

Obenhoff. Onnela. Rauhala.

This area was settled by immigrants from Finland.

The area is known for its logging, general farming, dairy and potato farms, temperance hall, and Henry Lampinen's gas station and grocery store.

Don Heikkila shares Nov. 2008: Names from my era (1950's) are Larson, Harma, Walstrom, Rautio, Markham.

Farmers had a picnic day at Obenhoff Lake. We had sack races. It was a great social time.

Portage Lake Mining Gazette March 8th, 1877: Mr. Henry Obenhoff's soap factory back of the Atlantic Mine, caught fire last Monday (March 5, 1877) and burned down.

Onnela. A settlement located in Stanton Township 5 miles from Houghton. In February 2009, Ken Niemi shared that Onnela was named from Finnish word meaning place of good fortune.

Its post office was established on July 6, 1909 and closed on November 30, 1925. Arthur Lampinen was postmaster. The post office was in the Lampinen home in one room. Today it is Jerry Gagnon farm property.

Henry Lampinen had a flour and feed business and sawmill.

It was the Messner woodsmen who owned the land and hired men of the area to cut the timber. There were many sawmills in the region, the most notable being the Stratton. They also cut cordwood for the copper mines and shipped it by lumber hooker vessels.

Charcoal kilns were built around 1910, since many copper mining smelter used charcoal to purify copper during the smelting process. Ken Niemi tells author that a set of kilns were on today's Joe Ovist's property on Cowles Creek Road.

Ken Niemi's family always called Cowles Creek Road the Onnela Road. Today the road is called Coles creek. Tell me what you can about that name Cowles/Coles.

Ken shared that the open fields on Cowles/Coles Creek Road (North or South side?) just before Rauhala Road was Copper Range farm fields. Then Ed Heinonen parents (first names?) leased the land for farming. He quit and then his dad (first name?) rented the area for farming.

Rev. Ilmonen's 1926 book Michigan's Finnish Index shares early settlers of Onnela were: Heikki Lampinen from Matarengista. Joonas Kovala from Suomusalmi. Paul Raisanen from Pudasjoki. Heikki Juntunen for Suomussalmi. Jacob Piippola from Kiiminki. Mikko Jampsa fro Toholampi. Victor Pellosmas from Lehtimaki. Matti Neimitalo from Alajarvi. Lassi Seppanen.

Janet H. Larson's interview with Raymond J. Larson on 6-30-1993:

Andrew Larson came to America at age 14 from Finland with his sisters Anna and Mary because their mother had died and father was already settled in the Copper Country. It took them three weeks by boat to Montreal and then train to get here. Andrew started working for Henry Lampinen who operated the Post Office, farmed and logged. Andrew met Henry's daughter Lillian and they married and settled on a farm a few forties away from the Lampinen Farm. After the roads were constructed the road became known as the Larson Road.

Andrew farmed the land by growing potatoes and he had dairy cows and other farm animals. Andrew and Lillian had two sons- Rudolph and Raymond, and two daughters- Clara and Ellen.

Andrew also worked for Michael Messner who was a local logger. He purchased his first set of horses from his father-in-law. A new dairy barn was built in 1930.

The county started to plow the roads in 1937. Up until then the roads had been plowed by a team of horses and a huge roller device that would pack the snow down.

Electricity was brought out to the farm in 1942.

The cream from the dairy barn was hauled by horses to the Bridgeman Russell Company in Hancock. In the winter there was a winter road over the ice at the Michigan Smelts.

Andrew sold the farm to his son Raymond in 1950.

Raymond continued farming- expanding the potato fields, selling off the dairy herd, and raising his children until 1963. The labor force for picking the potatoes was cut in the early 1960's due to the Public School ruling not excusing students from school during the harvest. The soil in the Onnela area is full of rocks so the first mechanical picker was not a good replacement for the manual pickers. These factors caused Raymond to sell of the farm and open up a Gas Station in 1963 and a Public Sauna in 1965.

