

## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



# A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

LAITALA & KEMPAINEN (SECOND EDITION)

JILL HOLMAN

Copyright ©2018 All Rights Reserved  
Please share this book in its entirety, but don't change it or charge for it.

## Dedication

*This book is dedicated to all the cousins.*

*With thanks to Grandma for getting me started and to everyone who helped.*



# Contents

	<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a>	i
1.	<a href="#"><u>William &amp; Katri</u></a>	3
2.	<a href="#"><u>Places</u></a>	14
3.	<a href="#"><u>The Ancestors of William Laitala</u></a>	37
4.	<a href="#"><u>The Ancestors of Katri Kempainen</u></a>	39
5.	<a href="#"><u>Finnish Culture</u></a>	43
6.	<a href="#"><u>Sources</u></a>	45
	<a href="#"><u>About the Author</u></a>	47





## Introduction



Mural in Chisholm in 2008

I have been working on family history since 1995 on and off. I really like this part of the family – they seem like good people. And it is a good immigrant story. Katri even came through Ellis Island!

The first version of this book was in 2009 after a visit to northern Minnesota and FinnFest in Duluth.

I have learned a few things since then, so here is the next edition.

Thanks to everyone who helped and shared information!

JH

P.S. Please share any additions and corrections with me. There very well might be another edition in the future. I would love to have a chapter on each of the six brothers . . . anyone want to help?



I

WILLIAM & KATRI

---



Katri, William and grandson Elmer in 1944 on the farm

This is the story of William and Katri and their six sons, a Finnish family in northern Minnesota. What most captivates me about their story? First, it is an immigrant story. These people were brave to leave everything they knew and build a new life in a new land. Paltamo, Katri's birthplace, was first settled around 1555! It had to be a difficult decision to leave a place where your family lived for many generations. In addition, sometimes the family who stayed in Finland treated people who left as traitors. So why did they leave? Things were not great in Finland in the early 1900s. There were low wages and famine and only property owners could vote. There was the Russian military. Women experienced more equality in the US than they did in Finland.

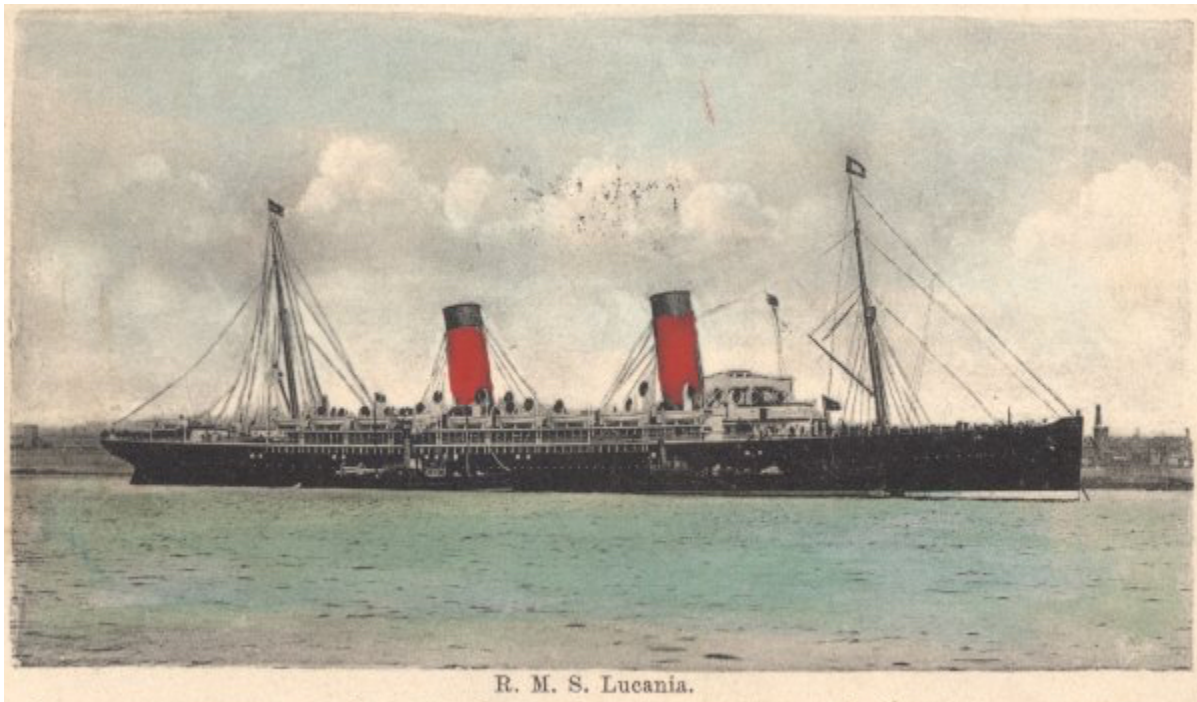
The second thing that captivates me is that William and Katri did pretty well. Farming in northern Minnesota is not the easiest life, but they built up a farm with about 15 buildings on it. They farmed, sold milk and had a blacksmith shop. Chisholm is in the far north of the United States and is known as cold and snowy. But it is actually farther south than the towns in Finland where William and Katri were born. Paltamo and Haapavesi are at 64 degrees North and Chisholm is only 47 degrees North. And yes, if you are thinking 64 degrees North is close to the arctic circle, you are right! It is about 173 miles away.

The third thing that captivates me is that William and Katri seemed like good people, honest and hard working. (I can't say the same about some of my other relatives I have researched!) Also, the unique Finnish

culture fascinates me! I cannot wait to visit Finland some day. Our family definitely inherited *sisu*. It is hard to translate this word, sort of a stubborn perseverance, and the Finnish are known for it.

Katri loved desserts and made homemade root beer. She did not ever speak much English. Carol, a granddaughter, remembers William always had a pocket full of lemondrops.

