

ESTHER RINNE Maiden name was Wiirre. Born in Pyhajoki, Finland on January 7, 1901. Pyhajoki is near Oulu in Oulun Laani.

PARENTS Father - Antti. Mother - Sophia. Mother died when Esther was 2 yrs old. Father was a carpenter. Father tried to take care of her. He had to board her out because he had to work. Some families treated her cruelly. She didn't dare tell her father. He visited her often.

This went on for 10 years. Went to school. When 14 years old found a nice family to stay with. Took good care of her.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Had a brother who was 22 years older, a sister 21 years older. They were in America when she was born. Heikki (Hank), Jenny, Hilda, Anne, Helme. Esther was youngest. Only knew Helme. Helme 17 when mother died. Most of them settled in Eureka, California in 1890's.

GRANDPARENTS Doesn't remember them.

FAMILY NAME Name hasn't changed.

Stayed with a good family from age 14-17. Their name was Harrilla (?). Lived on a farm. This was still in Pyhajoki.

After this, went to stay with a sister in Rauma in the southern part of Finland. When Esther was 19, a sister in America sent her a ticket to come to the US. Came to Eureka, California. Came by herself.

TRIP TO AMERICA Came on the Lusitania (?) across the Atlantic. Ellis Island was awful.. Dirty. 5 girls from Finland. This was 1920.

Sister wrote from America - don't take any money with you. She wrote that they'd send what she needed to Nilson & Lundbeck Co. in New York. When Esther got to Ellis Island, she found out Ellis Island was Ellis Island and New York was New York. Esther didn't have the \$25 on her so she had to send a telegram to her sister for money. Stayed in a tiny room with some other Finnish girls. Finally got her money. They gave her a sack lunch. Cost \$3.00. Bread and moldy cheese. Escorted to the train. Pinned a note on her said where she was going.

TRAIN TRIP Saw a black person for the first time. They wouldn't let her go anywhere when the train stopped. Trip took 9 days.

Came to San Francisco, California first. Went to a restroom to wash up. Left suitcase on bench. Two ladies eyed the

suitcase. Trapped Esther. Took her on two streetcars and up to the 6th floor of a hotel. Started looking for her purse. One of the ladies went to a phone.

Signaled for Esther to come. She heard a Finnish voice. Said the ladies were policewomen; they wanted to know if she had the \$1.50 to pay for a hotel room for the night. They showed her where to go in the morning. Showed her the time on a clock when she should be there. Was ready to go at 5:30. Went to the place they showed her. Found an ocean in front of her instead of a train. The two ladies were there again.

Gave her an envelope to give to the conductor. She had to take a ferry across the bay. Goldengate Bridge wasn't built yet. Policeman met her at other end. Escorted her to the train. She gave the letter to the conductor. Took a whole day to get from San Francisco to Eureka, California.

Sisters were there. Esther told them to ask the conductor what the letter was. The letter said not to let her go anywhere. In those days, many girls disappeared. Her sisters arranged for her to be protected on her journey.

**FEELINGS ABOUT COMING TO AMERICA** Left Finland from Hanko (HangÅ¶). On a beautiful evening. Felt lonesome. Felt better once she got to England and met some other Finnish girls. Got to California and her sister, Anne had a job for her. Esther had only 2 days before she started. Sister told her not to bring many clothes with her. They'd be out of style here. Esther was sorry she hadn't brought more. Styles were the same. Clothes were expensive.

**WORK** Worked in a cookhouse near Eureka, California. First washed dishes. Then waited tables. Owed her sister for the ticket and the \$25. Lived at the cookhouse. Cook was German. One girl was Finnish-Swedish. Mrs. Curry was America. Esther felt at home here. People were nice.

**PROBLEMS WITH THE LANGUAGE** People were very understanding. Always confused cabbage and lettuce. Which ever the cook asked for, she brought the other. Had to learn English. Nobody spoke Finnish there. Every fourth week she'd go to Eureka and visit her sister. She stayed at the cookhouse for 2 years.

She got a 2 week vacation. Went to Astoria, Oregon. by boat to visit her sister. Sister talked her into staying in Astoria. Got a job at a restaurant. Waited tables.

Met her husband in Astoria. They've lived there for 58 years. They had one boy, but he died in the service. Her husband's name in Sulo.

After getting married they bought a farm. Had cattle, chicken. Raised lettuce, peas, *etc.* Farm was in Gearhart, Oregon. Son grew up there. Was born in a hospital in Seaside, Oregon. Went to high school there.

CHURCH Belong to Peace Lutheran Church in Astoria., Services in Finnish once a month.

Doesn't belong to any Finnish organizations. Belongs to American Legion Auxiliary.

FINNISH COOKING Mommi - a Finnish dish made at Easter. Lutefisk - A Christmas dish. Juhannusjuusto - See also I-878.

FINNISH CELEBRATIONS Juhannus (Midsummer). People stay up all the night. Custom to make Juhannusjuusto - a kind of cheese. Made out of milk. Cook it in a pan all night. It cooks down. Yellow and crisp. Christmas - Go to church at 6:00 am. After church, eat breakfast: rice pudding and baked mashed potatoes. Put cardamom in the potatoes. Pannuikku - pancake but different than American. Baked in oven. Serve meat with the meal too.

TWO TRIPS BACK TO FINLAND First in 1950. Father was gone. Sister still living. Oldest sisters' dons almost like a brother. Friends in Pyhajoki.

Not much different on the first trip. Second trip in 1963 many changes. Roads were different. People she knew were gone. Didn't want to go back after that. Has only a niece and a nephew left in Finland. Still writes to the Harrilla's (?) girl. She's been to the U.S. to visit in 1972. See also I-225.

No special feeling about being Finnish. Has a lot of English speaking friends.

Speaks Finnish with her husband and Mrs. Leppinen (?), a neighbor who doesn't speak English.

Esther likes it in America. Astoria has changed a lot. Likes Seaside better. Only 20 minutes to drive there.