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THE FINN IN AMERICA



*"The fairest land is the northern
land,
Where the forest usurps the
meadow."*

Eugene Van Cleef



THE
FINN IN AMERICA

2 THE
FINN IN AMERICA

EUGENE¹ VAN CLEEF

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION
OF
THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK
PUBLISHED BY
THE FINNISH DAILY PUBLISHING CO.
DULUTH, MINNESOTA

1918

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THE FINN IN AMERICA

*"The fairest land is the northern land,
Where the forest usurps the meadow.*

* * * * *

*The fairest land is the forest land
Which dreams in the silence ever."*

At this time it is perhaps of special interest to know the distribution of Finns in the United States, the extent of the Finnish "invasion" into northeastern Minnesota, the results attained by the Finn in his native land and in his new environment, and the possibilities of the Finn as a citizen of the United States.

Distribution of the Finns in the United States

Although Finns dwell in every state in the Union, their numbers are essentially negligible in all but the states of the northern half of the country. Hence, in the map (Fig. 1) showing the states where 500 or more reside, the southern states remain without a dot. The total number of Finns in the United States, including native and foreign born, was in 1910, 211,026.¹ The estimate for 1917 places their number at close to 300,000.

Michigan and Minnesota stand out preëminently as "Finnish" states. Massachusetts ranks next, the cotton and woolen mills oddly enough retaining a sort of magnetic hold upon the Finns, especially the women. Fitchburg and Worcester are the principal points of concentration. New York State ranks relatively high because of the large number of Finns in New York City. The clothing industry in the country's metropolis induces many of the Finns there to become permanent residents.

The western states, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and California, present a sort of anomaly in the problem. A more detailed consideration will be given later, but here it may be pointed out that the rise of the lumber industry in these states, coupled with its disappearance in the Great Lakes region, has been a potent factor in the western migration of

Acknowledgment is made to Mr. L. B. Arnold, Land Commissioner, of the Duluth and Iron Range R.R., for his many courtesies which have made possible this investigation; to the Finnish people of Duluth and vicinity who have co-operated so generously; and especially to Mr. O. J. Larson of Duluth who has made possible the publication of this entire manuscript.

¹ U. S. Census, 1910. Unless otherwise stated, all figures are based on this census.

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many Finns. The fisheries in the Puget Sound District and farming in all the area have had a secondary influence. The greater number of Finns in California are concentrated in San Francisco.

The southern states show a notable absence of Finns. For example, South Carolina has only 38, Florida 137, Georgia 65, Louisiana 186, Texas 218, Arkansas 30, and Kentucky 32.

Absolute numbers, if isolated, may exaggerate their significance; hence Figure 2 is introduced to show the relative number of Finns in each state

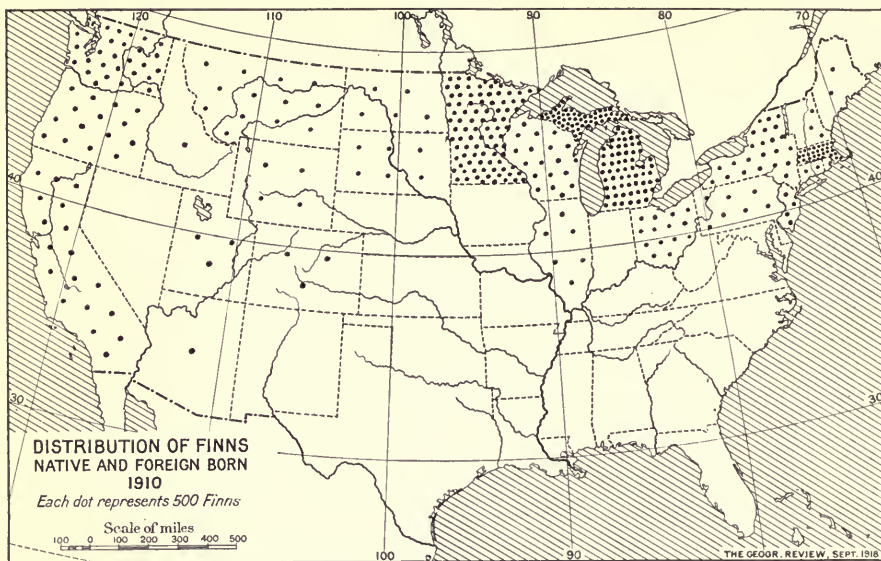


FIG. 1.—Cartogram showing distribution of Finns, native and foreign born, by States, 1910. The absence of Finns in the south is in striking contrast with the density in the north. Scale 1:41,000,000.

as compared with the total foreign population. Again the southern states are conspicuous by their lack of a considerable Finnish population. All the western states would seem to have fairly numerous colonies; but when one considers their small total foreign population compared with that of the central and eastern states the seeming discrepancy disappears. For example Wyoming, which shows 3.6 per cent of its total foreign population to be Finns, has a total foreign population of only 59,622, of whom 2,154 are Finns; whereas Ohio, which shows only 0.5 per cent to be Finns, has a total foreign population of 1,621,638, of whom 7,301 are Finns. Probably the most impressive figure on this map is the very low percentage of Finns everywhere, it being nowhere as high as 4 per cent.

URBAN VS. RURAL POPULATION

More than half (54.5 per cent) of the total population of Finns live in the rural² districts of the United States. This is rather notable, for only

² By "rural" is meant communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants.

immigrants from Norway, Denmark, Luxemburg, and Mexico show a similar tendency. The general inclination for foreigners is to concentrate in urban centers. Less than one-third of all "foreign white stock" (31.8 per cent) is located in the rural districts.

Moreover the proportion of Finns living under essentially rural conditions is higher than the figures show. Fresh immigrants gravitate almost immediately towards the mines and camps. In both instances they head-quarter largely in towns of 2,500 or more and hence are enumerated as

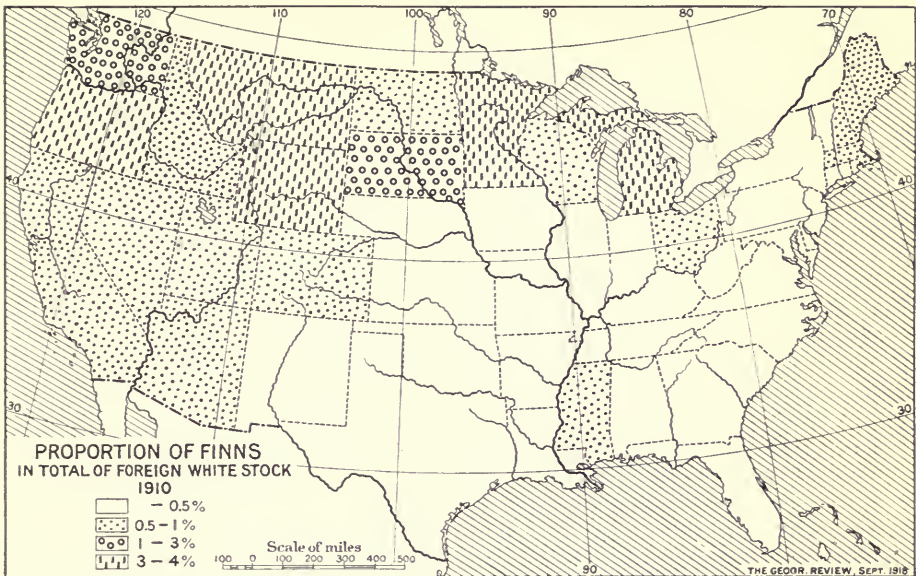


FIG. 2—Cartogram showing percentage of Finns among the total foreign-born white stock, by States, 1910. Relatively as well as absolutely the south shows lack of attraction for Finns. Scale 1: 41,000,000.

those residing in urban communities. Otherwise, if the census were taken in their case on the basis of occupation, the per cents would favor the rural districts. The very strong attraction of the out-door life is exhibited also in the case of those who are native-born but of foreign or mixed parentage, among whom the proportion in the rural area reaches the high figure of 61.7 per cent. The Finns, therefore, may be classified as distinctly a rural people.

