

EI-634
EINAR HEINO
BIRTHDATE: MAY 18, 1909
INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 6, 1995
RUNNING TIME: 55:20
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
INTERVIEW LOCATION: FITCHBERG, MASSACHUSETTS
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, NOVEMBER, 1995
TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

FINLAND, 1923
AGE 13
PASSAGE ON "THE CELTIC"

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Heino is the sister of Helmi Masalin, Interview EI-423.
Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of Oral History, 11/7/1995.

LEVINE: Today is July 6, 1995. And I'm here in Fitchberg, Massachusetts at the home of Einar Heino, who came from Finland in 1923 when he was thirteen years of old, years of age about to turn fourteen. And I have interviewed Mr. Heino's sister, Mrs. Masalin who lives in Camden, Maine. And I'm delighted to finally get to meet you.

HEINO: Yes. I thank you. So am I. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Okay. Why don't you give your birth date first for the tape, please.

HEINO: Well, my birth day's May 18th, 1909.

LEVINE: And where in Finland where you born?

HEINO: I was born in the township of Tammela.

LEVINE: Can you spell that?

HEINO: Yes, I can. T-A-M-M-E-L-A.

LEVINE: And did you live in Tammela up until the time you left Finland?

HEINO: Well, we, we lived in couple of, we moved around couple of times in Finland before, before we started.

LEVINE: How old were you when you first moved?

HEINO: Oh, I, I was only about five years old or something like that the first time we moved. We moved from the, from the small city of Forssa to Tammela.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Yeah. When I was about five years old. But then I think we moved a

couple of times after that even. Yeah.

LEVINE: Can you spell the name, the small where you started out?

HEINO: Yeah. Forssa is spelled F-O-R-S-S-A.

LEVINE: Forssa. Now you were in Forssa up until you were five?

HEINO: Yes. That's, that's exactly where I was born. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, do you have any memories up until the age of five years old?

HEINO: Yes, I do. Yeah, I have many, many of them.

LEVINE: Oh, you do. Oh, terrific. Okay. How about your grandparents? Were they living nearby? Did you see them?

HEINO: My grand, well, only my grandfather on my mother's side was living. But on my father's side the grandfather had been dead for many years already. But my grandmother was still living at my time. And, and both, both grandparents from my mother's side, they were still living at my time.

LEVINE: Do you remember any experiences with them? Did you go to their house, or did you do things with them.

HEINO: Yes, I did. Yeah. And they always greeted my nicely.

LEVINE: Can you remember what you grandmother was like, what she did and how she was?

HEINO: She did, she was working on wool most of the time. She was making this knitting yarn most of the time. And she had a, she had a spinning wheel which she was making a woolen yarn most of the time. Sometimes she worked on linen. And she, she was always busy with her hands. She, she lived with us for, for about couple years. Two or three years she lived us until she died. Yeah.

LEVINE: And so she was spinning, were there sheep around? Is that what she was spinning?

HEINO: Yeah. Well, somebody's [sic] elses [sic], she gathered somebody's elses wool, you know. And there, there, the farmers had sheep, you know, and, and she used to making a knitting yarn for the farmers around, surrounding farmers. Yes.

LEVINE: Do you, did, did she actually make things out of the wool?

HEINO: No, no she did not. She might, might have done a little knitting, but most of the time she was just making a yarn.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then did she, did she do that for work? I mean, was she actually selling that, or was she...

HEINO: Uh, I never saw anybody paying her for doing that work. But I guess she did it more to keep her occupied.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now this was your mother's mother?

HEINO: My father's mother.

LEVINE: Your father's mother.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and do you remember her name?

HEINO: Yeah. I think, yeah. Her maid, her first name was Hedda, Hedda.

LEVINE: Hedda Heino?

HEINO: Yeah. No. No. Her name was (he pauses), it was a Swedish name.
Glans. G-L-A-N-S.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did, did she, did you ever go anyplace with her, or did you
have any...

HEINO: No. No...

LEVINE: Did she...

HEINO: Not, not really. I, I have to tell about why my grand, my grandmother's
husband who had been dead for some time already. In her, in his youth, or
most of his lifetime, he had been a paid soldier. You know what they did?
They provided up a house and a parcel of land for, for the family, and, and

he served for, for this village. You know, they, the village hired a soldier to serve in the army. And they provided the family and he served in the army. He must have spent in the army, because part of his life in the olden days.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: That, that is the time when Finland was still occupied by Russia, and they had to serve in the Russian army.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And so when your grandfather died, did your grandmother stay in that house?

HEINO: For a while, yeah, but the, the last years of her life she lived with us. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about, then it was your grandfather on your mother's side that was alive?

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah. He was still living. Yeah. He was making furniture out, out of all kind of crooked thing. You know, three limbs that were crooked, he made furniture out of those crooked limbs.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Yeah. And they were good fellows.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what was his name?

