (the Inspector declined to elaborate; presumably rock falls, rather than the miners themselves falling). The miners were responsible for their own safety and that of their co-workers, freeing the company from liability.31

Grievances voiced by the miners seldom effected change. Although Inspector Welsh reported that daily investigations at Rocky Fork showed an absense of poisonous gas, Red Lodge miners disagreed. The Inspector replied to complaints by stating that the operators closed off one entry and air course for some months, at great expense, to take care of the problem; they were forced to re-open the section in order to save the entire workings of the mine. Welsh did not state whether or not this solved the ventilation problem.32

The Office of Mine Inspector had no enforcement capabilities. The

inspectors made suggestions to operators and legislators, proposing laws concerning the industry. Although such laws improved conditions for miners, they still had to rely on the goodwill of state bureaucrats and legislators for the degree of safety at the work-place.

Montana's governor appointed an Inspector more sympathetic to the miner in 1906. Inspector McDermott speculated in his 1908 report that "perhaps the reason for less precautions for health and safety are due to the company slogan, 'greater tonnage'." He noted that this was the case for both the miners and the company. "Indiscriminate use of powder is responsible for accidents. In the mad rush to produce tonnage, coal is gotten down any old way. [The miners] justify their haste with 'a man can't make a living without doing so.'"33 McDermott recomended undercutting the walls of the rooms before coal is shot down, at an added expense to the company. His suggestion went unheeded.

Coal Inspectors also engaged in the somewhat morbid practice of computing productivity and comparing the tonnage with fatality figures. In 1911, there were 224,107 tons of coal produced for each fatality. Each death in 1912 netted a total of 314,380 tons for the company.34

Mine disasters adversely effected both the coal mining business and miners' unions. Beginning in 1915 when Montana's Workmen's Compensation Act passed, accidents cost the company money in compensation. The company was not required to compensate relatives of alien immigrants; thus many Finnish families did not receive payments

for injury or death. The company also sustained loss of profits when mines closed temporarily after a large number of fatalities. Injured miners lost wages due to incapacitation. The amount workers received was often inadequate, requiring the union to donate its own funds to families while the breadwinner recovered. Thus unions also lost money as a result of mine disasters.

Red Lodge's first major disaster occurred on June 7, 1906. Eight miners, including one Finn, lost their lives as a result of a fire that emitted "white damp," a poisonous gas. Only three months previous, inspector McDermott had noted deficiencies in ventilation that he suggested be corrected.

The irony surrounding the 1906 disaster was heart-breaking. In a letter dated March 19, 1906, General Manager Claghorn warned Rocky Fork Superintendent Pettigrew that:

> the ventilation at the Red Lodge mine is weak and that in the mines where explosive gas is generated fire bosses should make their rounds in the morning before any men go to work and each and every working place reported clear before any men are allowed to enter. This is a precaution that we should take regardless of what the law may say, in the interest of protection of property as well as life. If our ventilation system at Red Lodge is weak, you should take steps to rectify the situation without delay, in the interest of the preservation of our own property as well as the interest of the Railway. We cannot afford to feel that we are sleeping over a volcano or neglecting any precautions.35

Claghorn proclaimed that "our mines should come within legal provisions of the law, not so much because the law says so, perhaps, but because these are the right things to do."36

Personnel conflicts between mine officials and state bureaucrats contributed to Red Lodge's problems. Superintendent Pettigrew complained about Inspector McDermott's insistence on obeying the law. McDermott placed too narrow an interpretation on Montana session law, 1904, section 3357, which required mines handling explosive gasses to be examined every morning to determine whether there were any gasses or obstruction to airways. According to the law, no person could enter until conditions were corrected. What irritated Pettigrew most was McDermott's interpretation of section 586 of the political code. The Inspector understood the section to mean that he could arrive at the mine immediately after accidents; Pettigrew insisted he need only call the Inspector if fatalities had occurred, (too late, of course). Pettigrew also alluded to McDermott's lack of qualifications for the job: "This [McDermott's insistence] appears to me to be somewhat bumptious for someone who until recently was emptying spitoons and sweeping dirt from the floors of the capitol."37 Pettigrew accused the state of illegally hiring Inspector McDermott.

Claghorn reacted by asking Governor to caution McDermott, as his appointment was in violation of the law. Further, he planned on directing a mining engineer to see that his instructions were carried through, as he had been worried about the Red Lodge situation. The company dealt with safety deficiencies by placing responsibility on either other company officials or on the state. Even the eight deaths of 1906 did not alter this practice.38

Three days before the disaster occurred, fires from spontaneous

combustion consumed the west entry, closing work for the day. The company intended to resume operation in the entries unaffected by the fire. On the morning of June 7, after they had fought the fires all night, mine officials were unaware that the air still contained white damp. Upon discovering the poison, William Haggerty, superintendent and manager Pettigrew went into the mine to seek those who had helped fight the fire, but both were overcome by gas. They did surface but were unable to warn the day shift which entered the mine through another opening. Six men died in the mine; two lost their lives in a rescue attempt.39

A coroner's jury held Northwest Improvement Company responsible for the deaths of the eight miners. They determined that the company knew of the existence of the white damp in the mines on the morning of June 7, before the day shift entered the mine. The officials neglected to stop the workers before they began work. The company failed to file the report as required by section 3357 of the Political Code on the air quality in the mines (no record had been kept since June 2). The six jurors indicted fire boss George White and NWIC. Many witnesses were called during the examination, but only Assistant Superintendent Sell and the accused George White took the stand to defend the company. General Manager Claghorn was in the city during the investigation but did not attend the inquest.

The witnesses called by the prosecutor persuaded the jurors to decide against the company. They determined that fire boss White unwittingly erred by shutting down a ventilation fan, which would have

prevented the spread of the poisonous gas. When cross-examined by the company's attorney Inspector McDermott admitted that under the frantic and confusing circumstances, White's mistake was understandable. Because the men on the day shift in the morning had not been warned of the of the damp, the company had violated state law.40

NWIC dealt with the disaster by replacing Superintendent Pettigrew with the head man at the company's Washington mine. The company saw the 1906 disaster and loss of life as simply a problem of bad management.

Sheriff Fred Potter of Red Lodge, a long-time friend of the company, announced to Claghorn that the people's sentiment in Red Lodge had turned against the company. Many registered fear of the mine operations and distrust of the company by leaving town. Claghorn's optimism continued unabated; he believed that after a year of new management, the company would find its Montana properties "easier to handle."41

Red Lodge's miners unionized to change working conditions, raise their wages, and ultimately, take control of mining operations. They struck when the company did not meet their requests. The strikes theoretically would stop production, so that the company would be forced to comply with demands. The company dealt with strikes by storing coal so they could continue to make a profit. They company treated with the leaders of UMWA, whose goal was to simply keep the industry going. Individually, miners tried to get the State Coal Inspector to investigate an accident or unsafe conditions at the

mines. The Inspectors did effect some beneficial changes, but not as the result of requests or suggestions made by the miners themselves. Thus, the miners had no control over the industry that paid their wages and determined the well-being of themselves and their families.

The immigrant had even fewer ways to gain self-determination. In 1919, three-fifths of the miners at Rocky Fork were aliens, the largest percentage of any company in Montana. Those who did not speak English could not read the newspapers that reported the health of the company. They could not converse with the union leaders or understand the negotiations that went on at the Labor Temple. They relied on the reports of the union members who could speak their language as well as English. It is remarkable that the union was able to function at all, reflecting the miners' intense desire for improvement. Yet the weary strikers of 1922, in opposition to their radical leaders, wanted simply their jobs back at liveable wages and working conditions; that was all they asked.42

ENDNOTES -- CHAPTER 4

1. Al Gedicks, "The Finnish Immigrants in Michigan," Politics and Society, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 127-156.

2. 13th Census of the United States, 1910, Vol. XI, Mines and Quarries, 1909: general report and analysis, pp. 204-207.

3. J. B. Haggin to C. S. Mellen, 19 March 1900; Zupan, p. 23.

4. 13th Census of the United States, 1910, Vol. XI, Mines and Quarries, p. 211; Loren Newman, "Early Days in the Coal Mines," in Red Lodge: Saga of a Western Area, pp. 140-141.

5. Harris, "The Coal Mines," p. 131.

6. Harris, "The Coal Mines," p. 133; 13th Census of the United States, 1910, Vol. XI, Mines and Quarries, p. 211.

7. C. R. Claghorn to Howard Elliot, 13 October 1918; C. C. Andersen to Thomas Cooper, 19 August 1918; Pettigrew to Mayor and City Council, 19 August 1918.