In 26 states of the Union over 50 per cent of the Finns live in the rural districts. In such states as Illinois and New York, large manufacturing centers attract the relatively small number who happen to reside there, but these constantly drift toward the land. Interviews with many Finns who have passed through the several stages before reaching the farm, reveal the fact that the congested cities retain the Finn a very short time. As soon as he saves enough money to purchase a small acreage or to claim a homestead he establishes communion with nature and leads a life more attractive and more satisfying to his natural and seemingly instinctive desire to live in the open.

LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT

The vicinity of Lake Superior seems to constitute the haven of refuge for the Finns. Their density is greater here than in any other equal area in the country.³ Figure 3 represents the distribution about Lake Superior, and at the same time brings to light the apparent attraction of the iron and copper mines. The region is also forested and accordingly attracts the lumberjack. Northeastern Minnesota presents conditions typical of practically the entire Lake Superior district. For this reason, it was chosen as the scene of the present investigation. St. Louis County (see Fig. 3), in Northeastern Minnesota, has been the principal field for intensive study. St. Louis County has an area of 6,503 square miles. Its total population is 163,274, of whom 16,381,⁴ or about 10 per cent, are Finns. The Finns are engaged in iron ore mining, lumbering, and agriculture. They number about 10 per cent⁵ of the total of foreigners in the mines. The number of men of all nationalities employed in the mines in 1917 was 14,479.⁶

The number engaged in lumbering fluctuates, as most of the Finns in this industry are employed only in winter for logging operations in the woods. Hence employment is generally temporary, and these so-called lumberjacks are oftentimes the miners and farmers of the summer season. A few work in the lumber mills the entire year.

Agricultural pursuits attract most of the remaining Finns. Nearly 60 per cent (or about 1,800) of the farmers of the county are Finns. This number must be multiplied by at least 3 to obtain the total number of Finns on the land, for the families are large. Others are engaged in miscellaneous occupations in the cities. Duluth, the largest city of the county, with a population of 78,466 in 1910, was credited with 2,772 Finns.

THE FINNS IN THE MINES

The absence of large mineral deposits in Finland means that few of the natives are miners. Emigration is mainly from the northerly parts of Finland⁷ where the population is scattered, and where agriculture, practically the only pursuit, is carried on under severest handicaps.

Singularly enough, the first Finns who settled in the Lake Superior district became miners. They left their homes because of depressing economic conditions and in hope of a better future in America. The gold rush of '49 in California attracted a few, but none of them profited. A little later, between 1850 and 1860, about 250 Finns from the copper

³ There is a similar distribution in Canada. The census of 1911 gives 4,301 Finns (about 28 per cent of the total in Canada) in the Thunder Bay-Rainy River district at the western end of Lake Superior. Other large groups are found elsewhere in the Lake region.

⁴ Census of 1910; the estimate for 1917 places the number at from 20,000 to 25,000.

⁵ Estimate of the Oliver Iron Mining Company. Accurate records of nationalities are not kept.

⁶ Report of W. H. Harvey, County Mine Inspector, October, 1917.

⁷ Ninety per cent of those interviewed came from northern Finland, or, if native-born, their parents came from those parts.

mines of Norway and Sweden arrived at Calumet, Michigan, to help in the newly opened copper mines.⁸ This seems to be the only instance of the importation of Finns by an industrial company.

After a short acquaintance with the new land these men wrote home to friends and relatives, sometimes sending transportation tickets, encouraging them to come to this country, where tyranny was unknown and independence was a possibility. The subsequent years, up to the present, have witnessed a steady though not large inflow of their countrymen. The

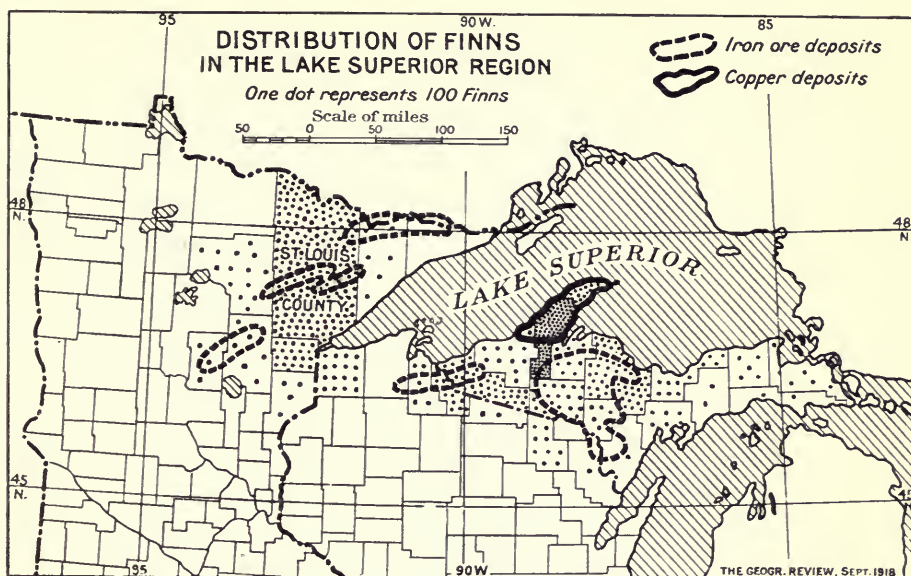


FIG. 3—Cartogram showing distribution of Finns in the Lake Superior Region. This is by far the most attractive region for the Finn in America. Scale 1:9,500,000.

new arrivals could not speak English and had no money. The land was still densely wooded, and the winters were long. Mining was the only occupation open. In the years since the first settlements among the mines of Michigan, successive Finnish immigrants have entered the iron mines of both northern Michigan and northeastern Minnesota. Many who are prominent citizens in these parts today found their opportunity there.

THEIR THRIFT, EFFICIENCY, AND ENDURANCE

But the Finn is not a miner by nature. He is a man of the soil. After working in the mines a few years—the average is from two to five—he uses his savings for the purchase of some land or for taking up a home-
stead. In some instances, however, after leaving the mines as a place of regular employment, he may return temporarily when in need of money. He is credited with being the most thrifty of all nationalities represented in the mines and lumber camps.

⁸ According to C. H. Salminen, manager of *Finnish Daily News*, Duluth, and others.



FIG. 4.—Unusually numerous buildings characterize the Finnish farm. The boulder-strewn highland in the background is a familiar feature of the landscape. Embarrass, Minn.

In efficiency in the mines the Finns rank close to the top. They make good timbermen in the underground mines, for they are reputed "clever and ingenious with axe and log." Herein one may see the result of their many centuries of training in the forests of their native land. Their struggle with nature has also developed much resourcefulness. The younger Finns coming to this country today show a considerable proficiency along mechanical lines. Some of them are employed in handling drills and other machinery requiring dexterity.

