

HILMA TOLONEN SALVON Born in Paltamo, Finland in 1895. Paltamo is in northern Finland, south of Lapland. If you were in Oulu, you'd take a train to Kajaani, an inland city and then another train to Paltamo. When Hilma lived there, 90% of the people lived off the land in some way.

Many were small farmers. A couple of cows, a horse, and some sheep. Only one big farm in the area. Owned by Kajaani Paper Mill. They had 125 dairy cows. Exported cheese. All of Hilma's family in Finland have some land, several cows, and a horse. They still live off the land.

PARENTS Mother - Else Vayrynen. Father - Matti Tolonen. They never had a farm. Didn't even own a house. Father was from Ristijärvi.

Hilma and her husband spent 4 months in Finland. Traveled and studied Finland during the summer. Went to Ristijärvi. Her father's home had been near the church.

When he was young, his family sent him to a trade school in Oulu for 3 years. Finland has some of the best trade schools in the world. Started in 1888, Father learned many things.

LOGGING Timber is chief export of Finland. Father worked for a Swedish and Finnish logging outfit in Lapland. Headquarters were in Rovaniemi, a town by the Arctic Circle.

He was a foreman for the Kemi Tukki Yhtiö. They fell the timber in northern Lapland. Floated logs down Ounasjoki (River) to Rovaniemi. Floated logs from Rovaniemi to Kemi on the Kemijoki (River). At this point, the Swedes and the Finns each took their share of the logs. Hilma's father was foreman for this company for 10 years. This was 1895-1905. The family stayed in Sinettä, a little village 10 kilometers north of Rovaniemi, while their father was in the woods. They rented a cottage there.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Brother's name was Matti. Sister's names were Kate (She lives in Seaside, Ore. Widow. Retired school teacher.), Paula, and the youngest, Tanna, a boy of 9 months when they came to the US in 1906.

She describes the house they rented in Sinettä. Log cabin. Red with white trim. Cozy.

FINNISH FOOD They never got used to white bread in the US. Her mother used to bake a rye bread in Finland and when they came here. Hilma used to bake it. She gets it from a Finnish baker in Astoria now. Stew with different kinds of meat. Salt pork, cook it with onions and make gravy.

Her mother made good pancakes. They'd pick lingonberries and freeze them. In the winter, her mother would cook

the berries in water and sugar and thicken them with potato flour.

CELEBRATIONS Juhannuspäivä or Midsummer is a big holiday in Finland. When Hilma and her husband were in Finland, they were near the Arctic Circle for Midsummer.

They saw the midnight sun. As a child they cut birch branches and put them in the yard. They'd have coffee and pastry out in the yard.

CHRISTMAS Didn't have a tree. Their father wasn't home. Made trimmings out of colored paper. No gifts. Never heard of Santa Claus. People were poor.

RELATIVES Paternal - Had some addresses from her mother of relatives in Finland. Went to Ristijärvi where her father was born.

Met relatives who'd taken care of her grandfather's sister. The man had been a schoolteacher. The woman had been a nurse.

Speaks of other relatives they met.

Talks about Finnish massages. She met a masseuse in northern Finland who gave President Kekkonen massages when he went on skiing trips in the north.

GRANDPARENTS Paternal - When in Ristijärvi, asked if they knew her grandfather's name and where the house was. It was near the church. Her great-grandfather had been a choirmaster. Describes the place where the house had been.

EMIGRATION Her father had worked only as a foreman for that logging company. It was mandatory that every man serve 3 years in the Finnish Army. Finland belonged to Russia then. Russia demanded that Finland send 10,000 trained men to Russia. Nicholas II was czar at that time. Finland refused. Protest. Strike in Finland. Everything stopped. A man named Schauman shot the general governor over Finland from Russia in 1905.

A lot of confusion in Finland. Hilma's father left for America in 1905. Escaped the confusion by leaving. He had a cousin in Astoria who sent him a ticket. Hilma and her family moved into a house with another family. They stayed there for one year. 1906 the family joined their father in Astoria. Father got a job from one of the 3 Kankonen(?) brothers. The youngest Kankonen was an architect. They were building St. Mary's Hospital at that time. They were involved in much of the building of Astoria.

After he'd saved enough money, he sent for the rest of the family. Trip over: Bedding, clothing, photographs were taken along. They left from Hanko (Hangö in Swedish), a seaport in Finland. The name of the ship was Polaris. It took them to Liverpool. They had to wait a week for the boat which would take them across the Atlantic. Left from Hull, England. She described the boat trip. Her family didn't get seasick.

Only Finnish people on the Polaris. Many nationalities on the boat across the Atlantic. People who worked in the kitchen on the boat had dark hair and big teeth.

1004 SHOPPING IN LIVERPOOL Finnish speaking Jews owned shops there. Bought a coat for the baby. A skirt for Hilma.

1032 ARRIVAL IN AMERICA Their ticket was to New York. Should have gone through Ellis Island, which is near Staten Island. Somehow they were put on a Canadian ship. Came to Quebec. Put on the train. No problems. Nobody went through their bags. Their eyes were checked. Everyone had to be vaccinated. Compulsory in Finland to be vaccinated. Other groups, such as the Italians, vaccinated on the trip.