But let us begin our story back in Finland. It looks like both William and Katri were living in Oulu and met there. William, 25 years old and a laborer, arrived first, in 1903. Usually people traveled on a Finnish Steamship Company steamer from Hanko to Hull and then took a train to Liverpool, so that is probably what William did too. Then he took a ship to Halifax and then came through Sault Sainte Marie. He appeared to be traveling alone and he was already going to Chisholm Box 127 – who was there before him? Why was he going there? Chisholm had only just been incorporated in 1901 with 250 people.



Katri crossed the Atlantic Ocean via the Lucania

Katri arrived in 1905 on the Lucania. The Statue of Liberty welcomed her into the harbor and then she had to go through Ellis Island. She could read and write and she was listed as a servant. She was 26, in good health and had \$20. She was going to Chisholm to meet a friend who had paid her ticket: Vilho Laitala at Box 127 in Chisholm. Yes, that is William, just one of the variations on his name. Maria Leinonen traveled with Katri and also said she was going to Vilho in Chisholm, though she paid herself. There were other Finnish folks on the ship. This was the peak of emigration from Finland because times were tough there.

Already in 1905, Chisholm had 4231 people. There was a big mining boom with 8 mines nearby. 64% of the population was foreign born, the highest on the iron range.

William and Katri married on 6 May 1906. John and Hannah Heikkinen were listed as witnesses. The next year, William was born on 7 May 1907.

Then the next year, they had the Great Fire in Chisholm. It happened quickly and people ran for their lives. 4000/6000 people lost their homes. We don't know where William and Katri were living at this time or how bad it was for them, but it had to be scary. There were lootings. Martial law was declared and the

JILL HOLMAN

militia stayed for 8 weeks. Chisholm quickly started to rebuild and had a 25% increase in population one year later. ([Read more here.](#))



Ruins after Chisholm fire in 1908

Edward was born 29 Oct 1909. Sulo followed 23 Sep 1911. His baptism was done by the pastor at Saarikoski Finnish Evangelical Church in Lavell township. It was independent, with only 6-8 families the first few years.





Sulo's baptism 1911

At first I had the notion that it was a lonely existence for this immigrant family. Boy, was I wrong. There was a huge Finnish population in the area and they had many community activities: sports, music, Finnish Temperance Society, Workers Society, civic clubs and Finnish newspapers. We don't know how active

William and Katri were, but they were at least connected to the Saarikoski Finnish Evangelical Church since the pastor on Sulo's baptism certificate was associated with this church.

In 1913, William bought block 4 lot 13 on Hickory and Adolph returned from Finland with Hanna. It looks like a couple other cousins came with them as well. Wayne was born 3 May 1914 and later that year William bought block 4 lot 14-15 on Hickory. In 1916, William bought lot 2 of the farm and Arvid was born 27 Aug 1916.

Matt Laitala came through New York on the Oscar II 19 Sep 1916. The next year he was living at 101 Poplar and listed William as his closest relative on his draft card.

In 1918, Adolph Kemppainen worked at the Balkan school and lived at 314 Central Ave. William and family were still living at 310 W Hickory. Veikko was born 13 Jun 1919.

In 1919, Matt Laitala filed his declaration of intent. He's still at 101 Poplar and a laborer.

The 1920 census lists the family at 310 W. Hickory in Chisholm: William, Catherine, John, Edward, Sulo, Wainer, Arvid, Waico. They had a mortgage. William had filed his papers to become a citizen. John through Wainer were in school. William, Catherine, John, and Edward were listed as being able to read and write. William's occupation was listed as common laborer.

In 1922, William sold lots 13-15 on Hickory and in 1925 he bought another section of the farm. In 1929, they raised the farmhouse and put in the foundation.

The boys ran moonshine during Prohibition and Katri was very mad when she found out. (Funny coincidence that Haapavesi, William's birthplace, is known for moonshine!)

In 1930, Adolph K. is a lodger on Poplar with the Ranta family and a laborer in a lumber camp, where he stays for the next ten years.



Balkan Farmers Club 1931 – can you find the Laitalas?

In 1933, William bought another section of the farm. In 1934, Chisholm officially becomes a city. In 1937, Katri filed her declaration to become a citizen. In 1939, she filed her petition and Marie Imsola and Gust Lake were witnesses.

1940 was a big year. Sulo and Gertrude married in 1940, having met a couple years before. The Doerings, her cousins, were witnesses. Her parents were not there since she was not marrying a Catholic. Katri became



## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

a citizen in March and William in September. The 1940 census reports that William and Katri had Ed, Sulo, Arvid and Gertrude living with them and Ailie is listed as a servant.