The physical strength of the Finn contributes to his ability to endure the strains incident to mining. The work is hard, and the winter long and rigorous. Where the open pit process is used, employment does not last throughout the year. Hence many workers must find something else to engage them during the closed season. The relative isolation of the region makes travel to other industrial centers rather expensive. Therefore adjustment is made to practically the only alternative, logging. Hundreds of Finns go to the woods to labor in the deep snow and in temperatures ranging from -15° to -30° F. Their life is camp life, but not after their own choosing. It oftentimes is next to intolerable. Yet doggedness, a sense of responsibility, unusual powers of endurance, enable them to remain throughout the season. They have had vigorous training in the "land of a thousand lakes" and the land of as many hardships.

The Finn in Agriculture

CONDITION OF THE LAND

The Finn has acquired much of his land in northeastern Minnesota as a homesteader, although recently he has become an active purchaser in the open market. His holding ranges from 40 to 160 acres. If he is a homesteader he always possesses the latter amount. For the most part his land is heavily timbered with tall thin spruce and tamarack and the birch with its accompanying underbrush. Occasionally some jack pine is scattered about. More often than not, the desirable timber has been removed by lumber companies before the land is placed on sale, only the stumps remaining; or, if virgin timber be available, it is not in abundance.

The spruce and tamarack land is swampy. It is highland swamp ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 feet above sea level and from 600 to 1,400 feet above Lake Superior. The several moderately sized streams of fair gradient flowing either across the land or near it (Fig. 9) make drainage relatively easy after a clearing has been effected. Oftentimes a few acres, sometimes as much as one-half of a forty-acre tract, consist of swampy land known as "muskeg." The muskeg, which varies in depth from 3 to 21 feet, is a sort of transition swamp verging on the peat stage. This land corresponds almost everywhere to the *Hochmoor* of Germany, Denmark, and Finland. In addition to muskeg there may be a very generous distribution of glacial

boulders of large size (Figs. 4 and 10), especially upon the higher, better drained land most desirable for cultivation.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The Finn builds a little single-room or two-room tar-papered shack (Fig. 5) near an edge of his land where the drainage is good. He will clear about an acre the first summer. When winter interrupts his work he may go to the woods as a lumberjack to earn a little ready money. The next spring he returns to his farm to continue improvements. Should he run short of funds before the following winter he may work for a few weeks as a common laborer on county or town roads. It has been said that the road-building activity of the counties and towns in northeastern Minnesota has been the salvation of the farmer, not merely because it gives him an improved means of communication, but because it gives him employment and funds.

As soon as a few hundred square feet are cleared, potatoes and rutabagas are planted. A cow barn and cow follow. "Where there's a Finn there's a cow" is almost axiomatic. Another year witnesses the addition of a few chickens. Garden, cow, and poultry now assure the pioneer's food supply: he is fairly on the road to independence.

CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS

In the evolution of the farm the construction of buildings plays an important part. One may very safely identify a Finnish farm from a distance by its number of buildings (Fig. 4). Among them may be counted the owner's first shack, his later log cabin, his recent modern dwelling (Fig. 7), his never-forgotten bathhouse, a cow barn, perhaps the old one and the new one with its glacial-boulder foundation, a horse barn, a root cellar, several hay barns scattered over the fields, a tool house, a woodshed, and other miscellaneous special buildings.

The hay barn alone is a means of identifying a Finnish farm (Fig. 6). It is always built of logs spaced several inches apart. The flooring is raised from the ground a foot or two and is likewise made of spaced logging. Such construction allows the air to circulate freely through the hay, keeping it dry and helping to season it. The sides of the barn slope inward toward the floor. This characteristic is determinative. In only a few isolated cases has a Finn erected a modern scientific combination dairy and hay barn.

SLOW DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND

The cutting of timber, the grubbing of underbrush and roots, the dynamiting of stumps, the piling up of the boulders gathered from all parts of the land, and the draining of the wet places all follow in succession. The work is slow, for the Finn never hurries. Deliberate and determined, he is



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.

FIG. 5—The first home of the pioneer farmer, a two-room tar-papered shack. The man in the foreground is a Finn, but not the tenant of this hut. Embarass, Minn.

FIG. 6—The hay barn with sides sloping inward toward the floor. It identifies a Finnish farm. Floodwood, Minn.

seldom discouraged. Some day his land will be entirely cleared and beautifully developed. The Finnish immigrant makes an ideal pioneer, a splendid blazer of the trail; but the speedy development of the land awaits the rising generation. Whatever the length of time that must elapse before success crowns his efforts; the fact that a Finn is developing the land is always reassuring. To a farmer in the corn belt these northern lands must seem almost hopeless; but to the Finn, where there is land there is hope. His struggle through the many generations has taught him to keep at the problem until it is solved, if solution there be; and he is thankful for, and appreciative of every little gain. When his farm is well



FIG. 7—The old log cabin, and the modern dwelling: convincing proof of progress. Floodwood, Minn.

along he confines his efforts largely to such crops as hay, potatoes, rutabagas, and minor quantities of rye, oats, and barley. He possesses a number of cows, inclining very strongly toward the development of a dairy farm. Swine are conspicuously absent. A few horses, and not infrequently an automobile, complete his establishment.

REASONS FOR LOCALIZATION IN THE LAKE SUPERIOR REGION

In view of the many hardships with which the settler in northeastern Minnesota must contend, one naturally wonders why the Finns continue to assemble here. Did the first few who happened to come to the copper mines of Michigan so stimulate the successive immigrant flow as to give it a momentum sufficient to maintain itself to the present day? Could the momentum of the first influx have resulted in the concentration of about 150,000 Finns, or three-fourths of all the Finns in the United States, in the Lake Superior district? Why have not the more recent immigrants settled in the central

states? Why have not those who came twenty years ago moved further south after working under such severe strains and in the face of possible failure? To determine whether the factors are geographic in any degree, one needs to consider the natural environment in Finland and to compare it with that of northeastern Minnesota, and to study the life of the Finn in Finland, both past and present.

Finland vs. Northeastern Minnesota

The total population of Finland in 1910 was 3,115,197.⁹ Its area was 144,252 square miles. The density therefore is between 21 and 22 per square



FIG. 8—A typical Finnish log cabin with windows which identify the nationality. The corners of the cabin are boxed off and the logs are squared, the squaring being done after the logs have been put in place. It represents a bit of Finnish mechanical skill. Toivola—"the place of hope"—Minn.

mile, a very low value compared with that in other countries of western Europe.

SURFACE RESEMBLANCES

Finland is a vast region of lakes, rivers, and marshes. Its very name in the Finnish language, *Suomi*, means "swamp land." Lakes occupy 11.73 per cent, swamp and peat surfaces 30.8 per cent of the total area of the country.¹⁰ These figures are approximations, for they do not include large areas that are neither lake, swamp, nor peat bog, yet are very poorly drained. A map¹¹ of Finland showing the wet lands indicates that well

⁹ Census figures: for characteristics of distribution see *Atlas de Finlande*, 1910, 1 vol. of maps and 2 vols. of text, Société de Géographie de Finlande, Helsingfors, 1911.

¹⁰ "There are at least a quarter of a million lakes in Finland." See A. Hettner: *Grundzüge der Länderkunde*, Vol. I, Europa, Leipzig, 1907, pp. 178-182.

¹¹ Work cited in footnote 9.

over 75 per cent of the surface area may be catalogued under this heading. The surface of northeastern Minnesota is closely similar. In St. Louis County 5.6 per cent of the surface area is lake, and 29 per cent is swamp and peat land.¹²

Finland has been completely glaciated. Excepting for a few small exposures of igneous rocks, the surface is entirely of drift material. Among the few outcrops Pre-Cambrian rocks predominate. Similarities with the Lake Superior region are suggested.¹³ The Finnish geologist Sederholm indicates the possibility of stratigraphical correlation. Both Finland and Minnesota have boulder-strewn surfaces and in their respective localities present scenes that are almost identical. Prominent hills are uncommon; but the range of altitudes in Finland is almost exactly the same as that in St. Louis County. The land rises from about 250 feet close to the Baltic Coast, to 2,000 feet along the Russian boundary. In St. Louis County the range is from 600 feet above sea level at the shore of Lake Superior, to 2,000-2,200 feet in the northern parts of the county.

