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The Finnish Pioneers of Minnesota¹

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AS WE GATHER tonight to honor the Finnish pioneers, eighty years separate us from the distant summer of 1864 when the first of these sons of Suomi entered Minnesota, "to try their luck," they said, in this challenging section of America.

Four score years have wrought tremendous change. The pioneers, themselves, have felt time's handiwork. The names of many already have been swept into oblivion. Those yet living bear little likeness to the hardy and industrious, forward-looking folk so strikingly depicted on Juho Rissanen's painting. The hands that once so powerfully gripped and guided the plow have lost their vigor; the work-pursuing fingers of the pioneer mother have at last found rest, crossed in prayer over a well-worn Old Country Bible. The setting sun no longer marks the end of a day's work eagerly to be resumed on the morrow, but of life's labors; the generation of Finnish pioneers is joining its forefathers. It is, therefore, seasonable for us to honor these men and women who tilled the soil of two continents, whose joys and sorrows ranged two worlds. I congratulate the artist and the members of the Finnish-American Historical Society of Minnesota for having chosen this appropriate moment and way to pay homage to them.

Eighty years have seen the rise of Minnesota's foreign-born Finnish population from a handful of pioneers to nearly thirty thousand

¹ An address presented before a joint meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Finnish-American Historical Society in the Historical Building, St. Paul, on October 16, 1944. The occasion was the presentation to the state society of a painting, by Juho Rissanen, representing a Finnish farm homestead. *Ed.*

and have witnessed the spread of Finnish settlement from a small farming district in a single county to a point where each of ten counties have had more than five hundred Finnish immigrants. Only four Minnesota counties bore the dubious distinction in 1930 of never having harbored in a census year a single Finlander within their jurisdictions.²

The first permanent Finnish settlements were established in 1865 at Franklin in Renville County and in 1866 at Holmes City in Douglas County and in the Cokato country of Wright and Meeker counties. The pioneers were led by Peter Lahti, Matti Niemi, Antti Rovainen, Johan Piippo, Isak Johanson, Matias Kärjenaho, Elias Peltoperä, and others. Some of these men had gone to St. Peter and Red Wing in the summer and fall of 1864.³

As the years passed into decades, an ever-increasing number of Finns settled in Minnesota, emigrating from Michigan and other states as well as directly from Europe. By 1879 over 450 Finns, according to a contemporary estimate, were living in the Cokato country. They had in their possession some 1,500 acres of cleared and 4,000 acres of uncleared land as well as 126 oxen, 231 cows, and 56 horses. In 1883 around Holmes City 133 immigrants were moving up the difficult road to self-sufficiency and independence. With the growth of the older settlements, the area of Finnish penetration spread northward; by 1873 Finns were settling in and near Brainerd in Crow Wing County, and two years later they were laying the foundations for a flourishing and extensive settlement in the New York Mills region of Otter Tail, Wadena, and Becker counties. The late 1870's and the 1880's saw settlements rising in the Esko-Thomson and Kettle River areas of Carlton and St. Louis counties, as well as

² The counties are Martin, Rock, Sibley, and Watonwan. For fifty-seven Minnesota counties, not more than twenty-five foreign-born Finnish residents are recorded in any one census year. The state's total Finnish population was 10,727 in 1900, 26,637 in 1910, 29,108 in 1920, 24,360 in 1930, and 20,152 in 1940. These figures and many other statistics given in this paper are drawn from the population volumes of the *United States Census* for the years indicated.

³ S. Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia*, 2:130-232 (Jyväskylä, Finland, 1923); A. Järnefelt, *Suomalaiset Amerikassa*, 122-145 (Helsinki, 1899); "Amerikan Suomalaiset," in *Oma Maa*, 3:427-436 (Porvoo, 1906-07). The Duluth *Päivälehti* for October 7, 1941, is a fortieth anniversary number containing much valuable material on Finnish settlement in Minnesota.

the development of more stable communities in Duluth and Minneapolis.⁴

The opening of the Vermilion and Mesabi ranges was shortly followed by Finnish settlement in many mining towns and villages, among them Tower and Soudan in 1885, Ely in 1887, Hibbing, Mountain Iron, and Virginia in 1893, and Biwabik and Eveleth in 1894. After the turn of the century, the vast expanse of St. Louis County's cutover areas was discovered by the Finns; the Palo-Makinen region, for example, was first settled in 1902, and the Brimson-Toimi district, in the years following 1903. By 1920 the total number of Finns in the state had reached 29,108, nearly sixty per cent of whom lived in St. Louis County; other counties with sizable Finnish settlements included Carlton, Itasca, Otter Tail, and Hennepin. The ratio of rural to urban settlers was approximately three to two, with the larger urban communities in Duluth, Virginia, Hibbing, Minneapolis, and St. Paul.

