

EI-1057

TYNE KEMPPAINEN

BIRTHDATE: MAY 28, 1906

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AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 92

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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FINLAND, 1923

AGE: 17

SHIP: STOCKHOLM

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

LEVINE: —20th, 1999. I'm here in Florida at the Finnish Rest Home with Tyna—is that how—why don't you pronounce your name?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, the Finns, they call me Toona.

LEVINE: Toona.

KEMPPAINEN: But it's very hard for American people to say Toona. They can't pronounce that y like we do. It's oou.

LEVINE: Oou, uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Uh-huh. So most of them, they call me Tiny.

LEVINE: Tiny.

KEMPPAINEN: Mmm.

LEVINE: Okay, and your last name?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, Kemppainen.

LEVINE: Kemppainen.

KEMPPAINEN: Right.

LEVINE: [laughs] Surprise! Okay, so we'll say Tyna Kemppainen.

KEMPPAINEN: Right.

LEVINE: And you—your name when you were born was Tyna Bachman [PH].

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, it—actually, the whole name was Tyna Erlandten [PH] Tuytar Bachman. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Now, what was—tell me the—the part before the Bachman. What was the rest of it? If you could spell the—the name.

KEMPPAINEN: Bachman?

LEVINE: Yeah—no, before the Er—

KEMPPAINEN: That was mine father's name. At that time, when [unclear] was christened, it was given the father's first name. See, like mine father was Erland [PH]. So it was Erlandten Tuytar and Tuytar is daughter.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEMPPAINEN: See. Tyna Erlandten Tuytar Bachman.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And spell your father's name.

KEMPPAINEN: Um—

LEVINE: Er—Er—

KEMPPAINEN: E-R-L-A-N-D.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And daughter?

KEMPPAINEN: Daughter is—

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

KEMPPAINEN: In Finnish?

LEVINE: Well, in English, can—

KEMPPAINEN: Oh. Oh. [chuckles] In English, of course it is that. D-A-U-G-H? Daughter.

LEVINE: D-A-U-G-T, right.

KEMPPAINEN: D—T-E-R.

LEVINE: But in Finnish, how do you spell it?

KEMPPAINEN: T-U-Y-T-A-R.

LEVINE: Okay. All right, great. And [clears throat] Mrs. Kemppainen came from Finland in 1923 when she was 17 years of age.

KEMPPAINEN: 1923.

LEVINE: Right, and you were 17.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: And you came on the Stockholm.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: And she is 92 years old at the time of this interview. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Okay. If we could start for the tape. If you would give where in Finland you were born. Where in Finland were you born?

KEMPPAINEN: I was born in Myrskylä.

LEVINE: Myrskylä.

KEMPPAINEN: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And that's M-Y-R-S-K-Y-L-A. Myrskylä, Finland. And your birth date?

KEMPPAINEN: Birthday is—I was born 1906, May 28th.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, did you remain in Myrskylä until you left Finland? Were you always living in Myrskylä?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay. Describe Myrskylä. What kind of a—was it a large town or—

KEMPPAINEN: No. Myrskylä County, I think, it is larger. But this was the—the main part of Myrskylä, or the main town, what—they used to call it Kirkonkylä [PH], like a church town or something like that.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: In English.

LEVINE: Where in Finland is it?

KEMPPAINEN: It's about—I think about 125 kilometers from Helsinki to northeast, more on the northeast than—than to—no, west. Must be to the west because it's [unclear] there, more closer to Sweden than Russia.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So to the west, the northwest—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: —of Helsinki.

KEMPPAINEN: Mmm.

LEVINE: And what was your father's name? Er—

KEMPPAINEN: Franz [PH] Erland.

LEVINE: Erland. Franz. And your mother's name?

KEMPPAINEN: Alma Josefviina.

LEVINE: Alma? Is that Alma?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And—

KEMPPAINEN: Josefviina. That's J-O-S-E-F-V-I-I-N-A, I think.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: I think. That's pretty good.

LEVINE: Yeah, that's good. How about her maiden name? Your mother?

KEMPPAINEN: My mother's maiden name was Hurdic—H-U-R-D-I-C.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about grandparents? Were they in the same vicinity?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, they—they were.

LEVINE: Did you know them?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Did you know both sets of grandparents?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes. I—I knew them and her name was Ida. I do not know her maiden name. And then Grandpa's name was Carl.

LEVINE: Now, which side was—was that? Your mother's side?

KEMPPAINEN: No.

LEVINE: Your father's side.

KEMPPAINEN: My father's side.

LEVINE: Do—

KEMPPAINEN: And from my mother's side, I knew her father. But I didn't know her mother because she was dead when I came to remember—

LEVINE: Do—

KEMPPAINEN: —things. But I don't remember his first name because we always just called him Papa.