The streams crossing Finland, like those in northeastern Minnesota, are relatively short but rapid. Minnesota has no such famous rapids as the wonderful Imatra Fall; on the other hand, the variety and frequency of small rapids and falls are strikingly similar in the two countries.

CLIMATIC CORRESPONDENCES

The climates likewise show a close correspondence, that of Finland being somewhat less extreme. The coldest and warmest months in Finland are February and August respectively, whereas those in St. Louis County are January and July. In the former country in January the temperature ranges from 6° F. in the north to 14°-21° F. in the south, whereas in the latter region the range is from 4° F. in the north to 12° F. in the south. In July the range in Finland is from 56° F. in the north to 60° F. in the south, while in St. Louis County it is from 64° F. in the north to 66° F. in the south. There is however a great difference in latitude between the two regions. Finland extends from 60° N. to 70° N.; St. Louis County reaches from not quite 47° N. to 48.5° N. Finland tempered by the warm prevailing southwesterlies blowing from the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea shows a very high temperature anomaly—at least 10° F. higher than the normal for the latitude—the divergence being specially great in winter. St. Louis County, in a continental area, is modified by the influence of a considerable body of water only along the short Lake Superior shore line.

The precipitation in Finland averages from 12 inches in the north to 27 inches in the south; in St. Louis County it is much more uniform, averaging from 27 inches in the north to 30 inches in the south. The amount

¹² Figures based on Leverett and Sardeson: *Surface Formations and Agricultural Conditions of Northeastern Minnesota*, *Minn. Geol. Survey Bull. No. 13*, Minneapolis, 1917, p. 56.

¹³ See the section on Finland in Van Hise and Leith: *Pre-Cambrian Geology of North America*, *U. S. Geol. Survey Bull. 360*, pp. 51-53.

of moisture falling as snow, ranges in Finland from 30 inches in the extreme northern parts to 55 inches in the south, and in St. Louis County averages from 50 to 55 inches. The annual distribution of the precipitation may be considered identical in both places. The dates for the appearance and disappearance of both snow and ice are practically the same. February and March are the months of maximum snowfall. Frost may occur in any month of the year in the swamp areas of both regions.

SIMILARITY OF FLORA

With similar soils and climates one may look for a similarity in native flora. The evergreens predominate in the northern parts, while the deciduous trees are most common in the southern portions. Pines, spruce, tamarack, mountain ash, birch, and aspen are the best known among the many varieties of trees. While the species of trees are not in every instance the same, their effect upon the landscape does not differ. The swamp lands in both countries are alike, excepting for the somewhat more extensive low-land type of swamp in Finland. Peat is common to both areas. The wild flowers are strikingly similar, as witness

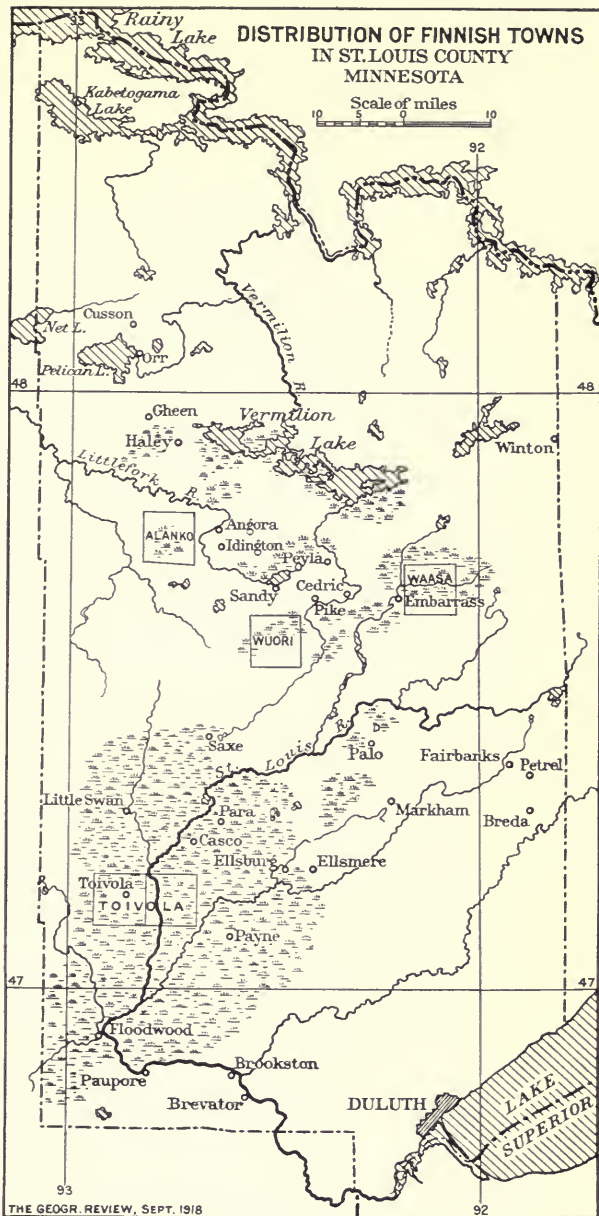


FIG. 9.—Sketch map showing the distribution of towns essentially Finnish in population in St. Louis County. In a few cases there is a fairly large number of other nationalities. Distribution should be noted in reference to swamps, streams and lakes of which only the larger features are shown. Swamps are mapped from Leverett and Sardeson, *op. cit.* footnote 12. Scale 1:1,400,000.

the following description of a scene in Finland which will apply equally well to northeastern Minnesota: "I remember that meadow distinctly . . . a mass of giant bluebells, oxeye daisies, pink phlox,¹⁴ yellow buttercups, and countless other varieties of flowers all growing pell-mell in a chaos of colors."¹⁵

AGRICULTURE

From 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the people in all parts of Finland are engaged in agricultural pursuits. The principal crops in descending order of rank are oats, potatoes, rye, and barley. Wheat is produced in minor quantities in the southwest. Corn is said to be grown as a decora-



FIG. 10—This generous distribution of large-sized glacial boulders is typical of the region selected by the Finnish farmer. Near Chisholm, Minn.

tive plant in gardens. Hay, mostly wild, is important, for it constitutes the foundation of the dairying industry. Truck-garden products are grown for immediate family use. All of these crops are grown in northeastern Minnesota. Excepting hay, they are not grown so largely, but that is only because of the relative newness of the region.

In northern Finland the number of cattle is 500-1,000 per 1,000 inhabitants; in southern Finland the number is not so large, but is still important. Swine are notably few, especially in the north where their density is 0-10 per 1,000 inhabitants.

With respect to live stock Minnesota again resembles Finland. Northeastern Minnesota is developing rapidly into a dairy country. Swine are kept in decidedly larger numbers by the Finns in America than by those in Finland. Yet it may be noted that the Finns in St. Louis County keep fewer swine than do the farmers of other nationalities. This evidently is a reflection of conditions in their native land.

¹⁴ This name may apply to the plant known as fireweed, very common and attractive in northeastern Minnesota.

¹⁵ Paul Waineman: A Summer Tour in Finland, New York, 1908.

