

Interview with Mummi (Lea Inkeri Antsola Mahoney)

November 9, 2008

Audio File: Part 1

Leila: Could you just start- say your full name, where you were born and when, and your parents' names?

Mummi: Ok. My name is Lea Inkeri Antsola Mahoney. I was born in Finland. I was actually born in Toijala, but it's not in my papers, my papers say Viipuri, because my mother traveled to her mother to have the baby, which was me. So I was two weeks old when I went back to Viipuri.

L: OK. So your mother's mother was in Toijala.

M: That's right. And, I went back to Viipuri. And I use Viipuri as where I was born because it's in all the papers. I can tell the story to somebody who's very interested. I was born 7/27/28 (July 27, 1928). I was the oldest child. Actually, there was one more child, one little girl who lived 10 days.

L: Before you?

M: Yeah. But I was born a year later or so than she was. And I have it here somewhere, and I will give it to you someday.

What else did you ask?

L: Your parents' names.

M: My parents were Kerttu Aleksandra Ajo. She was born May (pause) I don't remember. I'll find it.

L: It's okay, I've got a lot of the information.

M: My dad is Johann Arvi Andersson, which in 1935 was Finlandized to Antsola, which a lot of people did.

L: Because before that, Swedish was the language of the elite, the cultured.

M: Oh, yes, absolutely. Finland was under Swedish rule for 700 years. Russian rule for 100.

L: And then independence.

M: And then independence.

L: And that was before you were born, that they gained independence?

M: Oh, yeah. 1916 or '17. Some say '16, some say '17. I haven't really looked it up.

L: It's around there.

M: It's probably '17. I think that the war which was called Sisällisota, which is "Inside War," they were fighting

L: Each other, like a civil war.

M: Yes.

L: Finns fighting each other.

M: Because some wanted to keep the Russians, and they weren't bad to us, they had very good leaders.

L: They were better than the Swedes, weren't they?

M: Yeah, in many ways they were. Swedes, and this is just my opinion, are still looking down their noses at Finns. And right now I think in technical, technically, Finland is beyond Sweden.

L: Well, yeah, we've got Nokia (chuckle).

M: And many others. Anyway. Ok, what's the next question.

L: Did your parents talk about what it was like before independence, or did they tell you anything?

M: My mother died when I was thirteen years old, so, and I was a lot with my grandmother, and my sister, too. I have one sister. But no, we didn't talk about it.

L: Ok. So how long were you in Viipuri?

M: I was five years old, and I remember perfectly everything in Viipuri. And when we moved out, I remember everything.

L: So why did you move from Viipuri?

M: Because my dad was an army man, and when he was told to move, he moved, and they were told off- in Viipuri there was an officer school, where he was several years. He had to take that because his parents died when he was two years old, and the relatives took everything, and they didn't have money to put the children to school, so he-

L: So he went to the army school.

M: That's right. I don't know how they go here, but there's also limit how high he could go, because he didn't have the *ylioppilas* (diploma) papers from the regular school. He always thought of going back to school, but then he had a family, and-

L: That makes it hard.

M: But he was always in the leadership positions because of his schooling, even before he was- see, the lowest is *vänrikki* (second lieutenant) in Finnish, then it's *luutnantti* (lieutenant), and then it's *kapteeni*, captain.

L: Ok. Those are the army positions.

M: Yeah. And he never made it. One higher than him, saw what he was doing- and he had hundred men under him, and the second in command was Major, higher than he. But my dad didn't seem to care. He knew he was in command, and he was in command!

One other major, or something else higher, general or whatever, told Jons that, 'Oh, we gotta do something about this,' because captain was the line, that he couldn't [go past], because he didn't have the education. And his parents were very rich, they owned saw mill, and flour mill, and lot of land-

L: But then his relatives took all that when they died?

M: One relative felt bad and gave me that piano, that is there, because it came from my dad's home.

L: Oh, wow, that's neat, I didn't know that.

