

TRIP TO FINLAND ARTICLE WRITTEN IN 1940

This was read to the Perth (North Dakota) PTA in 1940, by Marian (Herrala) Juntunen. The article was written by Otto Herrala after coming back from his Finland trip.

By OTTO HERRALA

NOTE” This was read by Marian Herrala at the Perth P.T.A program on Jan. 26 for Finnish Relief.

In the summer of 1938, I made a trip to Finland, after a long absence from my childhood home and country. I'm going to say a few words concerning Finland.

Finland is a small country, population only about four million people. The chief industries of Finland are: dairying, fishing, farming, lumbering and some nickel and copper mining. There are few factories, but still many things are made at home.

During the last twenty years, when Finland has been able to enjoy its independence, Finland has progressed remarkably, especially in the education of her people. In my home community, many schools had been built during that time, also farming was broadened.

The people seemed to be very contented and happy in their work and life. These people of little Finland didn't wish to attack or invade Russia or any nation, nor to interfere in their well being. All they wished for was to retain their independence. Sometimes many wondered how long their great neighbor would leave them in peace. There were bitter memories of the war 20 years ago. A small percentage of the people believed in Communism even after Finland gained its independence.

This dreaded attack by Russia of which all nations know was made Nov. 30 (1939). But Finland is a small country, and to stand a force so much greater without outside help is impossible. We are happy to know that so many nations have already extended their sympathy and aid during Finland's hour of need.

So many have been amazed at the ability and success of the Finnish army to repulse and hold back the enemy. It is to be noted that Finland has been training its men right along. Since its independence men have been drafted for three years service in the army. Boys could voluntarily join at the age of 18. The government has established army training camps at quite a few places. Army service seemed to be rather interesting to young boys as there were different sports connected with it. At some places certain days were set for training and boys could go from home to camp on such days.

Mrs. Adolph Halone related an instance where a boy was supposed to go to the camp for training. The camp was across the river. Usually one member on the family went along to bring the boat to the home shore. It was raining so the parents objected. The boy insisted on going so he was taken across and the boat returned to the home shore.

A short time later the boy was back home. The parents were puzzled to know how he came. He said, "I undressed and swam across to the boat and rowed back after my clothes." The parents were pleased and said, "Good boy." So few came on account of the rain, so they didn't have their practice. This instance shows how much it meant to the boy to be there.

Skiing is one of the chief sports in Finland during the winter. This has played an important part in fighting this winter.

People of Finland are fighting for their independence, liberty of people, homes and religion. All these the enemy wishes to destroy and in place bring communism which does not have God's blessing.

It's God's will in this war. He may bring victory through a small nation even as he did through Gideon and of Midian of which we read in the Bible. It is in God's name people of Finland have started into war fighting for their religion, homes, families and independence.