- LEVINE: [chuckles] Can you remember Papa, experiences, how he was with you?
- KEMPPAINEN: Yes. I was four years old when he died. And I hold his hand.
- LEVINE: Oh.
- KEMPPAINEN: And then—then I went—Mother was in the neighbor's. And I ran there and I said, “[unclear] to come—Mother, come home because Papa is so cold and I can't find any more covers for him.” So when she came home, she found that he was dead.
- LEVINE: Hmm. Uh-hmm. Wh—do you remember a funeral of your grandpa?
- KEMPPAINEN: No, I don't remember the funeral but I suppose it was the same as—
- LEVINE: As here.
- KEMPPAINEN: —usual, yeah.
- LEVINE: And how about your mo—your father's mother and father? What do you remember about them, as a little girl or as a girl growing up?
- KEMPPAINEN: Well, they—they had a little farm. And I was the one of our [unclear] that I went there more often than the others, because they had their daughter's little baby there. And the baby was about nine months old. And when they went to do hay or whatever they had to, so I had to watch the baby. So I carried the baby because, you know, I was little. I was, I think, about nine at the time. And the baby was nine months because—yeah, that's about the age difference we have. And I used to put her in the [unclear]—what they call—they carried the babies this way, you know. Clothes put this way on—on the baby. So the old people say that legs will get straight if they're in that kupolo [PH]. They called it kupolo. I don't know what they would call it here. And I used to put her on mine shoulder and put a hold of her legs. [laughs]
- LEVINE: Uh-huh. So this was to straighten her legs?
- KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, her legs are straight. Yes, always been.
- LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: And she's a nice looking woman yet, at her 80s.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, whose baby was this?

KEMPPAINEN: That was mine aunt's.

LEVINE: Your aunt's baby.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah. One of mine father's sister.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: She had a baby—well, she said that she was engaged and the man left her. And they had the baby.

LEVINE: I see. I see.

KEMPPAINEN: So they—she brought the baby home to mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Now, was your mo—your grandmother and your grandfather, were they out working on the farm?

KEMPPAINEN: Ah—

LEVINE: Did they have a farm, your grandparents?

KEMPPAINEN: They had—they had a small farm. They used to call it [unclear]. See, it belongs to—the land belonged to the—to the—like, a—it was a picker farmer. And he had those—they used to have those [unclear], what they called, who did land for them. And of course, they get certain person of the—growing.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: See, he was not independent farmer.

LEVINE: And what was he growing?

KEMPPAINEN: They don't h—oh, wheat and—and potatoes and even rye, I think there was, and then oats, a lot of oats. They use, you know—what you'd use for oatmeal. They—they grew a lot of—a lot of that.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: In Finland, yeah.

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LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And was it a—was—how—do you have any idea of how big the area was that your grandfather—

KEMPPAINEN: Gosh.

LEVINE: —farmed?

KEMPPAINEN: No, I—I won't—I won't know. But it was a pretty good size—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —farm. And then, you see, it was—to go—to have a—a town. They had to use our horse and buggy. And—and then they had cows and I don't remember if they had chicken. But they have cows and they have pigs.

LEVINE: Hmm. And did your grandmother help out on the farm?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Out in the fields?

KEMPPAINEN: Th—out in the field, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And I suppose when the youngster were teenagers before they went to work outside, I suppose they worked there too. They didn't work anymore when they were grown up and had their own families.

LEVINE: Do you remember any experiences with your grandparents?

KEMPPAINEN: Any what?

LEVINE: Any experiences that you had with your grandparents?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, the only experience that I had that I—I was little mad at my grandpa first. But then they all say, "Oh, Grandpa was just joking." They served me a rye cereal. And I had eaten one cup already and then they wanted me to eat the second cup. And I said, "No, I can't. I'm too full." And Grandpa was so serious and he said, "Oh, yes. You have to eat that. Otherwise, I'm going to lick you." And—and he try it—everything to—not—not for me to eat it anymore, as long as I was full. But I was so stubborn. I just ate it and cried. [chuckles] That was really—

LEVINE: You ate it and then you cried?

KEMPPAINEN: I cried.

LEVINE: And—and he said—

KEMPPAINEN: And ate it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: I ate the second cup and cried.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: He never did that again. [laughter]

LEVINE: Well—

KEMPPAINEN: But otherwise, the life was just like it was out on the farm as it was in the—at home.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. And how many brothers and sisters did you have in Finland?

KEMPPAINEN: I—well, all my sisters was born before I left. Even the youngest one was a year and two months, I think. There were five of us.

LEVINE: Were you the oldest?

KEMPPAINEN: I was the second oldest.

