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A report to Lakehead University and the Thunder Bay Finnish Canadian Historical Society by Leonard Wm. Kengas (shortened from Kankaanpää) of my working life career as a Logging contractor, Lumber Manufacturer, Tourist Outfitter, Bush Pilot, Log Home designer and builder, and a land developer, from 1947 to 2003

attention of Dr. Kaija Warkentin, Dept. of Anthropology  
 Dr. Carmen Mihai, Faculty of Bus. Admin.  
 Martti Kujala, Finnish Can. Historical Society

### The Story of my family immigration.

My paternal grandfather, Juho Heikki Kankaanpää was born in 1875 in a rural farming area close to the village of Isojoki in SW Finland. He was married to Eliina Karki in approx. 1897. They raised 2 daughters and six sons. Juho Kankaanpää worked as a forest products river drive supervisor. He and his brother Oscar built a water powered feed mill and sawmill on the Karki river rapids in early 1900.

Juho Kankaanpää came to Canada, to Thunder Bay in June 1922 with three of his sons, Eino (my father) Lauri and Leander. They went to work for local logging contractor C.W. Cox in the Black Bay Sennersaula. The father Juho, as a saw filer, to file buck saws for Ukrainian and Polish immigrants

My maternal grand parents came from, grand. mother Ida Lahtonen, from Oulu area in Finland in 1895 to Calumet, Michigan, with her brother Kalle, who worked in the copper mines. <sup>as a blacksmith</sup> Ida <sup>worked</sup> in Duluth and Two Harbors, Minnesota, <sup>as a clearing</sup> and then came to Thunder Bay in 1900, where she married Anselm Luoma. They purchased a 160 acre farm on Mapleward Road, 6 miles N. of Dawson Rd. They cleared approx 50 acres of field from forest, and operated a dairy farm until their deaths in the mid 1950's. They raised a family of 6 boys and two girls, of which their daughter Rose, was my mother.

Anselm Luoma came from Karvia, in central Finland. He always kept Clydesdale work horses, and helped build many of the rural roads in Gorchom and Ware townships. He was also a logger, sold pulpwood and hauled the wood to Port Arthur and Fort William with their own 1930 International 2 ton truck. He built his own sawmill, to supply the material for their farm buildings. Mr. Luoma produced a lot of foundation piling jack pine for construction of Thunder Bay grain elevator foundations, which he delivered in winter months to the elevator sites with his horses and sleighs, all the way from Surprise Lake.

In 1915 Ida and Anselm Luoma donated two acres of their farm for the Ware Twp public school and cemetery, N 1/2 lot 1 Cor 2, Ware Twp. Sixty-five local pioneers are buried there, including Juho & Leonard Kankkarsaari, and Robert & Theodore Luoma.

My parents, *Uuno Korkkampi* and *Lore Luoma*, were married in Port Arthur by a Lutheran minister in 1928. Father purchased a 140 acre woodlot on land in Ware trap, where, as did many other Finnish immigrants, cleared land for a crop of hay and oats, and a garden. They cut and sold pulpwood and delivered it to Port Arthur and Ft. William mills. We always had a Jersey cow, Daisy, and her calf, approx. 30 chickens, one or two pigs for winter meat and sausages, and a well looked after draught horse in a warm stable.

Our family was 4 boys and a girl. We never had much money, but we had no debt, and a good life. It was a great occasion to receive a pair of \$4.00 RBLT's (rubber bottoms, leather tops) @ first snowfall to walk or ski the 3 1/2 miles to Gorham and Ware School #2, in comfort.

Our country-raised kids were a victim of the times. It was a few years before school buses arrived. It would have cost \$40/mth. for room and board in Thunder Bay to attend high school, which our parents could not afford. It also tended to be the thinking of rural Finnish parents, that it was more important that a kid was trained how to work. I also understand now how the 3 1/2 mile walk, ski or bicycle to school, mostly through short cuts through the forest, toughened me up for life . . . . . so that even today @ 71 years of age I can selectively fell and limb trees in the forest, safely in the forest, without tiring, 5 days a week.