HEINO: Emmanuel.

LEVINE: And your mother's maiden name, which I guess would have been his last name?

HEINO: My, that, the family name was Nakia. And it was spelled N-A-K-I-A. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now did you help ever your help your grandfather, or do you...

HEINO: No, I was too young to do that. Yeah.

LEVINE: What kind of a man was he.

HEINO: Oh, he was a, he was a, a big man. He had some Swedish blood in him.
Yeah.

LEVINE: And your father's name?

HEINO: My father's name, well, he started out to be a Glans, you know. But then he didn't like that Swedish name. There's a (unintelligible) in Finland there where everybody hated the Swedish names. So they started picking up Finnish names for themselves. So my father picked up a name, a name Heino. H-E-I-N-O.

LEVINE: Oh, Heino.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, so it's not Heino. (she pronounces it "High-noh.) It's Heino.
(pronounced "Hay-noh.")

HEINO: But he was, he was born under the name of Glans.

LEVINE: Ah, I see. So Heino is...

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, your, you were always named Heino.

HEINO: Always. Yeah.

LEVINE: I see. Let's see. So your mother's name?

HEINO: My mother's name was Wilhelmina.

LEVINE: Wilhelmina. And do you remember the house, your first house that you remember living in?

HEINO: Yeah. I, I remember, I kind of remember all the houses that we lived in. Actually my father built one of them.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Could you describe that one?

HEINO: Well, it was a log house he built. And, but we didn't live in that house too long.

LEVINE: And what was the main room like?

HEINO: Well, you know, log cabins, they had sort of a big where everybody lived. They also had a, a baking oven, and a, like a kitchen stove, and a, where the baking ovens, where they made all the Finnish bread, the rye bread, you know, they were big ovens. Of course, they, the Finnish people in those days, they usually made bread only about couple of times a year.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: They made enough bread to last them about six months. The bread was hung in the, on the ceiling.

LEVINE: Really?

HEINO: That, it was a bread, you know, it had a hole in the middle, and they, they put a stick through the, through the hole in, on the bread, and then the bread was hung up in the ceiling.

LEVINE: Really? And it stayed, it dried, I guess.

HEINO: It dried up. It was dry, crispy. Very crispy.

LEVINE: Oh. Now what was the oven like? What was it made out of?

HEINO: Brick ovens. They were all brick ovens, yeah.

LEVINE: Could you, could you describe it, what it looked like?

HEINO: Well, it was heated first. The fire, the fire was burned first, you know, in the oven for quite a while. And then all the ashes and everything were swept out of the oven. So they swept it out real clean, and then they put that, put that bread, bread, you know, that raw bread dough in it, you know, form of bread?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

HEINO: And then it was baked in the oven, in the brick ovens.

LEVINE: Did the bread have a particular name that you recall?

HEINO: Just the plain rye, rye bread. Yeah. What the things called, "risileibaer"
[PH].

LEVINE: That's rye bread.

HEINO: Yeah. That's rye bread. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. And, and what did your mother do? What do you remember your
mother doing?

HEINO: He, he, my mother was just a homemaker. And at times she, she was also
a midwife.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: With the neighboring ladies.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: I think she delivered quite a few babies in her life's time.

LEVINE: Do you remember any instances of her being called out, or...

HEINO: Yeah. Just one time. But somebody had a very difficult birth, you know. The baby actually died. They called the doctor, but the baby actually died. It was a very difficult birth. That's the only instance that I can actually remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you had sisters and brother?

HEINO: I had, I had one brother and two sisters. And there's only, only one sister living now.

LEVINE: Now could you name your brothers and sisters in the order from the oldest to the youngest?

HEINO: My, my older sister never lived in this country. She lived in a place named Biltbola [PH] in Finland. And she, she graduated to be a pharmacist. But she, she gave up that profession, you know, and just became farmer's wife. My brother came over here to the United States at the same time as I did.

LEVINE: What was his name?

HEINO: His name was Charles. In, in Finland, Finnish name was Kal, Kalle. K-L, K-A-L-L-E. Kalle. But he changed his name to Charles. Charles Heino.

LEVINE: And your sister?

HEINO: In Finland?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Her name was Aili. A-I-L, A-I-L-I. Yeah.

LEVINE: And, now where, where were you? Were you the second child?

HEINO: No. I was the third child.

LEVINE: You were the third child?

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, right. You have the...

HEINO: And my sister was the youngest.

LEVINE: The youngest.

HEINO: Very youngest. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah. My brother was born in 1899. My sister, the older sister was born in 1900. And then...

LEVINE: And then you were born in 1909.

HEINO: 1909. And my sister Helmi was born 1914.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember any of the, well, did you go to school over in

Finland?

HEINO: That I did. Yeah. I graduated from grammar school. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember what school was like? Can you...