M: Yeah, so when she died, it was in her papers, "Before you do anything else, give the piano to Lea." Actually they gave it to my dad, and he gave it to me. Anyway, it's- did I answer that?

L: Yeah. So, how much school did you go to in Finland?

M: I finished.

L: Finished high school?

M: Yeah, and I did one year at BYU! I got a four year scholarship, but then I got married. I should have gone, I just, sometimes I think I should have finished and get a degree. But I would have never used it! Because if Steve died I would've, but we were fine enough as it was.

L: But you never know if your husband is going to die.

M: No, no, you never know.

L: That's why I want to make sure I finish school myself.

M: Yeah, if you can, I recommend it. But I thought I had a chance to get it- and, in fact, Steve was, it took me a whole year, and I didn't come here for him, you know that?

L: Yes.

M: But once he started to steadily date me, I thought, you know, there must be something, because he didn't date anybody else. And for a whole year, we had so much fun together. But I didn't know if he was going to marry me or not. Steve's mother proposed to me before he did.

L: (Laughs) Tell me that story, I don't know if I've heard that story before.

M: No, that's it! We were living in California, and we were visiting and Steve was gone somewhere, and she said, "What's my son waiting for?" And I said, "Waiting for?" And she said, "Yeah. I know you are the girl for him." She was really good to me. She was a sweetheart. "You're the one for Steve, how come he doesn't say the words?" And I said, "I don't know!"

L: How long after that did he propose to you, officially?

M: Well, his mother took after him, really, she said, "She's gonna go back." And I was. That's what I don't understand now is, why didn't I decide to stay in school, and go back Finland three years later with some kind of a degree, in one of the nicest universities in the United States? But I was gonna go back.

L: But then you got married.

M: (pause) Well, yeah, I obviously got married, I'd better have! And it's been good, it's been good. Not perfect, nothing's never perfect. Maybe on the other side, but not here. But I can say, and I've probably told you, we have never had a fight.

L: Wow. That's good.

M: You know, we disagree, but that's fine. You'll always. I told him long time ago that I want those soldiers brought back [from Iraq]. And he said, oh, no. Then those countries will destroy America. We couldn't agree on that. Still don't. Because I saw so much death in Finland during the war. And I thought, this is, why don't they protect their own country? Why do they go- and spend billions and billions and trillions just to keep 'em there. And now we don't have any money in this country. So, I was Republican, but I agreed with the Democrats on the war.

L: War is not a pretty thing. So you remember, was it the Talvisota? While you were there?

M: Oh, yes, I was there through the whole thing. And my dad was, dad was what they called, I don't know what it is in English, if there is a word. But what he did was, he and his men were always first. You know, when there was war. They had pontoons, they were mostly on the water, because through Karelia there was a big river, *Vuoksi*. And so, water was always- Karelia is just one part of Finland, and through that went that big [river], so he was mostly on the water. He would come before everyone else. They had great big pontoon type of boats that they built bridges, they put side by side by side, and they were wide enough like a road. And then they were tied together, there was some kind of thing that went over. Then all the war machinery and cars, they had some horses, too, they could just go through it. And they were waiting for the Russians to come and boom-boom. And then they went somewhere else and did the same thing.

One summer before the war, I was probably seven, eight, actually war didn't start til I was 11, so it was a couple of years before. 'Cause Dad didn't have a son, so when he could, he took me with him. I have lots of great memories, sleeping with the twenty soldiers in a tent. They were really good to me. Course they spoiled me, 'cause I was their leader's daughter.

But anyway, I don't know if I told you already, I told it to somebody yesterday—No, you weren't here yesterday—The men sometimes teased me, they had those big sticks, when there was a big thing in the river, where there's land—what's it called? a peninsula, they put one of those big sticks, and then after them, came another boat, where the men drew the map. They just put those sticks so they wouldn't- they were noticeable enough that they want them in the map. And they put everywhere where there was one of those. *Vuoksi* was a very strong running river, so there wasn't much going that way. It has been there for eons. In fact, because of it, if you went swimming there, you had to know how to swim because it was like this [even] and then suddenly [drop down], because the river had taken everything and it was very deep.