LEVINE: What were the—what were your brothers and sisters d—or sisters from the oldest on down?

KEMPPAINEN: Their name?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Well, mine oldest sister was Lahia [PH]. That means like—she was born on New Year's Day and that was like a gift, see. So they called her Lahia. So then I'm Tyna and the second. Then the third child, she was Helime [PH]. Helime means pearl.

LEVINE: Pearl?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, in English. And she was two and a half years younger than me. And then there were Eilie, who is 12 and a ha—12 years younger than I am.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEMPPAINEN: And the last one—yes, she was born already when I left. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. No, Eilie—Eilie is 12 years younger and—and Tuvie [PH], who is the youngest, is two and a half years—no, she's 16 years younger than—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Or was. She's been dead now eight years.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: The only ones are alive is me here and Eilie in Finland. And she's—she's almost blind.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well—

KEMPPAINEN: But she lives alone yet.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What—when you think back to Finland and growing up there, what are the things that you think about?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I really don't know. Their—their [unclear] is not bad. Mother and Father both were very nice to us. But it was poor.

LEVINE: Hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: You couldn't spend any money like the kids do here. No way. It was a good and—good if they had money enough to buy food.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. What was your father doing for work?

KEMPPAINEN: He was a carpenter.

LEVINE: Did he build houses or did he build furniture or—

KEMPPAINEN: He—he did housing and then—then when they moved, they moved while I was here already. And then they went to—closer to Helsinki and then he did some architecture too. And he builded a little bit bigger buildings.

LEVINE: Hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: But he couldn't—he couldn't do them too long because his other leg was cut off.

LEVINE: Mmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So he had to have an artificial leg. And at that time yet, they made artificial legs from cork.

LEVINE: Hmm. I see.

KEMPPAINEN: They were—they were lighter, I think, than—but he—but then, you see, it didn't—it didn't bend. I remember that—no, I think it must have been under the knees, because—or at—maybe at knees because he couldn't bend his foot—

LEVINE: Hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —anymore. And when he did bicycling, the other leg was—I think it was his right leg—it was just setting there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: He only used his left.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Do you remember health care growing up when you—when you were in Myrskylä, do you remember what people did when they became ill? What kind of health care was available?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, there was no doctor. You had to go to city if you want to find a doctor. But there was some kind of a nurse, I remember, who gave medicine. But she thought that was for that sickness. But if you got really sick, you had to go to a doctor. And when I was a child, we didn't have any doctor. And then usually, when a baby was born, just some relative help you.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was there such a thing as a drugstore? Were there shops at all in Myrskylä?

KEMPPAINEN: Not that I remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was there a market day? Do you remember any—

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, there was market—a marketplace where you could buy coffee and—and those—oatmeal and all kinds of stuff like that. Sugar, flour.

LEVINE: Did your grandfather and grandmother sell any of what they grew in the marketplace on market day?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, that I really don't remember if they—if they were able to sell their stuff or not.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But they—they had to give a certain percentage of it—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: —to the landowner.

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did your mother work at all?

KEMPPAINEN: No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: No, not all.

LEVINE: Okay. And did you—

KEMPPAINEN: I don't know what she did when she was—before she got married. But she never worked.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: But of course, she baked everything and whatever we needed, and sometimes a little more of what we didn't need. Because you know, a lot of people didn't even bake coffee bread, but she did.

LEVINE: What kinds of Finnish food did she make—did she either bake or make for you?

KEMPPAINEN: And—and then, we had baked potatoes and—and of course, mashed potatoes. And then we had a lot of scalloped potatoes.

LEVINE: Scalloped?

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: And then the young potatoes, you know, when they start to come. They—they—those, we cooked skin on.

LEVINE: You boil them?

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, we boiled them. Yes.

LEVINE: So potatoes were a real mainstay in your diet.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, yes. We—we did have carrots and celery. And sometimes we had sweet peas but very, very seldom when I was a—as long as I can remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How about fish?

KEMPPAINEN: And then, no—no fruits but some berries and apples and pears at summertime. But I don't—oh, yes, and we had [unclear] berries in the fall and loganberries in the fall that you could—I think they—I think Mother freezed the loganberries, anyway.

LEVINE: She had a freezer?

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah. No, but [chuckles] weather outside was cold enough. [laughter] We didn't have—we didn't have electricity until I was 15.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: I was 15 when the electricians came to Myrskylä.

LEVINE: How about water? Where did you get your—

KEMPPAINEN: Well, water we had to get from a well

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about washing? Do you remember how your mother did the wash?

KEMPPAINEN: This way.