HEINO: Very strict. The Finland schools are very strict. Yeah. They have a lot of men teachers. At that time they had a lot of men teachers.

LEVINE: And was your family religious?

HEINO: No, not, only mildly. Mildly. Not, not too religious. (a telephone rings)

LEVINE: Woops. I'm stop...(break in tape)...Okay, we're resuming now after a telephone call. Let's see. We're talking about school and religion. What religion was your family?

HEINO: Protestant. Lutheran. Lutheran protestant.

LEVINE: And what did you or your family members do for enjoyment in Finland?

HEINO: Well, they had shows. And I think my sister and brother, they went to

dances. I was too young to go to the dances, but they, they, there were a lot of shows around. They performed in these dance halls. They also had shows, you know, stuff like that. Yeah.

LEVINE: You mean like plays?

HEINO: Yeah, plays. Yeah.

LEVINE: And, let's see. And how about you as a young boy? What would you do for recreation or for fun?

HEINO: Went around with a sling shot, trying to shoot the, on, on, the glass things on the telephone wires with the sling shot. That's one of the things, you know. (he laughs)

LEVINE: You put things on it, or you shoot things off the telephone...

HEINO: I tried to break one. Yeah. But it very rarely happened. (they laugh)

LEVINE: I see. And anything else. How about in the winter? Would you, winter...

HEINO: We did a lot of skiing. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HEINO: Yeah. As a matter of fact, when I went to school most of the time I went with my skis on.

LEVINE: How far was it to school?

HEINO: Not to far. Only, I only had to go about a mile or so, just about it that, if was even that. It wasn't too far. Fortunately.

LEVINE: And were there, like, skiing, you know, races or any kind of competition...

HEINO: Well, sometimes at noontime at school there, there's a little hill near the school there, and we did some, like, ski, little ski jumping there, and stuff like that.

LEVINE: And what did your father do for work?

HEINO: My father was a carpenter. Yeah. That was his profession.

LEVINE: Was it furniture, or was it...

HEINO: No, no, building...

LEVINE: Buildings?

HEINO: ...building, like, outdoor buildings, and, and he even built one co-op market there. In the village where we lived he had a contract with the, of course, he had men working with him. But he had a contract on building this one co-op market.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you have, did you have in mind what you would do when you grew when you were a young boy?

HEINO: Well, I always thought that I'd go and work in some store or something like that. Yeah. But it never materialized that way.

LEVINE: Yeah. What are your fondest memories of Finland when you think about it? What, what do you think about...

HEINO: Well, the beautiful summers over there and the continuous daylight. Summers were beautiful. And I can't complain about the winters either, you know. They were snappy and they were cold, but we didn't have too much

wind. When it was really cold weather it was mostly calm weather. Yeah. But it was lousy skiing in winter when it was real cold.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How about ice skating? Did you do any of that?

HEINO: I did try it, a little bit, yeah. But not that much.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now were you particularly close to any family member? Were you closest to any particular family member?

HEINO: No, no. We just jumped around the neighbors there. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, let's see. Is there anything else that you remember from Finland that was either something that, let's see. You were, well, you were there during the first world war.

HEINO: Yes, I was. Yeah. That was a very rough time. Yeah.

LEVINE: What was going on in your particular town then?

HEINO: Well, they were, they were fighting like brother, brother against brother. It was bad, and then there was like a famine there, too. The food very hard to

get.

LEVINE: Do you remember that?

HEINO: Yeah, I do. Yeah. Yeah. We nearly starved.

LEVINE: What were people doing as far as food was concerned?

HEINO: Well, they did the best they could, you know. Scavenger around whatever they could. The thing the Finns missed the most, because the bread was so scarce, and the Finns are great bread eaters, and, and it was, you know, it was very hard to get bread. And that was the toughest part of it. Because the Finns don't mind anything as long as they have plenty of bread to eat.

LEVINE: What kind of food was grown around where you were?

HEINO: Well, they grew potatoes, rye, barley, and turnips, carrots and beets. Yeah. The most of the stuff that they grow over here, too, in the United States.

LEVINE: And how about dairy? Was there, were there dairy farms at all?

HEINO: Oh, yeah. There, some of them were good size dairy farms around. We

only had, I think my family, most of the time we just had one cow.

LEVINE: Oh, you had your own cow.

HEINO: Yeah, we had one cow. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how were people getting around in...

HEINO: Walking. Yeah. Everybody walked in those days. Or, either bicycles. My father had a bicycle.

LEVINE: And, so was food rationed. I mean, could you go...

HEINO: Yeah, it was rationed, too. Yeah. But even the stores didn't carry too much. So it was really hard to get. There was no sugar there for the longest time. We didn't get any sugar at all.

LEVINE: How was it decided that your family would move to the United States?