So that's what my dad did lots before the war.

L: You said that the soldiers spoiled you when you went with your dad. What did they do? Did they play games with you?

M: It was mostly teasing. They claimed they were in love with me and we all laughed. I was just a kid. And I believed them. They were very nice to me. Never anything shady or bad or anything. Because Dad only had the best men with him.

L: Did he get to choose which soldiers he had with him?

M: Well, he had hundred of them, and he just took, they can't put a hundred men there in the tent. And they were needed. He only had less than 20, maybe 15 or so, because I don't remember the big tent ever being crowded. It was 20-man tent, and it was round, and everybody slept with their feet towards the heater and the smoke went up there.

L: So how did the war affect your hometown? You weren't living in Viipuri then, were you?

M: No. I was in Toijala with my grandmother because both my parents were involved with the war. My mother was what they call a *lotta* (nurse), and I was a *pikkulotta* (little nurse). I had the outfit and everything. Men who have been, and even women who have been in the war, especially in the danger zone, they don't talk about it. It's not memory they want to preserve.

L: They don't want to relive the memories.

M: No. My dad told me some things, but very little. He said, "Maybe someday."

My mother was mostly in the back. She wasn't fighting, no woman was fighting. They were either cooking for the men, or in the office behind the lines. And my mother was very good typist, and I think that's what she did, I don't know. But she was there during the Winter War. She died during the Continuation War, *Jatkosota*. And so then she wasn't anywhere, she was in bed at Grandma's, dying.

Anyway, what else?

L: You say you remember a lot from Viipuri. What are some of your vivid memories from your childhood there?

M: Viipuri, I don't want to remember. I was born there, almost. My mother, my dad explained it later, even though he didn't know what happened, but my mother . . . I was five, and as long as I can remember backwards, probably up to three years old, she beat me up, and beat me up, and beat me up, until I had blood coming out of my back. The reason was, that she sent me out to play, and it was kind of a long distance where there was other

kids. This was an apartment building, we were on the third floor, and next to it was, well, I can't call anything Finnish a mountain, but a small mountain, and I had to climb there, and there were houses where there were kids. I didn't mind, but the thing was, those spankings were all because I wet my pants. Nothing else. I wasn't a bad kid or anything. And the reason is, even if I left right away, I couldn't open the door. I prayed, I said, "Jesus, I need help. I need this door open." And somebody came out. But the reason why nobody came because we were the only—in that there was two doors, big building, two doors. I don't know about that door, but probably same thing. But by our door, there was nobody who didn't go to work early, so there was nobody coming and going. And I couldn't open the door. It was too heavy. And I think my mother wanted that. Because sometimes, even when it rained she would send me out. These are memories I don't want to remember, but . . .

She said, "Well, let's spank a little." And I got another spanking, and they weren't little. My legs, and my behind, and my back, and she went til I was—and I used to, as a child, touch my back, and they were all lumpy. I don't know, there had to be—'cause I was her only child. But I think one reason was, that she worked where my dad worked, she sold magazines at a little kiosk thing, magazines and books and candy, things like that. She was rather pretty, so she flirted, innocently, nothing else, but she had a good time, because they flattered her a little and all that. And when I came along, there wasn't anything—later on, we had a maid, and she could go back to work, but that was right before the war, and that didn't last very long.

Audio File: Part 3

And also, she read an awful lot of romance novels. She befriended every bookstore owner, and in the railroad station there was a kiosk where they sold the books and magazines, she pretty soon got to know the owner of that place. And they let her borrow books. We had a library, only school library, but it was far away. And she very carefully read them, then brought them back and they gave her another one. But they were all romance. Well, my dad's dad died when he was two years old, and he told me one day, a few years before I came here, that "I didn't know how to be romantic, nobody had taught me! I had never seen anything, there was no movies." I saw the first movie that came to Finland, it was just pictures of, not moving pictures, of birds and butterflies, and I still remember that. So, didn't learn anything. And he said, "Everything I did wasn't very good to your mother because all those books that she read, they were much more romantic." But I also think—what could I do about it?