I also learned to understand wild life from their tracks, and plant species. Black bears and wolverines always were away. There were no cougars. A white tail deer's life was numbered in minutes, even when chased by a single wolf, I hope it died of a heart attack before the fangs closed in. The huge NW Ontario forest at our doorstep was our friend, we learned how to understand the lay of the land. We know that the east wind meant rain or snow, the west wind brought clear weather. During winter months, the south wind tended to bring mild weather.

The simplicity and economic life style of Henry Thoreau's "Walden" tends to be my favorite book.

## Memories of beginning a business

I was 15 yrs old in 1947. I had grade eight, and a year and a half of grade 9 & 10 correspondence school study. Grades 6, 7 & 8 were taken in Ware Township school Section #5. It was one classroom, grades one to eight with approx. 10 pupils. We were blessed with an exceptional teacher, Evelyn McIntyre, an elderly lady from S. Ontario. She knew we probably would never have a chance to go to high school, and taught us broad, valuable lessons in life. For the boys - why we should never smoke (none of 4 from her class never have) she taught the girls how to make clothes.

A lot of exposure to mathematics, spelling, poetry, literature.

The larger logging contractors I heard of seemed to all be affluent, and successful. Their workmen spoke well of them, their organizational abilities, their work forces of over 100 men and well-maintained equipment, and well cared for horses.

I decided to go into logging, or to work for Ontario Hydro, even power line construction. <sup>Electricity</sup> ~~Power~~ will always be in demand, <sup>but</sup> due to forest know-how, logging won.

I had saved \$350.00. An elderly

~~Scott~~ Scotch man, Howard Trotter, owned 100 acres of forest only 3 mi. west of home. The Abitibi Paper Co. gave me a contract to supply their Fort Arthur Provincial Paper Mill with peeled poplar pulpwood. The price for the wood lot was \$600.00. My father <sup>looked</sup> borrowed me what I was short. I hired 6 Finnish local neighbours to come to cut pulpwood, <sup>@ sap peeling time May-July</sup> and helped a trucker to load by hand, 4 ft wood. The pay cheques were issued every 2 weeks, <sup>after wood was delivered</sup> so I was able to meet the cutters and truckers payroll. There was a log cottage on the property, which I repaired for a work-man's quarters, and moved it by a spring creek location.

I was able to operate within the incoming cash flow.

The Nature of the Business Endeavor and changes in it over the years.

The year 1949. Another vacant wood lot adjacent mine. It was for sale for \$1,200, almost 300 acres, partially cut over, but a substantial amount of standing timber remaining. I had purchased a used 1949 Pontiac car, which I particularly at that age enjoyed. However, I sold it <sup>for \$1,800.00</sup> to purchase the 2nd wood lot, and put a down payment on a used International TD9 dozer, to build road with, and pull pulpwood to road side. The pulpwood production increased from 600 cords/year @ the first property to approx 2500 cbs/yr., produced by 12 workmen.

The gasoline powered chain saw became available at this time. It increased production dramatically, and by choosing extra productive loggers and working harder myself, in the summer mths from 4 AM to 4 PM, to take advantage during the summer of cooler weather, we were able to produce more pulpwood with 1/2 less men. 6 vs. 12.

In 1952 I located a timber area 1 1/2 mi. x 10 miles E-W. 18 miles N of home <sup>E of Day Lake</sup> with a valuable conifer forest, spruce and balsam, a lot more valuable than the aspen we had been logging. Spruce and balsam peeled

pulpwood was in high demand by the Hammermill Paper Co. in Erie, Pennsylvania. My father and I, as a youngster, had produced peeled wood for Hammermill for many years, while I was still in public school, during summer holidays, so I had <sup>to</sup> gotten to know the head wood purchaser well, we had always dependably completed our quota.

Mr. Lundberg, the purchaser agreed to purchase 4,000 cbs/peeling season, May to Aug from me in the new larger forest tract.

I built a 30-man portable logging camp on skids, 3 bunkhouses, kitchen and sauna and garage from which we produced peeled wood for Hammermill in the summer, and spruce pulpwood for Abitibi during the winter. Hammermill advanced the cutting portion @ \$12/cord into the woods. Wood sales now were over \$150,000.00 per year.