HEINO: Well, we had relatives over here, and they kind of sort of coaxed us to come over here. They, they figured that the living conditions were much better over here than they were in Finland at that time. Which is almost, almost

the reverse today. Yeah. Which is a funny thing. Yeah.

LEVINE: So, so these people sort of sponsored you, would you say, or...

HEINO: They did. Yeah. They actually sponsored us. Yeah. And I think it worked out good. At least I didn't go through the second world war. The terrible war. The Russians there, I didn't have to go through that. If I had been living over there I'd probably be dead by now, or long before this. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So, your entire family, father, mother...

HEINO: Except my older sister.

LEVINE: Except your oldest sister.

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The four of us came. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, why did your older sister not come?

HEINO: Well, she, she had just graduated from the University of Helsinki to be a pharmacist. She had a nice job waiting for her, so she decided to stay over there and practice in her own profession.

LEVINE: And so, do you remember what you knew about the United States, or what you thought you would be coming to when you left?

HEINO: Well, we, we pictured all kinds of things there, but I really didn't know much there. But we, we figured that the living was much better here in the United States, which it actually turned out to be that way when we came.

LEVINE: Do you remember what your mother packed?

HEINO: Well, she packed her Bible for one thing. Yeah. And I think she had a pair of scissors with her that she brought here, and, and she went back to Finland with them again. (he laughs)

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: That part I remember.

LEVINE: Did you personally bring anything in particular?

HEINO: No, not myself. No. No. No.

LEVINE: Now, were you examined before you left?

HEINO: That we were. We were examined before we left from Finland. Then we were examined again at the Ellis Island. We really went through the...

LEVINE: Through your paces. (she laughs) Well...

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...what do you remember about the examinations?

HEINO: Well, we were vaccinated in Finland, but at Ellis Island they sort of a just looked us over. I don't remember being vaccinated anymore. But they separated the men and the women, women. And, of course, I went with my father and my brother when they separated the men from the women. And I noticed, noticed one thing that the men had to haul down there pants. I think they were looking for any diseases, you know. Something like that. Venereal diseases, you know, or something like that. But, of course, I was a young kid, so they, they just told me to go right through. Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, do you remember leaving your town when you were about to get on the ship?

HEINO: Yes, I do.

LEVINE: What was that like, the departure from your town?

HEINO: Well, I don't know. We, we didn't, we didn't cry. I don't know. We weren't too happy but we didn't cry, either, so.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: That was probably the dead of the winter when we left Finland.

LEVINE: Was your grandmother alive at that time?

HEINO: No, no. She had passed away already then.

LEVINE: Well, did people come and say good-bye, or...

HEINO: Yeah. Many, many came, many people came and said good-bye to us.
Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HEINO: And we, they were wishing us luck.

LEVINE: And, had, had a lot of people gone from, from your town to the United States. Was that something that was happening a lot, or not so much?

HEINO: No, not, not from our place. Not, not anybody else that I know.

LEVINE: Oh, you didn't know of other people who did that?

HEINO: No. No, not from, from where, where we come from.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: So, so you left, and how did you get to the port? What port did you leave from?

HEINO: We port, we left from the port Hango. It's on the paper right there. Hango. That's the port that we left. Yeah. We went there by rail.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And had you ever been on a train before?

HEINO: No. I think that was the first time for me.

LEVINE: Yeah? Do you remember anything about the train to the port?

HEINO: Well, the one that started off from Forssa, there's a narrow, narrow gauge train. And then they went to Tammela where we picked up a regular train that, the regular size train. Yeah. That, it was a narrow gauge train that took us to the city of Tammela, and then we had to change trains right there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was the name of the ship?

HEINO: You mean the one that took us first from Finland? We sailed on one ship from, from Hango to, to Liverpool. To, to England. Which one is, no, we left from Liv...

LEVINE: Southampton?

HEINO: No. It was one of those cities on the east coast of England that we, and then we crossed England on a train. Overnight train. We crossed England. And then from there we took a ship. From Liverpool we started. Took the ship to United States.

LEVINE: Okay.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was The Celtic, right?

HEINO: Yeah, that was the Celtic. But, but the little ship that we sailed from Finland, the name was Astri. A-S-T-R-I. Something like that.

LEVINE: Ah.

HEINO: Yeah. And I, I heard that later, later on it had sunk anyway somewhere in the Baltic Sea.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Yeah. It was even leaking that time that we crossed. It was leaking so it was kind, they had a load of the cargo on one side, so the, the ship was kind of tilting on one side all, all the way, because it had a leak on one side. So they kind of raised the one side that had a leak, leak, so that's the way we sailed.

LEVINE: Wow.

HEINO: Yeah. It was a very primitive ship. There, there was no store, cab, cabinets there. Nothing, you know. We all slept in the same great, big one opening there. We all slept and ate.

