

John Kuivala. Born March 18, 1892 in Revonlahti, Finland. Revonlahti is in northern Finland near Oulu.

Parents: Jaakko and Anna Gretas. They were farmers. Had some cattle, horses, sheep, chickens, and pigs. Used his horse to haul logs in the winter.

Brothers and Sisters: One brother, Jaakko and two sisters - Ida and Anna.

Half-brothers and Sisters: Two half-sisters - Emmy and Hanna.

Grandparents: Knew maternal grandmother. Taught carpentry in a grade school. His name was Issac Kamaramen. He made tables and things for the school. Paternal grandfather was born in Hailuoto, Finland.

School: 5 hours a day. John went through 2 grades, then he had to work.

Work: Worked at home and someplace else.

Trip to US: Came in 1910. Came alone. Had a sister in Astoria, Ore. Sister sent him the ticket. Mother and father each had a brother in the US.

Reason for coming to America: 'I had to work in Finland to get the bread. I came to America to get some butter for that bread.' He was 19 when he came. He brought a pine, woven picnic basket. He had hard tack and dried meat in it.

Took the train to Hanko. Took a ship to England. Ship called Titania (?). Took a ship from Liverpool, England to Boston, Mass. Oceanliner's name was Simbric, White Star Line (?). Many Finns on the trip. Other nationalities too. Many from Scotland.

6 days by train from Boston to Astoria, Ore. Trip was terrible. Traveled in summer. Very hot. Still had hard tack and meat to eat. Tells about the first tomato he ate. Uncle met him at the train.

Work: Got a job at a sawmill 2 or 3 days after he came to Astoria, Ore. Lived in a boardinghouse. Ate meals there. Finnish people ran the boarding house. John paid \$15 per month there. Received low wages at the mill - \$1.75 per day.

Described his work at the mill. Made bundles out the flooring. Trimming. This was in 1910.

Several sawmills in the area at that time: Hammons, Pikkumylly (Little Mill), Kinney (?) Mill. Had big trees then, 8-10 feet thick. Rafted the logs down the river. Donkeys pulled the logs out the woods. Hard work. John quit logging after he cut himself badly. Fell down with saw and ax. Tells about injuries and deaths in the woods. 'If a man happened to die in the lumber camps they just took him to the nearest cemetery and buried him like a dog.' Many single men came to Astoria to work in the lumber industry. Some lived with families. Many lived in boardinghouses.

Those working in the mills, worked six days a week. Same rule for fishermen. Fishing season started May 1. Ended August 25.

John tells about fishing in Astoria, Ore. His uncle took him out in his boat right after he came from Finland. He had a sailboat. In 1911, they started using motor boats. They fished on the river. Two men on the boat. Sold fish to the canneries. Many women worked in the canneries. Many Finns and many Chinese.

Language difficulties: Didn't understand much in the beginning. Gradually learned. Studied a little in a night school.

Took a while to feel at home in Astoria. Felt at home after he got married in 1915. Married Elna Toivonen. She was from Halikko, Finland. This is close to Turko.

Worked in Warrenton, Ore. after he got married. Next job: Worked for Hill Shipping Firm in Flavell (?) Ore. Built passenger ships that traveled between Astoria, Ore and San Francisco, CA. WWI came and the Germans sunk the ships. John started longshoring after that.

Fished in Alaska in the summer. Quit fishing in 1932. Just worked as a longshoreman. Many other Finns fished there as well. Fished in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Lived in bunkhouses most of the time. Two people fished on the boat. It was miserable in Alaska. Cold and rainy.

Children: Girl - Easter, Boy - Toivo. The family stayed in Astoria, Ore. and lived in the house that John bought in 1919.

Finnish organizations: Finnish Brotherhood, a sick benefit organization. Many who belonged. Has decreased in membership. Finnish Brotherhood puts on dances.

Finnish Food: Beef stew (Lihamojakka) and Fish stew (Kalamojakka).

Christmas: Celebrate it as Americans. Different than in Finland. Colder in Finland.

Midsummer: Juhannus. Don't celebrate it here.

5 Home remedies for illness in Finland: For colds, they had to take a sugar cube soaked in pine tar. (Ginger) - comes in a chunk. Scrape it, mix it with syrup, put it in a spoon, heat it up and eat it. Used for colds. Toothaches: Father would use pipe. Turn bowl of bowl over the tooth.

Telling fortunes on New Years Eve: Pour hot tin into cold water. The form the tin made would predict the future.

Has a sister in Finland. Visited her recently. Brother passed away in 1966. His brothers and sisters are younger than he is. Had reunions when he came to visit. They had coffee and schnapps.

Finnish Heritage: Finnish are good people just as other nationalities are. He and his wife spoke Finnish at home. Children learned it too.

Both children live in Astoria. He has 3 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

John took his girl to Finland on his last trip. She liked it there. Met both parents' families.

John is glad he came to America, but the Finns live better than we do now. Plenty of food, butter on their bread. Nice houses. Cost of living is high in Finland.

Talks about a wedding dance.

Juhannus (Midsummer): Bonfires, singing, dancing. Tradition still maintained.

Speaks in Finnish:

Glad he came here. Missed out on a lot misery that way. Missed 2 wars in Finland, 1939 and 1942. John didn't have to fight in any ways in America.

Russians were taking Finnish soldiers into their army in the beginning of the century. 1904 - Finns went on strike.

No more Finns went in the Russian army. John's father was in the Russian army. His brother was in the Finnish Coast Guard.