

Church Activities.

Richard Garnell shares this about his family and Church: My Grandpa Alekski used to go to town on Saturdays with his son Henry to deliver farm products. They would stay overnight with church people friends / preachers. (Koppanas and Simonsons) and other friends sometimes. Then on Sundays Grandpa and other church member took the streetcar to Calumet to the Pine Street church. After church they took another streetcar back to Hancock for coffee or lunch. Then Grandpa stayed a night or two with friends in Hancock. I don't know how he always made it back home, maybe Henry went to get him, maybe he hitched a ride. After I got a driver's license my father told me to go get grandpa home from whichever people he stayed with. Often Grandpa visited Hans Tapio close to Schmidt's corner, or Mr. Perala in Liminga. I would take those men home and then we'd go home. The road to Henry's was a real narrow road through the swamp, which my father, Grandpa Alekski and Henry made by themselves.

When I was young (he was born in 1915) church meeting were often held at the homes of church members. Usually on communion Sunday, the meetings were held in the church on Pine Street in Calumet. These are some of the homes we held meetings at: -

- William Ruohonen's, Dorvinen and ours in Oskar;
- Ovist's, Puuri's, and Korpela's in Liminga.
- Sometimes at Schmidt's corner we met in Thomas Kuru's or Hans Tapio
- On Rauhala Road the family homes of Herman Juntunen's and Peter Anderson
- Snake River Hill the Luusuas,
- Portage Entry the Kaliannens
- and Kinnunens at Keweenaw Bay.
- Oneco (near the now airport) was Levanen's.
- In Hancock meetings were held at Koppana's, Simonson's ,and Toivonens and others I can't remember.

In 1930 we were at Koppana's or Simonson's. When the preaching was still going on, my father got up from his chair and went to the preachers to ask forgiveness for his sins. Everybody was happy for him. Later when the meeting was over, I recall his father say he was so happy and elated that his heart almost stopped when his son made repentance. Then when my father saw his neighbors, he told them that he had made repentance and asked forgiveness from them also. He was a devout Christian the rest of his life.

Eventually the church on Pine Street in Calumet had the basement fixed into a kitchen and dining area so the members could have coffee after church and lunch at least once a month especially after communion Sunday. With the church basement fixed so well, the meetings in Christian homes slowly died out. Especially when the church made an addition to the church and basement.

Evelyn Olson Mikko in her 1980 document shares (time is her birth in 1913 to 1930):
Christmas.

Many a letter to Santa was written and then thrown into a roaring fire in the fireplace for Santa to find as he came down the chimney. How dumb.

All the trimmings for the tree were made at home. We'd color paper with crayons then cut them into strips and make chains, glued together with past made of flour and water. All year we would save tin foil we found from thrown away cigarette or peerless

packages and made small balls from them and cover onions with them and hand on the tree. Later, little by little, trimming were bought.

We used to hang up our stockings. Most of the time the findings were meager. Maybe a box of crayons, a piece of candy or an orange. Before Christmas if you did wrong you were threatened with just an onion in your stocking. I do recall two dolls. One doll my mother ordered the heads and made the bodies for Alice and myself. Another was about 10 inches long with blue eyes that opened and closed. It had a blue dress and blue cap. Wish I had kept it.

One year as my older sisters were putting the things in the stockings; they spotted me sitting on the top stairway watching them. The following Christmas they said “no presents”. My younger sister Alice and I were sleeping in one of the downstairs bedrooms. I got up at barely day break and went to look in the living room; went back and told my sister with great relief “under the tree is full of presents” and went back to sleep. Lo and behold; when we got up in broad daylight there was not one thing under the tree. I could hardly believe my eyes had deceived me. I’m sure it was the “hard times” and not my previous year’s peeking. But we did always get one gift each from my uncle and aunt. Mine usually was a storybook “The Twin’s of Sunnybrook Farms”, which were reread many a time.

The Sunday school program was also held at the school. Each child would go up and give a recitation in Finnish. A small bag of candy was given to each child, school age or not; and the Christmas cards from the neighbors to each other were distributed.

My father (Alex Olson) was in charge of the Sunday school and he would have all the books in a suitcase. In the wintertime he would carry it on one ski stick over his shoulder. We would all ski to wherever the Sunday school was. Everyone took their turn keeping it in each other’s homes. After Sunday school we had coffee and cake.