At this time, I was able to purchase a new Caterpillar D4 dozer and winch from the local Caterpillar dealer for \$11,000.00. With the Cat D4 and a neighbour's Cat 02, plus a team of horses, we were able to bring the wood to roadside. The Caterpillar salesman, Arny Bayle delivered the new D4, ~~He~~ had was a professional forest engineer, and had been employed by the St Lawrence Corp from Montreal in Beaudouin, 120 mi E of L. Bay & on the east side of L. Nipigon.

(now Dornier) before becoming a Caterpillar tractor salesman. He was so impressed by our well planned, neat logging camp set up, that he offered to find me contract logging work with St. Lawrence Corp. in Beardmore Ontario the following spring, when I would be free.

So, June 1956, St. Lawrence Corp. put me and the Swiss supervisor I had developed, Mr. Rudolf Zaugg, in charge of a 100 man logging operation at camp # 91, S/E of Beardmore.

The next year we were offered a 10,000 cord contract to produce spruce pulpwood @ camp # 94. Thanks to our prior logging experience with Hammermill and Abitibi, the job went well.

In 1958 St. Lawrence Corp. offered us a 25,000 cord contract at camp # 88, 30 mi S of Beardmore. The volume increased to 50,000 cds. by 1965.

In 1965 the Great Lakes Paper Co. of Thunder Bay constructed a new logging camp, sp. 418 on the Trans-Canada highway, 120 mi W of T. Bay. It was a painful decision to leave Dornier. They had treated us very fairly. The volume at Great Lakes sp. 418 increased from 35,000 cords/year to close to 100,000 cds /yr., a double shift operation year round for the next 20 years.

## Hardships and joys of running a logging business

Logging operations tend to be so remotely located that it places ~~a~~ severe strain on family life, especially on a wife, who is left with young growing children. A father's presence and influence in a home with growing youngsters is so important, yet it is damn hard to drive over 100 miles to be with them at mid week, after a busy day attending to the decisions which have to be made to make things go smoothly and economically.

Operating a 100 plus man camp required a constant reliable supply of clean pure water. This made locating camp site location critical, and was sometimes overlooked. Water lines had to be six feet deep, below the frost line. Heating and ventilation was a major point for kitchens, bunk houses, work clothes dry rooms, office building, supervisors' and scaler's quarters.

A reliable cookery staff, a head cook, 2nd cook, and usually 4 waitresses, a bullcook who cleaned the bunk houses daily and fed the 72 wood stoves (barrel type heaters) at camp 38 during the day, heated the Sauna daily 6 days per week, a nightwatchman to fire the stoves @ night, and a barn boss who fed, watered and cared for the hard working horses, had to be carefully selected, reliable people.

Our cookery staff were usually women. Their

husbands often were employed at the same camp. Kitchens and bunk houses were kept clean and warm. Bedding sheets and blankets were laundered regularly. Ample, well prepared tasty food had to be available to nourish a large crew who had laboured hard all day or on night shift, in the forest.

Supervisors had to fair with the men they directed, no favoritism, scalers had to measure produced wood accurately for the mostly piece work crews. Bus transportation to work had to be safe, reliable, on time. At Great Lakes Apr. Co. camp 418 we employed six mechanics and two welders in a clean, warm repair shop, equipped with an over head crane, which could lift out a Caterpillar D8 tractor diesel motor which weighed two tons. A portable heated garage, equipped with a 30 KW Caterpillar generator was used to maintain our 15' wheeled skidders, used to pull tree length wood to roadside.

The joys of operating a well performing logging operation were easy two way communication with every one, good safety record, good production and operating costs, reasonable earnings, and appreciation by your employer for a job well done.

Advantages or disadvantages of being a Finnish  
business man in Thunder Bay

I am not aware of any disadvantages. There may have been some advantage in being a logger of Finnish descent. Our work force tended to be approx. 50%, or 50 employees of experienced <sup>FINNISH</sup> forest workers from the Thunder Bay area, and recent immigrants from Finland, especially during 1957, when large numbers came to Thunder Bay. Most of them had worked in ~~Thunder Bay~~ the forest industry in Finland.

