

**Heikkinen School. 1880's to 1915 or 1917 original burnt.
1919 to 1999.**

T54 R36W NW ¼ of SW ¼ in Section 35. Near Heikkinen family.



This Finnish named Toivola (Toy'-vo-la) means hopeful. It was an agriculture and logging community with a population of 25 in 1909, founded in 1894.¹

The first Heikkinen School was built in 1880's on the Heikkinen property. Barb Koski found two documents with different years it burnt down- one 1915 and another being 1917.

During reconstruction the teacher was Helmi Huru and school was held in John Heikkinen's new kitchen addition. New school was ready in 1919, built on original school site. It was a wood frame structure with two rooms for classes.

An addition was added in 1957 with two teachers.

The 1992 Toivola Reunion document has these names as teachers:
Helmi Huru (Heltunen later) 1915, Miss Finnegan 1917, Miss Kirkish 1920, Anse Raappana maybe 1921, Hilda Juntunen, Eleanor Lahnala Brenner 1926-1928, Elizabeth Hooper 1929, John Wisti 1930-31, Irene Henderson Matson 1932-1934, Reino Takala 1931-1934, Arminda Koivunen 1935-1936, Josephine Raisanen Kangas 1939-40, Helvi Kauppila Pellegrini 1938-40, Edward Simonson 1947-48, Mrs. Sophie Junttila 1943, Mrs Randall, Ernest Wisti 1941-1971 (another source says to 1978), Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Anne (Heikkila)Waisanen 1943-44, Miss Harma 1936, Mrs Ida Manzetti 1958-59, Albert Tolonen 1941, Ingrid Suksi Wiitala 1950-1969, LuannWisti Penny 1969-90, Henry Feldhusen 1972-date of document 1992 (+), Mrs. Janet Larson 1990- date of document +.

Other known teacher: Vieno Pirhonen,

¹ Clarence Monette [Some Copper Country Names and Places](#)

Teacher 1931-1934 was Reino Takala in 7-10th grade. He did janitorial jobs as well – fired wood stove in AM, swept floors in PM. In a 1992 Gazette interview he said: For a time I taught all eight grades. When grades 9 and 10 were added I taught all subjects in 7-10.

During the 1930's and 40's John Heikkinen recalls a teacher named Miss Josephine Kangas "a wonderful teacher.. kept the kids busy.. while she was there we formed the Double L Club standing for Life and Laughter."

A Liminga native and Painesdale High School graduate, Ernest Wisti, taught here from 1941 to 1978. Later he was made principal while also teaching 4th to 8th grades. A graduate of NMU, Ernest Wisti, began his career in the former Perala (also known to some as Sampson. Trasti was before this school). In 1969 Wisti was honored with the "My Favorite Teacher" award by the Detroit News paper.

1964. Ernest Wisti was Supt. and upper grade instructor with Ingrid Wiitala in lower grades.²

In a 1992 interview Edward Spiegel shared: I remember when I was about 15 years old, my friends and I were at a gathering at the Toivola People's Hall and we were all communicating in Finnish. We only spoke English in school. Suddenly our teacher, Ernie Wisti, a wonderful fellow, came up and said, "When are you fellows going to talk like you live in the United States." I remember thinking, 'What's the matter with that fella, we're getting along fine'. But I realize now it would have been advisable to have learned English.

Leo Mattila told Barb: The teacher made me the school "fireman". Teacher did not want me so sent me to the basement to fire the stove.

A garage on the property was used for the bus. Prior to the bus in 1950 this is what Evelyn (Maki) Olson recalls on ride to high school in 1945: The bus did not go on the side roads.. only the main highway to pick up students. Instead, students had to find their own transportation system to carry them through the 10 miles of forested road so they could meet the bus on the highway and ride to Painesdale's Jeffers High School some 15 miles away. As always, the independent community worked together toward a solution.

According to Evelyn, homesteader Gus Koistinen had a flat bed truck that he dropped a tarp over and added car seats to create an area "school bus". His son, Raymond Koistinen drove the vehicle as far as the highway, picking up Florence, Robert and Billy Lindgren; Eva, Elaine and Anna Wiitala; William Bari and Paula Komula. Robert Lindgren also drove his father's paneled truck to the bus stop for a time.

School Board minutes:

July 1940. - School repairs @ Heikkinen and Perala (asphalt and boiled linseed oil for floors.