8. Western Federation of Miners Constitution and Bylaws, Butte, Montana, 1893.

9. Zupan, p. 240; Billings Gazette, 2 January 1899; Picket, 29 June and 28 September 1900.

10. Harris, p. 133.

11. H. J. Horn to C. S. Mellen and Thomas Cooper, 19 September 1903.

12. 4th Annual Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines, Howard F. Welsh, Inspector (Independent Publishing Company, Helena, Montana, 1904).

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Employee positions in the mines and their national origins can be found in the 1910 Census Population Schedule, next to residents´ names.

16. Harris, "The Coal Mines," in Red Lodge: Saga of a Western Area, p. 133.

17. C. R. Claghorn to Howard Elliot, 5 October 1910.

18. Claghorn to Elliot, 30 March 1911.

19. C. C. Andersen to Thomas Cooper, 29 May 1917.

20. Hannaford to Elliot, 13 August 1917.

21. *Ibid*.

22. Cooper to Hannaford, 10 September 1917.

23. Harris, "The Coal Mines," pp. 133-134.

24. C. C. Andersen to Charles Donnelly, 12 December 1919.

25. Andersen to Donnelly, 24 May 1922.

26. *Ibid*.

27. Andersen to Donnelly, 27 September 1922. Strike called because UMWA wanted access to books, production, operations and selling price to the public; *Red Lodge Picket*, 1 June 1922. Employment of C. D. Graft, *Red Lodge Picket*, 20 September 1922; election of new officers, *Picket*, 20 September 1922; end of strike, *Picket*, 27 September 1922.

28. *4th Annual Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines of the State of Montana 1903-1904* (Helena, Montana: Independent Printing Office).

29. *Biennial Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines 1907-1908*; *1909-1910*.

30. *Biennial Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines 1907-1908*.

31. *4th Annual Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines 1903-1904*.

32. *Ibid*.

33. *Biennial Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines 1907-1908*.

34. *Biennial Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines 1909-1910*.

35. C. R. Claghorn to Howard Elliot, 19 March 1906.

36. *Ibid*.

37. Robert Pettigrew to Claghorn, 14 March 1906.

38. Claghorn to Elliot, 13 July 1906.

Chapter 5

THE FINNISH COMMUNITY DURING WORLD WAR I

For many Americans, the war that began in August 1914 revealed the evils of the monarchical system still existing in many European countries, and the superiority of their own democratic government. Americans reacted to the catastrophe by insisting on remaining isolated, while at the same time offering immense industrial might to aid both sides and incidentally profit by arms sales. When the US found itself embroiled in the conflict, the decision to risk the lives of its young men necessitated, in a nation of foreigners, a propaganda "war" to enlist the loyalties of immigrants. Propaganda attempted to make patriots out of foreigners whose loyalties, in spite of such efforts, remained divided.

Red Lodge´s ethnic communities divided between those expressing loyalty to their adopted country and those who remained dubious of American intervention in the European war. For the Finns, it was not necessary to choose sides, as Finland was not an Allied enemy. Many claimed loyalty to both Finland and the US; some found the question irrelevant in light of their belief in a world-wide working-class revolution. For these Finns, the problem of loyalty to either side was supplanted by the question of who was fighting the war. Marxists saw the world not as a conglomeration of nations, but as different economic classes within nations. To them, the war was a conflict

between capitalist nations, prolonging the day of the working class revolution. For this reason, many socialists protested the war, spreading their own anti-war propaganda.

The socialist immigrants had found an ideal which went beyond the problem of uprootedness and homelessness, whereas the patriotic Finns, during the first world war, recognized that their loyalties shifted from Finland to the United States. US intervention in World War I became an event forcing the Red Lodge Finns to identify themselves either as Americans or socialists. It was a question that left the Finnish community divided. The Finns also held contrary opinions concerning the Finnish Civil War, which was fought concurrently with World War I. Conservative Finns backed the Whites or bourgeoisie, while the socialists supported the Red faction.

The Red Lodge newspaper lent its pages to both sides of the Finnish attitude. The Carbon County Journal printed "loyalty resolutions," statements of patriotism passed by a group of Finns in Duluth, Minnesota. The article included an interpretation of Finnish history showing the Finns as a people in search of democracy, first under Swedish rule, then under Russian autocracy, and finally finding a democratic haven in the US.[1]

During the Finnish Civil War in 1918, the Journal printed a letter from Finnish diplomat Santeri Nuorteva, in which he attempted to earn support for the Labor Party of that country. Playing on anti-German sentiment, he claimed that the Finnish White Guard had asked for German assistance to oust the labor radicals from Helsinki. The Whites had revealed close ties to the Kaiser, and an affinity for a

monarchical government. The Labor Party, pleaded the diplomat, represented the only democratic element in Finland. Reminding the immigrants of their adopted country's revolutionary history, the diplomat insisted the Reds could achieve stability, order and democracy.2

In Red Lodge, many Finns agreed with the diplomat's dislike of the Finnish bourgeoisie. Negative feelings were expressed toward Jussi Hannula, an acquaintance of Mikko's, who was a member of the White Guard. Many Finnish radicals, including Mikko, refrained from returning to Finland after the White victory. Friends visiting from the Old Country described a bitter class hatred that smouldered in the hearts of the workers. "Workers in Finland," wrote Mikko in 1920,

> are still being given heavy sentences and the government is wasting money to support the military. To the Germans they the white government paid 140 million marks for that good work when they came to help put down the Finnish workers. At the working place you don't hear anything else except name-calling like "red" and "butcher." I can just imagine how thousands of pale workers languish in crowded and filthy prisons slowly dying from disease and starvation. I can see workers being transported from their homes in the darkness, or being taken from prison camps to ready made holes in the forest where they are first robbed then shot with out an investigation or sentence, and all this because they had the courage to demand themselves justice and bread. Where is law and justice now in Finland?... Even the African cannibal is shocked with the civilization of your white heroes.

Mikko went on to describe what he heard about farming conditions in White Finland:

> Then taxes are extremely high for farmers. It is said that they actually walk around the farms to be able to thoroughly tax them. It's no wonder since the Finnish government has to try to keep up its military state; it has

> to support its large military organization...all of which swallows up millions of the people´s money. Besides it has arranged many looting expeditions to Estonia, Aunus, and just recently to Karelia. There has been plenty of money for these but not a penny to help the starving in Russia, and because it has refused to allow the workers to collect money to help to keep children from starving to death, let alone grownups. The actions of the government condemn it- and the sword of Damacles hangs over its head.

The bitterness expressed by Mikko reflected his growing sense of suffering the working class endured, and his faith in their ability to overcome social injustices: "All signs point to another revolution [in Finland] and this time it will end with the workers being victorious since there won´t be any aid to the butchers from the bourgeois abroad."3

The Finnish civil war and the world war had a profound effect on Mikko. "The [world] war," he wrote in July 1917, "makes me feel three times as far away from Finland because the mail takes so long... I´ll come back to Finland, where I´ll make my fortune." Three years later, in April 1920, his mind had changed: "...the happiness [I feel when I daydream of Finland] is destroyed by recalling white Finland. When I recall those happenings that were taking place in the spring of 1918 [the Civil War] and which are still taking place, it is difficult to pick up a pen. I used to think I had a native land, but I don´t any more."

Mikko´s growing class-consciousness magnified his feelings of homelessness. He did not believe the capitalists´ claims that the sluggish economy was due to the war. He thought that if the US were at peace, times would be even worse. "European nations at war have

bought materials worth millions of dollars from this country. Copper, lead and zinc mines are doing well and workers have received high salaries. The price of copper and lead and zinc is higher here in the US than it has ever been before, and this is due to war." Mikko expressed the sentiments of socialists who felt that the war was being fought by capitalists for control of the world market.4

US intervention darkened the horizon in 1917. President Wilson signed the Selective Service Act in May of that year, requiring all adult males to sign up for the draft. Registration forced all Red Lodge´s male inhabitants to confront their feelings of nationalism. For immigrants, registration symbolized the severing of ties to the homeland in preparation to fight for the US. Especially if they were aliens, they pondered their state of homelessness.

After reflecting on their values, 78 men in Red Lodge chose to break the law. These men did not register for the draft, and found themselves in jail for their insolence. All 78 were Finnish-born. The Carbon County jail nearly rocked with the Finnish songs, laughter and hoots of the incarcerated mob. Their disrespectful, boisterous behavior brought cheers of support from by-standers. Officials had not expected such resistance, and, upon wiring Governor Stewart that the jail was full, secured a special train to move the over-flow to Billings. Reportedly, only one in ten of the resisters spoke English and only 5% were US citizens. All were suspected IWW members.5

Over 900 IWW members roamed Red Lodge´s streets, quietly dispersing anti-war propaganda, applauding draft resistance. The "Wobblies" saw World War I as a capitalists´ war, fought by the workers to uphold

an economic system that oppressed them. The Red Lodge resisters refused to fight a war that had no meaning for them.

