

THE KANNIAINEN FAMILY OF NEGANUEE

Researched and written by David Curtis



John Henry Kanninen (1867-1935) and Ida Marie Antilla (1874-1958)

Acknowledgment: Par Erik Levlin of Sollentuna, Sweden, who found the family tree in Finland.

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

This volume is a continuation of the Curtis Family history. It follows the Finnish side of the family, Kanninen and Antilla, from their nineteenth century origins in Finland to their immigration to America. Much of the background information on Negaunee was not duplicated

from the Curtis volume. Readers are referred to the original Curtis volume for a more complete presentation. This story begins at the turn of the nineteenth century and tries to put our ancestors in the context of the great awakening in Finland that was occurring at the time and which led to the great emigration. It ends with the death of Ida Marie. Because she was so kind, my memories of her are still vivid.

The Kanniainen Family united with the Curtis Family when Elsie Kanniainen married Leland Curtis on June 27, 1931. This history covers the lives of Joh Henry Kanniainen and his wife Ida Marie Antilla, who were born in Finland in the 19th century, emigrated to America in the 1890s and lived the remainder of their lives in Negaunee, Michigan. I've tried to put our ancestors in the context of the great awakening in Finland that led to their emigration to America.

PART 2 – BRIEF EARLY HISTORY of FINLAND

The lapps were the first known people to occupy Finland, but they were pushed north, about the time of Christ, by new settlers. The Tavasts and “Proper Finns,” belonging to the tribal Finno-Ugrians, left their homeland between the Ural Mountains and the Volga River in Russia and settled in Estonia, Hungary and Central Finland. Another branch of this tribe, the Karelians, originating from the Lake Ladoga region, settled north of Leningrad

Also settling in Finland were other Scandinavians. In large part, the history of Finland is intertwined with Sweden. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Swedes took over the country, consolidation Finland's loose organization of isolated communities, each separated from the other by climate and dense forests. Between 1150 and 1293, Sweden brought Christianity to Finland in a series of crusades, and they also built fortified forts on Finnish lands. Finland became a duchy of Sweden in 1362. Even though the official government language became Swedish, the independent Finns kept to their own language, just as they did in America in the latter part of the 19th century.

The Finns got along fairly well with the Swedes during the period of domination. The Finns were allowed involvement in the government. The Swedes also offered protection during invasions of

Finland. But association with Sweden also drew them into fights that were of no concern to them. For example, many of the battles that occurred between Sweden and Russia, starting in the 15th century and continuing for decades after, were fought in Finland devastating villages and the economy.

Also during the 15th century, the Swedes were contending with forces from the east too. In 1520, Christian II of Denmark invaded Sweden, resulting in the Stockholm Bloodbath, which ended in the execution of between eighty and ninety members of the Swedish nobility and clergy.

During the conflict, a Swedish nobleman, Gustav Ericksson Vasa, escaped from captivity, although his father and brother-in-law were murdered and his mother and sister were captured. In May 1520, he began instigating revolts against the Danes that culminated in driving them out of Sweden. In June 1523, Vasa then became King and adopted a hereditary succession. He also converted the country from the Catholic faith to Lutheran, which by the end of the century was accepted by nearly all of the people, including those in Finland. One reason that the Lutheran Church became so attractive in Finland was that the services were conducted in the native language, not Latin.

PART 3 – ANCIENT ORIGINS of the FAMILY, DNA ANALYSIS by THE GENOGRAPHIC PROJECT, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The ancient history of the members of our Finnish clan began between 150,000 and 170,000 years ago with a woman whom anthropologists call “Mitochondrial Eve.” All people alive on the planet today can trace their maternal lineage back to her. Although the homo-sapiens species itself evolved in Africa about 200,000 years ago, Eve’s lineage is the only one from that distant time to survive until today.

Our clan originated in Western Africa. About 80,000 years ago, we left Africa and moved across the Sinai Peninsula to present-day Egypt. From there, we followed the Nile Basin to the Mediterranean area and Turkey. About 25,000 years ago, we moved across the

Caucasus Mountains and ended up in Northern Europe and Western Siberia.