LEVINE: How long did it take?

HEINO: Oh, about three days I guess it took us to, to sail from Finland to, to England.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember any experiences aboard ship in, during the voyage?

HEINO: Yes. The Celtic was a very nice ship there. And this guy, he was an interpreter on the ship there. And he had actually built a swing for my sister

and I, so we were able to swing on the, on the top deck.

LEVINE: Yeah? And how was the, what, were you in the steerage? Were you down in the bottom, a big room, a big space, or were you in a cabin?

HEINO: We had cabins on Celtics [sic].

LEVINE: Yeah?

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how was the food?

HEINO: Very good. Very good.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HEINO: Except it was a little it strange. It was different that the Finnish food, but it was still good. It was sort of a English style. Kind of spicy more or less.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

HEINO: My mother always thought that the cooks were dropping the cigarette ashes in the food because it was so spicy.

LEVINE: And, let's see. So, you took the ship, do you remember the ship coming into the New York Harbor?

HEINO: That I do. It was in the afternoon. And everybody rushed on the deck to see the Statue of Lib, you know, Statue of Liberty. Oh, yeah. Everybody rushed on the, on the deck.

LEVINE: And what were they doing?

HEINO: Oh, they were yelling and, you know, welcoming the new country. Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember, was it exciting? Did you feel...

HEINO: It was sort of exciting. Very exciting. Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: And then what? What happened then?

HEINO: They herded us on, on Ellis Island. Then we came into this great, big room there. There was benches there and we had to stay there on one section

there for a little while. And then they moved us again where they examined us. And after we got through with that they fed us. And it was sort of a buffet style food. Sort of a dinner that they gave us, you know. It was good. And one thing I remember. I had never eaten any pickles before. And this guy that was kind of in charge of the whole affair there, he saw that I really liked the pickles. So he came around at the (unintelligible) again, and he offered me some pickles, because I really liked them. I had never eaten any pickles before. And I really went to town on them.

LEVINE: And did you see any other things that were new to you that you recall on Ellis Island?

HEINO: No, no. They didn't, they didn't let us roam around hardly at all. They sort of kept us in the back all the while. And from there then they put us, put us on another ship that we sailed through the night. We started sailing again the same evening, when they put us on another ship, which brought us to a place, I think it was Fall River that this little ship came. It was very nice, though. Nice cabin. It was very lovely. But we slept on that. The beds in that cabin, nice lovely beds, beds in the cabinets [sic]. And we slept through the night. And then in the morning we got off of that boat, and they put us on a train that headed towards Boston. And in Boston I remember we, I guess some guys, there must have been a, some Finn there, heard us

speaking in the Finnish language. And he asked us if there was anything that we'd really like to eat or drink. And he said, my mother said would it be possible to have some buttermilk. And the man says, "Sure. I'm sure that they have buttermilk." So this guy, he went to the, somewhere where there's a cafe or something there. And we all had a big glass of buttermilk which really tasted good then after, after the long voyage. It was on an English ship. I don't remember having any milk at all. They only gave us coffee with our meals. Coffee or tea. One or the other.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: So your, your first stop, really, where you got off of transportation was Boston?

HEINO: Yes. We, yeah. In from Boston then we had to take another train to Maine. And that time we had to ferry over the, in Bath, Maine we had to ferry across the river, you know. There was no bridge there at that time, and they ferried us. The whole train was ferried across the river. And

then it continued from, from there on to Rockland.

LEVINE: After you ferried across the river, you got on another train?

HEINO: No, it was the same train. They, they ferried the whole, whole train.

LEVINE: Oh, the whole train.

HEINO: Yeah. It was ferried across the river. Yeah. So we just stayed, stayed in the same, same coach all the while. We didn't have to change at all.

LEVINE: What was the train like? That train that went to Rockland?

HEINO: Well, it was a coal burning. Usually all the trains at that time were coal burning. They made a lot of smoke.

LEVINE: Was it comfortable?

HEINO: Yes. I don't think it had too much heat. It was more on the cold side, because it lacked the heat.

LEVINE: Why was it that the family went to Rockland, Maine?

HEINO: Well, that's where, then my, my uncle came after us in Rockland. That's where, and from there, he came with a double runner, he had a team of horses with a, there was still snow on the ground. There was a lot of snow on the ground yet. And he came with a team of horses with a big, long double runner sled. And we loaded all our bag and baggage on that big sled. And from there he brought us to his place. That's why we stayed till, till we bought our own farm over there.

LEVINE: And do you remember his, where his place was?

HEINO: It was in Rockville. No, actually in West Rockport, which only about, only about two or three miles from Camden.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And did he have a farm?

HEINO: He had a farm. Yes. That he did.

LEVINE: What kind?