She was very disappointed when I came home with wet pants. But I couldn't help that either! It was later on that a doctor told me I had smaller bladder than normal. I haven't had any trouble as I've grown up. (laughs)

When we moved, and my mother moved with us, first place she was happy. I don't know why, but she was happy. Besides, there was an outside toilet, and I could go just fine, I never had wet pants. But I remember her smiling sometimes, which she never did in Viipuri, as far as I can tell, I remember.

However, then we moved to another place again, I was maybe 8, 9, 10, and she wasn't happy again, and she went, I shouldn't tell you this,

L: You don't have to.

M: Well, I just don't want you to think she was a bad person. People loved her. She was a nice person. I was the only one. She bought a horse whip, and whipped me with that. But then we had, it was a double, on one side lived family of his—higher man [in the army] than my dad was, he probably had thousand men under him. And the walls were thin, and of course I cried. But once I decided, I'm gonna scream. Next time when she spanks me I'm gonna scream. See, I was getting a little older, and I screamed. And when they came to their, our *eteinen*, which is the front entryway. They came to theirs and ours were together. There was wall, but there was door between us, and it was locked. But anyway, I screamed, "I'm being murdered!" My mother was so surprised, I think that was the last spanking I got. Oh no, there was one more. All those, I can forgive her, but there's one more that I have a really hard time, and I have to before I go and meet her again. I have to. I even pray about it, "Please help me." But I won't tell you about it.

I don't think my mother loved me, or even liked me. Because in growing up years, I was lots and lots in Toijala. My grandmother was a sweetheart, and I loved it there. And my dad didn't know anything. My dad did not know that I was beaten up like that. Because I didn't tell him. And the reason was, and I don't know how young can reason like that, but I thought, "He's grown up, and my mother's grown up. My dad will say, 'Okay, if your mother beats you like that, you probably deserve it.'" But it would have stopped.

L: Now, looking back, you realize it would have stopped.

M: Same- I never told my mother that I can't open the door. Because, I said, she always told me how bad I was, [so I thought she would say,] "I tell you you're bad, only bad people can't open the door." That was my thinking. So I never told.

She was very young, she was 19 when she got married, was already expecting a baby. Then, it died. And then, I came. And she didn't want me.

L: What about your sister, Leila? Was she also your mother's daughter?

M: Yes.

L: And how much younger was she than you?

M: Seven years. And somehow whatever was my mother's problem somewhat cured. There's a picture. This is a bad picture of my mother. She was looking straight into the sunshine. Here's me and Irmeli [Leila] and my mother. This is where we lived when we were traveling, and dad was mapping the river Vuoksi.

L: What town was it in?

M: Vuoksella. 'On the river.' It was wonderful. A little more shallow water than most places. All beautiful sand. It was good place. I remember it very well. I think I was about seven.

L: So was Irmeli born while you were living there?

M: No, no. She's about—well, no, I had to be--

L: She looks like she's probably about three or four in that picture.

M: Not that old. Two at the most. So I must have been nine years. She [my mother] didn't always look like that. Everyone I show this picture to says, "Oh, yeah, she's looking straight into the sun." I gave this picture to Irmeli last Christmas, because she didn't have it at all. I had it made bigger and gave her a frame and all. And she was so tickled. Because it's a very good picture of her, and me too! But, no, she was never spanked. My mother was seven years older! And not doing anything. She was very popular with people.

Audio File: Part 4

L: So were you excited to have a little sister, or were you jealous of her at first?