From that distant time of nameless relatives, we now begin our history of our known direct descendants in the Finnish clan, beginning with Matts Erikson Huhtala.

PART 4 – HISTORY of ANTILLA and KANNIAINEN FAMILIES from 1801-1991.

Ida Marie Antilla's grandparents on her mother's side, 1801-1845

During the latter few years of Swedish control over Finland, Matts Erikson Huhtala (Ida's grandfather on her mother's side) was born February 25, 1801, in Lohtaja, at a place referred to as Huhtala.

Lohtaja is in Western Province, mid-country, on the eastern side of the Gulf of Bothnia. It is eighty miles equidistant from the cities of Vaasa to the south and Oulu to the north and situated on the longest beach in Scandinavia.

Carin Mickelsdaughter (Matts wife) was born March 12, 1803, in Lohtaja.

Matts and Carin were young children in 1809 when attacks by Denmark and Russia during the Napoleonic Wars forced Sweden to sign a treaty forfeiting Finland to Russia. They may not have noticed much of a change in their lives, though. The peasants' basic freedoms and the practices of local government and the Lutheran Church remained much the same. When Matts and Carin were young adults in 1812, the Finnish capital city was moved closer to Russia, from Turku to Helsinki.

Carin and Matts were married in Lohtaja on June 21, 1822. Matts was a farmer. At the time of his marriage, he moved to Carin's home. The name of this home was Laurila, but after Matts moved there, it came to be known as Niemi. It currently has the number 6 in Maringais Village, Marinkainen, which is located slightly to the south of Lohtaja.

Carin and Matts had eight children: (Erik (b. 1823), Elisabet (b. 1824), Brita (b. 1830), Johannes (b. 1830), Thomas (b. 1832), Catharina (b. 1835) Maria Christiana (b. 1842) and Michael (b. 1845), all born at Neimi in Lohtaja.

Ida Marie Antilla's grandparents on her father's side, 1816-1859

Maria Mattsdaughter Seikkala (Ida's grandmother) was born September 21, 1816, at Seikkala in Lohtaja.

Erik Jakobsson Antilla, (Ida's grandfather) was born June 26, 1817, on Antilla farm at a location called Karhi in Lohtaja. Erik and Maria were married on June 16, 1839, in Lohtaja. Erik was a farmer, and the family lived on the Antilla farm. They had ten children: Matti (b. 1839), Jakob (b. 1841), Anna Sofia (b. 1843, d. 1856), Abram (b. 1844, died as a child), Eva Maja (b. 1849), Brita Johanna (b. 1851), Abram (b. 1853), Wilhelmina (b. 1855), Erik (b. 1857, d. 1858) and Erik (b. 1859), all born in Lohtaja.

Both sets of Ida's grandparents were adults in 1827 when the great fire of Turku destroyed most of the former Finnish capital. They were also alive in 1835 when both the Kalevala, the Finnish National Epic was published and the Maamme, the Finnish National Anthem, was performed.

Ida Marie Antilla's parents, 1839-1896

Matti Erikinpoika Antilla (Ida's father) was born to Maria and Erik on October 30, 1839, in Lohtaja at the Evangelical Lutheran Parish. Maria Christiana Matsdaughter Niemi (Ida's mother) was born to Carin and Matts on February 17, 1842, in Lohtaja. Matti and Maria were married on June 16, 1861. They had six children: Anna Sofia (b. 1862, d. 1862), Kajsa Sofia (b. 1864, m. 1884), Matti (b. 1868, m. 1894, d. 1929 in Marquette), Johan Alfred (b. 1872, d. 1873), Ida Marie (b. 1874) and Hilma Charlotta (b. 1877, d. 1877). Maria Christiana died on September 30, 1877, one day after childbirth. Her newborn daughter Hilma died three weeks later on October 22. Matti died nineteen years after his wife on November 17, 1896, in Lohtaja.