INDUSTRIES AND THE CO-OPERATIVE PLAN

The variety of important industries in Finland is very small, as might well be expected in a region where raw materials are so limited and where agriculture offers practically the only visible means of gaining a livelihood. Lumbering takes first rank. Saw-mills are very numerous, especially in the coastal districts. Paper making ranks second. Beyond these two industries it is not possible to rank any of consequence as yet. St. Louis County differs only in having iron ore in tremendous quantities and in the consequent development of the mining industry.

The Finns have much faith in co-operative establishments for the conduct of their affairs, as is evidenced by the numerous co-operative



FIG. 11—The Finn places his grain and hay crops on driers, a custom brought from home. This is an oat crop at Palo, Minn.

creameries, co-operative general merchandise and grocery stores, co-operative savings banks, and other co-operative institutions. In 1913 there were 2,167 co-operative societies in Finland with a total membership¹⁶ of 196,000. Into northeastern Minnesota co-operative institutions are rapidly finding their way. While all varieties are not yet represented there they may be found in the Lake Superior region as a whole. In addition the co-operative hotel has grown to be a significant institution.

The Finns in Finland

In order that the Finns in America may be fully and properly appreciated, a glimpse of their life in Finland is essential.

ORIGIN

The history of the Finns is wrapped in romantic mystery. Theories as to their place of origin and their wanderings are abundant. That they are

¹⁶ Hannes Gebhard: Co-operation in Finland, London, 1916.

of Asiatic origin has been very generally held. Keane says, "Many of the European Finns, and especially the Baltic group, have undoubtedly been largely assimilated to the surrounding populations, although even these retain certain physical and mental characters, such as peaky eyes, somewhat flat face, round head, dull sullen temperament, which, combined with their pure Ural-Altaic speech, betray their primordial, Mongol affinities."¹⁷ It is however rather with Turanian peoples that affinities may be found. The case is stated by Haddon¹⁸ who assigns to the Finno-Ugrian stock a home about the headwaters of the Yenisei. The Finnish branch wandered across the Urals, the true Finns ultimately proceeding up the Volga into what is now Finland. But this view of the Asiatic origin of the Finns is not universally held. Ripley claims for them a Nordic origin on anthropological grounds.¹⁹ What seems to be near the truth of the matter is suggested by Dominian²⁰ who states that while the culture is Asiatic the Finns are racially a blend of Nordic and Asiatic. Recent anthropometrical work points to a diversity of origin. The Finns were formerly described as a brachycephalic people, a feature in agreement with their supposed Turanian origin. Actually both dolichocephalic and brachycephalic forms are found, in proportions varying in various parts of the country.

The principal recent work has been done by Dr. F. W. Westerlund, who with the assistance of others took the head measurements of 131,697 men of about 21 years of age.²¹ His work has been summarized by another Finnish authority²² who gives the following figures: In southwestern Finland 55 to 58 per cent are dolichocephalic; in some parts of southern Finland as many as 70 per cent; in western Finland 65 per cent are dolichocephalic. In central Finland only 40 per cent are in this class. In eastern and northern Finland 73 to 88 per cent are brachycephalic. It is from the latter region that most of the Finns in America come; from whom we derive our impressions with regard to the whole of Finland.

MYTHOLOGY; NATURE WORSHIP

Something more of the lives of the early Finns is related in their mythology. That they have always been nature worshippers is evident throughout their literature. "The ancient Finns were worshippers of the sun and of fire; they were highly superstitious and had faith in miracles and magic. . . . Their supreme God was Ukko, the God of Thunder, who lived in the clouds and who ruled human destiny."²³ They worshipped

¹⁷ A. H. Keane: *Ethnology*, University Press, Cambridge, 1896, p. 305.

¹⁸ A. C. Haddon: *The Wanderings of Peoples*, University Press, Cambridge, 1912, pp. 18, 19.

¹⁹ W. Z. Ripley: *The Races of Europe*, New impression, New York, 1915, p. 365.

²⁰ Leon Dominian: *Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe*, New York, 1917, p. 102.

²¹ See also the work cited in footnote 9, Vol. 2 of text, p. 56 of Ch. "Statistique démographique." See also the cartogram showing proportional distribution of forms.

²² J. J. Mikkola: "Suomen kansa antropologisessa suhteessa," in Vol 1 of *Oma Maa*, 6 vols., Porvoo, Finland, 1907. This work is an encyclopedia of Finland. The statements in the text were summarized from the above article and were translated from the Finnish by Dr. K. V. Arminen of Duluth.

²³ George Renwick: *Finland Today*, New York, 1911.

Tapio, God of the Forest; Ahti, Ruler of the Waters; and Tuoni, Lord of the Nether Worlds. The sons and daughters of these gods were the gods and goddesses respectively of the sun, moon, stars, fire, and air. "In the Finnish mythology, the air and meteorological phenomena occupy the foremost place among the manifestations of the Divine."²⁴ The modern Finns still exhibit an intense love for and devotion to the open air. No weather seems too severe, no land too poor to prevent their deriving from it something well worth while.

The very names of the Finnish people are based upon natural features. A short list of the most common names with their English meaning is worth giving: Lahti, "bay"; Koski, "waterfall"; Vuori, "mountain"; Harju, "ridge"; Hirvi, "moose"; Korpi, "swampy woodland"; Järvi, "lake"; Nurmi, "pasture"; Joki, "river"; Niemi, "cape"; Saari, "island"; Koivo, "birch"; Kangas, "moor"; Hirsi, "timber"; Kantola, "stump land." These names occur as frequently among the Finns as "Smith" and "Jones" among Americans. Some estimates give 60 per cent as the proportion of Finnish names based upon topographic features.

MUSIC

The music of the Finns reflects their environment. It is written largely in the minor key. Sadness, seriousness of life's struggles, vain hope, and work, work, work, are the words and expressions that pass through one's mind as one listens to their melodies. Some of their folk songs, however, are quite cheerful. One is reminded of rapids and waterfalls separated by quiet reaches. The song is quite different from the heavily accented folk song of the Slavic peoples of southern Europe. It seems to be very decidedly influenced by the presence of the numerous swiftly-flowing streams of Finland.

THE KALEVALA

One of the most interesting expressions of Finnish life is the great Finnish epic, the Kalevala,²⁵ a dramatic record of the struggle for existence that has ever confronted the Finns. In Finland it is studied in the schools, and in this country dramatized selections from it are presented on gala occasions.

The Kalevala is a splendid record of the response of a people to their geographic environment. A complete analysis of it is not possible here. Yet some extracts must be cited, for modern Finnish agriculture and respect for nature's gift to mankind could not be fully appreciated without a little reflection upon some of the verses of Finland's wonderful epic.

It was common in early times, and in fact to within the last twenty-five years, for the farmer to burn over the land that its fertility might be increased. Experience and scientific investigation have shown this proced-

²⁴ J. C. Brown: People of Finland in Archaic Times, London, 1892.

²⁵ Accented on the first syllable.