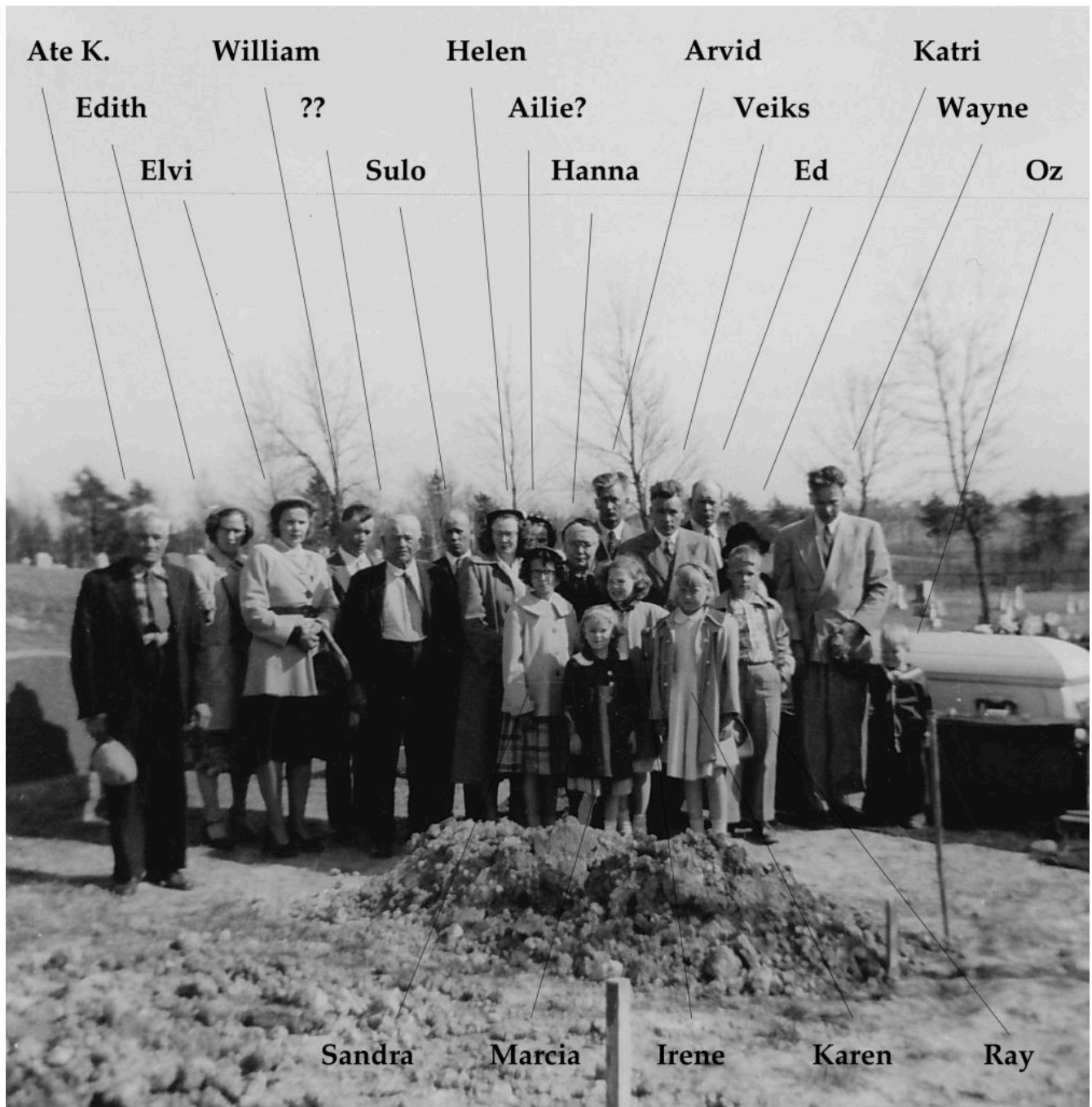
Then in November there was the big Armistice Day Blizzard. It was 1000 miles wide and 145 people died! Read more: [1940 Armistice Day Blizzard](#) and [75th Anniversary of the Armistice Day Blizzard](#).



Armistice Day Blizzard on the farm in 1940

In 1941, William bought the last section of the farm. In 1944, Gertrude and Sulo were living in Minneapolis. In 1948, they were living in Kettle River for a few years and then they returned to Minneapolis.

In 1951, Ed bought the farm from William for \$1. William died in Virginia, MN from lung cancer 21 Apr 1952.



Williams's funeral 1952



On the farm the day of their father's funeral (front: William, Sulo, Veikko and back: Wayne, Arvid, Ed)

Wayne visited Finland in the 1960s and a Finnish cousin visited the United States as well.

Katri died from cerebral vascular thrombosis in Virginia, MN 29 Jun 1963. She had been in the Virginia Infirmary for a year. Adolph died in Balkan township 30 Nov 1963.

Hannah K. had worked at a Chicago hotel for years. She lived with Veiks and Ruth for awhile and then in a nursing home in Indiana. She died 14 Jun 1974 and left money to the six brothers who pooled it together for Ed.

William and Katri's sons were good craftsmen and had various talents:

- William (1907-1976) farmed and cut wood. He married Elvie and they lived in Bovey.
- Ed (1909-1997) was the blacksmith. He never married. He stayed on the farm.
- Sulo (1911-1992) was the machinist. He married Gertrude. They lived in Kettle River 1948-1952 and Minneapolis the rest of their lives.
- Wayne (1914-1980) was a Cargill executive in NY. He married Edith.
- Arvid (1916-1986) worked in the mines and farmed. He married Ailie. He was a sergeant in the army during WWII.
- Veikko (1919-1991) was a mason, machinist and in the army during WWII. He married Helen and then Ruth.





The Laitala Brothers and their Wives (front: Bill, Elvie, Sulo, Gertrude, Ailie and back: Helen, Veikko, Arvid, Wayne, Edith, Ed)

I am not giving much detail on the later descendants of William and Katri in order to protect the privacy of living people. They had 16 grandchildren.