Experiences of discriminations in the  
business environment

I am not aware of any.

Business practices in Finland and Canada  
a cross country comparison

I have traveled to Finland five times, trips of three ~~week~~ duration. Usually 19 to 20 days were spent each time in their forests, studying silviculture practices, forest regeneration, insect damage, logging systems, forest fire control and suppression, site preparation for seeding or hand planting, selection and preparation of trees for log homes, and log home construction.

My cousin, Eelki Honkaniemi is a graduate Forest Engineer, in charge of forest management in SW Finland, in my father's and

grand father's home area. Erkkonen has been my guide and instructor. He came to Canada in 1988, and studied our regeneration and planting practices, and gave instructions for our tree plantations in Ignace and Thunder Bay.

In Finland they are years ahead of us in forest management. It will take a long while for us to develop the right frame of mind. Our thinking may be swayed by having too much land available, horizon to horizon of trees. However, modern mechanical logging, forest fires and insects decimate the Canadian forest horizon to horizon. Not only do we lose the timber to fire, but in severe drought conditions, also the a lot of the valuable rich top soil, which takes nature 1,500 years to create one inch from falling leaves, needles, fallen trees. (See Osmo's book on Landscape Architecture).

Finland is a small country, where forest products are their main export. They must aggressively manage their forest to maintain a viable economy. High level forest technology is initiated in high levels of Finland's government. Their foresters are university graduates, who have to produce results in their work. They believe in selective tree removal, in site preparation, leaving seed trees, planting bare root stock, tree nurseries every few kilometers along their rural country roads, fertilizing the forest.

Finnish sawmills and paper mills purchase timber from Sweden and the Soviet Union in order to save their own forests. Every harvested area <sup>IN FINLAND</sup> is site prepared and planted in short order, in a matter of days, time is not wasted, it must not be wasted, it takes almost 100 years to raise a merchantable tree.

It is remarkable in Scandinavia how care of the forest is practised by everyone, from high levels of government down to the isolated cottages <sup>farmstead</sup> with only a few hectares of land, on which they have a bit of field for hay and cereal crops, a vegetable garden, and always nurture a crop of trees, and tends to know each one's value. If a wedding is approaching in a family, and money is required, as weddings require, they will <sup>decide</sup> whether to sell a few cubic meters of wood, or the heifer in the pasture. Usually the heifer boxes out. Forest care is set in the minds of grade school youngsters.

8 Ethnic profile of the clientele and employees  
and challenges in dealing with people of different  
cultures

Experience taught us over the years, that with a 100 plus person work force on a logging job, living in a logging camp, that a mixed nationality work force tended to be more problem free, better all around. To St. Lawrence Corp - Dorchester, we brought a nucleus <sup>700 people</sup> of Finnish descent, approx. 40 people. In those days, mid 1950's, Sarnia more tended to be the westerly limit for French-Canadians. It increased

eastward in Geraldton and Longlac. Hearst was already mostly French speaking. So we had approx. 25 French-Canadians in our crew. They were experienced hard workers, exceptionally good with horses. Each 2 men crew had one horse. One man felled, limbed and topped trees in the several acres given to them by the cut foreman. The other worker stayed at the landing, bucked the tree lengths into 8 ft pcs, and piled them. The horse walked to where the logger was felling, and stopped at the butt of a felled tree. The skid chain was hooked onto the butt, and the horse pulled it to the other logger, backing at the pile. The horse was so well trained, that if the log caught on a stump, it would turn  $90^\circ$  to the side, pull the log free and continued toward the landing. It was usually rewarded with a lump of sugar at both ends of the job.

In 1957 there was a severe shortage of woods workers. St Lawrence Corp. - Kamtar sent a hiring agent to Toronto to interview recently arrived Portuguese immigrants, and several came to Beardmore, to work for the company. Approx 15 came to our camp BB. We spent time training them, a cut foreman stayed with them for several days, teaching chain saw safe operating, tree felling, bucking to lengths. A strip of forest assigned to a cutter was 66 ft. wide, so they had to be careful not to fell trees on ~~each other~~ a neighbour logger. The Portuguese became safe, productive loggers. Some still live in the Beardmore - Geraldton, Thunder Bay area.