LEVINE: Scrub board.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes. And then—then she went to some stream to—because stream was running, you know. So they was always in that one stream anyway. And she went there and did like this. You know, so they don't have to pump so much water.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So she let the stream run past the clothing and—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Or whatever. Uh-huh. And did you have any duties when you were little, things that you had to do that you were responsible for doing? Chores?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, we—we had to, but nothing—nothing special. But usually, the older ones had to take care of the little ones, the smaller ones. And I remember my older sister was only a year and five months older. But when she went to school first, and I was rocking their baby basket, I listened to her. And I—I learned to talk more and— and remember and read, you know, at the same time when mine— when I was rocking the baby and—and my sister was doing her homework.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then did you go to school then?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, I went to school. I went to six grades.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Not—that was grammar school. Here, they have—do they have eight?

LEVINE: Well, they used to have eight and then they started with junior high school. And so it was six.

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And then—

KEMPPAINEN: Seventh and—and eight—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: —is junior high. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEMPPAINEN: No, six. That was the highest that they had.

LEVINE: And did you enjoy school?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, I did. I—I went to school. I didn't even think of putting a fight for it. [chuckles]

LEVINE: To go more, you mean.

KEMPPAINEN: No, to go less.

LEVINE: Oh. [laughter] Oh, I see, because you enjoyed it.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then—

KEMPPAINEN: And then at the school, they had a little land there. And any one of us who wanted to make a little corridor, we had—we had a little space. And then we had to take care of it all summer.

LEVINE: You mean you—

KEMPPAINEN: You have to plant it and then when it needs water, we had to water. And I—the fertilizer, I don't remember. I think it just grew out of the [chuckles]—out of the dirt.

LEVINE: So when you had your corridor, what did you grow?

KEMPPAINEN: I had celery and carrots and beets.

LEVINE: And did most of the children have a little corridor that they attended?

KEMPPAINEN: Not all of the—they didn't—they didn't like to work with the dirt.

LEVINE: Hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So they didn't all have that.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: But I did.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And when did you do for enjoyment when you were little?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, well. The enjoyment when I grew up to be bigger, I guess maybe 12 or so, because I know—I know how to dance at 10. But I don't know if they let us go to dance at 12 but I did go when I was 14. We had dances there. And we didn't have any movies. There was no movies at that time when I was in Finland yet. And I was 17 when I left.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And what would be the instruments when you would go to a dance?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, usually either—what do you call this?

LEVINE: Harmonica?

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah. And—and an accordion. There were some—sometimes a violin but very seldom. Mostly, it was just a accordion and that—

LEVINE: Harmonica.

KEMPPAINEN: —harmonica. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. And [clears throat] now, the civil war in Finland, you were—you were about 11 when it started. Do you remember anything about that?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: What do you remember, personally?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I remember because, you know, that they were what they called Red Guard. And the other side was the White Guard. They call it Bunekarte [PH] or Weilkokarte [PH]. See? And of course, we were poor people so we belonged to the Bunekarte, the Red Guard, and how they—how they hated each others. And, you know, that's been a lot of innocent people got killed, just like here in the Civil War.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, hmm.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Any—any violence that you witnessed?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, we didn't have—we didn't have any violence or any actual fighting in the—in the hometown. But of course, we read about it and heard about it, how then—how the Whites killed so many Reds again and so on. And so it—it grew hate between. See, even if they didn't do anything to us. I remember one day they were looking for mine uncle, Father's brother. And you know, we had—they—the bed open like—like this. But then—then you go put it really on when it was closed, like this. But they didn't even—I remember they didn't open. They put their guns through. It was more like a—a—what would you call them? We called them [unclear]. See, it had just a great long, sharp edge, you know. And they put it like this in many places in that bed to find out if he was there.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEMPPAINEN: And of course, he wasn't. He was in—far from us.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So that really—it—it hurt all the way.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. You said you were poor people so you were the Red.

KEMPPAINEN: Most of them were, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything your mother or father told you about, you know, what they believed in or what they were standing for or—

KEMPPAINEN: No, I really don't because they usually talk about that together. And they didn't want the kids know what was going on.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: But of course, we were big enough, the two of us, anyway, to understand little something that it was a really not very nice feeling between those two guards.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: And that's what happened to a lot of—lot of them. If they had a chance, they escape, you know, to Sweden and Norway and—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: To get away from that fighting.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see. Well, after you finished the sixth grade, what did you do then?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I went to do baby sitting.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Because—but how old was I when I—I finished? Second grading. Oh, I don't remember. But I know I went to baby sit when I was 12 and 14. And then—then I was—two years before I left home and—and came here to America, I was what they call a [unclear]. You know, a little—there is other maids in the house. But then there is one girl, usually, who had to do the dishes and—and set the table and—and if there were little children, you had to take care of them. And sometimes, the summertime, I went with the regular maids and—and men who were doing outside work. We went to milk the cows, sometimes many kilometers away. And I went—they sent me with them to get one more. So I was milking cows when I was 14. Oh, I think I did that earlier too.