The incident of disavowal sent battle cries in the air. Finn Town reacted vociferously both in support and in defiance of the rebels; the latter group got the most press. An organization called the Liberty Committee formed to further the war effort and chase the IWW (the root, they believed, of anti-Americanism) out of town.

United States Attorney Burton K. Wheeler received instructions from Attorney General Thomas Gregory to discharge the resisters after recording their names and securing promises to register upon return to Red Lodge. Gregory´s leniency brought angry calls for justice from Red Lodge patriots. They wired Gregory, explaining that the event resulted from organized opposition to registration, and insisting on an immediate investigation. Twenty signatures, including at least two Northwest Improvement Company officials, pleaded with Gregory to prosecute the leaders of the resistance, as their numbers and influence were large in proportion to Red Lodge´s population. Gregory met the patriots´ demands half-way. He allowed those who acted from misinformation to register immediately and secure their freedom. US Attorney General Wheeler was to indict leaders who instigated the trouble.6

Upon interviewing the jailed, Wheeler thought most were simply misinformed, believing that to register was to cast a vote for war. Wheeler released half the interned on June 8, and the rest the following day. He expressed the belief that the local businessmen who had

sent the telegram to Gregory were "unduly excited." The paper reported that 80 men registered the following week.7

Draft proceedings continued unhampered during the next few months. In July a draft board formed in Carbon County to accept requests for exemptions from the draft. Possible excuses included poor health, occupational obligations, and dependants. Decisions made by the local board could be appealed to a Helena review board.

IWW activity expanded after the registration debacle. A young Finnish female pacifist canvassed homes to gain IWW membership. She found her position at the Southern Hotel terminated after she described unbearable working conditions in a letter to the Finnish socialist newspaper Industrialisti. A translation of the letter appeared in the Red Lodge Picket. In the letter, she claimed her IWW activity would help end the war.8

For their part, the patriotic Finns stirred support for America and the war effort, condemning the IWWs. A group of Finnish businessmen and farmers circulated a loyalty statement, encouraging all of Finn Town to affix their signatures. The Finns made a contribution to the Red Cross, claiming that they were no longer Finns, but Americans. Joint agreements between the Liberty Committee and the Finns led to a demonstration at the Labor Temple, where committee organizer Walter Alderson asked the Finns to condemn the local IWWs. They declined to vote on this proposal, claiming that their purpose was simply to find out who in their community was a loyal American citizen.9

Despite this display of affection, the Liberty Committee refrained from bestowing its blessings on all Finnish activities.

Workers´ Hall was the scene of a dance to benefit the Red Cross. The committee placed an embargo on the hall, believing it to be controlled by the IWW. The patriotic Finns acted with haste to rectify the situation. The (Finnish) Workers´ Building Association, owners of the hall, saw the Liberty Committee ban as a financial obstruction to the Association. They elected new officers to their board of directors, hoping that the committee would repeal the ban. Some of the newly elected officers were Liberty Committee members; all pledged to support the war. Control of the hall had been in the hands of the Finnish Workers´ Club, the group that still owned the majority of stock in the company. The newly elected directors pledged to control the activities of the Workers´ Club, reiterating the hope that the ban on the building would be lifted. The patriotic Finns began taking control of the Finns´ buildings, influenced by the Liberty Committee.10

The Liberty Committee´s ire extended to individuals as well as organizations. Leading vigilante Walter Alderson admitted responsibility for the arrest and subsequent departure of Dr. Gustaf Pitkanen, a Finnish physician. Pitkanen snubbed the committee´s interrogations, claiming he did not care who won the war. President Wilson, he declared, had urged the war and was benefiting financially from it. Friends of Pitkanen´s raised his bond. He fled Red Lodge, relocating in Butte.11

An <u>Industrialisti</u> translation appeared in the Red Lodge newspaper, revealing the extent of the committee´s determination to rid

the community of IWW "suspects." A group of committee members, according to the translation, appeared at the home of Finnish-born Jack Lindquist. The visitors produced a list of names, asking Lindquist to indicate which were IWW members. The miner refused; the intruders made threats, pressing Lindquist to name names. They gave him three days to reveal more; in the meantime he swore an oath to keep his mouth shut. The "libertarians" made at least three other such "investigations."12

President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on April 2, 1917. The following year a special session of the Montana legislature authorized the creation of Councils of Defense. Carbon County was obliged to organize one such council, in conjunction with the state-wide Montana council. The council was to review cases of sedition against the US and the war effort. Red Lodge´s Liberty Committee thought it proper to send a list of possible council appointees to Governor Samuel Stewart. Not surprisingly, the three they named were Liberty Committee members: William Haggerty, mine superintendent; Walter Alderson, bsinessman; and former Sheriff Fred Potter. The Governor resisted, appointing instead W. A. Talmadge, Thomas Pollard, hotel manager, and J. Skinner, who had served him in previous positions. The Council of Defense had an air of legitimacy about it, in contrast to the antics of the Liberty Committee.13

Not satisfied with its judgements, the latter brought the council and the local draft board to court over an alleged mishandling of an exemption case. The Carbon County draft board exempted Christian Branger from the draft on grounds of agricultural necessity. The

committee rejected its decision and appealed to the Montana Council of Defense. Helena ordered Carbon County's council to hear the case first. The council declared the draft board's decision sound. Potter and Alderson, they insisted, had conducted their own investigation into the problem, without notifying the police or the draft board. They circulated false affidavits regarding the Branger case and coerced other draftees into signing. The committee, noted the jury, had deteriorated into the excesses of Potter and Alderson, and should no longer exist.14

Walter Alderson came into political problems as a result of his activities. So, too, did Northwest Improvement Company. In November of 1918, Alderson ran for state representative. A few days before the election, Alderson had the local newspaper print a letter written by NWIC General Manager C. C. Andersen, in which the letter praised the Liberty Committee for purging the mines of IWWs. Andersen thanked Alderson on behalf of the company and the United Mine Workers of America, who also supported the Liberty Committee. Alderson lost the election, and unwittingly started a scandal within the ranks of NWIC.15

Thomas Pollard, the member of the Carbon County Council of Defense that Alderson had tried to indict, wrote to Governor Stewart after reading the story in the Picket about NWIC's endorsement of Alderson. Pollard accused the company of electing the legislature. Governor Stewart could not fathom why the company would support a vigilante like Alderson, who had opposed the legally authorized Carbon

County Council of Defense, when NWIC claimed to respect law and order.16

The company replied to Pollard's accusations by saying that Alderson had reproduced the letter to imply that the company endorsed his campaign. The company applauded the Liberty Committee's ousting of IWW leaders, as they had a negative influence on labor. NWIC did not wish to be politically active; however, it encouraged its officials and employees to support the forces that maintained law and order and the suppression of anarchy.17

NWIC had ties to political candidates running on platforms favorable to company interests. Company officials saw laborers as a different class of people (ironically, so did the radical laborers the company tried to suppress), and wished to influence their political attitudes. Good citizenship and patriotism became a company goal, in addition to high productivity. The two goals went hand in hand; an "orderly" work force was a more productive one.

The company and the Liberty Committee created an anti-war hysteria in Red Lodge by rounding up IWW "suspects," harassing them with questions and throwing them in jail when they did not get satisfactory answers. Both were responsible for creating an environment of hatred that encouraged the Finnish community to establish themselves as American patriots, rejecting their neighbors who had joined the anti-war efforts of the IWW.

Neither Northwest Improvement nor the Liberty Committee stopped with mere political persuasion. Both groups interferred by imposing their political attitudes on others. The company admittedly supported

political candidates, while the Liberty Committee punished non-conformists. The punishment they meted out caused physical harm; in one instance, it cost a life.

Emil Koski immigrated to the United States from Finland in 1896, and had lived in Red Lodge for fifteen years. A quiet, unimposing miner, his property included a large boarding house that sheltered four Finnish families. His neighbors claimed his thriftiness bordered on the neurotic; politically, he leaned toward anarchism. Koski served as secretary of the Finnish Workers´ Club, where he learned of the IWW and clung to their philosophy. A letter in the Finnish paper Industrialisti named Koski and three others as leaders of the IWW in Red Lodge. The Liberty Committee, through connections with patriotic Finns, had confiscated the newspaper. In hysterical fashion, the committee set about rounding the radicals up, forcing them to confess their inclinations.18

One autumn evening in 1917, Koski found himself in front of an assembly of patriots, answering questions concerning his IWW activity. Judged guilty, the baffled foreigner found himself imprisoned in the local jail. Three days later, he was granted freedom. Koski´s ordeal shook him to such an extent that he was unable to work. His family found him brooding over the incident. He purchased a gun, fearing the return of the zealots.