HEINO: Well, it was sort of a blueberry farm. But he, but they had cows and he had a team of horses. He had a truck and he had an automobile. A real automobile which was very fancy in those days. But then, of course, you know, the people didn't use the automobiles in wintertime at all. The automobiles, they jacked them up for the winter in the state of Maine.

LEVINE: And what? Put them in the garage?

HEINO: Yeah. Either garage or barn. Yeah. But they didn't plow the roads at all. They just packed the snow down.

LEVINE: Wow. So, what kind of a farm did your family have?

HEINO: Well, we had some fields. We raised our potatoes and vegetables. And there was a little patch of blueberries, too, but often we went to work and picked blueberries for other people. Because it only took a couple of days to pick the blueberries that we raised.

LEVINE: Well, this was now a change for your father, because he had been a carpenter, right?

HEINO: Yeah. That's true. Yeah. But afterwards he did some carpenter work in this country, too. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, was your, did you and your older brother help out on the farm?

HEINO: Yes. Yes, we did. Of course, then after a while my brother moved out. He actually got, you know, he got married after seven years. He got married and moved out on his own. And I stayed with my folks till they went to Finland. In the meantime I got married, too. And then the place was left for me and my wife.

LEVINE: The farm?

HEINO: Yeah, the farm. Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, can you remember those early days when you first got to Maine? Do you remember any things that...

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...were new and different that struck you as...

HEINO: Yeah, well, for one thing they sent me to school. I think it was the following day. After, the day after we arrived I had to go to school, which I hated to do all over again. I thought, I thought that I was all done schooling, but I had to go to school right away.

LEVINE: And how was the school compared with the school you had been to in Finland?

HEINO: (he laughs) Very easy. Yeah. Yeah. They were not strict like in Finland. They were very strict, and these school weren't very strict at all. Yeah.

LEVINE: And so how, how, tell me about learning the language. How was that for you?

HEINO: Well, that was kind of difficult. Yeah, very difficult.

LEVINE: Do you remember what helped you in picking it up?

HEINO: Well, I don't know if, see, they, the teachers didn't allow us to speak any Finnish at all. That was strictly forbidden, you know. They didn't want us to, they wanted us to speak just English. And if you didn't know the

meaning of the words, well, that made it hard. If somebody told us that, you know, what the word means, well, that would have helped, but that was forbidden.

LEVINE: Were there many Finnish children in the school?

HEINO: Yes, there were quite a few, quite a few Finnish children, yeah. But once, of course, once we got outside, you know, out of the sight of the teacher then we started jabbering in Finnish. All them kids that went to school with me, they knew how to speak, the Finn kids, they knew how to speak Finnish.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now were the other children, were they nice, or were they, were they mean to the newly arrived children?

HEINO: They were very nice. They were very nice. The only thing that they marvelled, because I had the high boots, you know, and they couldn't get over looking at my boots. And I told them that they're water proof. So there was sort of a group right there, and they wanted me to go in, well, you know, across the brook many times, you know, to prove that the, my, my boots didn't leak any water. They, they couldn't understand that the leather didn't get soaked through. But see, they made different kind of a

leather in Finland there. It was water proof.

LEVINE: So did you, were, your clothing was still the clothing from Finland that you started out with?

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That, that was the clothing that I was wearing when I went to school. Yeah.

LEVINE: And so how long did you stay in school?

HEINO: The rest, the rest of that season, and then the following, the following fall I went back to school and through that the, the following winter. And that was the end of my schooling. Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and then did you work on your father's farm? Is that what you did?

HEINO: Yes. Yeah. I was always helping my father. We, we went, in the wintertime we cut wood. In the woods. Cut wood. And in the summertime worked on the fields.

LEVINE: How was the house you lived in different than the one you lived in in Finland, or was it pretty much the same?

HEINO: No, it was entirely different. Yeah. Yeah. We had separate rooms, which were something, something else. Instead of just one big room, one big log cabin, you know, we had separate rooms. We had bedrooms and living rooms, kitchens and all that stuff. Yeah. With a iron stove in the kitchen. Kitchen range was made of iron. Which they didn't have those kind of things in Finland. They were all brick ovens, and stoves, everything was masonry.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how did your, were your mother and father and sister and brother, were they, and yourself, were you happy you had come in the beginning or did you, were you sorry?

HEINO: No, they were always happy. Yeah. Yeah. Even when, when my father left, went back to Finland there, he said he was always happy through the years he lived in this country. He said he had no regrets.

LEVINE: Now did your mother carry over certain customs or ways of doing things that, that were the ways that she did them in Finland?

HEINO: Yeah, yeah. He, yeah, she did her cooking mostly the Finnish style. Made a lot of coffee bread. The Finnish coffee bread.

LEVINE: Any other dishes that you remember that she made?

HEINO: No. A lot of beef stew. The Finns, Finns, they like the beef stew.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now did she make that bread, the kind that you used to have drying up on the ceiling in Finland?