Source as in
original for

ure to be very unwise, for the land loses its fertility very rapidly three to four years after the burning. In the Kalevala reference is made to the burning of the forest that the ashes may enrich the soil:

"Hark! the titmouse wildly crying,
From the aspen, words as follows:
'Osma's barley will not flourish,
Not the barley of Wainola,
If the soil be not made ready,
If the forest be not leveled,
And the branches burned to ashes.'"²⁶

A familiar picture of the Finnish landscape is given in the farewell song of Pohyola, daughter of the Rainbow:

"Send to all my farewell greetings,
To the fields, and groves, and berries;
Greet the meadows with their daisies,
Greet the borders with their fences,
Greet the lakelets with their islands,
Greet the streams with trout disporting,
Greet the hills with stately pine trees,
And the valleys with their birches.
Fare ye well, ye streams and lakelets,
Fertile fields and shores of ocean,
All ye aspens on the mountains,
All ye lindens of the valleys,
All ye beautiful stone lindens,
All ye shade trees by the cottage,
All ye junipers and willows,
All ye shrubs with berries laden,
Waving grass and fields of barley,
Arms of elms, and oaks, and alders,
Fare ye well, dear scenes of childhood,
Happiness of days departed."²⁷

Among the many favorite trees of the Finns, the graceful white-trunked birch is most admired, indeed one might almost say it is revered. Even in northeastern Minnesota the Finn will stop before a beautiful group of nodding birches to admire the clean white dress of bark and the spreading branches that seem to bid him welcome. The Kalevala makes clear why his love for the birch is so enduring. The tree speaks:

" . . . I, alas! a helpless birch tree,
Dread the changing of the seasons,
I must give my bark to others,
Lose my leaves and silken tassels.
Often come the Suomi children,
Peel my bark and drink my lifeblood;
Wicked shepherds in the summer,

²⁶ Kalevala: Epic Poem of Finland, translated by J. M. Crawford, Cincinnati, 1888; passage from Rune II, "Wainomoinen's Sowing."

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Rune XXI V, "The Bride's Farewell."

Come and steal my belt of silver,
 Of my bark make berry baskets,
 Dishes make, and cups for drinking.
 Oftentimes the Northland maidens
 Cut my tender limbs for birch brooms,
 Bind my twigs and silver tassels
 Into brooms to sweep their cabins;
 Often have the Northland heroes
 Chopped me into chips for burning;
 Three times in the summer season,
 In the pleasant days of springtime,
 Foresters have ground their axes
 On my silver trunk and branches,
 Robbed me of my life for ages.''²⁸

THE FINNS TODAY

The Finns have struggled against titanic handicaps of physical circumstance. With the country a vast region of lake and morass, with only diminutive areas here and there suitable for cultivation without the necessity of drainage, with lowland pockets in which cold air may collect to cause premature frosts and destroy in a night that which represents the labor of months; with few raw materials for the manufacture of articles that might aid in the maintenance of prosperity; with no surplus of food for storage over periods of scarcity; with all these factors to obstruct their way, they nevertheless have risen among the peoples of the earth to a position which many might well envy. "One can not but be impressed with the industry and pluck of this valiant little people, and feel in sympathy with the Finnish economists who see in the geographical location and the magnificent water power of their country the basis for a great development in the future."²⁹ But meanwhile growing political oppression has added a final weight of adversity and many Finns, giving up hope of bettering their condition in Finland, have sought freedom and opportunity in the United States.

The Finns in Northeastern Minnesota (St. Louis County)

Yet man is the creature of his native environment however ungrateful it may be. Its strong hold is exemplified here: given freedom and land the Finn in the United States will select an environment that reminds him of the home of his fathers. From what has been depicted thus far we are led to the conclusion that the attraction of the Finn to northeastern Minnesota has a geographical basis. It remains to offer direct evidence in confirmation.

²⁸ Kalevala: Epic Poem of Finland, translated by J. M. Crawford, Cincinnati, 1888; passage from Rune XLIV, "Birth of the Second Harp."

²⁹ W. E. Lingelbach: Geography in Russian History, *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 86, 1915, pp. 5-24.

INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVE FINNS

Sixty Finns, many of them heads of families, representing various walks of life, have been interviewed by the writer. Some of these people were in a position to speak for hundreds of others and therefore their

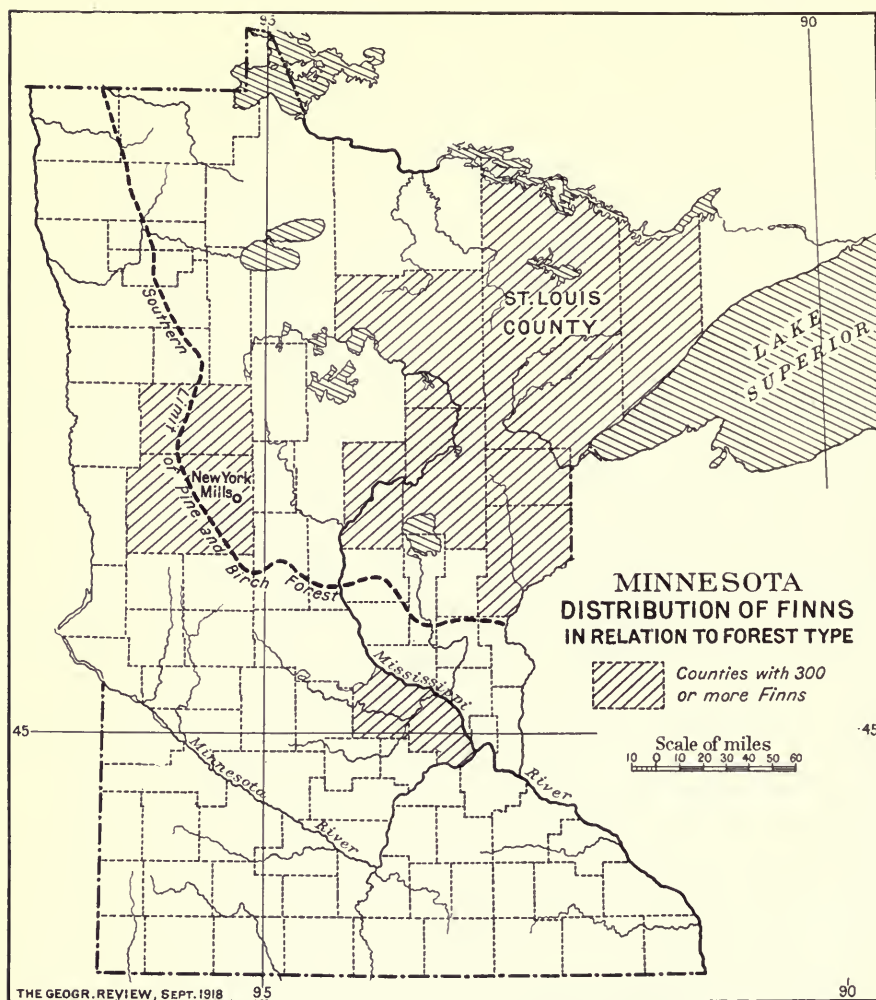


FIG. 12—Correspondence of Finns and the coniferous and birch forest. New York Mills accounts for most of the Finns in the county in which it is situated. Scale 1:5,100,000.

statements are representative of large numbers. Further, employers of from just a few Finns to upwards of 1,500 have been interviewed. The discussion that follows is a summary of the many opinions expressed by both Finns and non-Finns, and may be accepted as unquestionably reflecting reliable and accurate points of view.

With no more than ten exceptions, everyone interviewed volunteered unqualifiedly some geographic element as the principal reason for either

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the establishment of Finnish colonies in northeastern Minnesota, or for their persistence in spite of the adverse living conditions. Climate ranks first among all the reasons assigned. Of 42 interviews, 30 indicated climate as the prime cause for settlement in the northern United States, instead of central or southern, and 12 asserted that friends were the influencing factor. Of these 12, all but 2 stated as their reason for remaining in northeastern Minnesota the similarity of the country to their homeland, both in general appearance and in climate. Again, emphasis is laid upon the fact that these 42 interviews are representative of the opinions of thousands of Finns. A few quotations will be significant. These are in reply to such questions as "Why did you come to St. Louis County?" "After your arrival and your observation of the rather unpromising conditions, why did you not go further south or return home?" "Why have you remained in these parts so long, when you have known of opportunities elsewhere?"