A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



The grandchildren in 1980

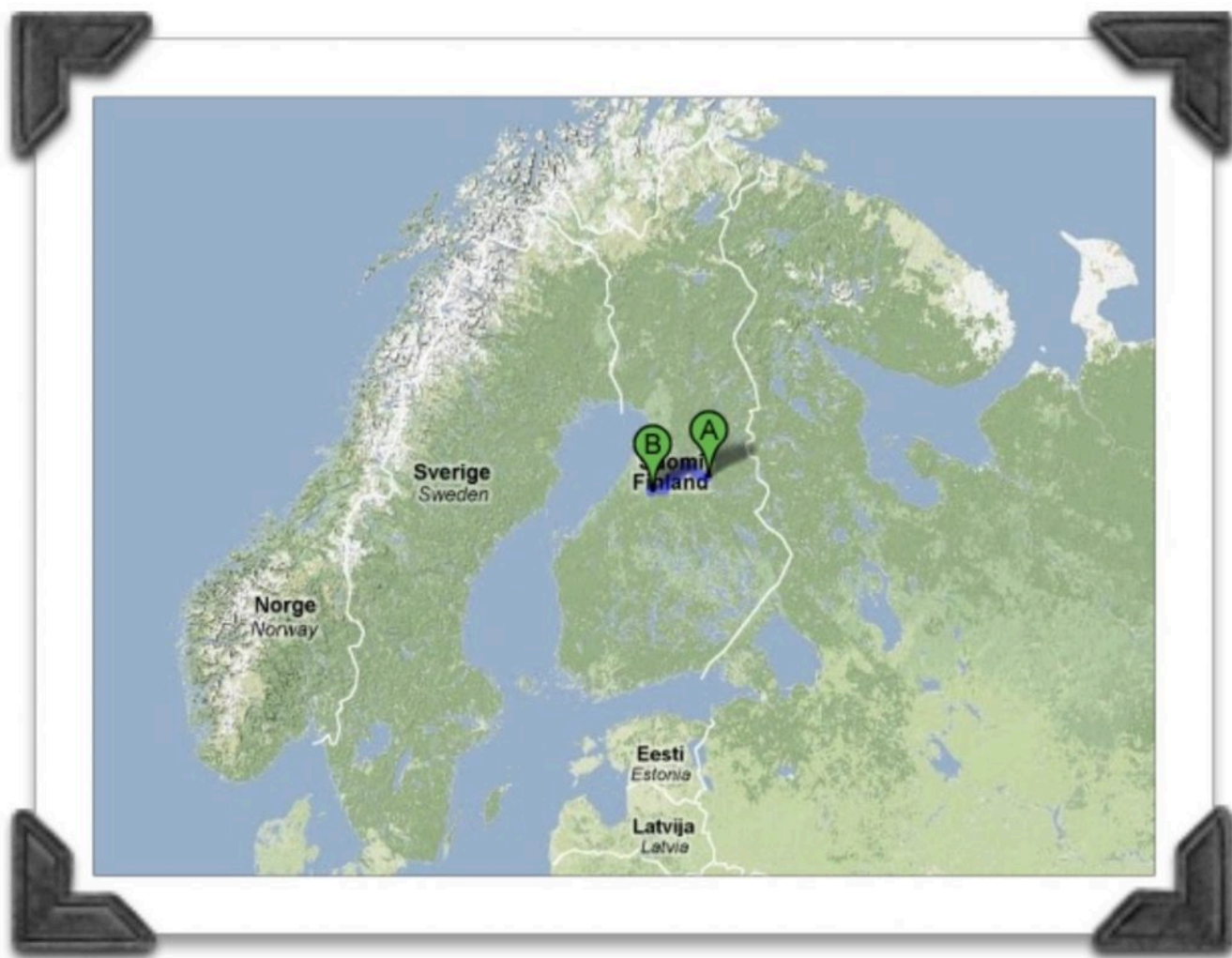
## PLACES

---

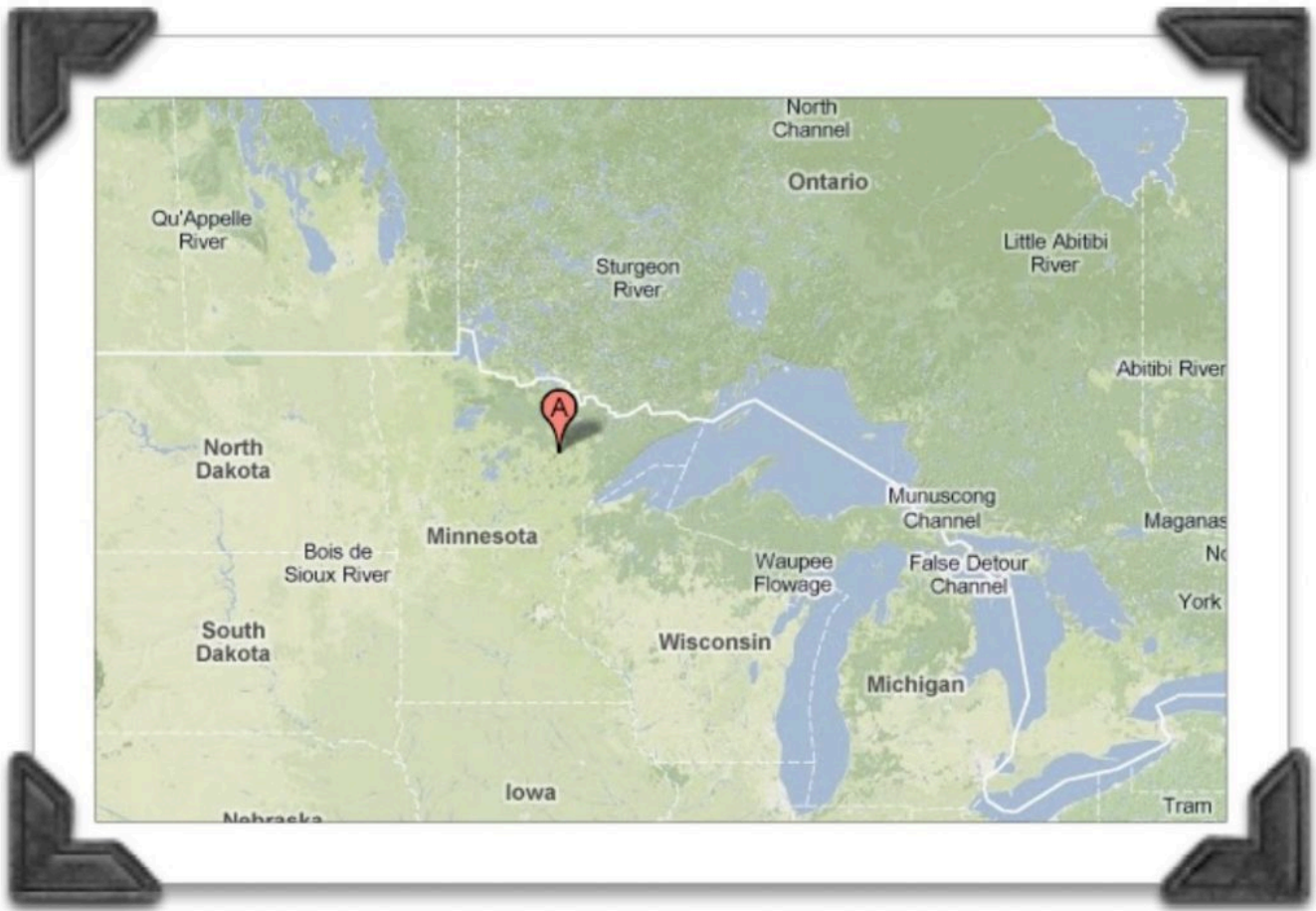
William and Katri came from villages in Finland, not far from the Arctic Circle. William came from Haapavesi and Katri came from Paltamo.



## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



A is Paltamo and B is Haapavesi on this map



Here is where William and Katri settled, Chisholm, MN. This area has seasons and looks similar to where they came from in Finland.

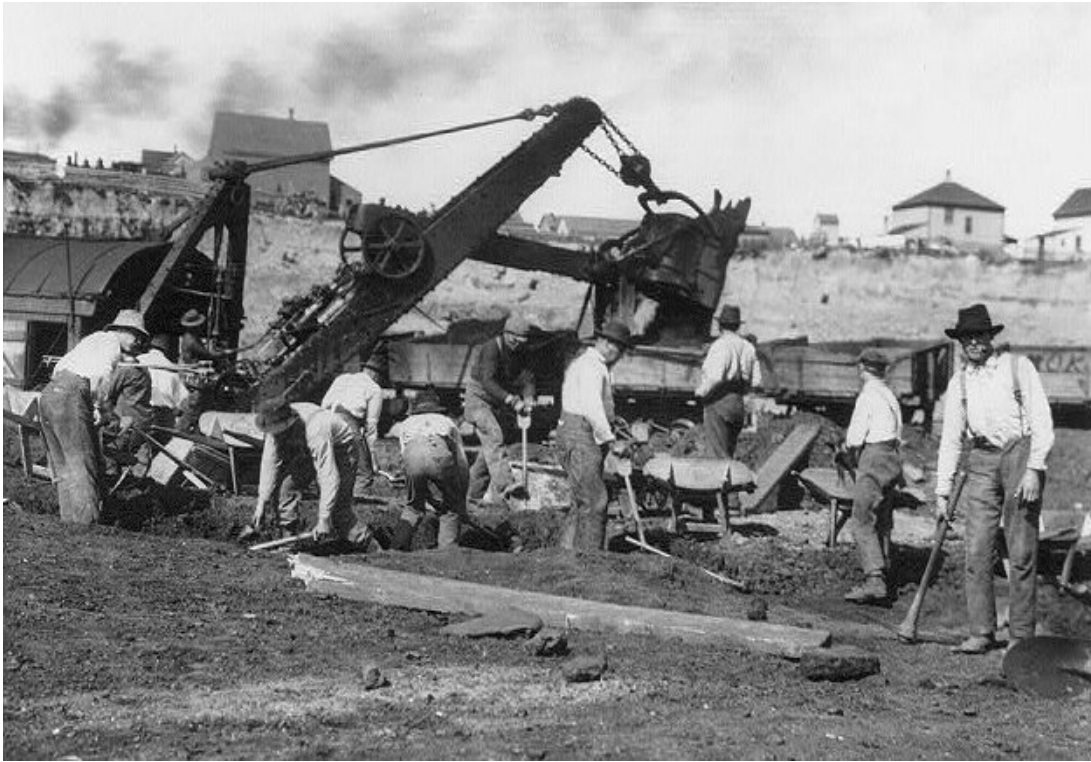
### The Iron Range, MN

William and Katri settled in the Iron Range, otherwise known as the Mesabi Range, which is the largest iron ore deposit in the world. It is now an historic landmark and as it says in the [National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination: Mountain Iron Mine](#), “Minnesota steel was a significant factor in the decisive role this country played in the two World Wars.”)

Many early settlers in the area were Finnish. William and Katri were the next generation after the first pioneers, but the book, *Mesabi Pioneers*, is still worth reading. The author did a great job bringing to life what it was like back then, being a pioneer in northern Minnesota. It was a diverse community of immigrants and these people had a lot of strength and determination. You may think historical fiction has to be boring and dry, but it doesn't! This book is really quite an enjoyable read. [Get the book here](#). They made this [great video](#) about the book that has many magnificent old pictures!

Here is a picture of what it would have looked like when William arrived:





Miners – Mesabi Range 1903 (from the Library of Congress)

### Chisholm

First a lumber camp and then a mining community in the 1890s, Chisholm was first incorporated as a village in 1901. Then there was a devastating fire in 1908 and only a few buildings survived. They re-built the town in the next year.

Let's look at images of historic Chisholm. We do not usually think of northern Minnesota as the Old West, but Chisholm was that same sort of rough and tumble boomtown with lots of young single Finnish men, working in the mines and lumber camps, living in boarding houses. And then there was a lot of drinking and carousing. What an interesting time and place!

There are some great old images in Hans R. Wasastjerna's [History of the Finns in Minnesota](#) – don't you love these?!