LEVINE: Now, you were finished with school by then?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And did you live with the family that you worked for?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. So why—what were the circumstances around the decision to come to America?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, my aunt, who was living in Chicago, she wrote to mine father and ask, "Is any of your daughters old enough to come here?"

Well, mine oldest daughter was already married and had—had a little baby because she was almost—well, she got married, anyway, when she was 16 and then had the baby. And of course, she couldn't come. And the other daughter was, you know, the one younger than I. She was too young. Father said, "No, you can't go." So I said, "I go." And here I am.

LEVINE: [chuckles] How did you feel about coming to this country? What were you thinking when you said you would come?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, it was exciting. Really exciting, because, you know, you start to think that you see strange country and strange people and don't even know how to speak with them yes or no.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. So did you travel by yourself?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: And do you remember leaving?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, I—I remember I went two weeks—before I left, I went to Helsinki and stayed with mine uncle, because I had to get all the v—visas and passports and whatnot and arrangement to get to America. So I stayed two weeks there. And then I saw a lot of—lot of mine relatives that I had not seen before on my mother's side.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Was it—was that the first time you'd been to Helsinki or you'd been there before?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And was that—how did you feel about that? Did you see things there were different or—

KEMPPAINEN: Well, yes. Of course, it was different, you know. Different from suburbs. Like it's here too.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: And do you remember going to the port to get the ship?

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, we—we had to—we had to take—from Helsinki, we had to take—anyway, I had to take—when I left, I had to take a train from Helsinki to Turku. And then from Turku, that was the sole city

between Hel—between Finland and Sweden. And then from Turku we took a little boat. And that, I remember when—when we were on that boat, it was such a tiny boat. And we went to Sweden on [unclear] that [unclear] there. And—but I wasn't scared.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And I was never scared when we were on the Atlantic.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: But we didn't have—we only had two days that we couldn't go on the deck.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Because it was rocking so much that they were afraid that we would fall into the sea. [chuckles]

LEVINE: So where did you leave from then?

KEMPPAINEN: From Stockhol—oh, no. Yes, from Stockholm. We got the ship from Stockholm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And that was the name of the ship too.

KEMPPAINEN: That was the name of the ship.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was there anything else about the voyage that you recall?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, there were four of us in the cabin. There were two bunk beds on the other end and two bunk beds on this end. And then they were little space here. There were four girls [unclear]. And I don't even—well, I—I think they were just the regular Finnish names. And we all—all called each others by maiden name. You know, the first name.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, so I don't—they were Helen and they were Ida and—and, you know, something like this.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: I didn't know. Of course, we were told where they came from but after 75 years—

LEVINE: [chuckles]

KEMPPAINEN: —it's hard to remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the Stockholm came into the New York harbor?

KEMPPAINEN: It didn't actually come, because it was in front of Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: See, and then—then that day, when we got out of the ship, we went to—to Ellis Island to have our pa—passports checked and our eyes and our ears and our mouth. They check all that. Then, like—like me and a lot of others, had to take a train to come. Like, I had—I had to take—it was a little boat again, or maybe a—what would they call that?

LEVINE: They call it a tender or—or—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: —a ferry.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: A ferry, I think it was—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —that they took us to New York and then to the train. I came with a [unclear] train. And I remember when we were joking when there were some Finns, that, "Now, we're going to see, maybe, golden streets," and, you know, like it's—and when I got into Penn—

LEVINE: Pennsylvania Station.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: And it was black. So I said, "Well, this is funny. It's just black gold." [chuckles] I didn't think it was coal [unclear] gold dust. You know how it is in Chicago, at that time anyway. And mine aunt and uncle were to meet me. And mine aunt was—just had a baby, I think, four days before, because the oldest baby of hers was born, I think, four or five days before I came.

LEVINE: Why don't you tell about when the ship was in the harbor and you had to stay on board?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, we—yes. And we had—they took us [unclear] first class cabins. And—and of course, the—the mess boys had to prepare to feed us because we had to have food. And then—then the sailors who was there, they went to—to New York City. And they brought us bananas and oranges. And it's the first time I ever tasted any of that. And then in the evening, every evening they had—early evening, they had dance. They had orchestra—an—not an orchestra, but somebody playing music. And there were a lot of tall Swedish men. Oh, they looked like boys, you know. They liked to dance and they taught me how to dance [unclear]. Never—[chuckles] never knew that either. I knew how to dance [unclear] and polka and waltzes but not [unclear].

LEVINE: What's—I never—I don't know what that is.