A week later, the Koskis had retired after an evening out. Their renters, Reverend and Mrs. Jackson, were also at home. Mrs. Koski answered a knock at the door. Four Liberty Committee members faced

her. They requested an audience with her husband; she replied that he was out. Undeterred, the intruders edged toward the bedroom door. At that moment, Koski emptied his revolver of a stream of bullets. One of the shots pierced the walls of the home, fatally wounding Mrs. Jackson.

Emil Koski left his home, escorted to the county jail by the visitors. He now faced a murder charge. During the next three weeks of his confinement, he appeared irrational at times, shrieking in his native tongue. His hysterical behavior postponed his arraignment. County Attorney Simmons dismissed his case, declaring insufficient grounds for conviction. One condition of his release was that he leave the city immediately.

A year later in November 1918, Koski filed suit in Butte´s Federal Court. His attorneys asked $200,000 damages for false imprisonment and mistreatment. Twenty-eight businessmen, including William Haggerty of NWIC, were named as defendants. Koski claimed the men had deprived him of food and medical attention and due process during his confinement. Nearly a month later, Koski filed a second suit, naming four new defendants and relieving three. The second suit, for the same amount, accused the defendants of breaking and entering his home.

Koski´s court action resulted in a Liberty Committee reunion. The members felt Koski´s suit reflected on all who had joined and supported the committee. The defendants asked the community for its support. At a mass meeting, pleas that Koski had filed suit to replenish the IWW´s coffers garnered financial and moral support. The

Finn, they believed, would use a court award to spread more IWW propaganda.

The case finally appeared in court nearly four years later. Judge George Bourquin presided at the hearing. The jury found the defendants guilty. Koski, they determined, had been denied due process; he had not been granted a hearing during his first prison term, and had been offered bail. Bourquin directed the jury to find for substantial damages against George Headington (Sheriff in 1917) and Walter Alderson, Liberty Committee organizer.

The jury let the defendants off with as light a sentence as possible. The court awarded Koski $750 in damages, not including court costs. Only six out of the thirty-two defendants were obliged to compensate Koski for the mental, emotional and physical damages he endured.19

The stealthy hand of the Northwest Improvement Company found its way into the Butte courtroom. NPRR Vice President Donnelly directed General Manager C. C. Andersen to aid the Liberty Committee during the hearing. Andersen, visiting Red Lodge, learned that the damages and court costs came to about $3200. The committee had collected $1200 from businesses and individuals. Andersen gave the committee a personal check for $1000, which he included in his expense account; the patriots, he assured Donnelly, would have no trouble collecting the remaining $1000.20

Thus the lives of two Finnish immigrants, a miner and a preacher's wife, had been forever altered for the sake of Americanism and higher profits. Emil Koski and his family were forced to once

again uproot themselves from their home. Mrs. Jackson's death in 1917 spared her the grief the Finnish community suffered as the immigrants divided over World War I.

In the years 1917-1920, at least four Finnish immigrants were arrested on charges of sedition; two out of the four were "tried" by the Liberty Committee. Dr. Pitkanen received justice in a federal court. Nels Tahti, miner at nearby Washoe and correspondent for Industrialisti, was held on sabotage and syndicalism. After several months in jail, a judge released Tahti on grounds of insufficient evidence.21

The war years saw an extraordinary number of suicides among Finnish male immigrants in Red Lodge, caused by wartime stress, injury, and inability to work as a result of mine accidents. Three men died by their own hand, while one escaped an aborted attempt. Three were miners who had sustained physical or emotional incapacitation while working for NWIC. One was a miner who had more recently begun farming near Roberts, ten miles south of Red Lodge.

Reverend Jackson, having recently buried his own wife, laid Otto Puumala to rest at the Finnish church. Puumala sustained injuries at the coal mine nine months prior to his death. He was left partly paralyzed as a result. NWIC had compensated him for five months. Doctors had told him he would not recover. Worry over his financial situation and his inability to work caused him to end his life. In his 29th year, he left a wife and three children.

Miner John Warila lived in Red Lodge for 28 years when he took his own life. A psychiatrist had treated him for a nervous disease. The affliction left him unable to work.

Otto Sandberg attempted suicide by slashing his throat in 1920. Sandberg also sustained injuries while working for NWIC. According to family members, the Finn had been acting strangely since his accident. He had inflicted injuries on himself, telling relatives his evil deeds would condemn him to death.

Later that same year, Matt Hurtine committed suicide on his farm near Roberts. Hurtine was a survivor of the 1906 NWIC mine disaster. Neighbors at Roberts declared him mentally unbalanced.22

Thus World War I, fought thousands of miles away on foreign soil, disrupted the Americans as well as their European ancestors. Naively believing they existed in isolation, untouched by the hostilities that beset the Old World nations, the Americans found themselves fighting nevertheless over the same question of power: who should lead and who should follow. In Red Lodge, a microcosm of American society at large, battles erupted in the ethnic communities (as in the Finnish enclave over building control), in the coal mines over economic autonomy, and in the entire community over political conformity. The paradise the Finns hoped to find in America seemed as evasive as ever.

As home for a conglomeration of wandering immigrants with differing customs and languages, Red Lodge struggled to remain a community during its turbulent history of strikes and world wars. Yet

also a part of its past was the 1906 mine disaster, where all nationalities were drawn together in human sympathy and understanding.

AFTERWORD

Due to strikes at the coal mines and the hysteria created by the war, Finn Town shrank during the 1920s. Many left the mines during the 1922 strike; others took advantage of the idle period to try their luck at farming, and never returned. The world war and decrease in immigration from Finland also took its toll. In Red Lodge, Mikko wrote in 1922 that only the Suomela boarding house remained. Here 70 Finnish men lived with 20 men of other nationalities.

Mikko became involved with a Finnish woman named Anna Hakala during and after the war years. Her family farmed near Roberts. The two had a stormy relationship, with marriage plans hampered by unemployment. In the early twenties, Anna moved to Seattle, where she found securing employment difficult. Plagued by health problems, she was unable to work steadily for a long period of time. Mikko summoned her back to Red Lodge several times through his letters, as his mother had summoned him back to Finland through her letters, but she stayed in Seattle.23

Mikko´s mother died in the spring of 1926. Mikko returned to Finland after her death for a short visit. After sixteen years in the US, he still had not declared citizenship, and was unsure of how long he would stay in Finland. He applied for and received a permit to re-enter the US if his trip should last beyond five months. He cut his trip short, re-entering a few months later. Mikko never really found a home.

By 1935, Mikko moved to Butte, where he became an agent for Tyomies. He sold newspaper subscriptions and literature, for which he received a commision. The staff at Tyomies encouraged Mikko to spread socialism among the Finnish workers in Butte. The moment was critical; sales of the paper were down and the staff feared the demise of the Finnish Workers' Society. Mikko let his own bills to the society pile up. He explained to Earnest Koski of the Tyomies staff that his tardiness was due to his inability to find work. He received $7 a week relief for groceries, and wondered sarcastically if comrade Koski knew what it was like to survive on $7 a week.

Mikko endured difficult times in the 1930s. He still corresponded with friends and relatives in Red Lodge. One relative, a woman named Rauha, admonished him for throwing his money away on alcohol rather than food and clothing. Mikko, like his mother had done before him, begged Rauha to come to Butte and keep his house. She chose instead, as he had, to remain in Red Lodge.

During the early 1930s, at the depth of the Depression, organizers of the Communist Party appeared in Red Lodge. Holding meetings and rallies, they convinced some listeners of the opportunities awaiting in Russia under Stalin's five year plans. A few Finnish families sold their belongings and left for Russia. Apparently life was worse there than in the US, as hunger plagued the exiles. Families and friends worked with the Finnish Embassy to permit the return of the expatriates. One woman declared that the Finnish analogy "as bad as cat meat" was no longer adequate. After her ordeal in Russia, she exclaimed, cat meat sounded

good. The Finns' idealism drove them to Russia, where they expected to find the paradise they had hoped America would be. Instead, they found their idealism once again thwarted by reality.

The Finnish immigrants longed to create a Canaan in the United States. They discovered that regardless of political persuasion or national origin, the fate of humanity precluded the ability to make paradise on earth. The Finns settled on making peace among themselves and their neighbors; in the community of Red Lodge, that meant with people of all nationalities.

ENDNOTES -- CHAPTER 5

1. Carbon County Journal, 19 December 1917.

2. Carbon County Journal, 19 June 1918 (not recognized by U.S., Santeri Nvorteva, People's Republic of Finland).

3. Appendix, Letter #24.

4. Appendix, Letter #16.

5. Red Lodge Picket, 15 June 1917.

6. Carbon County Journal, 29 August 1917; Record Group 60, Records of the Department of Justice, "Glasser File," 9-19-1707; 186233-61; -27; -54; 195 397, Section 1. National Archives, 1934 (microfilm).