Chisholm Boarding House

## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



Hibbing Miners 1914, Mostly Finns

### The Laitala Farm

William and Katri first bought the house on 310 West Hickory in 1913. Supposedly Ate was squatting on the land where the farm would be. William and Katri bought the farm in pieces over time. They moved from the house on Hickory out to the farm in 1919 and sold the house on Hickory in 1922. Their son Edward bought the farm in 1951. It has stayed in the family to this day.

Over the years, a lot has happened and then again, not so much has changed. Many of the buildings have stood the test of time. Sadly, the house burned down in 1977 and some of the buildings are succumbing gracefully to gravity . . .





The Laitala farm as it was in 1938



The cow barn & pole barn in 1938

A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



The cow barn in 1988



The garage and machine shop September 1988





The pole barn & blacksmith shop in 1988



The Laitala farm in 2008

A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



The blacksmith shop with the chicken coop in the background in 2008





The machine shop succumbing to gravity in 2008



## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



Inside view of the machine shop succumbing to gravity in 2008



The pole barn, cow barn & blacksmith shop in 2008



Let's take a closer look at that pole barn. Here it is in 2018 – Adolph built it to last. Examine the corner – double dovetail, double keylock.



## A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



This map shows the layout of the buildings for the Laitala Farm

### The Cabin on Sturgeon Lake

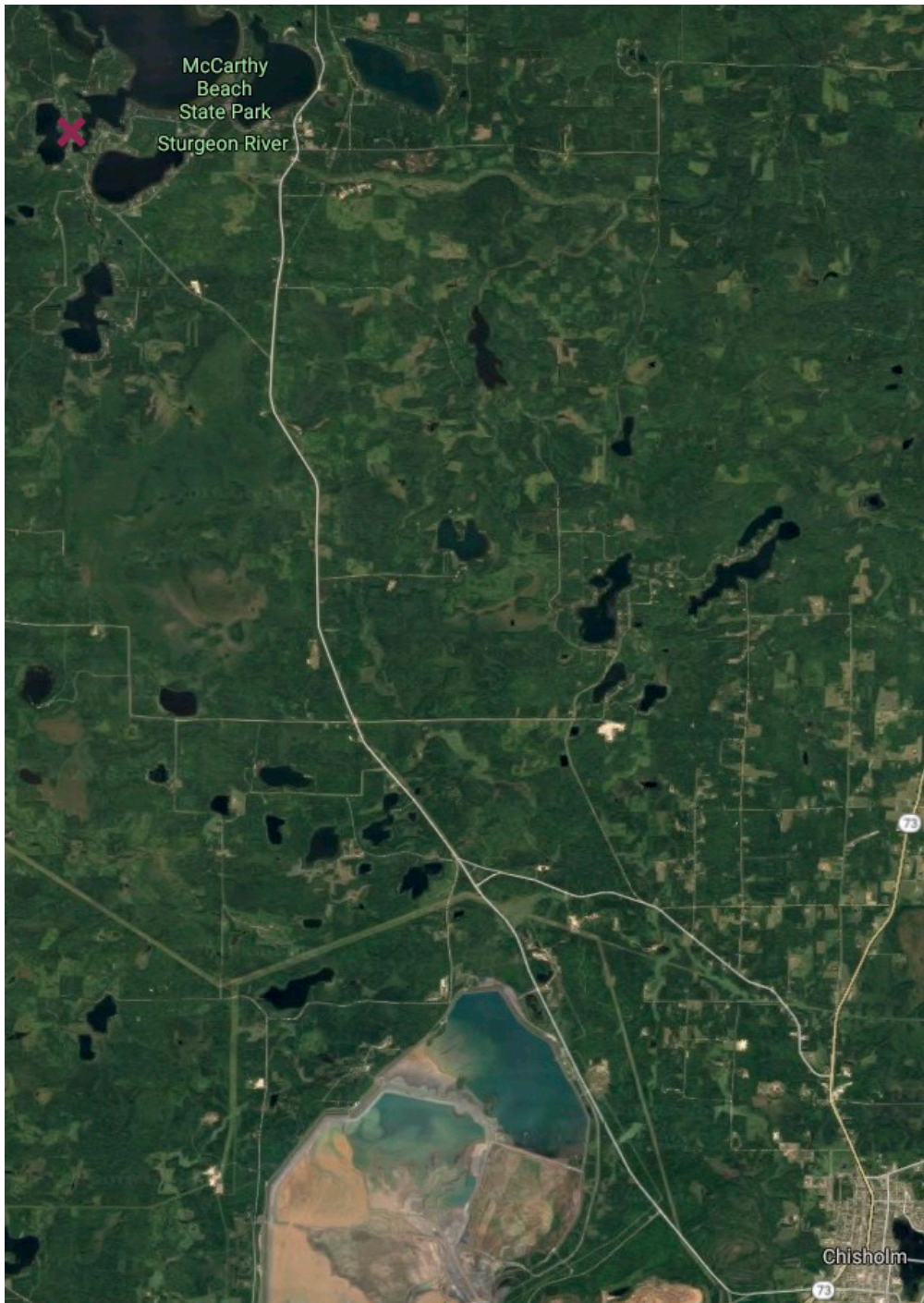


Ate, Hanna and Wayne at the cabin, about 1940.

Adolph (Ate) Kempainen bought the land in 1939 for \$187.50. Edward Laitala bought the cabin from him in 1963 for \$2000. It was sold in 1987.

JILL HOLMAN

I have fond memories of going to this cabin when I was little and of course there was a sauna house at the edge of the lake. Supposedly, grandpa liked it very hot.



The Cabin on Sturgeon Lake was several miles to the northwest of Chisholm

A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

Kettle River, MN

Sulo and Gerturde lived here with their young family for a few years. There is an historical marker in memory of the Finnish pioneers!