The Portuguese were very frugal. They stayed at camp most weekends, as room and board cost only \$1.75 per day. Usually a cook or second cook and one waitress stayed to operate the kitchen. The Portuguese loggers saved their money, and claimed that by saving their earnings for a few years, they could go back to Portugal, purchase a farm, and hire a servant, and semi retire for life.

Approx. 15' of our woods workers were displaced Polish men, displaced by WW #2, and ended up with no country in Europe. One of them was Barber Frank, who <sup>had</sup> given haircuts to Hitler's generals. A very pleasant man, who became the supervisor's barber. He had a lot of anecdotes to tell while cutting hair. Due to their farm work background, the Polish loggers also were good with horses, they took to horse logging naturally. The Polish workers tended to live in East Fort William in the Polish-Ukrainian section off Simpson Street.

Our Estonian workers formed their own log hauling company, auto trucking, and hauled our pulpwood to the Sturgeon River for several years. From there the wood was floated to the Red Rock mill. They also built logging camps by contract for Dantax.

We also had a few good workers from N Italy, and 3 Norwegians.

The long-established woods labour union spokesman was not able to sway the thinking of a mixed labour force at once / month meetings. Cooler heads in the work force tended to prevail. We also learned to attend to complaints quickly, before they became <sup>grievances</sup> grievances. Two way communication, fair treatment, no favouritism tended to create a harmonious work force.

9 Languages you have used and use today.

English and speak and write Finnish a few words of French.

10 Catering to clients' wishes

We were producing wood usually to the same company on an annual basis. Reliable production at a good cost and delivery on time, an injury free safety record seemed to create work for us on an ongoing basis.

11 Memorable events

Spring 1963, Started to take flying lessons at the Thunder Bay Flying Club. Rec'd pilot license 3 mths later. Purchased a new Cessna 180 aircraft on floats, took instrument training & received night flying endorsement.

Summer 1963 Became a shareholder of Albany L. Airways, which operated fly-in tourist camps 85 mi NE of Beardmore & north of Lake Nipigon. I was in charge of locating new fly-in camp locations, and construction of them. Albany L. Airways owned an Cessna 2 passenger sea plane

During the summer of 1964 I hired my brother Leo, 21 yrs old, to manage Albany L. Airways. Leo was a licensed pilot. My intent was to create Leo with the possibility to become self employed, lead an interesting life, I was prepared to give him my shares in the company.

Oct 1, 1964. Leo was directing a moose hunt at our Ara Lake & Meta L. camps. On take off in windy conditions a gust upset his aircraft, threw the plane on its back @ 300ft altitude, which stalled the plane, which spiraled into the water below. Leo and his passengers were knocked <sup>unconscious</sup> unconscious, and drowned. It was a terrible blow to me and our close family. Leo had the personality to become a successful tourist outfitter.

1965 Great Lakes Paper Co constructed a new logging camp and operation 120 mi. W of Thunder Bay on the Trans Canada highway at Martin. There was a major wood supply with favourable ground conditions.

I accepted their offer to go and operate the new camp 418, with a crew of 35 men.

During the fall of 1966 I and Chuck Spittlehouse, a Thunder Bay insurance executive, formed Siverlake Timber Co. Ltd. to supply logging equip. for the cp. 418 operation. Pulpwood was shipped by rail to the Great Lakes Paper Thunder Bay mill. The operation was substantially closer to Thunder Bay.

Approx 1/2 of our work force gave up their seniority at Domtar, Seaboard, and moved to work for Great Lakes Paper Co.

At this time extensive reforestation, by site preparation began, in which we took a serious part. The work consisted of pulling heavy drags made up of anchor chain and steel barrels, pulled across the cut over with D7<sup>00</sup> Caterpillar tractors, to expose mineral soil. The cones ~~scattered~~ on the cut over, opened <sup>up</sup> in hot summer <sup>sunlight</sup> to start a new crop of trees. We site prepared up to 6,000 acres per summer of our own and B & P Co. cutovers. The new forest tended to come back too thick, now thinning is required.