KEMPPAINEN: No. It's—it's a little bit different from [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, in other words, you had traveled third class.

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: But because Ellis Island was so crowded—

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: —that you had to stay on the ship. And then you stayed on—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: —the ship and went up to the first class.

KEMPPAINEN: Right. So we had—we really enjoyed ourselves. We were young people. Well, why not? [laughter]

LEVINE: So then when you went to Pennsylvania—to station, you got the train.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then where did you go?

KEMPPAINEN: I went to Chicago.

LEVINE: To Chicago.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then your aunt and uncle, did they come to the—to the train station?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And where did you—where did they take you?

KEMPPAINEN: To their home.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you stay with them for a while?

KEMPPAINEN: I stayed one month because my aunt needed little help. And then mine other aunt—there was mine other aunt too, my father's sister, whose little girl—her mother used to take care of. And she wasn't at the station but her husband was. She—she had gotten married here and—and her husband was Finnish. But the aunt who sent for me, her husband was Italian. So I have four cousins that are half Italian and half Finns.

LEVINE: Hmm, uh-hmm. So after a month then, what did you do?

KEMPPAINEN: Then—then mine other aunt—she was working in a—a sanitarium. It was a TB sanitarium at—almost close to Evanston and Chicago. Chicago side, but Evanston was the next town. And there were a lot of Finnish girls working in that sanitarium. And we had a separate building from the—from the patients. The patients—the hospital was farther down, maybe block and a half, you know. It was all in the same area, see. But we had to work that—to go to work. And we only—we only had to work at the breakfast time, dinnertime and the lunchtime. See. And then the—the supper was late—not later than, I think, 6:30 or something. We were through then, the—the part where I was. There were three of us girls. And we waited on the—on the nurses and the doctors. So we were

through about 7 or 7:30, something like that. And then we were in our own. We could do anything we wanted.

LEVINE: Were you living in a kind of a dormitory? Where you lived? Where you slept?

KEMPPAINEN: No, it—it was—you know, first, there was that big building and it was like a hospital. And hospitals, a kitchen and dining room and—and then the place, you know, where we washed the dishes. We carried the dishes from the dining room out of that place and we washed them there. And then, after that we were through. And these were not like—like dormitories. There were several buildings. We girls had a little away from—from the others. And we stayed up there and we had our—only what was in that building was the laundry.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: But they did all the laundry there. I think the—not the patients' laundry. They—they had sent those out, I think. And then we all had boards. It was as wide as—yeah, I think as wide as this. And then it was little longer because all or beds were on that porch. And we slept there wintertime and summertime. Wintertime, we didn't have anything to warm but put hot water into a [unclear] and put the [unclear] in the bed so it warms the bed up.

LEVINE: Hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And all—most of us kept something in our head. But we had good covers.

LEVINE: Hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: That was really good, healthy sleep. And they put those better patients who had TB—it was a TB sanitarium. And they put those patients to sleep on cold porch too.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Fresh air was supposed to be—

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: —part of the cure. Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So how long did you stay there?

KEMPPAINEN: Two and a half years.

LEVINE: And then what?

KEMPPAINEN: [unclear] anymore. Two and a half years I stayed there. And then I came to visit one hometown couple in Minneso—no, it was Superior.

LEVINE: Michigan.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes. No, Wisconsin.

LEVINE: Wisconsin.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah, Wisconsin. And I met a—a woman there who was a cook in—we had—then when you left Chicago, there were different little towns next to Michigan Lake. And they had maids. And she was there in one of those little towns. She was there and—and she was cooking. She was the cook there and she needed a other girl to wait on the table and clean the bathrooms. So she told me. She said, “You’ll never learn English if you don’t get out of that place where you always just talk Finnish and nothing else,” because there were so many—I think there were 18 of us girls in that sanitarium. Finnish girls. So—so when I got back from our vacation, I was there two weeks and then I told the authorities that I want to quit. So I did and I went there. And I stay at—with her till the people went away. They went for a longer period. So she had to go too. She knew that already when she hired me. And then—then I took a—a little place. It was a little house and there was just two people. They never did have children. And they just wanted one girl. So that’s where I went and that’s where I learned to cook.