And a Finnish church from 1915!







Did you know Kettle River was originally called Finland? There were a lot of Finnish settlers here.

The church was built in 1915. Then they had a terrible fire in 1918. Over 450 people died, with fifteen hundred square miles consumed. ([More on the fire here.](#)) But the church was spared! There is some interesting information about the church building in this [National Register of Historic Places Registration Form](#). The builders were Kaipainens, which is one of our family names – they could have been cousins. I need to do more digging on that.

Where did they live? They lived northwest of town.





Sulo's house in Kettle River 1949



A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



Gertrude and Sulo on the farm in Kettle River in 1950



The Kalevala School in Kettle River, MN about 1950

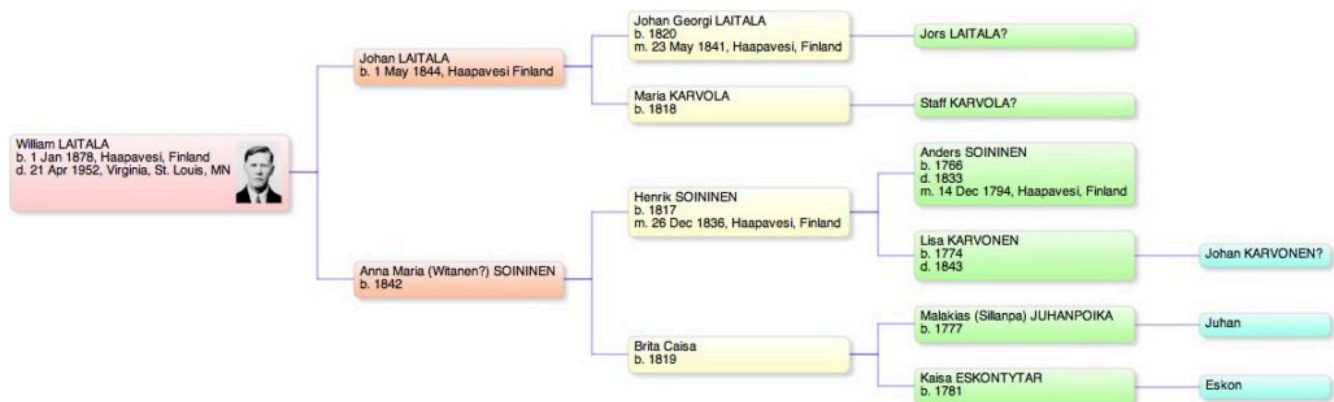
Lastly, here is some information on the first settlers in the area: [Reminiscences of the History of Kalevala District](#)

There are some names in there that could be cousins as well. More digging to do!

## THE ANCESTORS OF WILLIAM LAITALA

---

Here is what we have for William's ancestors. This could have errors, but it is a good start for further research.



Look at all the interesting things going on with the Finnish names!:

- Laitala was likely a farm name because it ends with -la
- Soininen changed to Witanen (Soininen might be an old style family surname)
- There is some Swedish and some Finnish
- We are going back far enough that we see the old fashioned Juhanpoika or “son of Juhan”

Read more about naming in Finland here:

- [Finland Surnames](#)
- [Finnish Farm Names \(interesting translations\)](#)

Summary on what we know about William Laitala's siblings:

- Abel (1868-?) was already in MN in 1895! With Manuel Laitala, perhaps a cousin?
- Johan Henrik (1870-?)
- Herman (1873-?)
- Abraim (1874-?)
- Anna Maria (1876-?)
- William (1878-1952?)
- Antti (1879-?) came to brother Matti in 1909
- Matti (1882-?) He names William as his nearest relative on his WWI draft card. He worked in the mines. (There seem to be more than one Matti Laitala, so we need to sort out.)
- Alina (1884-?) married Sakri Juntilla in Finland and had daughter Martha. Lived in Chisholm.

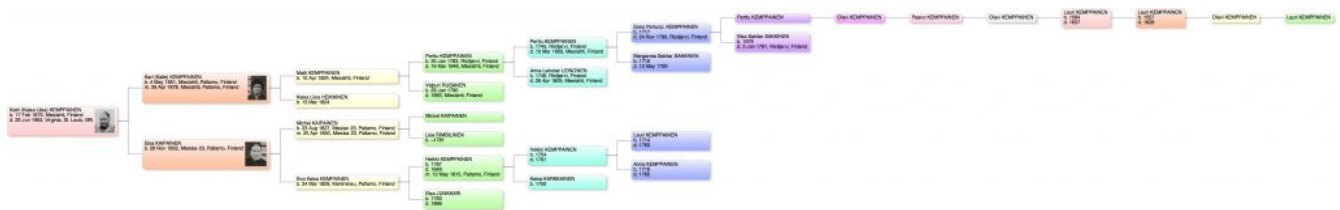
Of his older siblings, we think only Abel and Abraim came to Minnesota and the others remained in Finland. We also think there were two younger brothers, Matti and Antti, who also came to Minnesota. And, of course, Alina Laitala Juntilla, the youngest sister, came to Chisholm in 1910 with her daughter to join her husband.



## THE ANCESTORS OF KATRI KEMPAINEN

---

Here is what we have for Katri's ancestors. Cousins have traced back to the early 1500s!



The Ancestors of Katri Kempainen

This picture is from the funeral of Katri's brother Kalle in 1931:



Kalle's funeral – you can see Katri's sister, Elsa Karoliina and her husband in the upper left corner. Their father Kalle is in the first row.