A clerk in charge of a Finnish co-operative store in a township populated by 59 Finns and their families replies: "The climate is similar to that in Finland. The winters here are somewhat less severe; the summers are a little warmer, but the days are shorter than in Finland." A student and school-teacher who has been in this country for ten years and has experienced the struggle for existence says: "Some came to work in the mines to make money, as my brother did, intending to return. But, like others, after a few years he quit the mine and began farming, his natural occupation. The similarity of this north country to Finland caused those who came before me to become enthusiastic and to send for their friends and relatives." According to the County School Supervisor of Agriculture, a Finn whose father claims to be one of the first two Finnish settlers in St. Louis County, "even now they [Finns] will buy land here in preference to taking up homesteads elsewhere even when conditions for farming are easier." A Finnish farmer of long residence, well acquainted with farming conditions in other regions, states: "Hearing of greater opportunities to make money elsewhere the Finns will not leave, for climate is the attraction here." "The Finns don't know how to choose land, for they select the stony and poorly drained lands seemingly in preference to the dry lands." This is the opinion of a Finn of many years experience in St. Louis County. He surmised that since their experiences in Finland had been with such poor land these similarly appearing areas "made them feel at home."

Many referred to their love for the deep snow and their admiration for the beautiful glacial lakes set among the dense evergreen forests. One who had seen much of the United States says that nowhere are the views so nearly like those in Finland as in the vicinity of Ely, in the northern part of St. Louis County. The myriads of lakes, the boulder-strewn inter-lake areas, the extensive woods of pines and birches are "just like home."

Several attempts have been made to colonize parts of the south with

Finns, but all have failed. Florida and Georgia were the states in which the principal efforts were put forth. Malaria played havoc, and the remnants of each colony returned to the north. Others have gone south only to find it too warm. Some have traveled westward to try their fortunes



FIG. 13—A contrast: modern hayrake and the ancient boots. These home-made boots are true to type, representing the Finnish style of a century or more. The farmer has been a resident of this district for 17 years. Floodwood, Minn.

in a region not so warm as the south but milder than in Minnesota; they likewise have returned to struggle with the five or six months of a wet spring, a cool summer, and a bracing autumn, and six or seven months of a cold, snowy, but exhilarating winter.

Most of those who have gone west and remained there are engaged in lumbering, mining, and fishing. They have migrated largely in the path of the first two shifting industries. Many are fishermen, farmers, and some even shipbuilders. One of the largest canneries on the Columbia River is owned by a Finnish co-operative company. Until recently most of the migrants have been unmarried men and women. The women re-

ceive high wages as housemaids in western homes. Higher wages are generally the magnet that attracts; but the attraction seems to diminish in strength after a year or two, and the return of the adventurers to north-eastern Minnesota follows in due course.

Every attempt to get away permanently from the Lake Superior region has failed. Thus it may be stated unhesitatingly that while non-geographic factors have played a part in the settlement of Finns in northeastern Minnesota, they have been only incidental, and the geographic factors have been primary. Clannishness has played its rôle only in so far as it has meant migration by groups; but the place of settlement by the

group, or the forerunners of a group, has been determined by natural influences.

Since the sum total of geographic conditions reflect themselves in citizenship it is but proper to turn the investigation toward the question of the Finn as a settler and a citizen.

THE FINN AS SETTLER AND CITIZEN

Perseverance, doggedness, tenacity of purpose, and endurance characterize the Finn. These qualities oftentimes develop into extreme, even detrimental stubbornness. He has a strong desire for independence, an ambition to own a bit of land and to free himself from all "bondage." His fondness for the land is obviously the result of the centuries of influence of his native environment, but his zeal for the attainment of independence, to the extent even of complete isolation, seems to have resulted from the long period of political oppression.

The Finn is frequently stolid and phlegmatic until opposed by some one or some idea not to his liking, when he becomes thoroughly aroused. Among the lumberjacks and miners this spirit has often led to serious disruptions and sometimes even murder. However, it would be an injustice to the Finns as a whole to imply that this is as common a characteristic as is their attitude of suspicion.

The Finn's suspicion is difficult to explain. It is a most unfortunate characteristic. Either tribal raids of ancient times or comparative isolation on the scattered farms of Finland is the cause. The latter seems very plausible, for where there is isolation and little opportunity for self protection a stranger will necessarily be under suspicion until he proves his good will. However the idea of fear is not to be associated with the Finns, for few people are as courageous.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

The Finn appreciates the value of education. He is an enthusiastic reader. There is said to be less illiteracy in Finland than in any other country. According to the census statistics for 1910 of persons of 15 years of age and above only 9 per 1,000 are illiterate (unable to read). In Minnesota the Finn demonstrates his desire for mental growth by the attendance of his children in the public schools and his own attendance at night school. "The Finns demand schools no matter how remote they may be. The daily attendance record of their children is very high," says the St. Louis County Superintendent of Schools. In a town on the Mesabi Range, Minnesota, where the Finn constitutes only about one-tenth of the total population, the Superintendent of Schools reports that "he is the backbone of the night school. Out of a total attendance of 900 over 500 were Finns." Figure 14 illustrates the type of rural school which the

Finn attends. While he is not directly responsible for the modernity of the structure and the system of teaching which has been developed within it, he must be credited with his willingness to contribute toward its support and toward the introduction of modern equipment.

Further evidence of educational aspirations is furnished by the extent of the Finnish press in the United States. Including four yearbooks, one may count 29 periodical publications. Of these, seven are Socialistic, one is an organ of the I. W. W., and the rest are liberal. The total circulation of these publications is as follows: Socialist 29,000, I. W. W. 3,500, liberal 59,000, yearbooks 20,000. This gives a grand total of 111,500. These



FIG. 14—A recently erected rural school house in the French River district of St. Louis County. It is one of the most modern structures of its kind in the country. Nearly all the pupils attending the school are Finns.

figures do not all represent different individuals who read these periodicals, for some subscribe to several of them. A single subscription however may reach many individuals: one must take into consideration not only the several members of a usually large family but also the fact that many Finns live in community houses (co-operative hotels) and take advantage of the co-operative subscription.

The ability of so many Finns to read may be traced to the church, which is dominantly Lutheran. Over 80 per cent of the Finns are Lutheran (in America probably only 60 per cent). The church requires that every member be able to read the catechism and the Bible. Some Finns have ventured the opinion that the reading done by the masses does not go beyond church literature. Whatever truth there may be in this, the fact remains that nearly all Finns can read, that quite as many can write, and that they possess a keen appetite for learning.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Strangely, the appetite for learning and the high state of intelligence among the Finns have not served to improve all their hygienic environment. In general all the home and business establishments which were visited were immaculately clean. This was found to be so, however humble



FIG. 15—The children in the upper group have just started school; they cannot talk English. Those in the lower group have been in school little more than a year and can talk English. Notice how readily these Finnish children become assimilated. Those in the lower group seem to have lost some of their foreign features. (Photo by Miss Betty Stonerock, Little Swan, Minn.)

the home; but, with only a few exceptions, proper ventilation was lacking. This is proving the death knell of many a worthy Finn, for it is courting successfully the spread of tubercular diseases. Furthermore the belief is still common among many of the older Finns that diseases are not contagious and that the contraction of a disease is the will of God. A similar apathy towards ventilation is shown in the management of their barns. Diseases among their live stock are all too common.