HEINO: No, no, no, she, no. No, we had to facilities, facilities to make that type of, flat kind of bread anymore, because that had to be baked in a brick oven and we didn't have any brick ovens, you know. All the baking was done in a stove oven. So, so we, we, from there on we bought our bread. There was a Italian bakery in Rockland, Maine, and that's where we bought this rye bread. We went there, every Saturday we bought five loaves of rye bread. It was sort of a round thing, you know. But it was good bread.

LEVINE: And how long would that last?

HEINO: Well, the five loaves lasted us the whole week, you know. So we stocked up, stocked up. People had to have it, or when they, farmers, you know, they went to town on Saturday nights and did their grocery shopping on Saturday night. And that's when we bought our bread, too.

LEVINE: Oh, was there a social, was there a community in West Rockport, Rockport, or in Rockland...

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: ...of Finnish people?

HEINO: Yeah, they had societies there. Yeah.

LEVINE: What would the societies, what would people do when they attended a society meeting?

HEINO: They had different meetings. And they had plays. Like I said, we had plays in, and music and dancing. Usually there was dances on Saturday nights, too. After people got through with their shopping then they went to a dance or a show. (unintelligible) used to go to the movie theatres.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Which used to cost a dime.

LEVINE: Is that the same movie theatre that's still on the main street in Rockland?

HEINO: Well...

LEVINE: Is that where it was?

HEINO: Well, the last time that one, one of the theatres was still there, but I don't know whether they have any movies there anymore or not. That I don't know. Yeah. That one I think used to cost us a whole quarter to go in there. But there's another one, then there was three movie theatres in Rockland. And one, you could get in for a dime, and another one was fifteen cents, and I think the one on Main Street, I think it cost you a quarter to go into that one.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Woops. (His microphone falls off)

HEINO: The sound went off I guess.

LEVINE: So, so, did, did the Finnish people tend to keep to each other? In other words, was your family interested in mainly associating with other Finnish people, or did they want you to become Americanized?

HEINO: No, no. They, they socialized with the Finnish people mostly. Yeah. As a matter of fact, my mother and father, they never learned to speak English. Because they were always amongst the Finnish people, sort of.

LEVINE: And did they become citizens?

HEINO: No, no. They did not.

LEVINE: But you did.

HEINO: Oh, yes, I did. Yeah. As a matter of fact I became a citizen about a week after I got married.

LEVINE: Oh.

HEINO: Then the clerk of courts asked me, he said, why didn't you, why didn't you get, why didn't you get civilized before you got married? That was sort of a hard thing to say.

LEVINE: Yes. Now, was your wife a Finnish woman?

HEINO: She was Finnish, but she was born here in Fitchberg.

LEVINE: Oh. What was your wife's name?

HEINO: Her name was Tyyne. T-Y-Y-N-E. The American, American people call her "Tiny." T-Y-Y-N-E.

LEVINE: And what was her maiden name?

HEINO: Lehtinen. L-E-H-T-I-N-E-N.

LEVINE: And do you, do you recall how you met?

HEINO: Yes. Her mother, well, she came, she was living here in Fitchberg with her father, and her mother had a farm up in Maine, because I guess the mother and father, they weren't divorced but they were separated. And the mother had a farm over there near us. And she came to visit her mother. And, of course, mother, her mother was good friends of my folks. And, and the mother came, one night mother came visiting us and brought the daughter with her, and that's how we met. And that's how it started.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So did you like her right away?

HEINO: Yes, right away. Yeah. As matter of fact, we were married almost fifty-five years.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: What was it you liked about her?

HEINO: Oh, I don't know. She had a very friendly disposition. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HEINO: That's one thing. Yeah. We always, as a matter of fact I don't think we ever argued. In all our married life I don't think we ever had an argument.

LEVINE: That's amazing.

HEINO: Yeah. That's how well got along.

LEVINE: Did you have children?

HEINO: Yeah. We, only one son.

LEVINE: And his name?

HEINO: His name is Richard.

LEVINE: And do have grandchildren?

HEINO: One granddaughter, and one great grandson, and another one on the way.

LEVINE: Oh. That's lovely. When you think about coming to this country at a young age from Finland, do you think that there are sides of you that are sort of Finnish and sides of you that are American? What would you say is sort of Finnish about you?

HEINO: I think, I think I'm about half, half and half. I think I'm about half a Finn and half American.

LEVINE: What would be the Finnish parts of you, or the side of you that Finnish?

Do you, do you, can you sort of say what about is like a Finn?

HEINO: Well, I still like to socialize with the Finnish people, that's for one thing. I even go to the Finn dances here in Fitchberg from time to time.

LEVINE: Oh. So there's a number of Finnish people in this...