John Kanniainen's parents and life in Finland 1829-1865

Else Jahansdaughter Vaananen (John's mother) was born on May 30, 1829, in Ylikiiminki, Finland. Ylikiiminki is located in Oulu Province. It is located twenty miles interior to the city of Oulu, which is located on the northeast edge of the Gulf of Bothnia. Henrik

Henrikson Kanniainen (John Kanniainen's father) was born on February 12, 1830. Henrik Kanniainen moved to Ylikiiminki from Muhos in 1857. Muhos is approximately ten miles south of Ylikiiminki. Else and Henrik probably married in the mid-1850s. They had seven children: Anna Lisa (b. 1857, m. 1884, d. 1889), Elsa (b. 1860), Henrik (b. 1863, d. 1863), Maria (b. 1865, d. 1866), John (b. 1867), Fredrika (b. 1870) and Reeta (b. 1874, d. 1945), all born in Ylikiiminki. Father Henrik died December 1, 1905. Mother Else died September 21, 1889, in Ylikiiminki.

Both John's and Ida's parents were adults in the 1860s when Finnish life was radically changing. Finland adopted its own currency, the "markka" in 1860. The first railway was built in 1862. Finland's legislature convened in 1863.

In the early part of that decade, Finnish industry was freed from strict regulation by Russia. The government began to charter companies. Big businesses sprang up, such as the paper industry. Up until this time, the Finnish way of life consisted of small farmers consuming what they produced. All of a sudden, earning and spending money on manufactured goods and market food became priorities over self-made goods and self-grown foods. In 1864, a law was adopted that allowed the Finnish peasants to buy and own their own lands. One effect of the legislation was that small farms started being absorbed by larger ones.

Laborers began to gravitate toward Southern Finland, looking for industrial jobs, which were in insufficient supply. Overpopulation in the larger cities resulted. The rigid agricultural system could not sustain a growing population. The times were so severe that some people ate pine bark mixed with ground-up straw.

Coupled with the industrial revolution was an educational one. At the time of the Russian takeover in 1809, there was virtually no organized education. In fact, it wasn't until 1843 that legislation was adopted laying the groundwork for it. Beginning in 1863, schools were freed from state control with a resulting increased interest in intellect and culture. The first school board came into existence in 1869.

Perhaps most representative of this movement toward education was the cultivation of the Finnish Language occurring at

that time. The promotion of the home language, practiced by a small group of scholars, led to a feeling of national pride and unity. Finnish became a nation language along with Swedish and Russian. While people began to take pride in their native tongue, though, they were still slow to learn to read and write it.

Increased interest in education and the national language were sparks for the great awakening that caught fire in the coastal towns first, in the last part of the 19th century, and led to rejection of the old rural life.

Seeking their fortunes, many Finns looked beyond their own shores. Approximately 360,000 Finns set sail for America in the 1860s. Around 120,000 of these eventually returned to Finland. Besides those already mentioned, the other reasons to emigrate included escaping serving in the Czar's army, political and religious persecution, unhappy love affairs, creditors and domineering parents.

In 1865, after the end of the American Civil War, emigration of Finns started in Arctic Norway's Finnmark and Tromsø Provinces. Six-thousand Finns were living a poor and severe existence there as farmers, fishermen and miners. After listening to agents from the Quincy Mining Company of Michigan's Copper Country, Finns started flocking to America. It was the first wave of immigrants to America. Prior to the 1860s immigration to America had been sparse and sporadic. The earliest immigrants were Finns from northern Sweden who settled in Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in about 1637.

John Kanniainen, Ida Antilla and their children, 1867-1991

John Henry Kanniainen was born, the fifth of seven children to Henrik and Else, on September 25, 1867. **(2)** in Ylikiiminki in Oulu Province, Finland, on or near a farm called Kouola or Kouo **(3)** John was a contemporary of Jean Sibelius, the country's great composer, who was born just two years before John.

His future wife, Ida Marie Antilla, was born on August 1, 1874, in Lohtaja, the fifth of six children born to Matti and Maria.

