

SAMUEL NIEMI

(AS sent in by Pearl Arnold) in May 1970

As far as our ancestors can be located our mother's parents were the first to come to Canada from Finland. They had a boarding house in Copper Cliff and were among the first Finnish farms to settle in Waters Township - the Lahti family.

Father - Samuel Niemi left Finland about 1892 and first went to Ohio and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Then he worked his way by railroad construction and bush camps to Copper Cliff. He worked at the old Copper Mine in Copper Cliff and quartz mine in Waters Township. He met our mother Wilhelmina Lahti in Copper Cliff and they were married in Sudbury in 1902. Their first child, Senja, was born in Copper Cliff in February 1904. They lived briefly in Waters and their second daughter Lempi was born in May 1906. Father worked in the mines at Garson, &c. and took his family for a visit to Finland. their first son Edward was born there in December, 1910. When they returned to Canada father bought the 40 acres bush land at the southeast corner of Black Lake Road and Soo Highway. He cleared the land up to the highway; built a house of lumber, a barn of logs and stables. They housed 2 horses, 2 cows, calves and chickens. And of course he built the sauna, which was a ritual every Saturday night, blizzard or rain or fair. Father also bought a farm near the old quartz mine, which was sold to Mr. Jaakkola in 1914. The first child to be born on the farm was a daughter Helmi (Pearl) in January 1912. Next was Annie, born May 1914. Times were very bad; the crops were poor, so father went back to work in the mines in Garson, and mother stayed on the farm with the children until fall. When it became too cold she decided to take the children and join father for the winter. She harnessed the horse, bundled up the children in the cutter and drove to Garson, which was about 31 miles. Lempi remembers the trip very well. She says we left at dark and arrived there in the dark, very late. We stopped at Sudbury at friends to feed the children and rest the horses. The youngest daughter Hilja was born in Garson in 1915. She was a delicate child so the family had to stay in Garson until she was well, so the family did

not move back to Waters until the spring of 1917. Our youngest brother Veikko was born in July 1919.

Winter was my favourite season, although we enjoyed swimming in the old river by Jacobson's. But we had a lot of fun sleighing and skiing in winter. We used to slide down hills with sleighs with one lying down on the lead sleigh with his feet hooked in the ropes of the next one and we loaded up and away we went like the wind? Many a farmer's team we scared off the road. Father made skis for all of us and we made use of them. We never had a toboggan but a piece of cardboard or roofing tin and a slope or hill was all we needed. Snaring rabbits was fun too, and digging caves in the huge snow drifts. We used to dare each other to run barefoot from the steambath to the house, with the snow piled above our heads on both sides of the path.

Senja and Lempi had the school cleaning job when the Waters school was by the cemetery. Then the girls all took turns at it when the school was built in its present site.

Mother passed away in January 1922 and father sold the farm to our uncle Victor Niemi, so we moved into our grandparents' old house as they had built a new one. Then Father moved on to the lot then owned by Bill Moxam, and this is when he took over the post office. When my brother left home I had to do all the paper work as father could not write English. He only had the Post Office for three or four years. When the older children left home, father moved to Black Lake where he lived until my husband Morley and I moved into the Township, and he lived with us until his death in November, 1942.

Senja: married Matti Pakkala in Copper Cliff in 1923 and lived there most of her life. She passed away in February, 1967, and her husband in October, 1969. They left 13 children, 9 girls and 4 boys. The youngest son has been with the Copper Cliff Post Office for many years.

Lempi: married John North in December 1941 and is living in Willowdale, Ontario. They have 1 son and 1 daughter.

Helmi: (Pearl) married Morley Arnold in February 1930, and has 13 children - 9 girls and 4 boys and 26 grandchildren as of 1970.