What actuated settlement in northern Minnesota? Geographers have an interesting theory of "geographic response," suggesting that the "indispensable concomitants" of Finnish settlement were "cold, snow, boulder strewn areas, lakes typical of a glaciated terrain," features, of course, common to Finland.⁵ This is undoubtedly more than a hypothesis; Finnish prose and verse abound with the theme "how like Finland is our new homeland." Yet other forces as well determined the direction of settlement—the prospects for employment in logging camps and sawmills, in the mines, and on the railroads; the availability of homesteads and cheap land with an appeal to a traditionally rural folk that was magnified by the frequent occurrence of industrial depression; the opportunity to perform profitable middleman's or professional functions in the rising Finnish communities. These considerations, more powerful perhaps than the geographic, prompted heavy settlement in the northern parts of the state.

⁴ Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia*, 2:150, 185.

⁵ Eugene Van Cleef, "The Problem of Scientific Settlement as Illustrated by the Finns," in *Comptes rendus du congrès international de géographie*, 3:1-7 (Paris, 1931). See also Darrell H. Davis, "The Finland Community," in the *Geographical Review*, 25:382-394 (July, 1935).

The widespread and impelling desire to own land, coupled with the proverbial empty purse, drove the Finns into the unpenetrated, cutover areas; their settlement there was reflected in a wealth of Finnish place names. To be sure, the *United States Postal Guide* for July, 1943, is extremely tightfisted, listing only four: Esko, Makinen, Finland in Lake County, and Toivola. But an atlas will reveal many more, and Finnish writings fairly bristle with them. Among such interesting additional evidences of Finnish settlement one might list Alango, Alavus, Onnela, Palo, and Petrell in St. Louis County; Finland, Finntown, Kalevala, and Salo in Carlton County; Toimi in Lake County; Suomi in Itasca County; Nurmijärvi in Pine County; and Aura, Finn, Heinola, Lehtijärvi, Lonnot, Runeberg, Susijärvi, and Topelius in Otter Tail, Becker, and Wadena counties.⁶ One is tempted to add, by means of a typographical change, still another: the substitution of *a* for *o* in Mahtowa in Carlton County will make of it a "splendid" Finnish place name, "Mahtawa"!

As the decades brought more and more Finns to labor in Minnesota's "green gold" of lumber and in its rich stores of iron ore embedded deep in the bowels of the familiar Pioneer and Zenith mines on the Vermilion or invitingly near the surface on the Mesabi, or to participate in the painful, if traditionally Finnish, task of transforming a "desert of barren pines" into agricultural oases, noteworthy changes occurred in the character of the immigrants. To begin with, the geographical sources of emigration shifted from northern Norway and Oulu to Vaasa and the southern provinces of Finland. Over eighty per cent of the pre-1890 Finnish pioneers in Minnesota were born in Oulu and some nine per cent in Norway; all the Finns living in Holmes City in 1883, for example, were from Oulu. By the 1920's, however, the situation had changed radically; only thirty-six per cent of Minnesota's Finns reported Oulu as their birthplace, and under four-tenths of one per cent, Norway. Newcomers in large numbers had emigrated in the preceding decades from Vaasa, Kuopio, Turu-Pori, and to a lesser degree, from Mikkeli, Häme, Viipuri,

⁶ These place names have been culled from maps, old and new, immigrant newspapers and periodicals, and Finnish writings on Minnesota.

and Uusimaa.⁷ Other consequential changes took place: more women, with characteristic shawls covering their heads, dared to make the trans-Atlantic crossing; a greater number of urban people entered the migration stream, cutting down the earlier preponderance of rural folk; many of the emigrants were single rather than married, younger in years, more liberal in outlook.