LEVINE: Hmm. Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: And I stayed there [pause] quite a long time because I had—yeah, I did two and a half years or three, maybe, when I met my first husband. And we just went around together, oh, maybe six months or eight months, something like that, and got married.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. H—did you teach yourself how to cook?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, that—that was kind of odd too because, you know, see—well, yes. I would say that because she opened the cookbook and she showed me what she wanted. I—I didn’t speak much English but I did already. And—and because I even read some of the

cookbook. And I did what the cookbook said [unclear]. [chuckles]
I learned to cook.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how did you meet your husband?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, we were in—I was free that night, all that—all that day, was a Thursday. I got Thursday free and Sunday free. And I went to Waukegan. That was where I actually then came—came to come to Florida from Waukegan. I went to Waukegan and the other girls said, “Let’s go to the dance tonight. There is a dance for this couple.” I said, “Okay, let’s do that.” So we went and I had my pocketbook. And I accidentally sit on the pocketbook and a glass mineral broke out in it. And I said, “Oh, my goodness. Now, I don’t have any sense for seven years to have any kind of a boyfriend.” And there was a—a laugh behind me and—and man’s voice said, “Oh, let’s show them that is not true.” And he took me to—well, he didn’t take me all the way to Highland Park where I was working. But he took me to the train station where I could get a electric car in—into there. But he called me the next day and—and it started.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And then he was—he was about eight years older than I. And then we got mar—we met, I think, in—because it was kind of warm yet. It must have been in August. Yes, it was in August, I think, when I went with him to the train. And then he called me and that’s it. And then in March we got married.

LEVINE: And what was his name?

KEMPPAINEN: His name was [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And—and did you have children?

KEMPPAINEN: We have one son.

LEVINE: And his name?

KEMPPAINEN: And—and then his family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What’s your son’s name?

KEMPPAINEN: Arnold.

LEVINE: Arnold, uh-huh. And so then where did you settle? Where did you live?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, our—then I settled in Waukegan. He started a plastering business. He did that plastering till—till we got this [unclear] time, you know, before the war.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: W—was he from Finland?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: And—

KEMPPAINEN: But not close to me.

LEVINE: From another part of Finland.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: But close to that—Sweden too. He's from down—is in—close to Sweden, very close to that—that big stream that goes between Finland and Sweden.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now—

KEMPPAINEN: [unclear], they call it.

LEVINE: Di—did you stay involved with Finnish groups? Were you in any social groups that were, largely, Finns?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, yes. In Waukegan, there was lots and lots of Finns at that time.

LEVINE: Is this Wisconsin? Is that in Wisconsin?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, the—it had a city name. It had—there were so many Finns because they had very good places to work. There were Mannsville [PH] and—and iron factory and—and then they did some—oh, yes, and they did lots of—there is the Abbott Lab—Laboratories were there. So there were a lot of places, you know, where you could get work.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So that's why there were a lot of Finns. But then when they—when they get to be at the age that they retired, a lot of them came to here to Lantana and [unclear]. But they're all dead now.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: They're—I have so many friends here in Lantana and in [unclear] when we came. I don't think there is—there isn't one who really came to—one woman is living yet in Lantana. But she—all her—rest of her life, she lived in Chicago. And I did—knew her. But she's about the only one who is close to mine age that I have known.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Okay, we're going to pause here. I want to change the tape. Just a minute.

KEMPPAINEN: Okay.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A]

LEVINE: Okay. We're starting tape two here and I'm—I'm speaking with Mrs. Kemp—Kemppainen. I'm not saying—

KEMPPAINEN: Kemppainen.

LEVINE: Kemppainen. And I—we—I'd like to kind of conclude. You—you talk about marrying your—your first husband, who was also from Finland.

KEMPPAINEN: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And what did he do for work?

KEMPPAINEN: He was a plasterer.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And then you stayed in Wisconsin?

KEMPPAINEN: No, we stayed in Waukegan, Illinois.

LEVINE: Oh, Illinois. Okay. You were II—II—I was thinking that was Wisconsin. But you were—have been—were in Illinois.

KEMPPAINEN: I—I—I was—when I was a—a [unclear], yeah, I went for a vacation for two weeks in Wisconsin.

LEVINE: I see.

KEMPPAINEN: Superior.

LEVINE: Right. Okay, well, now, when you think back on coming to this country, and you were 17 years old and you came here traveling on your own and started a new life, do you think that had an effect on you later? Do you think coming to this country made a difference in the way you were or the personality that you had?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I—I am almost positive that it is different. And I would—would have a different life altogether in Finland—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —than in America.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: See, this is so much larger and bigger. And you meet all kinds of life. And you—you get more nutritious food to eat. That might have something to do with a person's personality.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-hmm. And what were the low points in your life and the high points in your life? What were the times that were the worst for you? And what were the times that were the best for you?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I really can't say. I think—I suppose my marriage would have been the h—highest point because death is always sad. But it stays longer in your mind.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: But I really—what I most enjoyed, you know, going someplace is, of course it was nice to go back to Finland to see your friends and