HEINO: Oh, yeah. See, we have this Finnish-American club in, in Fitchberg, yeah, which is quite active.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: They just had a big Fourth of July celebration over here. All kinds of athletic events and dances and things. Let's see, last Sunday, there was a tremendous crowd over there. A lot of Finns, you know, they drop over here. They come from Florida and they, they usually come for the summer festival over here. And then when it's over they go back to Florida again, or they may stay here two or three weeks, you know, with friends. And then they go back to Florida again. Because a lot of those that living down in Florida now, they're former people from, from Fitchberg. There's also some former people from Maine that go down to Florida. Spent their, you know, they're retired people.

LEVINE: Why was it that your mother and father decided to go back to Finland?

HEINO: My mother's brother had some family problems, and he started begging my mother and father to go back there. He said, I'll fix you up good if you'll come back. You know, you won't be sorry. So they gave in and went back, you know, sort of to help him out. And another thing also, my folks, they want, they had always had the idea that they wanted to go back to Finland, die in Finland. You know, their native country. Which actually did happen then.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: But they went there just the wrong time. Just, just before the war started over there with the Russians. Yeah. So they had a little hardship over there, but not really bad.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, how do you feel about this phase of your life?

HEINO: I'm very...

LEVINE: This phase of retirement and...

HEINO: I'm very content with my life as it is, as of now. Yeah. Yeah. God has blessed with a good health, and I reach a ripe old age.

LEVINE: How old are you now?

HEINO: Eighty-six years old.

LEVINE: Wonderful. And how do you feel about having come to this country, having immigrated to this country. Do you think that made a big difference in the person you became?

HEINO: I think it did. Yeah. I love this country. Yeah. This is what I, everything is what I like.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Can you say what it is about this country that, that you...

HEINO: Well, I, I like the freedoms in this country for one thing. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. What do you feel very proud of that you've accomplished in your life, makes you feel good?

HEINO: Well, I have a, I have a wonderful son. He's done well in his lifetime. So there's one thing that I'm proud of. Yeah. That's about it.

LEVINE: Well, now, as far as your work life, you started out on the farm. Did you continue in farm work? Is that mostly what you did?

HEINO: Yes, I did, we did that, you know. Also my wife was helping then, you know. But then when the war started, 1940, when the war started, and the defense jobs. You know, they started to have the defense jobs. That was kind of draw, drawing thing, you know. I wanted have a little better living, you know. So we, we came back here to Fitchberg and I got a job here right away. I got a job in a foundry at first. And I worked in a foundry for a while. Ten or more years. And then I began to work with the machines. And I got interested in working with the machines and I finally became a machinist.

LEVINE: Oh. So when you retired, is that what you were doing, a machinist?

HEINO: I was a machinist. Yeah, that was my trade. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wonderful.

HEINO: Life, life has been good to me. I can't complain. Yeah.

LEVINE: And, is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to say about Finland or coming to this country?

HEINO: Well, all I know that Finland is a beautiful country. That's one thing. Nobody can deny that. And the standard of living over there is excellent now. Yeah. Some claim that it has surpassed the United States. That I can't prove it, but...

LEVINE: Have you visited?

HEINO: Yeah. We went, wife and I, we went back there in '69. We spent a month in Finland that time.

LEVINE: And how did you feel about being there?

HEINO: Oh, they treated us like royals, you know. They...

LEVINE: This is family, and, that you still have there?

HEINO: Yeah, yeah. We visited my sister and my aunts.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HEINO: Yeah. It was good. It was a very, very nice experience.

LEVINE: When you look back on your Ellis Island experience, how do you feel about that?

HEINO: Well, it was sort of an experience, but a lot of things that happened I've sort of forgotten already. Some of things, you know, because it was such a long time ago. But it was a thrill.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, if there's anything else that you can think of that we haven't covered about, about coming from Finland and being in Rockland, has, has Rockland, Maine changed a lot since you first saw it?

HEINO: Well, I don't think it's changed that much really. They, they do have the lobster festivals over there. They've been having them for many years

now. Camden is very nice place. Beautiful place. Yeah.

LEVINE: And you're happy here in Fitchberg?

HEINO: I'm very happy here in Fitchberg. If, if I, if I didn't have my son and his family living over here I think wife and I would have retired in state of Maine, because we actually did like state of Maine so much. But where my son lives here in Massachusetts, and grand daughter and the rest of the gang now. So we just decided to stay over here. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, it's certainly been a pleasure talking with you. And I think your son and your grand daughter will be interested in hearing your tape.

HEINO: I'm sure they will.

LEVINE: And it will be on file at Ellis Island as well for posterity. So thank you very, very much, Mr. Heino...

HEINO: Yeah. Yeah. You are most, you are most welcome. (they laugh)

LEVINE: And Mr. Heino came from Finland in 1923 when he was just about to turn fourteen. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service on July

6th, 1995, and I'm signing off.