

Finland to Fitchburg to Andover

by Jonathan W. Stevens

Beginning in the fall of 1909, Andover saw an influx of families of Finnish immigrants, who purchased abandoned (or soon to be abandoned) farms. By 1920s, more than 30 Finnish families had settled in the area. Even though these families were located throughout the town, the predominate settlement was on East Hill, giving rise to the moniker "Finn Hill." Many of these families first settled in the United States in Massachusetts, particularly in Fitchburg and the vicinity, though others came to Andover via Colorado, New York, South Dakota and Wyoming. Although many of these families would eventually leave Andover, a few still have descendants in town at the present time, including the Kalinen family.

Among the earliest Finnish families to settle in Andover was that of John and Emma (Moisio) Kalinen. John was born as "Johannes Kalinen" on May 28, 1877, in the village of Heikkilä in Alahärmä, Finland as the son of Kustaa and Sanna (Jahaauja) Kalinen. He immigrated to the United States, just prior to the 1900 U.S. Census, when he was a boarder in the household of his cousin Antti Kallio, residing on Mechanic Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, which had a large Finnish settlement at the time. John married Emma Johanna Moisio on January 25, 1902, in Fitchburg, by Andrew Groop, Pastor of the Finnish Congregational Church. Emma, the daughter of Kalle and Eva (Sironen) Moisio, was born in Karstula, Finland on July 25, 1881, and immigrated to the United States around the same time as John. At the time of their marriage John's occupation was a "buffer" and Emma was a dressmaker.

According to the Fitchburg city directories, in 1903 John Kalinen was a laborer, who boards at 200 Leighton St. In 1904, he was employed by the Putnam Machine Co., and resided at 31 Mechanic St., and in 1907, he was employed by the Union Machine Co., resided at 107 High St. While the family lived in Fitchburg there were two children were born: Walter Adiel Kalinen on November 26, 1902, who married Saima Elizabeth Schobert, and Aina Johanna Kalinen on September 19, 1905, who married Walter Aarne Kangas. The family then moved a few miles southeast to Clinton, Massachusetts, where daughter was born Saima Ellen Kalinen on November 16, 1907, who married Arthur Peter Johnson. The Kalinen family then moved back to Finland, where their daughter Martha Kalinen was born on November 25, 1908, who married first Phillip Occhino, second Albert A. Niemi and married third Basil Gallant. The family's stay in Finland was relatively short, they returned to United States on the American Lines steamship the S.S. New York, departing from Southampton, England on September 4, 1909 and arriving in New York City on September 12, 1909. John's brother Kustaa Kalinen, who resided at 200 Mechanic St. in Fitchburg, was the relative that sponsored them. The Kalinen family was living in Fitchburg at the time of the 1910 U.S. Census, which was enumerated on April 25, 1910, and John was listed as carpenter, who had been out of work for 6 weeks in 1909. Also in the household, in addition to three boarders, was John's younger brother Karl Kalinen.

On May 3, 1910, the Kalinen family moved to Andover, and it was noted in the Ludlow column in both *the Rutland Herald* and *the Vermont Tribune*, a few days later that "eight families of Finns have moved to farms on the Andover line. Among them are A. Anderson, John Kalinen and John Lempia." But how did all of this come about? The Finnish settlement in Andover and Ludlow dates back to the previous year. In 1909, Lyman R. Bates, a Ludlow native who had moved to Leominster, Massachusetts, owned the Joseph U. Reed farm on what is now Chauncey Road, the property was advertised in Massachusetts and attracted the interest of the Hamalainen family who were living in Fitchburg. The transaction is recounted in a news item in the *Fitchburg Sentinel* on August 21, 1909, that stated "A.L. Walker, real estate salesman in the Bank building, has sold for Lyman R. Bates a farm of 114 acres in Andover, Vt., to Mary Hamalainen of Fitchburg, and the family will move there this autumn." The deed between Lyman R. Bates and Pearl L. (Cummings) Bates of Leominster to Mary Hamalainen of Fitchburg was dated September 3, 1909. Mary was Maria (Waijalainen) Hamalainen the wife of Matti Hamalainen. Their family was living in Andover at the time of the 1910 census, the only Finnish family in Andover at that point. An article by Elba A. Henry, published in the *Rutland Daily Herald* on entitled "Finns Succeed on Farms That Have Been Abandoned by the Native Vermonters" stated "the abandoned farm in Vermont has long been a serious problem to those interested in the agricultural problems of the state. The high cost of farm labor coupled with the difficulty met in obtaining such help, the high cost of marketing his farm products and the distance from the main highways, and