These significant changes were to bring about a widespread liberalizing of institutional life and standards, often accompanied by discord and strife. The growing diversity of the immigrants, along with the more powerful pressures of the New World environment, tended, no doubt, to smooth the rough edges of some of the northern Finlander's (*Pohjalainen*) traits. Perhaps the characteristic slowness of thought and action gradually yielded to the faster tempo of American life, reluctance for the new giving way to a spirit of cautious experimentation, reticence moving in the direction of, but scarcely attaining, garrulity, chilling aloofness melting into a warmer personality. But some of the *Pohjalainen's* traits have proved unmistakable assets: endurance and stick-to-itiveness, downright honesty, love of freedom tempered with a deep respect for law, an age-old propensity for folk song and proverb and for deep-seated humor. Zacharias Topelius, that inimitable interpreter of Finland and its people, speaks of still another Finnish characteristic—blindness to the lure of gold.⁸ And was it not Wäinömöinen who in the *Kalevala* sang:

⁷ Of some 460 pre-1890 pioneers listed in Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Historia*, eighty per cent were born in Oulu, seven per cent in Vaasa, nine per cent in Norway, one per cent in Sweden, and three per cent elsewhere. No fewer than 140 of these individuals went to Minnesota by way of Norway. Of the 220 Finns living in Minnesota between 1922 and 1927, and listed in Werner Nikander, *Amerikan Suomalaisia* (Hancock, Michigan, 1927), thirty-six per cent were born in Oulu, thirty-six per cent in Vaasa, twenty per cent in Kuopio, Turu-Pori, Mikkeli, Häme, Viipuri, and Uusimaa, three per cent in Sweden, and four-tenths of one per cent in Norway, and three per cent are unidentified. Eighty-nine of the total number went to Minnesota directly from Europe, fifty-five from Michigan, fifteen from Massachusetts, eleven from Ohio, eight from New York, six from Wisconsin, and others from Illinois, Montana, Wyoming, and Canada.

⁸ Z. Topelius, in L. Mechelin, ed., *Suomi 19nnella Vouisadalla*, 1:56-73 (Helsinki, 1898). See also the excellent articles on the *Pohjalaiset* in *Oma Maa*, 4:157-172; and the following articles by Marjorie Edgar: "Finnish Folk Songs in Minnesota," *ante*, 16:319-321, "Finnish Charms and Folk Songs in Minnesota," *ante*, 17:406-410, and "Finnish Charms from Minnesota," in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, 47:381-383 (October-December, 1934).

Better dwell in one's own country
There to drink its healthful waters
From the simple cups of birchwood,
Than in foreign lands to wander,
There to drink the rarest liquors
From the golden bowls of strangers.

The spirit of Finland's mythical hero apparently has continued to reside in the hearts of many Minnesota Finns. Although they sought not golden bowls but birchwood cups—a simple, Spartan life—masters they were of a land of stumps and stones.

But, as the unfolding of the years testified, their land was not to remain one of stumps and stones; the proverbial Finnish *sisu* did not falter before a hard nature or its allies of fire and disease.⁹ Not miraculously or quickly, but by the patient alchemy of stubborn will and ceaseless toil, stumps were swallowed up by fields of wheat and potatoes; boulders strewn in a maddening manner on and below the surface became neat and symmetrical fences or high-piled mounds of victory. A lacework of roads and bridges cut into the tangled, trackless wilderness of swamp and forest, bringing the blessings of community ever nearer. Dwellings progressed from crude log huts, through a tar paper stage, into neat, if conventional, siding-covered houses, sometimes with the last layer superimposed upon the others. The familiar steam bath, too, underwent improvement from the primitive "smoke" *sauna* into a "luxurious hell" of heat and perspiration, as an enthusiastic American described it.¹⁰ The ox gave way to the horse, which in turn grudgingly yielded to the ungainly but effective homemade tractor, the *jukkəri*; modern equipment and electricity slowly penetrated into the fringes of Finnish pioneer settlement, spelling an end to the indescribable hardships of the earlier period. Modernity has not, of course, touched all the Finnish holdings; many immigrants still live under conditions most accurately defined as substandard. Yet once again the Finnish

⁹ For an American interpretation, see Hudson Strode, "Sisu: A Word That Explains Finland," in the *New York Times Magazine*, 6 (January 14, 1940).