In our work force we had 2 experienced log home builders. They had immigrated from Northern Finland in the 1920's and later. Building design had always been of interest to me, so I designed several log homes, which

our two or three man crew built over the next twenty-two years. They were pleasing in appearance, valuable homes.

Over the years I had advanced enough to own and fly a DeHavilland Beaver seaplane. Our Beaver came from Australia, purchased by Aero Agriculture Proprietary, in Sydney, to compliment 50 Beavers used for crop dusting. It was never uncrated, due to a four year drought, and returned to Vancouver by ship. It was flown over the Rockies on wheels, had pontoons installed in Edmonton, and delivered to cp 418 by an experienced old timer pilot, Mr. John Edwards, who had flown for years north from Edmonton down the Mackenzie River valley, and on to Victoria Island in the Arctic Ocean.

Mr. Edwards stayed for three days, to instruct me the Beaver was a very valuable tool in planning our timber harvest. We had to build almost 40 miles of roads through forest to produce our annual quota of wood, and to supervise road construction for the Ont. MNL in the Sioux Lookout area. I also flew in several flights of forest fire fighting crews, to put out lightning started fires N of camp 418.

It is a national negative point for Canada, that DeHavilland Beaver production was discontinued. It is one of the safest, well designed aircraft ever built, anywhere.

## Leaving or selling the business

I sold my interest in our logging company, Silverlake Timber to my partner, Chuck Spittlehouse in 1982, and went on to design and build a sawmill in Ig-nace in the early 80s.

## Any regrets

Yes, there have been regrets in leaving the Great Lakes Paper Co. (now Bowater). Four million dollar contracts were settled with a hand shake. The agreement followed a couple of months later. We were producing major amts of forest product at exceptionally good costs, pulpmud delivered and loaded onto rail cars at the camp 418 spur. The operation was supervised by excellent woods wise supervisors. Our operation captured the L. L. P. Co annual safety award for 14 years out of 20. We were well treated by upper management, as we had been treated at Domtar, at Hammermill and by Abitibi.

14 Differences of starting a business today, as compared in the past.

We are loggers. The forest resource is now way further. It would be <sup>7 times</sup> way harder to start a logging business today.

13 Are your sources of supply direct, or through  
a Canadian distributor

Our sources of supply have always been through  
Canadian distributors x

16 Education, training and career development  
of business owners and employees.

Domtar supplied the best training for business  
owners. They brought in trainers from Montreal,  
who were particularly advanced in how to deal  
with labour unions. Great Lakes Paper Co.  
tended to deal mainly with safety instruction.

17 How do you judge your business success?

All my decisions have not been correct. However,  
I am proud of the fact that I can log merchantable red pine  
trees I have planted 40 years ago. Trees have dramatically increased  
rural property values to the point where I am considering  
making our 20 acre home site available to the City of  
Khuinder Bay for a park, with its 12,000 planted conifer  
trees and fruit trees. It is only 1 mile from County  
Fair, on both sides of Dawson road.

To young people I say, learn to recognize that  
there is other wealth in life, than monetary wealth,  
that can be created by diligently planting and caring  
for trees, creating a home and shelter for nature's forest  
dwellers, including song birds, and a home site for

yourself and family. Learn to plan time wisely, learn to understand what 10 years, 20 years passage of time will do for a living tree, how it will change its form and value.

Learn to understand success in life by creating an attractive home site, acquire rural property, preferably a sandy soil type, be wary of red or grey clay, but even on them, white spruce, aspen or tamarack will prosper. Nursery stock is available through Ontario government programs.

18 job satisfaction and reward for employees

<sup>performed</sup>  
If the operation ~~performed~~ well, we ~~gave~~ paid annual monetary bonuses.

19 What is your competition and how do you deal with it?

We tended to try harder to run an efficient job, that was well organized ~~job.~~

20 Business support mechanisms

The Northern Ontario Development Corp. and Dept of Regional Economic Expansion helped us best, although interest rates tended to be high at 1400c in the 80s.

The Federal Business Development Bank gave us a hard time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ankerberg