railway lines, have each contributed toward forcing the American farmer from the hill farms. A solution to this problem seems to have offered, at least in the part of the state around Ludlow, Mount Holly and Andover, by the increasing number of Finns who are buying and reclaiming these abandoned farms. About 15 years ago the first of these people came to this part of the state largely through the efforts of George M. Moore of Ludlow, then a prominent real estate dealer. Mr. Moore was quick to see the possibilities of these people and believed that in them lay the solution of the abandoned farm problem." The next sale was a result of Mr. Moore's vision. On October 25, 1909, Fred F. and Ella H. (Root) Dow of Mount Holly sold the 210 acre "Samuel Nutting Farm" in Andover to Antti "Andrew" Anderson of Fitchburg. The witnesses on the deed were Matti Hamalainen and George M. Moore, plus the deed was also acknowledged before Moore. In 1910, Anderson lived in the same apartment house in Fitchburg on Mechanic St. as the Kalinen family. On July 29, 1911, Anderson now described as of Andover sold the "Samuel Nutting Farm" to Henry Waltanen and John Kalinen, both described as of Andover, with an undivided half interest each in the property.

The "Samuel Nutting Farm" was described as being a small part of Lot 18 in the 3rd Range and the whole of Lots No. 18 and 19 in the 4th Range. The property had its name due to the family that owned the property in the latter part of the 19th Century. However, the history the property dated back much earlier. Lot 19 in the 4th Range was the former Phineas Adams/Surry Burpee Farm and Lot 18 in the 4th Range was the former Benjamin Taylor Farm purchased by William Clark in the mid-1830s. Clark sold both of the parcels to John Stuart, and was subsequently sold to Edwin Taft, and then Charles Esty, and then to Nathaniel Spaulding of Springfield. Julia A. (Spaulding) Nutting, the wife of Samuel H. Nutting purchased the property from her father's estate.

After moving to the Nutting farm in Andover, John and Emma had several more children: Paavo Johannes "Pete" Kalinen born on August 17, 1912, who married Thelma Ardelle Sandberg; Arvid Robert Kalinen in born Andover, on June 7, 1914, who married Helvi Onerva Karhunen; Vietti Elias Kalinen, born May 10, 1916, who married Faye Rosalin Grover; Eva Susanna Kalinen born April 13, 1918, who married John J. Gauzer and Reino Kustaa Kalinen, born on March 21, 1920, who married Mary Kathleen Murphy.

Who was Henry Waltanen who purchased the "Samuel Nutting farm," along with John in 1911? Henry Waltanen, was born in Kajaani, Finland, on April 9, 1881 and sailed on the *Ultonia* from Liverpool, England on December 9, 1902 arriving in Boston, Massachusetts on December 22, 1902. He married Mary Lammi who had immigrated to the United States from Finland in 1903. By 1910, they were living on Concord St. in Manchester, N.H., where their eldest daughter Elma Maria Waltanen was born on December 11, 1910. By 1911, Waltanen's had moved to Andover and Henry purchased the Nutting farm along with John Kalinen. While residing on the Nutting farm a daughter Clara Waltanen was born on January 18, 1913. She only lived a day and was buried in Heald Cemetery. Waltanen then moved to Ludlow, where son Toivi Waltanen was born on October 19, 1914. On February 27, 1915, Henry Waltanen sold his undivided half interest in the "Samuel Nutting Farm" to John Kalinen, and at this point John and Emma Kalinen mortgaged the property back to Waltanen. On March 3, 1915, John Wilmouth of Ludlow sold Waltanen 96 acres located in Lot 17 in the 3rd Range. Waltanen's returned to Andover where daughter Esther Emilia Waltanen born in Andover on July 1, 1917. On April 15, 1919, Henry and Mary Waltanen sold their property to Kalle Kemppainen, and moved to Westminister, Massachusetts. In more recent memory, this was known as the William Philleo place at the end of Cobb Rd.

Even though John had moved his family to Andover, he returned to Fitchburg to work, and his comings and goings can be traced in the local column in the *Vermont Tribune*. On December 28, 1911, it mentioned "Messers Kalinen, Anterson [sic], Hamlainen and others were home with their families over Christmas." On January 23, 1913, the tribune noted that "Mr. Kalinen has gone to Fitchburg, Mass., to work." On July 22, 1915, On December 30, 1915, it was noted that "John Kalinen was home from Fitchburg, Mass., over Christmas." However, by the time of the World War I draft card in 1918, he stated the stated that he was a farmer residing in Andover.

The *Vermont Tribune* noted on February 17, 1921 "An entertainment and dance was held at the home of John Kalinen Saturday night for the benefit of the orphan children in Finland. The amount cleared was \$117." On April 21, 1921, that "Alex Lepisto and John Kalinen have been working in Ludlow" and May 5, 1921 "John Kalinen has bought a Ford car" and that "E. Moisio of Fitchburg has been visiting at John Kalinen's." This was Emma's younger brother Elias Moisio, who has immigrated to the United States in 1902. The column also mentioned that

“Charles Lauren has bought E. Moisio’s farm in Simonsville.” On October 3, 1919, Elias Moisio of Fitchburg, Mass., purchased the former Burton-Stannard farm consisting of 130 acres from Samuel J. and Augusta E. Pedden. On April 29, 1921, Elias and his wife Ida Maria (Wakkuri) Moisio of Fitchburg, sold the farm to Kalle “Charles” Lauren of Andover, who eventually lost the property to bank foreclosure.