On October 20, 1878, a year after his wife Maria died from childbirth, Matti Antilla married Eeva Stiina Antintytar who had moved to Lohtaja from Himanjo in 1878. Himanjo (currently called Himanka)

is five miles north of Lohtaja. Apparently, Eeva also went by the name of Tina Mattson. Mattie was thirty-nine years old at the time of the marriage and Eeva Stiina was twenty-six. At the time of the marriage, there were three children living in the household, the oldest being fourteen. Ida was four at the time.

This second marriage produced five step-brothers and step-sisters for Ida Marie: Alina (b. 1879, m. 1898, d. 1899 in Negaunee), Erik (b. 1882, d. 1883), Oskari (b. 1884 in Vassa Lanni, m. 1905, d. 1967 in Negaunee), Juho Emil (b. 1886) and Herman (b. 1889, d. 1918)

Ida lived in the household for a while. Apparently, due to disagreements with her step-mother, she eventually went to live with one of her two grandmothers.

In 1879, at the age of twelve, John Henry Kanninen was seeking employment at a time when life was hard and good jobs were scarce. Workers were leaving the country for jobs elsewhere.

The flow of workers leaving Finland for America started in intensity in John's province of Oulu, spread south to Ida's Western Province and finally to the urbanized areas. The northerners moved more extensively because the good jobs in Finland went to those living closest to the southern cities. At first, young unmarried men, such as John, left home. Girls, though, also emigrated to work as servants or become brides of Finns in America as Ida did.

Between 1882 and 1902, over 103,000 people left the two provinces for America, including John and Ida. Between 1893 and 1920, the provinces of Vaasa and Oulu provided over sixty percent of all emigrants who left the country. During this same period, passports indicated that about 86% of emigrants were from rural communities. The Finns came to America in the greatest numbers in the late 1890s and the first decade of the 1900s.

There were attempts to halt the rush of native-born Finns out of the country, both by Finnish government officials and the clergy. Some Finns were very nationalistic and couldn't understand others who would be willing to abandon their homeland for economic or any other reasons. In some parishes, Finnish marriages in America were not recognized. This feeling was more intense in the 1870s than at

the time when John and Ida left the country in the 1890s. By 1898, all government efforts to prohibit emigration were abandoned.

Before 1883, emigrants left Finland through Sweden. After 1883, when the Finnish Steamship Line was organized, the route was from Hanko, Finland, to Hull, England for the first leg of the journey. As a result of this arrangement, Hanko soon became overcrowded with homeless people. The Finnish Steamship Line had a monopoly on shipping between England and Finland and possessed the sole right to sell tickets. The names of some of the ships were Arcturus, Polaris, Sirius and Urania.

In 1894 civil disobedience arose in Finland due to the February Manifesto issued by Tsar Nicholas II that attempted to impose censorship, conscription, and the Russian Language on the population, restricting Finnish autonomy. This unrest could have been the final straw in making John Kanniainen and Ida Maria Antilla decide to emigrate.

John left for America in 1892 at the age of twenty-five, three years after his mother Else had died of dropsy (edema, excessive accumulation of fluid in the body) on September 21, 1889, in Ylikiiminki. His father would live another thirteen years in the homeland, dying of senility on December 1, 1905, at the age of seventy-five.

Ida departed Finland in 1895, the year before her father, Matti Antilla died on November 17, 1896.

Before emigrating to America in the 1890s, the Kanniainen and Antilla families lived in a period of Russian domination. Members of the Kanniainen family, firmly settled in a distant land, could only watch when Finland seized the opportunity to declare its independence during the Russian Revolution. This marked the beginning of a period when the Finns stepped out of the shadow of the Swedish presence and emerged into their own identity. Finland remained a duchy of Russia until 1917.

Prior to boarding, John obtained personal information from church parish registers and a certificate from the bailiff's office to secure a passport. His naturalization record indicates that he was 5 ft. 8 in. tall, weighed 165 pounds, had brown hair and blue eyes.