M: No, I never was jealous. I was so much older that I didn't really relate to a little girl. But later on we were always very close. And she followed me into the church. She just came to visit here [with] us. But then Lee Morris, which is Steve's second cousin, wanted to marry her. . . She's had a very hard life. Because Lee Morris, for the last nineteen years, he's had Parkinson's disease, and it gets worse and worse and worse and worse. And she's the caregiver. Sometimes the caregivers die before the patient. I'm afraid that that's what happens to her if he doesn't die pretty soon. He just gets worse and worse and worse, he can hardly walk. He can [talk], if he wants, but he talks so quiet. Steve used to visit him all the time, or take them to ride or to a restaurant to eat.

Their son is living with them. She hasn't told me this, but I can tell. He's just the nicest person, but for some reason he has decided that he can't get married because he has to take care of his parents. I told him last Christmas, "Brian, I think you're wasted." Other people were around. "I think you're wasted." And he said, "What? What do you mean?" And I said, "Because you'd make such a wonderful husband to some lucky girl." And there were some girls that were after him. But now he's past forty, and I don't think any girl is—but I think he's still good-looking and fun to be around, he's so funny and all that. But I don't know. He doesn't tell me if it's his decision or his mother's because Irmeli likes it that way. He used to live away from home, now he lives at home because he's needed there. But the Mormon doctrine is, all men have to be married unless there's something wrong with them. The girls, not necessarily, because they can't force the man to marry them. So, there's lot of girls, and Brian certainly has had his share. He goes to the Young Adults still and meets lot of girls. My sister says, "Well, there isn't any left anymore, all the good ones are married." I don't think so.

L: So tell me about your conversion. I've heard the story a little bit, but I'd like you to tell me about that.

M: My mother's youngest sister's husband died. They had three young children. I think the oldest was in the elementary school. In Finland it starts when they're seven. And then there was a girl and another boy, and the boy was maybe three. And I was free, so she called me—we always had been very good friends, she was only nine years older than I was. So she called me and said, "Could you come here for some time, because--" and I knew that her husband had died suddenly-- "Could you come here and look after the children because I have to go to work." Her husband was a principal of a high school. Good man, good man. And I

said yes, and I went happily. I wasn't very happy with my dad's and Tyyne's marriage, even though Tyyne wasn't ever bad to me, but she was a nagger, she was never happy with everything. She was a farmer's daughter, and had learned that you always had to work. I couldn't sit down without her bringing me knitting or mending the socks or something. Always, always, something. And I felt like a maid who never got paid. But I never said anything.

So I was tickled to go. At the time, I worked in a grocery store, but it was boring there, too, so I went. I think I stayed a year or so. When the missionaries came, a little before they came, I had opened the window—we were on the third floor of the apartment building—and I was dusting the furniture. And I had a dust rag, and I looked down there, and there was two men down there. I didn't know them, and I didn't know they would come to our place. I thought they were just somebody else's visitors. So I went back to my doings. And there was no elevator, so they walked to the third floor and rang the doorbell. And I thought—the kids were out, I don't know if it was a school time or summertime—anyway, doorbell rang, and I just hopped in there to open the door, and there those two men stood. And I looked at them, I thought they were selling something, and I was just going to say, “Nope, we don't buy anything.” But before I opened my mouth, one of them started to say something, which was supposedly Finnish. But he had just arrived and learned that door approach, and I did not understand a word, not a word! And I was so surprised that I took a step back, and they walked in.

I wouldn't have let them in, because I was home alone. And they're not supposed to go in, either, they're supposed to ask, “Is your husband home?” but they didn't say anything, they just walked right in. They went all the way to the front room and sat down and started telling me who they were. I wasn't scared, though, because the visitors looked so benign. No, I wasn't scared. But I thought they were selling vacuums or something and are really strong salespeople.