On April 26, 1912, Henry O. Drury of Weston quit-claimed a parcel of 10 acres, that had been previously sold out of the Nutting farm to John Kalinen, described as being bounded on the north by land of Alex Lepisto, on the east by land of Andrew Jyrinki, on the south by land of John Kalinen and on the west by the road leading from the Puffer school house to Boynton Hollow.” Drury had acquired this parcel on July 8, 1910, from John C. Thompson of Andover.

The Puffer District schoolhouse, located at the intersection of Lovejoy Brook Road and East Hill Road, was destroyed by fire on the night of January 17, 1912. It was decided that a new school would be built and on May 22, 1912, John Kalinen and Henry Waltanen sold a parcel 1 ½ acres off the north line of Lot 19 in the 4th Range to the town of Andover for \$20 “to be used as a school ground.” Percy H. Blake, Superintendent of Schools, noted in the report in the Annual Report of the School Directors of the Town of Andover for the year ending June 30, 1912 that “the burning of the Puffer schoolhouse made changes necessary in the accommodation of pupils in that part of the town. The new building on the hill between the old site and the Boynton Hollow School will accommodate all the pupils in that end of Andover, and will make it possible to use only one teacher. Ultimately, I feel this will be a fortunate circumstance, although the expense is regretted.” The foundation work and building of the school, by Alexander Lepisto, who lived on what was later known as the Matti Hill farm, were done in summer of 1912. The Lepisto family would later move to Ludlow and later to Troy, N.H. The Boynton Hill School operated until 1942 and the schoolhouse sold was sold off by Lorraine Korpi, Dorothy Trombley and Florence Plumb school directors to Helen B. Mactague of New York, N.Y., on July 27, 1951.

On July 27, 1922, Ethel E. Parsons of Northampton, Mass., sold to John and Emma “the Seth Lewis Place” consisting of 300 acres. Parsons had sold the property to Charles H. and Betsey A. Payson on March 5, 1914 and they sold the property back to Parsons on September 11, 1920. The property consisted of the former David Batchelder farm and the former Samuel Clark-Franklin Austin farm later known as the Hiram S. Allbee farm located directly south. The property consisted all of Lots 16 and 17 in the 4th Range, plus parcels in Lot 15 in the 4th Range, Lot 17 in the 5th Range, and Lots 15, 16, 17 and 18 in the 3rd Range.

In 1916, Andover’s Finnish community formed the Finnish Farmers Co-op, Inc., to purchase farm machinery needed in their work. Shares were sold to finance the purchase of a tractor, thresher, corn blower, and disc and smoothing harrows. As many of the members’ home buildings needed repair, one of the first items purchased was a gasoline engine and a shingle making machine. The co-op was governed by a board of officers and the machinery was rented by the hour. According to the recollections of Edwin Fossi the members of the club were: “John A. Rivers, Kusti Lehtinen, Edward Laitinen, Matti Hill, John Kalinen, Kalle Kangas, Kalle Kemppainen, Thomas Fossi, David Kangas, Albert Helberg, Selim Ruohomaa and others.” On December 8, 1920, Martin B. Johnson of Wardsboro sold the Rebecca Pease house lot on East Hill measuring 10 rods by 4 rods, a parcel that had been cut out of the Peter Adams farm in 1837, to the Finnish Farmers Co-op, Inc. On this lot the club built their machine shed exchange. When the shed was built, each member donated the lumber and labor. *The Vermont Tribune* noted on January 6, 1921 that “The Finnish Farmers’ Co-operative Co. of Andover, with a capital stock of \$5,000 has filed papers with the secretary of state to conduct a creamery business. The papers were signed by Alexander Lepisto, David Kangas and S. Ruohomaa and 10 others.” Finding a need for a social center, on February 11, 1922, John A. Rivers, who owned what was later was known as the Waino Suojanen farm, sold off one acre parcel, at the corner of East Hill, then referred to as Boynton Hill Road and Chauncey Road, then referred to as Suojanen Road, described as 12 rods and 17 links square. On this parcel the dance hall was built, a large building, clapboarded and shingled containing room for dancing, a stage for the presentation of plays and entertainment, a kitchen and dining room and a ticket office and cloak room, erected at an estimated cost of more than \$3,000. Christmas and patriotic programs were also held at the hall, and on Christmas day in 1928 the hall was destroyed by fire. An article in the *Brattleboro Reformer* entitled “Farmers’ Club Hall Burns. Finns of Andover Held Christmas Party There Night Before,” stated that a “fire of unknown origin destroyed the Finnish Farmers’ club hall here early yesterday. The