Arriving in Hull, England, the Finns boarded trains for large port cities, such as Liverpool or Southampton. They had difficulty, though, finding lodging in strange cities. As foreigners, they were often treated less than respectfully. *Emigrants were collected like sheep...where passports tickets and goods were examined as though they belonged to beasts. (4)*

The trip to America took ten days, and they traveled third class. Ships, such as the Allan, Cunard, American and White Star, were overcrowded and had few sanitation facilities. The diet, at best, often consisted of herring and potatoes.

John arrived at New York on March 20, 1892, aboard a ship by the name of Teutonic. In American ports, the immigrants were checked for illness, given disembarkation money and helped by interpreters to find lodging.

Finns went in all directions in America, working as miners, millwrights, lumberjacks, sawyers and fishermen. Many were mostly drawn to the northern areas that resembled their homeland, particularly Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, near Lake Superior. The 1900 census reflects that fifty percent of the immigrants had settled in the Great Lakes states. John and Ida followed this trend.

Upon reaching America, both John and Ida went directly to Negaunee, Michigan. Ida's old brother Matti was residing there. Her younger step-brother Oscar and step-sister Alina would eventually join Ida and Matti in Negaunee. Upon arriving in Negaunee, John lived at Buffalo Hill, near the Queen and Breitung # 2 mines.

What the immigrants found upon arriving was that their surnames, usually taken from nature of location, were difficult for Americans to spell and pronounce. Consequently, many Finns shortened their names by dropping the prefix or suffix. Isotalo became Talo, for example. Or they used the English translation of the surname, such as Bay for Lahti. Or they randomly selected a common English name like Smith. Many kept their Finnish names, though, due to the influence of churches and fraternal societies. Changes occurred most often among those Finns who had reason to mingle with non-Finns, a situation that did not apply to the Kanniainen family since they lived and socialized strictly within their Finnish neighborhoods in Negaunee.

Most of the Finns worked as menial laborers in the mines. The better jobs went to those men with mining skills, such as those from Cornwall. John worked in the mines in the 1890s. He is listed in the city directories as laborer in 1916-17 and 1920-21. He worked at the Queen Mine and for the Cleveland-Cliffs Company at various times in his career. Digging iron ore, John Kanniainen worked ten hours a day and six days a week for a monthly wage of between thirty and fifty dollars.

Working was a lot different than what the Finns were accustomed to in the old country. The family-oriented life style was of the past. The American mining companies emphasized work over the miners' personal lives. In reaction, the Finns tried to achieve greater rights by participating in strikes. These efforts, sometimes resulting in violence, led to anti-Finnish feeling from other ethnic groups in the Negaunee Community.

Even though the Finn found that he was doing much better in America monetarily, he also found that these economic gains did not come easily. He had to learn a whole new range of skills because the Finnish homespun ones, such as woodworking, were mostly worthless in his new home.

On May 14, 1898, John Henry Kanniainen and Ida Marie Antilla married when he was twenty-eight and she twenty-three. Two months later, on July 16, Ida's step-sister Alina married Jacob Salo and became a housekeeper. On May 13, 1899, though, Alina died of consumption at the age of eighteen years.

In 1900, John was still working as an iron-ore miner, and the family was renting a house at 118 Peck Street. In 1901-02, John and Ida lived at 416 Jackson Street and at 216 Peck Street in 1908. In 1910, they resided at the Queen Mine Location, on Prince Street, in a house that would be their family home for many years.

Elsie Esther Curtis, who is in the direct line of this history, was born to Ida and John on May 11, 1909. Other children in the family were six girls and three boys: John Henry (b. 1899, d. 1991), Mary (b. 1901, d. 1999), Matthew Arthur (b. 1903, d. 1964), Mayme (b. 1905, d. 1991), Hilma (b. 1907, d. 1992), George Walfred (b. 1911), Miriam Hilda (b. 1913), Ethel Helen (b. 1915, d. 1966) and Alice (b. 1917), all born in Negaunee. The last child, Alice, was called "Babe"

by family members. On July 4, 1920, the family had a still-born son, whom they had planned to call Sam William. It has been said that the girls of the family were known around town for their beauty. Although she was very shy, she did have a boy friend in the early years.

