

Mail- and how Oskar got its name:

The unauthored memorial to Oskar document says that the community was called Ojanpera after the business manager Jacob Ojanpera in Oscar Eliassen's logging operation. Oscar Eliassen went to Houghton once a week to get the mail. This meant loss of time from work and managing affairs.

According to a book History of the Finns in Michigan by Armas Kustaa Ensio Holmes: Mail was gotten by going to Houghton once a week. Settlers requested a Post Office of their own. Ojanpera asked Eliassen to go to town to create a post office.

The story goes on to say that the Houghton Postmaster asked Oscar Eliassen for a name of the community. He said Ojanpera. He was asked to spell the name and he could not. The postmaster asked him his given name and to spell his name. Oscar ... and postmaster changed it to Oskar and that became the name of the community.

Oscar Eliassen became the first postmaster in 1888.

A book Michigan Name Places states: Oscar Eliassen, a Finn, came to Hancock Township (now Stanton Township) about 1870 and became a charcoal tycoon. He was appointed the first postmaster of this settlement Feb. 2. 1888. (GSM1889; Post Office Archives).

Jack Ruohonen in his history of Oskar document shares: (he writes what Holmes wrote also. Then adds): Mail came to Oskar twice a week, and later daily.

The post office was built on Jacob Ojanpera's property. (He left just before in 1883). Betty Ruohonen shares (2008): The first post office was a separate building South of the creek on her property. (Then the Nels Burkman family property).

The Polk Directories list **Emma Burkman** as postmaster in 1897. She would have been 20 years old. Her father was Nels Olaf Burkman businessman of Charcoal. The post office was a separate building next to their home on corner of Canal Road and Ruohonen Rd.

She is listed in the 1901 directory as postmaster as well.

Nel's daughter **Pauline Burkman** is listed in 1905 as postmaster at age 33.

Lee Burkman shared that the 2nd post office was constructed at the base of the Cemetery and **John Koller** was postmaster, daughter Miriam doing the work. Grandson Paul Miller states that the home was built by John and he was postmaster in 1911. (The location is the home now on the North or right side corner of cemetery road and Canal Road)

The post office was discontinued in 1930 when rural delivery started. Libby Bjorklund Koski shares: Rural mailmen I remember were **George Usitalo** and **Mr. Korpela**.

Toivo Patana, from the Canal Rd, was a mail carrier on foot on the gravel Canal Rd.

Evelyn Olson Mikko shares from her 1980 document: My father (**Alex Olson**) got the mail for the neighborhood from a post office 3 miles away. (Oskar). We had a corner cupboard with bins for each neighbor. They would get their mail from our house; so seems like there was always someone coming over. Guess our home was the hub-bub of the neighborhood.

Ingrid Puuri Anderson shares that her Liminga home was the location for neighbors to come and get their mail. Not every house had a “mailbox” by their home; they came to our house to get mail.

Research and interviewing was done by Barb Koski, Osma Plat Road, Houghton MI. I welcome stories. Contact the webmaster. Submitted in 2009.