blaze was discovered about 2:30 o'clock and all efforts of townspeople to save the buildings were unavailing," it also mentioned that the structure was insured for \$1,500 and officials of the organization say that the loss may run over \$2,000." By the mid-1930s the club had run its course and on October 29, 1936, in two deeds signed by Matti Hill, treasurer and Kalle "Charles" Lauren, secretary, the club sold the machine shed exchange building to Theodore Korpi (Reino Kalinen later built a camp from the original materials of that building) and the Finnish Hall lot to Jalo A. Rivers, Mauri Rivers and Paavo J. Kalinen, thus marking the end of an era in the Finnish community.

On March 9, 1921, John Kalinen declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States in U.S. District Court held in Ludlow. His declaration of intention stated that he was a farmer, with a medium complexion, height of 5 feet 2 inches, weight of 130 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes. It also detailed his age and place of birth and same for Emma and gave the date of the second immigration in 1909. The witness to the affidavit were David Kangas of Andover and John A. Rivers of Ludlow, and on August 29, 1924, John Kalinen became a US citizen.

In 1940, the Kalinen household consisted of John and Emma, their sons Paavo, Veitti and Reino plus their granddaughter Joan Occhino. Paavo J. Kalinen married Thelma Ardelle Sandberg of Ludlow, on February 15, 1941, and they lived in Ludlow for a short time after their marriage. On May 4, 1945, John and Emma Kalinen sold one acre of land out of the Samuel Nutting Farm, located north of East Hill Road to Paavo and Thelma, who built a new house on this property, described as commencing at an iron stake driven in the ground near a large maple tree next to the main road leading from Andover to Ludlow, Vermont, being the northwest corner of the within conveyed premises; and located between the John Kalinen farm and the Boynton Hill Schoolhouse; thence in a straight line in an Easterly direction a distance of ten rods to an iron stake driven in the ground; thence Southerly in a straight line a distance of sixteen rods to an iron stake driven in the ground; thence westerly in a straight line distance of ten rods to an iron stake driven in the ground, thence northerly in a straight line a distance of sixteens rods to the place of beginning. The deed also provided spring rights, and reserved the right to enter into the grantor's other land from the main road across the premise of the grantees for general farming purposes." Paavo and Thelma eventually moved to Ludlow residing at 22 High Street. In 1949, John and Emma Kalinen moved to Church St. in Chester, and on May 5, 1950, John and Emma sold the Nutting Farm and the Seth Lewis Place to Paavo and Thelma, and on the same date, Paavo and Thelma sold the new house parcel to Lauri Antero and Ida Sophia (Ryyth) Karhunen. Lauri Antero Karhunen, a native of Keitele, Finland, was working at a textile mill in Maynard, Massachusetts, when he and Ida purchased the 320-acre Samuel Farrar Farm (formerly the Peter Adams farm) on East Hill, from the Federal Land Bank of Springfield, Mass on June 13, 1932. Karhunens ran the farm in Andover until retiring in 1950, when their daughter Helvi and her husband Arvid Kalinen returned from Springfield and took over the farm. Also at the same date, John and Emma Kalinen sold the Karhunens an additional 31 acres surrounding the new house parcel, described as commencing at the southwest corner of the Matti Hill premises in Andover and running easterly in a straight line approximately 1478 feet to the northwest corner of the Waino Suojanen premises, designated by a large maple tree; thence southerly in a straight line approximately 1234 feet to the southwest corner of said Waino Suojanen premises; thence westerly in a straight line approximately 500 feet to the main road leading from Andover to Ludlow; thence along said road in northerly direction a distance of 1528 feet to the southwest corner of school premises owned by distance of 150 feet; thence northerly in approximately a straight line 400 feet; thence westerly in approximately a straight line a distance of 161 feet to the place of beginning, the latter being schoolhouse more or less.

On Saturday January 26, 1952, John and Emma Kalinen celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a large party. The event, held at the Chester Town Hall, was attended by about 300 relatives and friends. John died at Mary Hitchcock Hospital in Hanover, N.H., on August 8, 1960 and was buried in Pleasant View Cemetery in Chester. Emma, died at Springfield Hospital on February 1, 1978, and buried beside John.

The Finnish families who settled on the abandoned farms in Andover brought with them old-world sensibilities and traditions and work ethic, revitalizing the town in the process. Even though the Finnish population has greatly decreased from its heyday, several families still remain, and many Finnish saunas still dot the local landscape. A reminder of the once thriving group of industrious immigrants who contributed in many ways to Andover's history.