¹⁰ Robert Traver, *Trouble-Shooter: The Story of a Northwoods Prosecutor*, 19 (New York, 1943). Another description of the Finnish steam bath is given by John B. Martin, in *Call It North Country*, 264-266 (New York, 1944).

ax and hoe have broken a wilderness. "Probably no other group," concludes Grace Lee Nute in a recent book, "could take over stump land, perhaps also burned over, and make successful farming country of it."¹¹

A victory over northern Minnesota's back country was, in the opinion of the pioneers, hollow and empty unless they could also win the struggle along a broad cultural front. Churches, temperance societies, workingmen's organizations, co-operatives, newspapers, libraries, and reading rooms had to be founded for the cultural enrichment of the immigrants; schools and teachers had to be procured for the rising generation of American Finns. This inner impulse for advancement and its harvest can be seen in the Brimson-Toimi area. Three years after the first Finns arrived in this cutover region of St. Louis and Lake counties in 1903, a typical "Society of Enlightenment" arose; its manuscript records, in a hand-written paper or *nyrkķilehti* entitled "Erämaan Oras," still rest undisturbed in a log hall nestled among the pines and poplars.¹² Other institutions followed, and when, in 1938, the pioneers were reviewing the fruits of thirty-five years of joint effort they counted two schools, two churches, a temperance society, two co-operative stores, four privately owned stores, thirteen gasoline stations, a home and community club, a study club, a Farmer-Labor club, a women's co-operative guild, two hall associations, a workers' society, a farmers' league, a workers' alliance, a band, a chorus, and a dramatic group. Well could this diminutive rural community — and many others like it in the state of Minnesota — proudly proclaim: "The same as in the Greater World."

The story of the founding and achievements of these immigrant institutions cannot be told tonight. Nonetheless I should like to re-

¹¹ *Lake Superior*, 258 (New York, 1944). Examples of Finnish verse commemorating the victory over the back country are Flora Manninen, "Villiin Korpeen," in *Veljeysviesti*, 21:28 (September, 1944), and Simon Korpela, "Korpeen Raatajat," in *Raitius-Kalenteri*, 1918, p. 144-150 (Hancock, Michigan, 1917).

¹² A memorial number of this manuscript paper, edited by Edwin Petrell and Hjalmar Kaikkonen, is dated June 19, 1938. "Pioneer Celebrations in St. Louis County" are discussed by B. G. Leighton, *ante*, p. 158-164; the present writer describes "The Finnish Immigrant *Nyrķķilehti*" in *Common Ground*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 105 (Autumn, 1943).

cord in this brief sketch of the Finnish pioneers a few names and facts. With reference to the Minnesota temperance movement, however, I shall add nothing now to the description it was my privilege to write earlier.¹³

Historical and traditional forces made well-nigh inevitable the emergence of Lutheran congregations among the immigrants. In the years after 1874, when the first church was established in the Cokato country, northern Minnesota became dotted with simple and unpretentious Lutheran churches, the earliest of which arose from the visits and tireless labors of such pioneer pastors as Juhani Tikkanen, William Williamson, J. K. Nikander, and Heikki Sarvela. By 1936 the Lutherans, who were divided into three bodies, the Apostolic, the National, and the Suomi Synod, jointly had a total of a hundred congregations and preaching points, reaching a communicant body of over 11,500. Other Protestant churches have appeared; although they have remained quantitatively insignificant. Methodism among the Minnesota Finns stems back to the early 1890's, when the Reverend J. H. Michaelson founded the first Finnish Methodist church in America at Moose Lake. The introduction of Unitarianism among the immigrants was largely the work of the Reverend Risto Lappala, who went to Duluth in 1908, and of his wife, the Reverend Milma Lappala. Scattered here and there are small numbers of Finnish Baptists and adherents of other denominational bodies.¹⁴

The earliest working-class institutions go back to the turn of the century. The indefatigable Martin Hendrickson, for example, organized workers' societies in 1902 at Hibbing and Duluth as he was on his way to join the one and only Matti Kurikka in the famous Utopian venture at Malkosaari in British Columbia. A year later a

¹³ The writer's article on "Finnish Temperance Societies in Minnesota" appears *ante*, 22:391-403.