7. Insufficient accommodation in Red Lodge jail described by correspondence from Attorney General Wheeler in Butte to the Attorney General in Washington, D.C., 7 June 1917; from Wheeler to U.S. Attorney General Gregory, 9 June 1917.

8. Red Lodge Picket, 23 November 1917. Translation of a letter written to the Finnish American newspaper Industrialisti.

9. Red Lodge Picket, 14 December 1917.

10. Workers Building Association minutes printed in Picket, 11 January 1918.

11. Red Lodge Picket, 21 December 1917.

12. Picket, 14 December 1917.

13. Report of Proceedings at Meeting of the Council of Defense, Carbon County, Montana, Red Lodge, Montana, 1 July 1918, Case 2, Drawer 12, Montana State Archives.

14. Carbon County Journal, 10 July 1918, reported the outcome of the Branger Case; Report of Proceedings at Meeting of the Council of Defense, Carbon County, Montana.

15. Red Lodge Picket, 31 October 1918. Letter from C. C. Andersen to Walter Alderson, printed in this issue of the Picket.

16. Letter from Governor Stewart to Gunn refers to Thomas Pollard's accusations. In the same letter, Stewart exclaims, ". . . I have not at any time been quite able to fathom the intricacies of the

(NWI) Company's political attitude in Carbon County." 1 November 1918.

17. Thomas Cooper to Gunn, 8 November 1918. "The Liberty Committee did very good work in Red Lodge in suppressing the IWW and in promoting patriotism, both excellent measures from the standpoint of good citizenship and important to the NWIC as a large employer of labor." Letter from C. C. Andersen to Cooper, the former states: "Our officials at the mine and I naturally take an interest in politics and in a quiet way (author's emphasis) help such candidates for office as we think favorable to Company interests. . ."

18. Carbon County Journal, 28 November 1917, reported Koski's interview with the Liberty Committee. Red Lodge Picket, 30 November 1917, reported the fatality and Koski's murder charge. Red Lodge Picket, 21 December 1917, reported Koski's release and dismissal of murder charge.

19. Picket-Journal, 12 November 1919, reported Koski's suit. 24 December 1919 issue of same reported Liberty Committee meeting. 31 December 1919 issue reported the support of the community for the Liberty Committee.

20. Andersen to Donnelly, 1 November 1923.

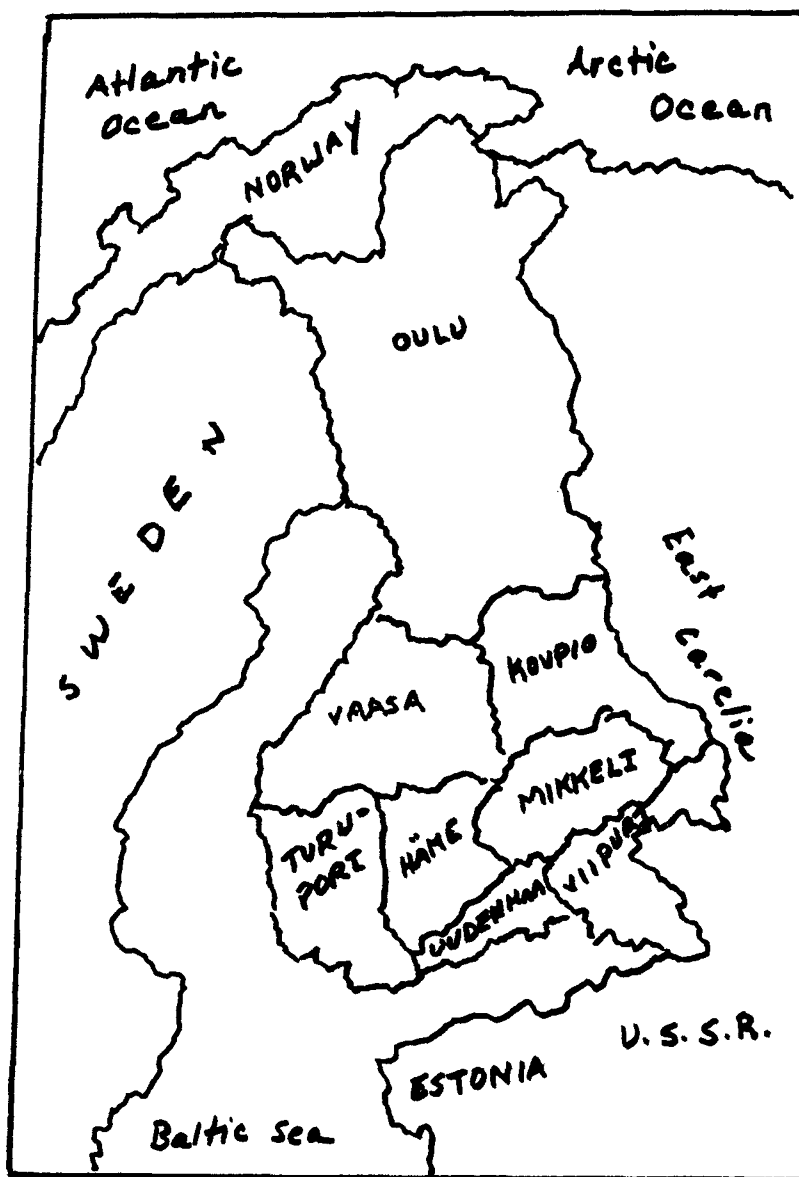
21. Red Lodge Picket, 14 November 1923.

22. Red Lodge Picket, 2 May 1918 (Puumala's suicide); Picket-Journal, 3 December 1919 (Warila's suicide); Picket Journal, 10 March 1920 (Sandberg's attempted suicide); Picket-Journal, 29 December 1920 (Hurtine's suicide).

23. Appendix, Letters #25 and #26.

24. Appendix, Letter #31.

25. Harris, "The Red Lodge Finns," in Red Lodge: Saga of a Western Area, p. 180. The "cat meat" anecdote was told at an interview between the author, Hannah Ukkola and Bob Kero at Hannah Ukkola's home in Roberts, Montana, 27 March 1987.


Atlantic Ocean
Arctic Ocean
NORWAY
OULU
SWEDEN
East Carelia
KUOPIO
VAASA
MIKKELI
TURU-PORI
HÄME
UUDENMAA
U.S.S.R.
ESTONIA
Baltic Sea

APPENDIX

CORRESPONDENCE OF MIKKO MARTTUNEN, 1904-1939

Letter #1

Karijoki
April 23, 1904*

Dear Mother,

Since you haven't written to me at all yet, I'll begin then and let you hear some of our news.

First of all, let me assure you that we are all well, as we hope you are. Antti is new staying with us and will probably be here permanently as Victor has auctioned off his homestead.

We have already sawed all the supporting beams. Victor has been collecting stones for the foundation put in place since there isn't much frost left on the ground.

Have you bought or sold any horses lately? Has Mikko Vuorenen's horse's foot healed? Sometime soon we'll be needing another horse just in time for plowing and trips to the lumber mill, as well as other places.

What about that loan? Is there any hope of getting one? And how much? Municipal taxes are due the 30th of this month and I don't have any money nor will there be any money from the dairy yet.

I would therefore appreciate a loan. You can trust me. I will repay the debt for sure. Mat's wife was here looking for a loan of 10 marks, but I wasn't home at the time.

Another thing: Will I be getting those cattle to fatten up from Kauhajoki? I would appreciate a speedy response, and if possible a little bit of assistance. That is if you haven't already forgotten your son.

Goodbye and God bless us all, recites your lone sailing in life's storm son,

Mikael.

*This letter was written before Mikko immigrated.

Letter #2

Himanka
September 1, 1910

Dearest Friend,

Dearest Mikko, you asked me to tell you my opinion on what you are doing. How much I would like to be able to decide this question for you, but I don't have the mind for that since I have such a timid nature that I cannot decide anything in my own life either so how could I decide another's fate?

No doubt you have yourself thought this over enough and now are carrying out what you thought best.

On the 10th of this month there are also quite a few leaving from here for that highly praised country. Sister Amalia is leaving then and brother Waino. You have no idea how painful this feels to see my brother and sister go, not knowing whether I will ever see them again.

I don't know how I will pass the fall and winter here, it is almost scary for me to face them, but undoubtedly it will go by better that I fear, since good books make pretty good companions.

Please write me before you go on your trip, and it would be nice if you remember me from beyond the Atlantic as well.

Your friend, Aino

Letter #3

Bessemer, Michigan
October 28, 1910

Dear Mother,

Greetings from America! I arrived here yesterday morning exactly three weeks to the day since I started the trip.