The children of Kalle and Elsa were:

- Kaisa (Katri) Lisa (1879-1963) – married William Laitala and had 6 sons
- Anna Gustaava (1880-1947) – married Heikki Heikkinen and had 9 children: Kalle, Elsa, Erkki, Heikki, Matti, Joseph, Alisa, Eino and Hanna
- Ida Maria (1882-195?) – never married
- Adolf (1884-1963) – never married. Worked at Balkan school in 1918.
- Matti (1885-?) – married Anna-Mari Klemetti, had 6 children: Aino, Ida, Aarne, Kerttu, Erkki, Anna-Liisa
- Kalle (1887-1931) – married Maria Tolonen and had 8 children: Hanna, Aate, Jussi, Eino, Maija-Liisa, Eeva, Aili, Hulda
- Elsa Karoliina (1890-1971) – married Antti Kempainen and had 10 children, two of which died as child : Hulda, Sampa, Pentti, Liisa (died at age of 1 year), Ella, Antti, Sakari, Vilho (died 7 days old), Lauri, Kaisa,
- Greta Stiina (1890-1891)
- Eeva Johanna (1892-1974) – never married

# A FINNISH FAMILY IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

It appears that at least three Kemppainen siblings came to the US. Katri came to the US in 1905 with Maria Leinonen. Adolph came to the US in 1906 and went back to Finland (between 1909 and 1913). Adolph returned to the US in 1913 with Hanna and a few other people . . . looks like we have more cousins to investigate! We think Kalle and Matti might have come to the US and returned to Finland. We need to do more research to be sure.

15

SAIDON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

## LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

S. S. CARMANIA sailing from LIVERPOOL 14 JUN 1913 19

No.	Family Name	Given Name	Age	Sex	Color	Height	Weight	Build	Complexion	Birth	Place of Birth	Country	City or Town	Occupation	Remarks	Final Destination
1	Chen	Matti	25	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
2	Leppanen	Wilhelm	25	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
3	Kempainen	Matti	24	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
4	Kale	Kalle	30	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
5	Ylisen	Anna	24	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
6	Alatalo	Julia	20	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
7	Onesha	Lauri	30	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
8	Lakunen	Antti	20	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
9		Anna	30	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
10		Edward	15	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
11		Emma	6	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
12	Luoma	Nicola	23	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
13		Kalle	20	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
14		Walter	1	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
15	Seheli	Ville	22	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
16	Seheli	Anna	25	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
17	Seheli	Anna	25	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
18	Kortis	Johann	24	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
19		Emma	22	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
20	Kehonen	Kalle	21	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
21	Makareus	Emil	22	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
22	Kemppainen	Adolf	29	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
23	Kaipainen	Adolf	20	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
24	Wallsten	Karin	24	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
25	Kemppainen	Eva	21	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
26	Lehtinen	Thomas	27	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
27	Lehtinen	Thomas	27	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
28	Kuorikoski	Josiah	25	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
29	Kuorikoski	Thomas	25	Male	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul
30	Kemppainen	Eva	21	Female	Light	5' 8"	140	Slender	Fair	1888	Finland	Finland	Angels	Farmer	Wife, Helen, born 1890	St. Paul

43

Here is the ship's manifest from 1913 where Adolph brought Eva Hanna to the US – and we have more cousins to investigate!

JILL HOLMAN

Thanks especially to cousins Matti and Marjatta for sharing information! They even have an association!: <http://www.kemppaistensukuseura.fi/>

## FINNISH CULTURE

---

This chapter is certainly not comprehensive, but here are a few resources to learn more about Finnish culture . . .

If you have not seen it yet, read [Finns in Minnesota by Arnold R. Alanen](#). It is a quick read at 112 pages and it has lots of fun pictures. I especially liked all the Finnish terms and phrases included. Of course **Sisu**, we all seem to have that. How about “**Oma tupa, oma lupa**,” which he translated as “one’s home, one’s way.” (Which differs slightly from Edgar’s translation of “One’s own cabin, one’s own freedom” in [Finnish Proverbs in Minnesota](#).) And who doesn’t love a good sauna.

Also check out [The Finnish Cookbook by Beatrice Ojakangas](#). She remembered yummy food from her Finnish grandparents and she lived in Finland for a year. Her cookbook came out in 1964 and it is more than just recipes. She has an introduction including personality, language and a bit of history. The recipes are put into historical and cultural context and adapted to the American kitchen. Both Finnish and English names appear. There is a lot of emphasis on items for the coffee table! Hmmm, I have got to get my hands on some sour rye bread!

[Mämmi](#) is a traditional Finnish porridge or pudding that looks interesting.

[Independence Day](#) is December 6 and an important holiday.

[And they have Easter witches!](#)

Bobby Aro was a singer who had Finnish heritage – [listen to one of his songs here](#).

Here is a song in Finnish: [Loituma – “Ievan Polkka” \(Eva’s Polka\) 1996](#).





Finnish Folkdancers from 1907 ([From Wikipedia](#))

And a bit of art . . .



The Aino Triptych by Gallen Kallela, picturing scenes from the Kalevala ([From Wikipedia.](#))



## SOURCES

---

This is not an exhaustive list, but I have checked many types of sources including: birth, marriage and death records; census and land records; ship manifests and naturalization papers and books such as:

- A County Built on Iron
- Duluth and St. Louis County
- Finnish Immigrants in America
- History of Duluth and St. Louis County
- History of Finns in Minnesota
- History of St. Louis County
- Mesabi Pioneers
- Minnesota's Iron Country

Thanks again to everyone who has shared information!



## About the Author

Jill has been doing genealogy since 1993. She has visited many repositories such as the Family History Library, the National Archives, the Minnesota History Center, the Wisconsin Area Research Centers, local historical societies, county courthouses and cemeteries. She studied history and computer science in college and earned her Masters degree in Information and Library Studies from the University of Michigan (focused on technology, research and management).

Check the website for updates and to contact Jill with corrections, additions or questions:  
<https://jillholman.com/genealogy>