Shyness was a common characteristic of the Finn. In the past, the winter climate and deep forests of Finland isolated the Finnish people from the rest of the world and from each other as well. Generally, the people of Oulu and the Western Province, where the Kanniainen and Antilla families had resided, were accustomed to living lonely and isolated lives, during which they learned to appreciate solitude. Many of Finnish heritage, including Elsie, seemed to carry that trait forward.

The Finns settled into a new life that centered around the kitchen and sauna. In anticipation of frequent visitors, the Kanniainen family always had the coffee pot and home-baked sweet rolls ready. Some Finnish families, as well as other Negaunee families, owned a cow or two. These animals provided milk, meat, blood for verri platyja, which was a Finnish pancake, blood sausage and bread. Even the inside of the horns were used for stuffing potato sausage. The sauna – used for relaxation, treating sickness and even giving birth – gave the Finns a strong and important link with the past.

One Negaunee neighborhood where the Finns clustered was call Finn Alley. These ethnic enclaves were often located on properties acquired by the mine companies to house their workers near the mines. In such locations, the Finns maintained their own customs and married within their ethnic group, such as John and Ida did.

The community was very strongly knit; it could function with little outside influence and without reliance on the English Language. In fact, there was a pride in ethnic purity reflected by the slogan: one tongue, one mind. *Finglish* was also widely spoken, which is coined word for a mixture of the two languages in which the English pronunciation of a term is altered according to Finnish rules. Saying “paarti” for party and “soopa” for soap are two examples of *Finglish*. This manner of speaking persisted for years. Melting into America was a slow process.

Even though most Finns could not speak or write English, the literacy rate was eighty percent higher than other immigrant groups. Because of their respect for literacy, the Finns happily sent their children to school in America. The immigrants who came to America from northern, rural Finland, like John did, differed in the respect that they came from areas that were slowest to develop schools. They never had the opportunities of children in southern cities. Less than fifty percent of immigrants coming from these areas before 1900 had schooling.

According to the 1900 census, John could read, write and speak English. Ida could read and write English but only spoke a few words. Her children, including Elsie, used to speak to her exclusively in Finnish.

The Finnish communities kept Finnish culture alive. Political organizations, gymnastic societies, fraternal orders, glee clubs, mixed choruses, bazaars, dramas, sewing circles and study groups all existed here. Finn Halls which were meeting places for Finnish organizations, became commonplace. Many Finns were still homesick, though. But Ida and John's large family and hard life did not allow them much time to reminisce about Finland.

Clashes of culture were common between the Finns and the other ethnic groups, such as the Church Finns, Temperance Finns and Labor Finns. The latter were pro-communist, anti-religion socialists who organized strikes against mining companies beginning in 1906.

Many miners had drinking problems that brought out the worst in them. The young Finn, far from parents and home church, in a strange country and under unusual pressures, resorted to the bottle. Drunkenness causes civil and domestic disorder in Finnish-American society. To combat it, the first Finnish temperance society was organized on February 22, 1885, in Quincy, Michigan. It was called Pohjantahti, which means north star.

The Lutheran Church played a big role in helping the Finns, including the Kannianens, adjust to a new life and deal with the resulting problems. Twenty-five percent of the immigrants were associated with distinctive churches. The first immigrants to the Copper Country were of a religious group founded by the preacher L.

L. Laestadius, who conducted revivals in Vaasa and Oulu Provinces until his death in 1861. The beliefs promoted by Laestadius stated that ministers did not have to be ordained and that each separate congregation was self-ruling. They favored hymn singing, personal devotion, public confession of sine and rejection of ritual.

In America in 1879, they became legally known as Apostolic Lutherans. This new name was coined in Calumet, Michigan, a town the Finns called Pesapaikka, or nesting place. The Apostolic Church of Negaunee was organized in 1921 under the name of the Negaunee Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Congregation. It was registered in Lansing in 1924. The Reverend Evert Maattala was the first minister and served until his death in 1936.