The trip went pretty well. The weather was good while on the ship and the people were very pleasant. From Hanko I left on the Aroturus on the 8th and we got to Hull on the 12th about midday. From there we left almost immediately for Liverpool. From Liverpool I left on the White Star line on a big ship called the Baltic, on Saturday the 15th of October and arrived in New York on Sunday the 23rd about dinner

time. Since it was Sunday, they wouldn't let us embark, not until Monday morning when we got off ship and went through customs and then they took us to Ellis Island, where they checked our eyes, asked about money, where we were going, and so on. Then from Ellis Island they took us by a small boat and distributed the passengers to many railroad stations. At 6 o'clock in the evening I got to take a train ride and scary it was- 30 hours later I was in Chicago. There I had to wait for half a day before I was able to continue my trip.

The most unpleasant part of the trip were the many physical examinations. First in Hanko, then in Liverpool, then on the Baltic boat and finally in Ellis Island they checked how good our eyes were. In the Liverpool examination they held Kalle Hakala back, and I don't know now whether they began to treat him there or whether they sent him directly back to Finland.

I will quit now and wish you the best of health.

Mikko.

<u>Letter #4</u>

Kauhajoki
Nov. 15, 1910

My Dear Son,

A thousand thanks for the card I got from Hankoniemi (a port city near Helsinki).

Well, I'll tell you a little about my life. I have been quite ill since the Sacred Day. At times I was so sick I wasn't able to eat anything during the week. I forced myself to. I have been indoors now for almost a week. When I was really sick I would sit on my bed and cry and say of God why isn't Mikael here?

If you find a good job there in Bessemeri and a reasonable salary it's best to stay put- things don't get better when you are constantly on the move. Lauttajarvi said that you shouldn't work as a miner. You have to find better work above ground. That is too my wish. Try to find a better place.

It was very nice to get your letter. It took two weeks to get here. Perhaps I'll stop here. I hope God will bless you, my son. Your Mother.

Letter #5

Bessemer, Michigan
December 11, 1910

Dear Mother,

...I am working at a camp 6 miles noth of Bessemer named Borkland. Times are poor and the mines are running with small crews. I have been thinking of moving to the mines of Red Lodge.

Tell the girls at home that things are tough for women in Bessemer. There are few men here, little work, and not many boarding houses and dishwashing jobs.

Mikko.

Letter #6

Kauhajoki
December 29, 1910

Dear Son

...My heart aches and I feel dizzy when I think about you suffering and not having enough clothes. Please, let me know my child and if things are really bad there come back here. Let's buy a little farm and let's work, we could manage. You would have to be a little thriftier than before. I have been asked to leave again today. I've decided to stay this winter and in the spring I would go to visit my sister. I just don't want to be a slave maid for those two lazy men [her husband and step-son].

It's terrible if you go to Montana to work in the mines, where there are so many accidents. I just read in the Vaasa newspaper that 300 men died in mine accidents. They are dangerous. Though God will protect if you ask for his protection...

I'll stop here and wish you well.

Your Mother.

Letter #7

Red Lodge, Montana
Jan. 30. 1911

Dear Mother,

...The work in Bessemer ended at Christmas. They didn't need anyone else except drivers and loaders who would load the logs on trains. Since mining activities in Bessemer were not very good, work was getting less and less, and jobs were not to be had, we decided to come here to the coal mines and see how it would go here. We left Bessemer on Tapani Day morning at six o'clock and got here on Wednesday, the 29th about noon. The trip was almost 2000 miles and the ticket cost $27. Here the wages are much better than in Michigan and here we don't need to fear exploding gas in the mines.

Around this town are high mountains every direction, but even then sometimes the wind blows fiercely here. Otherwise, it isn't as cold as in Michigan.

There are quite a few people from Karijoki here. Fiina Hakala's son Kalle and Oskar Ketola's four boys- Jussi, Jaska, Wille and Juuveli. They all have wives except Wille and Kalle. Alred Saarala and his wife are here too.

You are afraid Kalle will teach me to drink and run around. It's useless to worry since I have decided to teach Kalle to stop drinking and squandering- and Kalle plans to let me.

You talk already of my return to Finland. It certainly isn't time to think about my return to Finland since I haven't even started getting rich yet. And I am not homesick since there are so many old friends here and I am making new ones as we go along.

I am ending this with warmest regards and wishes for the best.

Mikko.

Letter #8

Kauhajoki
Feb 12, 1911

My Dear Son,

...We've been having really strange winter weather so far. It hasn't been cold. Sometimes it snows and sometimes it rains. Roads have been clear of snow. But now it's cold and we have a lot of snow too. It's windy like a blizzard. Isn't it terrible to be there when it blows so hard and there are such huge mountains around you? Don't the mountains frighten you? I bet you are not crazy about them either. Do you have any song clubs there or other entertainment.

Goodbye my son and stay healthy.

Your Mother

Letter #9

Kauhajoki
July 18, 1911

Dear Son

...Next Summer's Song Festivals will take place in Karijoki. So now you know, so you can come too. Don't you often wish you were in Finland and had your own home and a wife and a little child shouting "daddy" and running around. Even a small farm would make you feel good. Wouldn't it be nice to lay down on your own bed than look for a job there and suffer?

Antti Kaura said that you don't like being in the mines. Are you planning to move? Be careful so you won't get lost there among all those temptations...

Best wishes on your Nameday [Birthday]. Your Mother.

Letter #10

Red Lodge
January 27, 1912

My Dear Mother

...You asked me once if Kalle has paid back what he owed me. Kalle has had such bad luck that he still owes me $50 or 250 marks.

I too had a hard time when I first came to America. In Michigan I only worked 14 days out of 2 months in a logging camp, for which I only got $14.85 and food. Out of this I had to put out $11 for logging boots and clothes. This is what the situation was like when I started out for Red Lodge. I owed Maija Hauta $40. In Red Lodge I was out of work for three and a half months, finally starting to work in the coal mines on April 18. By then I owed Kalle over $30 and I had to take my mining tools on credit. Now I have been working over 9 months. I have paid my debts, sent $50 to Finland bought clothers for $32, and have $200 in my trunk. Tell me if you think I have been a spendthrift. Don't worry that I will put my money into liquor since I am able to pass the door of a bar without feeling any twinge of temptation. I have thought that when I have over $200, I shall send the amount to Finland and I will always have that $200 to fall back on. Life here is unstable; one can get laid off any time and if one doesn't have any money he can't even move to another community.

Well I am going to end this prattle. Say hello to the old man [Mikko's step-father], Fiilus, [step-brother] and the others. Warm wishes.

Mikko.

Letter #11

Red Lodge
September 6, 1912

Dear Mother,

In your letter you expressed a strong wish that I would come to Finland. I would like to come if it would be to my advantage, as one needs to have money there, no matter what one plans to do. Here I have a better opportunity to save money than there. I now have a relatively regular job and one that is not at all as dangerous as the one in the iron mines and now I hope to save up some money if all continues to go

along as it does now.

So I hope you don't worry on my account, just put your faith in God and He will protect you and me. And I pray that God gives you and me health and a long life so that we will be able to spend some happy days together in our own home in our beloved motherland...

I am awaiting good news from you.

Your Son.

Letter #12

Red Lodge
Nov. 30, 1912

Dear Mother,

...You want to know if I will ever come back to Finland. You must understand that a man who doesn't intend to return doesn't send money there. I haven't sent a lot, I know, but I haven't been able to send more.

Well, I have planned that if things go well, I shall continue to work in the mine, one more year after next spring. Then I have decided to spend one summer in a large farming area, to get acquainted with farming methods and to learn about it. Then I can go to Finland and find for myself a small land holding and then I will be able to live on it the rest of my life, quietly and happily.

Well I'll quit now, wishing mother health and luck and peace.

Mikko

Letter #13

Red Lodge
Tapani's Day 1912

Dear Mother-

In honor of the Christmas season I am writing you a few lines. I didn't go to work today. I decided that it isn't too much if I celebrate Christmas for 2 days since in Finland they celebrate it for a week.

Christmas was celebrated here on the Eve at the Temperance Hall, as well as at the Socialists' Hall, with Christmas trees, speeches, poetry reading and plays. There was no Christmas sermon offered to the Finns since the church, which has served the Finns here for years, just stood there cold and dark. There is no minister nor any religious activities. Isn't this a pagan place. What do you think?

Here in America socialism is gradually getting a stronger foothold. Just recently in the presidential election held in November, the socialist candidate got more than a million votes while in the 1908 election the socialists got only 428,000 votes. Here in Red Lodge last

summer the Finnish socialists built a magnificent hall that came to cost almost $20,000. The Socialist Party in this country is the only party that looks after the interests of the workers, and I wonder if any other party in Finland has the interests of the workers at heart-at least I don't think so...