1073 Put on the train in Niagara Falls. Couldn't get off the train. Went to Chicago. They were given food on the train. Stopped in St. Louis (possibly) Everyone who'd been on the ship taken to a big building. Pads on floor to sleep on. People vaccinated. Many nationalities. Spent the night there.

33 TRIP TO WEST COAST Remembers seeing billboards and advertisements painted on buildings. Saw a bunch of pumpkins. Didn't know what they were. Could get some dried American fruit - pruned, apricots, and raisins in Finland.

Took the train to Kalama, WA. Train put on a big barge. Took them down the Columbia River to Goble on the Oregon side. No railroad from Kalama to Portland or from Portland to Goble.

Took train from Goble to Astoria. Father met them at the train station.

Father had a room with a family. Lots of rooms in this house. He ate at a boarding house nearby. Lots of boardinghouses in Astoria. Many single men and single women came to Astoria. Hilma and her family stayed in the house her father was living in.

Hilma started school in Astoria. Couldn't speak much English. No problems in school. Many Finnish people there.

Rented a house in Astoria. It had 2 bedrooms, a living rooms, dining room, and kitchen. Her father was working on a hospital.

Felt at home. Her family was there. Started school right away., Neighbor had 5 girls. Mrs. Kertola(?) took Hilma to school her first day because Hilma couldn't speak any English. This lady is still living. Lives in Brownsmead, Oregon.

Met her husband in Astoria. He was from Finland too. Hilma got a job in a department store after she finished the 8th grade. Hilma ate there too. He shopped at the department store. They got married in 1917. Married for 63 years. Had 2 children. 1 died in infancy. The other died at war in the South Pacific. He'd just graduated from high school.

Tells about husband coming to the US. Chaos in Finland in early 1900's. His parents were a young couple. Mother had twins, Jalver and the girl. Mother's sister took Jalver. He was 9 months old. Came to Astoria, Ore. when father was out of military. Located in Seaside, Oregon. Father, mother, sister came in 1900. Jalver and aunt came in 1902.

FINNISH ORGANIZATIONS Husband belonged to Finnish Brotherhood for 66 years. Belonged to a Finnish church - Evangelical Congregational Church. Both Hilma and her husband were confirmed in that church. The Finnish Lutheran Church was established in Astoria 97 years ago (81).

Hilma's church isn't quite that old. Lutheran church had connections with Finland's State Church. In the beginning, the ministers had to come from Finland. The use of the Finnish language at the church has decreased. The old Finnish church and the old Swedish church are now consolidated into Peace Lutheran Church.

FINNISH IN THE HOME Husband was forgetting. Hilma has kept up with the language. Reads newspapers and books. Many Finnish people in Astoria. Many businesses used to require that employees speak Finnish because many people couldn't speak English.

FINNISH TRADITIONS Likes Finnish cooking. Mother made rye bread. Now gets it from bakery in Astoria.

IMPORTANCE OF FINNISH Proud of heritage. Likes Finland's culture. No illiteracy in Finland. Very resourceful people. Whatever they do, they do well. Everything clean and orderly.

TRIP TO FINLAND She and her husband traveled in Finland from June to September. Visited relatives some but stayed in traveler's inns and motels. Short summer in Finland. Learned a lot about Finland.

Says a prayer in Finnish.

Glad she and her family came here. Her family wouldn't have had the opportunity to get a good education in Finland. Her father had a good job in Finland. They got along all right but the Russians caused a lot of chaos.

Father was glad to leave when his cousin sent a ticket to America. Parents liked it in America. Northern Finland was so cold.

Hilma lives America, but they were treated very well when they traveled to Finland. Learned a lot about social security systems, medi-care system, and farming and school system. Things our school system could learn from the Finnish school system.

Good connections for traveling and learning about Finland. Finnish people love their flag. Friend put his flag up for them at summer cabin.

Describes a grade school they visited in Rovaniemi, which is near the Arctic Circle. Tells about friends they met in Rovaniemi.

Each school has an apartment in the school building. A friend of theirs, who'd adopted a war orphan. Lived at this school in Rovaniemi. 1500 pupils there. Explained about the school system. School lunches free for Finnish pupils. Put up the Finnish flag for the guests.

Talks about friends she visited in Astoria, had a luncheon. Mrs. Bjork (?) was there. Had thought about going to Finland. Hilma called a friend of hers in Helsinki when she and her husband got there. He took them to visit a general from the war days. They put up their Finnish flag for America guests. He gave them a quart of whiskey. When they came home, they served the Finnish whiskey in little jiggers to their friends.

Sister in Portland. Her husband has an uncle in Oulu, Finland. Oulu is called the 'white city.' Well educated man. Gave her a copy of geography book he wrote.