There was a Temperance Hall on the Juntunen (Junttonen?) farm located on the Larson Road. This building was torn down.

A K-8 grade school located on the Obenhoff Road (Obenhoff School) and a K-8 school located on the Smelts Road (Cowles/Coles Creek Road?) (Onnela School). This building is still standing. The Obenhoff School was torn down.

Henry Lampinen operated a Post Office and grocery store on the corner of the Harma and Smelt's road (Coles Creek Road now). The store burnt down sometime in the 1940's. The Post Office was re-routed to be covered by the Atlantic Mine and Houghton Post Offices.

Michael Messner Sr obit from the DMG August 26, 1930: Michael Messner Sr. was born in Trossinger, Germany on April 2, 1845. He came to the United States on May 26, 1864 and travelled to Eagle Harbor Michigan by boat. After working at the Huron and Minnesota Mines, he moved to South Pewabic (later Atlantic), where he resided for 65 years. Later he purchased a team of horses and cleared trees on the site of the first mine shaft. He also used his teams in connection with the construction of the Portage Canal and hauled materials for the railroad extension being built from Marquette to L'Anse. Besides cutting timber and operating a sawmill of his own, Messner ran a blacksmith shop and raised hay and cattle. He was married to Anna Knodt; he had two children and several stepchildren. He died at the age of 85 in August 1930.

Rauhala area.

The Rauhala school was on the corner of the section on Joe Ovist's property. Ken Niemi's father told Ken that the school was moved from the Poor Farm/Infirmary. Then there is a story from Frank Rugani that there was a school near the Smelts. Could they be the same building? Ken's father attended the Rauhala School in 1913. See the Chapter on Schools.

Ken Niemi shared: My grandfather and a cluster of farming neighbors around here were chatting one day about what to call his area (today's Rauhala Road and Niemi Road area) they

decided that Rauhala was a good name- it meant peaceful place.

Ken and Don Heikkila share: Farm families in this Rauhala area in the era of 1940-50's were:

Victor Sr., Victor Jr. and John Kuru -Don Heikkila shares Victor and John lived in the house across highway from Schmidt's Corner Store where Leona Burkman lived in the late 1900's) ,

Lampinen,
Heinonen,
Edwin and son Ken Raisanen,
Niemi,
Junttonen,
Anderson,
Larson (Pete Larson's great grandpa)

Onnela/Obenhoff memories.

- Don Heikkila shares: The white building on corner of Coles Creek and Harma Road is Gagnon farm now was owned by Walt Lampinen. He had a welding shop here. Yes, Tony Lampinen grew up here.

- Crusaders Car Club and the Onnela School building.

- The club organized on September 2, 1957
- The club decided to bid on the school to the Stanton Twp School Board in September 1958.
- The first meeting held in the new facility was on October 15, 1958. Minutes indicate a purchase price of \$125 and after that, about \$5.47 remained in the treasury.
- The club had a letter written by a Houghton teacher sent to the Stanton Board in support of the group.
- The last set of minutes I had was April 19, 1960 but there was mention of buying paint to fix up the place so there must have been more minutes somewhere.

Pictures are documentation of the source material.

Don

- Earl Brinkman recalls these folks living on the Onnela Road: Mildred Jampsa.. she had the best cinnamon rolls ever (though Earl's wife Charlotte's compare worthily), Ormand Lampinen who was a school bus driver and he took local cheese to Green Bay, and was a welder at Michigan Tech.

Farmer's milk went to Stella Cheese which was located in Dollar Bay across the street from Partanen's Bar on the concrete slab that remains.

He almost drown in Obenhoff Lake. There were peacocks living around there and the local boys would pickup and proudly put in their car visors.

He recalls the best ice cream in Obenhoff.. though can't remember where the store/creamery was.

Compiled by Barb Koski, Osma Plat Road Houghton, MI. More historical information is desired. Contact the Webmaster.