your sisters and my parents. I never see after I left Finland originally. But what I really always said that I am sorry going to Hawaii. I think that's really—Nels and I went to Hawaii in, I think, it must have been '75. Anyway, when mine oldest granddaughter got married and we went to the wedding, and then we went to Hawaii. And she's been—gosh, how long she's been married? Her oldest son is 20 so she must have been married about 21 years old. Well, anyway, that—that was the time that Nels and I went to—my second husband—we went to Hawaii and we had just wonderful time. We flew there from San Francisco to Honolulu and then we had been gone just on the flying height. And the captain said—the pilot says that we have to turn back. “They forgot to fill my gas tank and I am afraid that I won't make it to Honolulu. We have to turn back.” So everybody—you know, they—they were on their edge because, you know, now, if the gas tank will be empty before we get to—back to San Francisco. So mine husband and I, we were sitting, know, on the right side of the plane and then other couple on the other side. And I said, “Well, my husband said somebody who was looking at his hand—they said that you're going to die in the water.” [chuckles] And the man said, “Well, let's hope he dies in a bathtub.” [laughter] But we got safely down in Frisco and they filled their tanks and so we went again. And we got into Hawaii. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, do you remember the Depression in the '30s? The Great Depression?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes.

LEVINE: Did that affect you or—

KEMPPAINEN: Yes. Yes, it—that's the time that I went to work as a maid when we had the Depression.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: See? Because—and—and then our boy was only, I think, about four or five at that time. And he had to stay home with the father.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Father was able to get to work one day here and one day there and—and that's it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And it didn't buy food for them.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about World War II? Do you remember—did that affect you?

KEMPPAINEN: No. No, actually, it didn't affect me because our son got graduated when they were making those guided missiles. And he graduated as a—as a mechanical engineer. And they—they wanted him in California in that—close to Mojave Desert where they make those kind of missiles. And he was very, very good at there. And he didn't have to go to war.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So that way, didn't affect me in any way.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Because Lord knows—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —he may not be here today.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how is this time in your life? This—how is this time here, at the—

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, this time.

LEVINE: —at the Finnish H—[unclear] Home?

KEMPPAINEN: Well, I've been here now eight months and I'm just getting used to—to the idea that I don't have anything. Just to stay. Well, I have few things at here of mine own. But when you have to give up most—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. That's difficult. I see you have beautiful pictures around and you have some of your things.

KEMPPAINEN: These—and these are all—they're all mine [voice breaking] and they were all given to me.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And the pictures are mine and that's my family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. How do you think about your Finn—being Finnish and being American? Did—did you ever become a citizen?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEMPPAINEN: I became citizens in 1937.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And then my husband was a citizen so I didn't have to have a—first papers.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, I see. And di—

KEMPPAINEN: That wa—that was, well, I don't know. I just thought that when you have a son and he's going to have a family, that it's proper to be American citizen.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: And it has giving me my life.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: How do you think about your Finn—being Finnish and being American? How—how do you put those two together?

KEMPPAINEN: Oh, I don't know. That's easy. But not always, because a lot of times you start to talk Finn when you talk to Finn. But here, most of the time, even Finns, they talk English.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Do you—are you glad that you're in a place where there are a lot of Finnish people at this time?

KEMPPAINEN: Yes, there—it's quite often that we talk Finnish. When there isn't anybody who doesn't know Engl—Finnish in the group, then we always want to be polite enough to talk English as long as we can.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: Because now, like, my stepson and his wife—he talks very good Finnish and she under—she's not. Her mother was a Finnish but not her father. She was Swedish. And so she doesn't talk any Finnish or Sweden neither. But she understand Finnish quite a bit because she's been in Minnesota, and there has been a—a lot of Finnish friends around them.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: So—so she understands.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, did anyone from your family come over after you did from Finland?

KEMPPAINEN: Not to stay.

LEVINE: No, for a visit.

KEMPPAINEN: But—but the sister who lives now yet, has been here. I think she came here four times as a visitor—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: —and—and stay at—well, once, I think she stay at three months. But none—none of the others, none of the aunts or the uncles or cousins. Cousins—cousins from—from both sides, from Father's side and Mother's side, because, you know, there is those two aunts. And some of them were born here and some of them have come just for a visit.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Did you ever want to go back? Did you ever think—

KEMPPAINEN: No.

LEVINE: —about moving back?

KEMPPAINEN: No. And of course, not after all this time when I have great grandchildren and just one sister and some cousins in Finland.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEMPPAINEN: I—I have no desire. My life has been here. It's been a good life.

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LEVINE: Well, I think that's a good place to end. I want to thank you so much—

KEMPPAINEN: Thank you.

LEVINE: —for a lovely interview. I've been speaking with Tyne Kempainen.

KEMPPAINEN: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Who came in 1923 at 17 years of age from Finland and is 92 at the time of this interview. And this is Janet Levine in Florida for the National Park Service signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]