Then they started to talk about this church they came from all the way from America to teach about. One could speak, Elder Paulson. He calls here once in a while still, and mostly talks to Steve. He was a mission president later on, so Steve and him talk. But I often talk with him, too. He talked and he told me about the church. They had rented a *Kristusoppis Teosofinentemppli* (Learning of Christ Theological Temple). *Temppli* it was not, because we had to open all the windows—they had rented, the Mormons, for Sunday meetings—we had to open all the windows to get all the cigarette smoke out. That kind of temple. There was very few, there were three or four girls, one boy, who is here, in Salt Lake City, married. I see him all the time. And that was it. Oh, there was a couple of old ladies. And it was a big room and we were just in one corner. I went every Sunday because I didn't know anybody in Jyväskylä, and they were all so friendly, all those. We had the same interests. Especially that one guy, Kalevi, we really hit it together, and we walked up and down and up and down the streets closer to our homes, and wondered about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

L: So this was before you had gotten baptized, you were going to church.

M: Oh yeah, oh yeah. That's even, really thinking it. I had given one talk. I told a story that I had read somewhere, about how heaven's gate is so narrow, and we have all these travel bags of sins, that we can't get in. She said, no matter how we tried, that they were just too big, so we'd better, we'd better (chuckles). . . That's all I remember. One girl said afterwards, “What if you just put it right like this [sideways], then maybe you could've.” Anyway, that was my first talk.

L: So how did you feel when the missionaries were teaching you? How did you know the church was true?

M: Well, the one, that didn't know any language, they asked if I—and then they don't do it anymore, putting one missionary in and one girl—they asked if I just listen to him reading the lessons. One a week, or, I don't know if he came every day or . . . and my aunt, she didn't care, as long as food was on the table when she came home, and the kids were okay. And the kids, they had a key hanging there, so they never rang the doorbell, they just had their own key and opened the door. Anyway, they . . . I forgot, what was I saying?

Audio File: Part 5

L: When the missionaries taught you, how you felt.

M: For a beginning, I don't know if I felt anything. They were just fun to have there, they were funny sometimes. And the one that I taught, he lives in Salt Lake City, he builds homes. Or, he is the *rakennusmestari*, he's the one that says how to do it. I've seen him many times. And, you know, no missionary

meetings, we see them all. And we get a lot of them coming, more than the other missionary meetings, we had 3-400 sometimes. Of course, there's a lot of Finns here now, too, they go to school, and so on, they come, too.

So, they came, and the other guy was reading the lessons, and I was helping him read so that I understood what he was reading. Also, he asked, "What does this mean? What does this mean?" That kind of teaching. And I didn't speak English, so I didn't really know. Well, actually, the lessons were in Finnish. And all I knew [in English] was "I love you," and I couldn't say that to missionaries.

Anyway, it was fun. And like I said, I hope my aunt will be, she never joined, will be greatly blessed because she let them come, all the time, any time, and I went to their meetings. Not with the children, usually just Sunday meetings. But I started feeling something, and I told my aunt, "It probably happens that I will join this church." The reason was I did not like Lutheran church anymore. I wanted out of there. Have I told you why?

L: No.

M: I went to where my stepmother's from. I went to school there, because we were there, Irmeli and I, for two years before my dad came home, and it was a Lutheran church priest who was teaching, it was a Lutheran church school. There's more religion there than in normal schools, lots of stuff like that. My dad came from chasing the Germans out of Finland in the northern part, where the Germans came as friends, but wouldn't leave. And he went and chased them, with his men, and chased them out, and did, but while they were going out they bombed, I mean mined, on the way. Years, 10 years later, people were still, who went to pick berries, were killed there, because they didn't find everything, but they found lots. In fact, my dad almost got killed once. Only time, very rare time, when a German bomb did not explode. He heard the sound that means in two seconds, you're gone, and he couldn't even, they don't even run because it's just too fast. But it didn't, it did not explode. So he had to live a little longer.

So he came home for a week, vacation, time off, leave. One day he said to me, he said, "I can't get the sights and sounds off my head." Because we were in a war, or at least he was. And he said, "Is there a movie theater or something in here that we could go?" And I said, "Yeah, there's a movie theater, but I'm not supposed to go." Because, oh, movies were a big sin. I never learned to dance, because dancing . . . The principal, every week, a couple times a week, he asked, "Has anybody danced?" Some put their hands up, that they had danced, but some thought that it's none of his business. And then "Anybody been in the movies?" In fact, he sent his son once in a while just to see if any from the school had been there.