May 1941. Correspondence related to Rural Electrification Assoc. of Ont. for

² Houghton County Historical Museum in vertical file

Toivola School.

- June 1941. - notify AA Johnson and son to repair furnace pipe at Heikkinen School
- August 18, 1941 Special Meeting. - Discussion contract of Eino Heikkinen hauling students to Painesdale HS from Toivola. District agreed to pay \$75/mo.
- August 1942 - As no teachers now seem available for Onnela or Perala School it now appears that these students will be schooled at Redridge and Heikkinen.
- July 1943 – Jno Heikkinen to look into Toilet requirements @ Heikkinen and what can be obtained from Perala to use at Heikkinen.
- August 1943 – Toivola (Heikkinen?) gets 2 septic tanks 27 x 49”
- 1946 Special Meeting August – Decided to purchase one 48 passenger bus Ford Superior for Toivola thru Ford Motor of Houghton deliver Sept 20, 1946 \$3,360. (First school owned bus)
- July 21, 1947. Construct bus garage at Toivola
- Sept. 19, 1947 - remove florescent lights at Freda Beacon Hill (it closed) and put at Toivola, Liminga, and Oskar.
- 1948 July – Heikkinen got toilets
- March 1949 – purchase heater for Heikkinen bus. - State prep for lunch at Heikkinen means remodel. - Discussion of separate voting precinct for Toivola end. Heikkinen says to table till road between Freda and Toivola is passable.
- May 1950 – Playground equipment ordered for \$1250 to be divided between 4 schools in proportion to attendance.
- Nov. 1950 - New windows for Heikkinen from Suomi Lumber Co.
- July 1951 – created a school voting precinct in Toivola.
- Feb. 1953 - New bus for Heikkinen
- 1953 Sept. - obtain 3 vices for Heikkinen School.
- 1954 Sept. - Ok'd books for Heikkinen.
- 1955 March. - Discussion on Bohemia School students coming to Heikkinen so add new room to H. School. Move Misery Bay school students to Heikkinen. Bohemia residents not in favor. Still discussing in Feb. 56.
- 1956 August. - decided to build new room onto Heikkinen with Yalmer Mattila Contracting. Done by Jan. 57.
- 1956 Sept. Heikkinen 9 and 10 stay at Heikkinen and not go to Painesdale.
- 1957 July 8 Special election vote to keep 9 and 10 at Heikkinen.
- 1958 June – Discussion on maintaining 9th and 10th at Liminga and Heikkinen.
- 1958 August – o.k.'s to hire 3rd teacher at Heikkinen.

In 2009, Mr. Laurila, son to Levi Laurila (on School Board) recalls to Barb: The first busses he rode on had two rows of seats down the center whose back of seats touched, and on the sides were one row per side. He remembers Andrew Suoki drove his horse and sleigh for a bus. Earl Johnson drove a bus to Painesdale. Matta drove his paneled truck for a bus once also.

While the Heikkinen School was known to stress science project and field trips,

the rural school was one of the first to initiate a hot lunch program for their students in 1948.

The Heikkinen School was closed in 1999 under Superintendent Paul Saaranen and Board Chairman Mike Benda due to low enrollment and cost per pupil to operate. Heikkinen School is now a school museum owned by Mr. and Mrs. Dale Penny.

Schools in the Toivola Area but in Adams Township were 1) Toivola. It closed in the late 1930's.?? 2) Challenge Mine.

Toivola or Lundi's or Station School teachers given the Toivola 1992 Reunion document: Lillian Kemp Alaniva, Mrs. Lehtinen, Mrs. Olive (Maki) Dedick (Brothers) 1917-1918, Mrs. Newman, Charles Ritala, Mrgeret Sampson, Selma Sampson, Norman Stevenson, Edwin Champion, Naimi Lehti 1916 (Mrs. John Heikkinen of Atlantic Mine)

Picture in 1918 of Toivola School Children by railroad station. Teacher Mrs. Olive (Maki) Sedick



Items given in the Reunion document:

- Maggie Mattila, 5th grader had the winning entry in a fire prevention poster contest and had the poster on the cover of a US Forest Service publication- Fire Management Notes. Daughter of Mark and Callie Mattila.

Researched by Barb Koski Osma Plat Road Houghton MI 49931 in 2009.
Submitted 2011. Contact Webmaster with other information.