I will quit for now. Warmest regards

Mikko.

Letter #14

Red Lodge
July 21, 1913

My Mother!

I send you heartfilled greetings from this coal village! I got your letter and post card on the day preceeding Fredrik's Day [his birthday]. It's very nice that at least one gets good luck wishes from mother on his birthday, otherwise one would hardly pay any attention to one's birthday here. Here, you see, one does not notice whether it's Sunday, whether it's a holiday. It's always work and resless activites, so one doesn't even follow the almanac very much...

Letter #15

Kauhajoki
January 25, 1915

Dear Son,

...I really felt good when you promised to come home from there although I know that the trip is dangerous, but no worse will happen than God will allow. Ask God for His blessing. So far we haven't suffered any great need. If only now all the Finnish people would pray together for the end of the war and peace for all people. At night in peace we sing; in war all wail; joy breaks forth in peace; in war, nothing but complaints...

Letter #16

Red Lodge
June 13, 1915

Dear Mother,

...The work lately is not too exhausting since for a couple of months I have not had to work more than 2 days and sometimes 3 days a week. From that sort of wages one can't save very much, in fact I have to be careful so that I can pay for my food, room, and other small expenses. Many fellows have left here and of those remaining, most have begun "batching" which means that they prepare their own food, getting along cheaper than eating in the boarding house. In our

boarding house "Reintola," where before there were 50-70 men and 5 waitresses, there are only 20 men and 3 waitresses. I am at this time the bookkeeper for the boarding house and I earn $3 a month from that job.

We are having bad times in America now. The capitalists or money men say it is on account of the war, but I believe that if there wasn't a war, it would be worse. The countries that are warring in Europe have bought from this country hundreds of milllions of dollars worth of stuff, like food, mules, horses, clothing, saddles, boots and of course, guns and ammunition.

Only the copper, lead, and zinc mines are doing well now and raised their workers' wages. The price of copper, lead, and zinc in the United States is higher now because of the war than it has ever been before.

That great and terrible world war doesn't seem to come to an end. On the contrary it just seems to draw more and more countries into the conflict. Italy has now joined and Rumania, Bulgaria, and Greece probably will join in. Even the United States because of the sinking of the Lusitania in which as many people died as in the Titanic tragedy, was about to get into the war, but that danger seems to have been avoided.

We have again started a men's chorus this spring and tomorrow evening we will have a concert that we hope will be a success. We just sing, although dark forces tear up the world-- we sing away the burdens from our shoulders.

Well I guess I should end this now. I wish you the best of health.

Mikko.

Letter #17

Red Lodge
March 20, 1916

Dear Mother!

...You probably have been afraid that somethings have happened to me since I haven't written. No, nothing has happened to me, I'm healthy and am working, which contributes to this writing problem since a miner's days are the same, day after day, that there is nothing to write about. You don't have to worry that I will begin to drink since it as they say, in America you can get anything at all if you have money, but another truth is that in America you can't get anything unless you have money.

...A couple of weeks ago Alfred Saaraluoma's wife, Emma, had to go to Butte for surgery, there is a good Finnish doctor there, Doctor Pitkanen, a good surgeon.

I will end now and send you my mother lots of wishes for good health.

Mikko.

Letter #18

Kauhajoki
August 23, 1916

Dear Son,

...Well, listen I have a little matter to tell you about. A terrible thing has happened here. The young man who was master of the Luoma-Aijo place shot himself in July, a month ago, and now they are going to have an auction. The couple didn't have any children and so the relatives of the deceased get to inherit half of the property except for a fifth of their half of the house which belongs to the wife. Everything except for that fifth is to be split in half-the heirs number 16- so it will be necessary to have a sale. It has a good house in the middle of the land, it isn't too far from the county road. The Mrs. will not sell her half at all. So I thought , why not, when the other half goes up for auction, shouldn't we try to get the other half, and then you can combine it with the widow's half. She is a healthy handsome person who is capable of all sorts of work in the house and outside. And as a person she is very pleasant and

happy...Come back from America and be master of this place. You could come safely by way of Norway...

Write as soon as you get this letter, so it gets here before the auction. Goodbye and be well.

So wishes your Mother.

Letter #19

Diamondville, Wyoming
Feb. 8, 1916

Good Friend!

Warm greetings from here. From this desolate mining town where a handful of Finns fight for their existence. A small divided group we have here. Radicalism has been around here, but it hasn't been as strong as it is in Montana. But on the other hand, we have had a temperance person here who has carried his hate of activities of the socialists to the extreme.

They have control of the hall, through whose activities they try to suffocate our activities by charging us unreasonably high rents. We, however, have presented our side of the matter and I think that we can get them to be more kindly disposed to us.

If this area's Finns all lived in one town, there would be a nice little bunch. There is, you see, in a 15 mile radius 7 camps in which there live a few Finns.

At Christmas time we presented the play "The Broken Ones" which we presented in Rock Springs. I wrote you a card from there. I heard that our people's activities are pretty much in a state of rest there now. A zealous pioneer is lacking. And what can you do about that at the drop of a hat.

Are you still an established bachelor as before. You have not courted many girls during your stay in America. I, on the other hand, am completely spoiled. I have met, you see, a friend who has a soul-- a poetic soul, pure-- and I have discovered in her somthing I can respect-- and love. I don't know how long our friendship will last. Right now it is strong.

I am driving Polso Saarinen's bread truck but now we have a little "trouble." I don't know if I will continue. But at least I won't leave during this winter season.

I will quit this gabbing. I hope that you feel a responsibility to me as I do to you. In friendship,

Jussi Luoma

Letter #20

Red Lodge
March 20, 1916

My Dear Mother!

...I'm sure you've feared that something has happened to me, because I haven't written. Nothing has happened, I've been healthy and I've tried to work too, but that's the problem with miner's life, the days are all alike, one does not feel like writing letters. You don't have to worry about me turning into a drunk, because that I have not done yet, though I'm not a total abstainer, either. Card games seem to be a common vice, not just among young men but also among family men. There is one observation that I've made both about myself and others and that is: the longer you're here the harder it is to save money. There seems to be so many different ways one can be tempted into throwing money away one penny after another.

I'll stop here and wish my mother the best of health.

Mikko.

Letter #21

Kauhajoki
October 8, 1917

Dear Son,

Loving greetings to you. Thank you for your letter which I got 4 days ago. It was marvelous medicine not only for my sore body but for my soul. You couldn't believe how much I have grieved and how many nights I have cried when I have not known if you had started on the trip home. I was so pleased when I heard that you are there and safe and sound. And I thank God for this.

Thousands of immigrants have returned this summer by way of Haarparanta and Tornio and it has been extremely difficult for them to get here. Many have been imprisoned and have been taken to St. Petersburg and have been taken from place to place and I have feared that you have been in that group. I have hardly been able to sleep...

Letter #22

Kauhajoki
May 20, 1918

My Dear Son

Tears are not far as I write this, I miss you so badly. And I wish I could see you alive one more time...

There have been a lot of riots here in Finland. South Finland has been destroyed and burned down. They've murdered priests and many other people. Churches have been profaned shamelessly. But now Finland has been purified, and we have a white independent Finland, but it did take a lot of sacrifice. There are over 40 heroes lying in graves at the Kauhajoki cemetary...

Letter #23

Astoria, Oregon
August 17, 1918

Dear Comrade Mikko!

Greetings from this fishing town. Time seems to slip by here pretty well but of course it takes time to get adjusted. Haven't you thought of getting out of there, it seems that for a wood man there would be lots of opportunities here to get a good wage and you are a wood man.

I just help a carpenter for $4.90 a day and it is pretty easy work and it doesn't require special tools nor to pay foolish payments...

Here the Socialist Society is very active. The chorus is a good organization, and a damned good drama group which has some really good actors, last Sunday they presented the play "Devil" and it went extremely well. There is a big hall here where they can present big plays, and they make quite a bit of money. Kinari seems to be running the dances here too, hiding behind the name of "Sewing Club" in the conservative Temperance Hall. There are a lot of people here. I had a hard time getting into a boarding house.

What do you think about the idea of their making soldiers out of you and me?--as they are raising the age limit. Have you sweet-talked the Jarvela girl, and what about Eveliina, do you still love her?

Old timers say that in the fall the heavens open the windows and they are open 4 months day and night and the raindrops are as big as ordinary sausages. I bought a raincoat, maybe I should buy a helmet since those are pretty good-sized raindrops. Lots of greetings to Reintola boarders.

Wilho.