¹⁴ *Religious Bodies*, 1936, 2:968-983 (1941). The standard work on Finnish immigrant religious institutions is V. Rautanen, *Amerikan Suomalainen Kirkko* (Hancock, Michigan, 1911). Also useful are K. E. Salonen, *Amerikan Suom. Ev. Luth. Kansalliskirkon 25 Vuotis Julkaisu* (Ironwood, Michigan, 1923), and A. Kukko, ed., *Muistoja 30-Vuotisesta Lähetystyöstä* (Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1920). Several pioneer Finnish preachers, among them Williamson and Sarvela, were ordained by Hauge's Synod of the Norwegian Lutheran church at Red Wing. The Finnish Nationalist church maintained a college and theological seminary in Minneapolis and Smithville from 1903 to 1907; the institution was later transformed into the Work People's College.

similar group was started in Virginia; by 1905 the number of societies exceeded a dozen with a combined membership of about four hundred. After the Hibbing meeting of 1906, most of these societies became affiliated with the national Finnish federation of the Socialist party. But the working-class movement, like the other immigrant undertakings, was not free from discordant forces. In 1914 the syndicalist-minded Finns were won over by the banner of the I.W.W. A more serious rupture came from 1919 to 1921 in the form of the Communist secession, taking heavy toll of the Socialists who as late as 1917 claimed 33 chapters and 1,122 members in the state. Today, hopelessly divided, the immigrant working-class movement admittedly faces a forlorn future. The doors of its halls, according to a Socialist editor, have been closed by spider webs and dust, which are surely unworthy epitaphs to an enterprise once so rich with cultural and social, if not political, significance. The Farmer-Labor league of the Finns, too, has shrunk to "hole-in-the-wall dimensions"; a news story of 1942 suggested how a personable young lady of Finnish origin was trying under the most unfavorable circumstances to lead the party back to the glory of the "Olsonian days."¹⁵

Along the co-operative front there have been both progress and recession. The colorful co-operative boardinghouses—*poika-talot* to the Finns—which the novelist Phil Stong so inadequately describes in his recent book, *The Iron Mountain* (New York, 1942), are, of course, giving way to the normal family dining-room table. Yet as late as 1928 there were twenty-four such co-operative eating establishments in the state with picturesque names (if not food!) ranging from the traditional *elanto* to *pyrintö*.¹⁶ The largest was the Duluth "Toverila," started in 1909 and reporting in 1928 some 338

¹⁵ F. J. Syrjälä, *Historia-aiheita Amerikan Suomalaisten Työväen Liikkeestä* (Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1924); Henry Askeli, "Suomalainen Sosialisti Järjestö," in *Kalenteri Amerikan Suomalaiselle Työväelle*, 1918, p. 33 (Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1917); *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 14, 1942. On the Utopian colony, see Matti Halminen, *Sointula, Kalevan Kansan ja Kanadan Suomalaisten Historiaa* (Helsinki, 1936), and the present writer's article entitled "Harmony Island: A Finnish Utopian Venture in British Columbia," in *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, 5:111-123 (April, 1941).

¹⁶ "Finnish Co-operative Boarding Houses and Hotels in United States and Canada," in Fourth Northern States Co-operative League, *Year Book*, 259-262 (Minneapolis, 1928).

members and a volume of business totaling \$64,500; rivaling it was the Cloquet "Toivola" with 280 boarders.

On the other hand, the retail co-operatives have enjoyed an impressive development. In 1914 there were in northern Minnesota sixteen co-operatives incorporated on the Rochdale plan, all but two of which were clearly Finnish in origin and management; by 1941 the total number of Minnesota societies affiliated with the Superior Central Co-operative Wholesale was sixty-eight, of which at least forty-five trace back to Finnish initiative and foresight. The local associations, too, showed a remarkable capacity for growth. The Orr Farmers' Co-operative, for example, started as a small buying club in 1919; in 1941 its volume of business topped \$154,000. The Floodwood co-operative, similarly, attained a turnover of nearly \$350,000 only seventeen years after its establishment.¹⁷

Newspapers, too, were a concern of the pioneers; local pride perhaps prompted them to establish a native Minnesota press rather than rely on the wares of other states. Although immigrant papers were frequently moved from one state to another, the Minnesota Finns can perhaps claim title to thirteen in all. Information about many of these journalistic ventures is scarce; their files, if kept, have remained hidden. What a story of immigrant life they might have revealed! The loss of such irreplaceable materials is regrettable. One hopes that this ceremony tonight may mark not only the dedication of a fitting memorial to our pioneers, but also the beginning of an extensive united effort on the part of Finnish groups and the Minnesota Historical Society in the collection of the rich but now scattered and rapidly disappearing materials, both published and manuscript, to the end that some day this admirable painting may be given the depth and the detail and the analysis that can come only through historical investigation and interpretation.