L: So he thought it was a sin.

M: Oh, absolutely. And the movie at the time when Dad was there, there was only one movie theater and one movie, it was a Shirley Temple movie, "Little Sunshine." How bad was that? And I thought, "For my dad, I'd do anything. I'm going." Because he wanted me to go with him. I don't think he really realized how serious it could have been.

L: So that's why you didn't want to be part of the Lutheran church anymore.

M: I got enough of Lutheran church, I said I'd never . . . And I went to lot of little churches before I even met the Mormons. Some of them were so strange, so strange, they screamed and hollered and stood up and jumped. I said, "No way."

Audio File: Part 6

So anyway, that Saturday, or Friday, maybe, no Saturday, he asked, "Anybody gone to movies?" And I said, "Yeah, I went, I went with my dad." He said, "Dad or otherwise, you are member of this school, and that's the rule. You do not go to the movies." And I said, "But I went." Well, my punishment that Saturday, I had to stay there, and sit there and stare at one spot in the wall and think how, two hours, think how sinful and awful I was. That just made my mind up. I did not want to be a Lutheran. I don't know if all the Lutheran churches, they probably weren't that bad, it was just that principal at that school. But I just had enough, I'm not going to stay. I mostly thought of just, didn't belong to any church. But I was always a little religious, and I prayed, and I went. But nothing, nothing touched me. Once, two little girls sang, "O brother dear, O sister wonderful, would you like to go to heaven with me?" And they were cute little girls. I said, "Yes, I would like to go to heaven with you." But that was it.

I finally told the missionaries they can come and teach us. Well, they had come once a week already for a while . . . Because my year at Liisu's was almost through, and she was ready to let the kids . . . They had their keys, and school started, and all that, so she was ready to let me go. Except, well, I went visit with my dad

first, my parents first, and I told him I want to join the Mormon church, LDS church, and he said-- we had talked about it long before that, I was so tickled about the Church, I told him everything. And my dad said, "If you do that, you never have to come back. This is it. You're not my daughter." I said okay. He said, "Can't you do me one favor and wait for six months before you join? I am your father. Please, do that thing." I said okay. Six months. Sure.

I was the first one in Jyväskylä ready to go, and I was first one that was really baptized, even though there was five of us by then. But I was baptized first. So, meanwhile I had gone back to Jyväskylä, couple months there, and I went back to take all my stuff from my parents' home. I packed all my things, I went and took my Lutheran papers out. I had all my papers that I needed to keep them, and I went to say goodbye to my dad. It was the first time in my life that I saw my soldier father cry. And he said, "I didn't mean it." And I was glad. I was willing to forgive him. I was very glad. He said, "I just don't know anything about that church, I just didn't want you to make a mistake." And he preached at me a little while. The thing is, in the end, years and years later, when we were there, Steve was mission president, I begged him to join the Church because he knew more than members. He was retired from army, and he had opened a typing school, they don't teach it in Finland in the schools, so he was a teacher at a typing school. Because I trusted my dad--I was working in the church, the last few months while I was in Finland, with all kinds of papers that they needed somebody to type it so they're ready to be printed. So I sent most of it to my dad, because I knew he had to read it while he was typing. So he learned a lot, and I knew he was ready, but Tyyne was so much against it, Dad said, "I can't do it." He was 70 or something, and he said, "I can't do that to her." And she had been a good wife. He was really this close. He said, "Besides, you'll do my work anyway." I said, "Yes, will you accept it?" "Oh, yes!" I think, if Tyyne was different—Tyyne was never mean, or never anything against me being a member, but because she didn't want it, she didn't want her husband either.

L: Thank you so much for sharing all this with me!

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Questions and transcription by Leila Stewart.