Letter #24

Red Lodge
April 1, 1920

Dear Mother

While sitting here in the quiet of my room...my thoughts travel to times past, those times when I as a 20-year old left my home, that home where I'd played my childhood's innocent games and built castles in the air. To travel to the "wide-open world" to follow the trails of a vagabond and to enter the school of life. Sixteen years have passed, but an incredible amount of things have happened during that time, circumstances have changed and I have changed, too.

When I think about the things that have happened there in Finland since spring 1918, and is still happening, I feel very reluctant about writing a letter. It's terrible to imagine being there in Finland nowadays. I can just imagine how thousands of pale workers languish in crowded and filthy prisons slowly dying from disease and starvation. I can see workers being transported from their homes in the darkness, or being taken from prison camps to ready made graves in the forest where they are first robbed from their clothes and then are shot like dogs without an investigation and a sentence, and all this because they had the courage to demand themselves justice and bread. I can hear the jackals howl: "Legal order and democracy have won." Where is the law and justice now in Finland? At the tip of a bayonet. Poor nation, you who thought you were so civilized. Even the African cannibal is shocked with the civilization of your white "heroes."

Mother, I know you don't think about these things in the way I do, because you have not heard the truth about the things but I know because I am a worker and I sympathize with those tens of thousands of workers who have had to suffer so much for their cause...

Letter #25

Seattle, Washington
October 29

Mikko

...The nurses here [Anna works at a hospital as a dishwasher] think I'm clean at my work. I have to work hard because my partner is an American and she is afraid of work. So she relies on me, and still gets paid the same amount as I...

You asked if I've found a boyfriend. No, I haven't. I haven't even looked for, and I don't want to. I didn't come here because of men, but because of work. I have to be able to support myself like other people. I'm afraid to be with men. I'm sure they're afraid of marrying me. I think you're afraid of marrying me too because I'm so quick-tempered. Actually, I'd rather have this personality. If I were really gentle I would probably date everyone who asked me. So I have to be alone...

Letter #26

Seattle, Wahington
November 22, 1922

Mikko

Listen Mikko, first I have to ask you why you were so proud when you answered my letter and why were you hurt when I used "hallo Mikko Marttunen" in the letter. You said that I have distanced myself from you. I don't think so. I think you have distanced yourself from me since you are so proud in your letters.

I've been quite sad in this big city, but this is not as bad as Red Lodge. People come and go here, so they don't have so much interest in other people like the people in Red Lodge. In Red Lodge people can really oppress you and make you feel down. Life isn't that bad here, because there is always work here... I hope to get a job at a laundry soon.

...You asked about the ticket. It cost $32.39 from Billings to here. I can't pay back to Hosio right now. And I don't want to owe you any money.. You need your own money. But I have to stay here a long time. I thought about getting married, but it looks like even that isn't going to work out. I'm crazy to think someone would want me. You don't want me. I'll try to work as long as possible...

Goodbye Mikko

When you listen to the eastwind on a winter night, it will whisper to you to remember me.

Your Anna.

Letter #27

Petroskoi, Karelia
March 26, 1923

Dear Comrades:

In the winter of 1922, there were established all over America and Canada the Karelian Labor Cooperatives, whose purpose it was to support the economic development of Karelia by sending to Karelia various trade groups. The Astoria Fisherman's Cooperative group was the first trade group to move to Karelia, equipped with relatively new fishing equipment. Shortly after the fishermen's group came, an eight-man carpenters' group arrived in Karelia, also equipped with first class tools and necessary machinery, for example, a shingle saw, a circle saw, and a planing machine. As soon as this last group landed in Petroskoi, the Karelian Administration Committee ordered this carpentry group to Knasoho, where the American fishermen had already settled. There we worked diligently, despite the difficulties to be overcome.

In November 1923 this same carpentry group moved to Petroskoi where they would be established permanently. At this new political time, all industrial operations are to follow capitalistic lines, but the lack of funds really limits the activities of the American tradesmen. Since the Karelian Administration has not been able to finance these undertakings, these cooperative groups have not been able to fulfill the purposes for which they came...

In order to get the [wood-product] factory organized and finished we have to raise money abroad by selling stocks to members of the already organized labor groups that are supporting the development of Karelia. There has been interest in the Russian Education Ministry in our factory producing a large order of school desks...there is a terrific lack of housing and the old log structures are no longer in mode. We are beginning to use American models which are in all ways more practical...

We must overcome many obstacles before we can accomplish our goals. We work very hard in these humble surroundings to improve and raise the standards here in Russian Karelia. We know that the economic development of Russia is extremely important in the world picture and we know that the success of the world's proletarian revolution depends a good deal on the success here in Russia. So we have to hold on. Our job is to raise the Karelian economic life upwards from the terrible depths to which the attacks of imperialism has brought it. We agree that the American comrades have sacrificed alot, but the fight is not over.

We are sending you this letter so that you can present it at your organization meeting and we ask that you contact us as soon as possible if your members are interested in buying our shares.

We leave off now, awaiting your reply.

R.T.O. party member Thomas Waller

Lauri Suoutausta	Paul Lindberg
V. Lampinen	E.H. Elovaara
E. Wakkila	Kalle Seppanen
D. Hill	Waino Bjorkman

Address: Carpenters' Cooperative
Pushkinskaja no. 98
Petroskoi, Russian Karelia

Letter #28

Kauhajoki
March 28, 1926

Mikko Marttunen

I am writing you a few lines relative to the last days of your mother. I was taking care of her for eight weeks. She was, during that time, quite helpless. The doctor visited her during these last days. but she lived only a day and a half after his last visit. She believed in God and hoped to go to heaven. She remembered her son often and said that she prayed that you were coming to Finland since she didn't get any letter from you. Then again she said that you probably would never come to Finland.

I send you sincere thanks for your letter in which you remembered me.

Respectfully,

Alma Puskala

Letter #29

Lava Hot Springs
August 19, 1937

Good old Mikko

Greetings, man, Mike, although this letter writing goes rather clumsily with a pencil, because I haven't really written anything in twenty years except for my name once in a while. I wrote to Waino and Eemeli Autio last week.

...For a student of nature like you, this area has many interesting places and things. Some ten million years ago, when the surface of the earth had cooled off to about a mile deep, this area collapsed, like ice on the river in the winter and so created a wide gorge. Then some millions of years later the middle of the gorge collapsed and there a river formed. One can see from the crowns of the mountains and the banks of the river that this area is lava earth, like well turned out bread. This kind of soil allows water to seep in rapidly and down so deep that it gets hot and rises up, as it does here.

You too try to stop drinking and gather enough money so that next summer you can come here. It is too bad for me that we couldn't have come here together. As interesting as it is here, life still seems quite lonely when because of lack of English I can't mix with the Americans. My English is so bad that I don't feel like trying. It makes me mad sometimes in that pool when a young pretty girl seems to encourage me to come to talk to her. I have already met three such persons, who were so forward that they didn't wait but took the initiative themselves, and you can imagine what kind of situation developed for a man of my personality. I have many times cursed under my breath...that I never took it upon myself to learn the language as soon as I came to this country.

Well, I guess I should stop, it might be that you are so old, like Will Saari, that you can't stand to hear anything about girls or are you. I have sometimes just for the hell of it raved about girls to Will but he immediately begins to object or he talks of other things.

Well, see you then.

J.F. Koski

Letter #30

TYOMIES SOCIETY

June 13, 1938

Mikko Marttunen

Butte, Montana

Dear Comrade

...Your subscription had run out in January and comrade Voimala had asked to have it extended a couple of months. We decided that your name would be put on the mailing list again. So you will be getting the paper again. We hope that you will continue your activities in advertising. We do believe that the promotion of our ideas should not stop in Butte.

The economic situation seems to be getting worse everywhere. Many people in this town have lost their jobs this spring and it seems that the shipping business will not be more than a fraction of last year's shipping. Anyway we have to get through this time, because if we give in, then we will be truly lost. Thus we hope that in Butte too we can liven the activities of the Finns so that they can better struggle against this onslaught of decline.

Comradely greetings,

John A. Hautala

Letter #31

TYOMIES SOCIETY

Butte, Montana
May 31, 1939

Bookkeeper Earnest Koski Superior, Wisconsin

Dear Comrade:

With reference to your letter of May 18, I wish to tell you how sorry I am relative to my account. I want to say that my account is not in such arrears because of irresponsibility or laziness or carelessness, but because I have been bothered with ill health and inability to get a job in these mines. I do get some assistance now--relief-- a $7 grocery order each month. Has Comrade Koski experienced whether it is possible to live on $7 a month? I have been unemployed for quite a long time now. I have tried very hard to find a job and I am continuing to do so and as soon as I get some work, I will be able to start paying on my account. I am doing all I can, truly.

In comradship,

M. Marttunen

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