The Kanniainen house on Prince Street was situated next door to the Apostolic Church, perhaps the reason they decided to live there. Ida was a devote member of the Lutheran Church from the day she arrived. Church members prayed or confessed their sins publicly, and they occasionally spoke in tongues too. It was enough to make little Elsie become frightened by the sights and sounds.

Other Finns, rejecting religion as followed by the Apostolic Lutherans, wanted to continue with the Church of Finland. The first pastor from the Church of Finland, Alfred E. Backman, came to Calumet in 1876. What such ministers found, though, was that moral decay and language difference were often insurmountable problems. Eventually, forty of the sixty-three pastors sent to America before 1925 returned to Finland. A third church that formed in America was the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Life was not easy for the Kanniainen family. They were a poor family. The many children, although contributing much love to the family, put strain on family finances. The children slept four to a bed in unheated rooms. There were only two rooms for ten kids. The older children, especially Mary and Mayme, learning responsibility early, helped take care of the younger ones. Ida made the girls' clothes from flour sacks with flowered patterns, and they were all passed down. She also made rag rugs and quilts and sold them to make ends meet. It was a big day when they bought their cow; neighbors came out on the porch to watch it being delivered. They were so poor, Elsie complained, her father never bought any of his

children Christmas presents. For the children, Christmas was mainly fruit and nuts.

The eldest son, John, when he was old enough to work, helped to financially support the family. A generous soul, John also bought presents for his younger brothers and sisters, including a doll for Elsie. Mayme and Elsie quit school because they had to help take care of the family. They both became live-in maids, which made it even easier on finances because there weren't other mouths to feed.

As homemaker, Ida worked overtime. She rose at three o'clock in the morning to light the fire in the stove. She could accomplish a lot during the hours before the children awoke. Even with ten children, she was an immaculate housekeeper. She made and enforced the rule that the living room was reserved for entertaining visitors only. As if her domestic chores did not provide her enough to do, she regularly cleaned the church next door too.

The year 1929, in addition to being the onset of the Great Depression, was a time of trial for Ida. On March 6 of that year, her brother Matt Antilla, who was six years older than her and a miner, died of a ruptured ulcer. Her husband also began to exhibit mental problems then. He was ultimately committed to Newberry State Hospital on May 2, 1934.

On Sunday, April 28, 1935, John died there, in the afternoon, of chronic myocarditis (inflammation of the muscular tissue of the heart) at age sixty-seven. The newspaper reports were, as follows:

The funeral of the late John Kanninen, who passed away in Newberry Sunday, was held from the Finnish Apostolic Church on Thursday afternoon. The reverend Walter Torola, of Calumet, officiated. (5)

J. Kanninen Dies in State Hospital. Negaunee, April 29 – John Kanninen, of 309 Prince Street, died yesterday afternoon in the Newberry State Hospital where he had been a patient for the last year. The body was received in Negaunee this afternoon but funeral arrangements have not been made. Mr. Kanninen was born September 25, 1867, in Finland and resided in this city for 40 years. (6)

The funeral of the late John Kanninen will be held Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church, Prince Street. The Reverend Walter Torola of Calumet will officiate. Interment will be made in the Negaunee Cemetery. (7)

Ida continued living on Prince Street. Her financial woes were formidable. She had one child (Babe) at home who was under eighteen years of age.

Ida's children loved her, and their financial, physical and emotional support greatly aided her. The children who were living in Detroit regularly sent money to their mother in Negaunee. Both Elsie and Maye had gone to Detroit to find work in 1928-29. They lived together at 6330 Van Buren Avenue. The next year, Elsie lived with her brother John at 6389 Van Buren Avenue.

Oscar, Ida's step-brother, might have helped her as well. At the time, he and his wife Hilija lived at 534 Elm Street and was employed by the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company.