Sunday afternoon’s was a day of rest; as the strict belief was “Keep thy Sabbath Day Holy” which was a blessing. It gave everyone a rest including the horses. It was a sin to even use a pair of scissors. In the summertime my father would go and walk to his fields to see how they were progressing, then he’d play some religious songs on the organ. Usually he and mother would go and visit friends.

Sunday afternoons were all for fun. Never really lacked for playmates as you had time at home, but usually the neighbor children would come over. We’d have funerals for dead birds that we would find. My brother Ernest always was the minister and we’d sing a religious song and then bury the bird. Sometime a dead calf would get the same honor.

Some games we played were Button, Button who has the button. Pump, pump pull away. Blas ka blount. (Last couple out).

In the winter we would go skiing or sleigh riding in a ravine our sled were pieces of cardboard. Don’t know how we missed the trees, as you couldn’t steer them. We’d walk to Lake Superior and walk on the ice floes. My mother never knew we did this. Makes me shudder now.

The boys would clear a rink on the lake and we’d go skating. We had one pair of runner skates that you would clamp on your shoes and tighten with a key, hardly ever got them to stay on. Each one would go around the rink twice and then give them to the next one.

Hancock used to hold dog and ski races on Feb 22, Washington's Birthday. Some of us girls would enter the girls ski race. I won the ski race one-year and the prize was \$3. I bought a pair of skates that were attached to shoes with the money.

One time my sister Alice and I were playing in the snow. We'd climb up on a hay wagon rack that had been placed on end against a tree for the winter. Then we'd jump into the snow. I jumped so hard in the deep snow I couldn't move or get out. Just at this time my father walked by and hollered for us to get out of there. I couldn't move and he kept hollering not knowing I was stuck and we didn't dare tell him. He finally went inside and Alice had to get a shovel to get me out. When my father told you to do something, you did it; but that was one time I didn't obey him.

Once a month a minister would come and keep church services at the schoolhouse, or we would go to Hancock occasionally in the summer with my father's 1.5 ton truck. We were always willing to go so we could see the bright lights in town. Seems like the services were always the same; the world will end soon and then there would be fire and brimstone. For a week after you'd dream of the world ending and burning. When I was in my early twenties I went to a planetarium in New York They showed what would happen if the sun and moon would collide. The world on fire just like in my former days. One year in the 1920's we had a total eclipse of the sun. A lot of people thought the world would end. When it started to get dark we were frightened, what a relief when it got light again. The first movie I saw at age 15 was "The Flood" and more bad dreams.

Jack Ruohonen states in his history of Oskar document: Spiritual Activities in 1875. There had been an active congregation as soon as the first settlers got here. It was directed from Calumet where there was a Laestadian congregation under preacher J. Takkinen who came once a month.

Then on July 13, 1894 the A.P. Lutheran congregation was funded whose preacher was A. C. Heideman, leading it until his death. The first church council consisted of Nils o. Burkman, Jacob Abramson, John o. Kauppi, John Koller, Gusti Olson, Daniel Ojala, Henry Bohjanen, and Andrew Riekki. They elected leadership of Nils Burkman leader; Jacob Abramson secretary and treasurer and John Kauppi sexton. The church was joined by more than 70 members all of them whom belonged to the Laestadian faith.

The children's Sunday School started right away. It had only classes in Finnish. If anyone came who could not speak it, they had to learn Finnish. Now everything is in English.

After the death of Heideman, the congregation was led by his son P. A. Heideman and his assistants.

(The school was used for church activities for awhile)

Then there is the Finnish Synod congregation also in operation for a long time whose first preacher was Pastor Juho Nikanteri, who founded the congregation.

Then there is a congregation belonging to the AP Lutheran branch whose pastor is Andrew Mickelsen. In the above mentioned congregation is not large but yet the pastors visit them regularly.



Confirmation picture Barb is told of Dorvinen family.



**Sirkolliskouksen jäsenten huviretki:
Pohjoiskanawan valotornin luona.**

Church gathering by North Canal Light house.

Researched by Barb Koski. Osma Plat Road. Houghton, MI 49931
Barb is interested in other information and stories. Contact Web Master.
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