In partial justice to this attitude toward ventilation one should note carefully at least one important responsible factor. In the north of Finland it is bitterly cold in winter, and fuel, excepting wood, is scarce. The atmosphere is humid, and the sensible temperature is therefore quite low. Under these circumstances, conservation of heat as a matter of economy has undoubtedly led to the sealing of the log cabin windows and doors. Isolation from medical help has readily established credence in the theory that disease is not communicable and is incurable if the Finnish



FIG. 16—The Finnish bathhouse. The man is holding a couple of Finnish rakes. Floodwood, Minn.

bath does not prove effective. The faith of centuries cannot be broken in a single generation, and failure on the part of the immigrant to reform at once can be understood. The teaching of the principles of hygiene and sanitation to the children, however, in the magnificent rural and city schools of the county is proving an effective agency for betterment of home conditions. The rising generation will not have the faults of the older people.

THE BATH

The bathhouse (Fig. 16) is the "sign of the Finn." It is one of the first of the many buildings to be erected upon his farm. Figure 17 is a photograph of a stove in the bathhouse. That the house is dark is well attested by the picture. Glacial boulders gathered about the farm are piled up so as to leave a low ovenlike space at the base, extending well back under the rocks. A fire is built in this stove and allowed to burn only until

heat has penetrated every stone. Buckets of cold water are then thrown upon the stove, and a vast cloud of partially condensed steam fills the small room. Occasionally a single special vent in the roof allows the smoke and the excess steam to escape. But more often the cracks in the walls and ceilings and the space around the door casement perform the same function. When the latter is the case the uninitiated might suppose the bathhouse to be afire. The neighborhood knows when a Finn bathes, for the smoke and clouds issuing from all sides of the bathhouse are an index



FIG. 17—The stove in the bathhouse of Fig. 16.

to what is happening within. Several platforms at varying heights around the room allow of a certain adjustment to the degree of heat. The bather beats himself with a bunch of birch or aspen leaves. After about ten to twenty minutes in the steam bath he retires to a small adjoining room where he dashes cold water upon himself. He then dries himself and runs to his house where he dresses. In winter he may roll in the snow before returning to dress. For nearly all ailments the Finn applies one of these vapor baths. His training from childhood enables him to endure its rigors, and hence the benefits he derives are large. His faith in it is unbounded.

The Finnish bath introduces an element in the survival of the fittest, for babies are subjected to it. The infant mortality is very high. Were it not for the anti-ventilation sentiment among so many Finns their health would undoubtedly rank first among the peoples of the earth. Those of them who do observe the modern principles are rarely ill.

Whole families very frequently bathe at the same time. The house is large enough to accommodate from eight to ten people if necessary. Herein is undoubtedly one of the basic reasons for the high moral plane of the Finn. Members of both sexes, beginning with childhood, are educated in the form of the human body and, thereby, that ignorance in later life which so often accounts for sexual immorality is at once discounted.

THE FINN AS A WORKER

Reference has been made to the excellence of the Finn as a worker. An employer of large numbers of Finns says: "We find that a great many of the Finns are very good men in every way; not only are they sober and steady, but they remain at their work for a period of years. These belong more often to the Temperance class." The Temperance class consists of the non-Socialists. Employers state that about 25 years ago the honesty of the immigrant Finn was never to be questioned. Today this statement does not appear to be so generally true, especially in the lumber camps. The change has been attributed to the spread of radical Socialism among them.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Politically, the Finns may be grouped into two classes, the Socialists and the Temperance or Progressive party. The Socialists are subdivided into two classes, the Reds and the Yellows. The Reds are the more radical and advocate force, if necessary, to accomplish an end; the Yellows oppose force and foster legislation as the best means for accomplishing a purpose. Some of the radicals have helped swell the ranks of the I. W. W. Socialism is growing rapidly, although the Progressive party says the days of the Socialists are numbered. The conservative Socialists credit themselves with all real progress attributed to the Finns. The Progressive class disagrees, crediting them only with the organization of modern athletic clubs and community opera houses.

The political aspect of the Socialist versus the Progressive party movement perhaps should receive no attention in a geographic discussion. Yet, the recent introduction of Socialism has influenced these people so strongly that it cannot properly be passed without some consideration. The question has often been asked, "Why should the principles of Socialism have found such fertile soil among the Finns?" Nearly 40 per cent of the population of Finland and perhaps 25 per cent of Finns in America now belong to the Socialist party. Most of the latter are settled in the mining districts. Geographic conditions may answer the question in part at least. The struggle with a climate that makes crops uncertain, the tilling of a soil that is difficult to drain, and the relative isolation of the farm—all increased in their severity by the Russian autocratic rule—prepare the individual to accept almost anything that savors of a somewhat easier life. In Minnesota, where the Finn labors in a lumber camp hardly fit for human habita-

tion, he soon develops an antipathy toward employers that is not easy to counteract. He then becomes a fit subject for conversion by agitators of the radical type and is easily won over. In striking contrast, however, is his attitude after he has established himself upon the land and has had an opportunity to experience the privileges of independence, even with hard work.



FIG. 18—Excellent types of Finns: both leaders in their fields of work. On the left the former Mayor of Eveleth, Minn. On the right an attorney of Duluth, a man of ability and a leader among both Finns and Americans. He arrived in America at the age of 5 years.

DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

The above statements might give rise to erroneous impressions relative to the desirability of the Finn as a citizen. It will, therefore, be worth while to look at the other side of the shield and note what sort of leadership has developed among them (Fig. 18). The last mayor of Eveleth, Minnesota, a city of about 8,000 inhabitants, was a Finn. He is a young man possessed of an aggressive spirit and of excellent business ability. He offers an example that seems to discount the common assertion that the Finn has no capacity for business affairs. The chief of detectives of Duluth stands as another splendid example of young Finnish leadership. The medical field has its quota of Finns who rank high, and the legal profession is worthily represented. Many schoolteachers in the county are Finns. They rank among the best in the state, and some have made scholarship

records in the normal schools that might well be envied by their non-Finnish classmates.

Respecting the Finn's place in world civilization it is interesting to note the rank assigned his country in Huntington's "Civilization and Climate."³⁰ Excluding the northern portion, Finland is ranked "high," on a level nearly identical with that awarded the Northern Prairie states. Classified on the basis of "human energy," Minnesota is somewhat more highly favored; but for southwestern Finland the ranking still is "very high." Accordingly the settlement of Finns in northeastern Minnesota is perfectly natural.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

The Finn in Finland and the Finn in America present both similar and contrasting aspects. These have been discussed in the light of geographic conditions, with only occasional digressions to give a better background for the point of view. Now, in the light of the past and present, may something be ventured as to the future?

The similarity of topography, soil, and climate in Finland and northeastern Minnesota, it would seem, has been most influential in the settlement of Finnish immigrants in that part of the United States. The region is still thinly populated, and those interested in its further development are encouraging foreigners to settle. Should they seek Poles, Bohemians, Italians, Finns, or some other nationality? Considering the Finn's virtues and his defects and the fundamental facts of his evolution within a well-defined environment, there is no doubt in the mind of the writer that in the Finnish immigrant lies an assurance for the agricultural development of northeastern Minnesota. All his imperfections are not of his own making and can be corrected under proper influences. In the main, his life, his habits, and his customs have been shaped by certain unmistakable geographic conditions. These conditions are reproduced in northeastern Minnesota. The region has attracted him by reason of its general physical resemblance to his homeland, and thus far he has met with a degree of success in it which no other nationality has known. These facts should be recognized that they may be made available in the upbuilding of this part of our country.

³⁰ Ellsworth Huntington: *Civilization and Climate*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1915; reference on p. 200.

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