Immersed in the love of her family, Ida's lot did gradually improve over time. She remained in her home and lived to a happy old age of eighty-three. On May 8, 1958, she died of cerebral hemorrhage. The newspaper accounts were, as follows:

Negaunee – Mrs. Ida Kanninen, 83, of 309 Prince Street, died last evening in Bell Memorial Hospital, Ishpeming, where she had been a patient for two weeks. The body is in the Perala Funeral Home. Arrangements will be announced later. (8)

Mrs. Ida Kanninen, Negaunee – Funeral services for Mrs. Ida Kanninen, 83, of 309 Prince Street will be held Monday at 2 p.m. in the Apostolic Lutheran Church, Negaunee. The widow of John Kanninen died Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the Francis A. Bell Memorial Hospital where she had been a patient for two weeks. Born in Lohtaja, Finland, in August 1874, she had been a resident of Negaunee for 61 years. She was a member of the Apostolic Lutheran Church.

She is survived by seven daughters, Mrs. Armi (Mary) Parkkonen and Mrs. Elmer (Hilma) Holm, Negaunee; Mrs. Ralph (Mae) Snider, Mrs. Lee (Elsie) Curtis, Mrs. Robert (Miriam) Slasor, Mrs. Leo (Alice) McCormick, Detroit and Mrs. Ethel Larson, Racine, Wisconsin. Three sons, John and George, Detroit and Arthur, Hartford, Connecticut. One brother, Oscar Anttila, Negaunee, 24 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Services will be conducted by the Rev. Rayond Tulkki, Ishpeming. Pallbearers will be John Hill, Werner Johnson, Oscar Honkala and three grandsons, William and Arthur Parkkonen and Dale Samuelson. Burial will be made in the Negaunee Cemetery.

Friends may call at the Perala Funeral Home this evening. The body will be taken to the church at 11 a.m. Monday morning. (9)



Ida Marie Antilla Kanninen

Ida's step-brother, Oscar, outlived her eight years, dying at 1 pm on January 17, 1967 of a coronary thrombosis.

Of the ten children to Ida and John, only two, Mary and Hilma, ended up living most of their lives in Negaunee. Mary married Armi Parkkonen, a Negaunee Police Sergeant, and lived at 417 Prince Street all of her married life. She died on December 21, 1999, at age ninety-eight and one week shy of the turn of the 21st century.

Hilma married a man by the name of Emil, moved to Detroit and had a couple children. Eventually they divorced. Her second husband was Elmer Holm, who was seven years younger. After Emil died in 1975, Hilma lived alone in the family home on Prince Street until her death on October 27, 1992.

The three boys of the family all moved from Negaunee. John, the first born, died July 11, 1991, probably in the Detroit area, where he had lived most of his life. Matthew Arthur died in Hartford, Connecticut in November of 1964. George, a single man, served in the infantry during WWII, lived in Detroit most of his life and died in Negaunee.

Mayme married Ralph (Slim) Snider in Detroit, where they lived most of their lives. She died on February 2, 1991, in Grand Rapids at Georgetown residence in Ottawa County, fifteen months before her husband died at the same place. Miriam married Robert Slasor, allegedly a very handsome man. She died in November 1986 in Wayne County. Ethel married a man by the name of Larson and moved to Racine, Wisconsin. Her gravestone at Negaunee Cemetery gives her last name as Livingston, though, and her death year as 1966. Youngest child, Alice (Babe) married Leo McCormick and died in September 1972 in Wayne County, Michigan.

During the period 1928-29, Elsie began dating Leland Curtis and married him on June 27, 1931, in Garden City, Michigan. She died January 21, 1974, at Hemlock, Michigan.

PART 5 – FOOTNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, SOURCES

FOOTNOTES

1. Genetic History: David Curtis. Haplogroup W. National Geographic Society. Genographic Pr.
2. The official record from the parish office in Ylikiiminki records the date of birth as October 1, 1867. However, all of the American records give a birth date of September 25, 1867.
3. The name Kouola was written off to the side on John Henry's death record. My Finnish genealogist mentioned a place near Ylikiiminki called Kouo.
4. The Land and People of Finland, pg. 39.

5. Negaunee Iron Herald, May 3, 1935.
6. Marquette Mining Journal, April 30, 1935, pg. 6.
7. Ibid., May 1, 1935, pg. 8.
8. Ibid., May 9, 1958, pg. 10.
9. Ibid., May 10, 1958, pg. 9.

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