But to return to the journalistic efforts of the Finns. Apparently only three of the thirteen newspapers are in existence today. The

¹⁷ Central Co-operative Wholesale, *Year Book*, 1942, p. 42-47 (Superior, 1942). See also Wilho Boman, "Osuustoiminta Amerikassa," in *Kalenteri Amerikan Suomalaiselle Työvälle*, 1919, p. 56-67; V. S. Alanne, "Trends Today of Finnish Co-operatives," in *Co-operation*, 18:113-115 (New York, 1932).

Päivälehti, started in Michigan in 1901 and thirteen years later transferred to Duluth, has had a long and respectable history under able editorship; the *Industrialisti*, organ of the Finnish syndicalists, was launched in Duluth in 1917 and in 1935 reported a circulation of over eight thousand; and the *Minnesotan Uutiset* has been successfully published in New York Mills since 1932, after having earlier appeared in Virginia. But the other newspapers, for the most part, have joined the ranks of hundreds of Finnish language publications in America and Canada with life spans, measured often in months, sometimes in years, that have ended.¹⁸ The venerable *Siirtolainen (Lännetar)* gave up the ghost in Duluth in 1937; much earlier the New York Mills *Kansan Toveri*, the *Lentäviä Lehtiä* of Minneapolis, A. F. Tanner's *Aatteita* of Ely, the *Pohjalainen* of Virginia, and the *Uusi Raittiuslehti*, the *Teollisuuslainen*, and the *Suomalainen*, all of Duluth, had come to final rest. The *Uusi Kotimaa (ja Amerikan Suometar)*, begun in Minneapolis in 1881 and long published at New York Mills, was later removed to a neighboring state; in a like manner the *Amerikan Uutiset*, published in Minneapolis from 1887 to 1894, emigrated to Michigan. One might note also a Swede-Finn religious periodical, the *Finska-Missions Posten*, that was published in Duluth before being shifted to Chicago.

To be sure, the founding and maintenance of institutions, the clearing and cultivation of land, are no longer of immediate concern to the immigrants; these have become the tasks of a new generation. The pioneer's well-deserved occupation today is dreaming of a life gone by. Memories irresistably come back of Finland, beloved land of birth; of a mother's tear sealing final words of counsel; *Hankoniemen Silmä* flashing its last appeal to the outward-bound sons and daughters; the confusion of an inhospitable and indifferent Liverpool and New York; the deed to the homestead, the first crop, the first cow, the first son. There are recollections, too, of Sunday afternoons spent on tranquil Minnesota lakes, youthful words slowly

¹⁸ F. Tolonen, "Muutamia Historia-Tietoja Amerikan Suomalaisista Sanomalehdistä," in *Amerikan Suometar Muistojulkaisu 1899-1919*, 78-92 (Hancock, Michigan, 1919); S. Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisen Sivistyshistoria*, 188-195 (Hancock, Michigan, 1930-31).

carried to the skies on the curling smoke of the open fire, "A Song to Minnesota."¹⁹

Minnesotan mailla metsäisillä
 On koti-seutu meillä armainen,
 Kuusi kunnahillas lehväisillä
 Sen luonto meille sopii parhaiten.
 On kaunis näky kesä illoin
 Kun ruskot loistaa lännen auringon,
 Viel' kaunihimpi kuulla silloin
 Yö-rastaan riemulaulu verraton.
 Laulumme soi, Laulumme soi, Laulumme soi,
 Sinulle, Minnesota!

¹⁹ A favorite song among many Minnesota Finns is A. Tuikkainen's "Laulu Minnesotalle." A free translation of the verse quoted follows:

In Minnesota's wooded country
 Is our beloved homeland,
 With its hillocks of leafy spruce
 Its nature suits us best.
 On summer's eve, a beautiful scene
 As crimson glistens the western sun,
 More lovely yet then to hear
 The matchless carol of the evening thrush.
 Our song rings out, our song rings out, our song rings out,
 To you, Minnesota!



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