

A Letter from America

(This letter was read in the Ylönen Family Reunion 2011 in Pieksämäki, Finland)

Ingrid Maki passed on this letter from Toivo Puro to the Ylönen Family Society members. The chairman read the Finnish translation in the Family Meeting in Pieksämäki. Toivo Puro is descendant of Elviira Ylönen, born 1880 in Pieksämäki Finland. She had a passport dated 1st Aug. 1908 for travelling to America and her name is in the passenger records of the ship Polaris sailing on 5th Aug. 1908 to England and from there to Canada.

“To Ylönen Family:

Hello from a distant relative of the Ylonen Society. My first acquaintance with you happened in 1912 at a log cabin in Wisconsin when I first met my dear unforgettable mother, Elvira Ylonen. She came to America before the 20th century seeking the promised streets of gold. It must have been a surprise to begin scrubbing floors at Suomi College in Hancock, Michigan as her first job. There was, however, one bright side – Finnish language was spoken at the school and there were many Finns living in that area. My father, Jacob Puronen, played the accordion and met that pretty girl at one of the dances, they married and the Puro family began when I was born.

It is hard to believe that all happened almost 100 years ago and here I am, very pleased to remember, mom, at your party. My parents were proud when I won a scholarship to college in 1929 to study mathematics, but it was not until 10 years later that I found meaningful work in the engineering profession, which I enjoyed very much. Tool and machine design was my prime work, but I liked building houses and fixing the old ones. Retired since 1977, my wife and I have travelled some and moved several times to meet new people.

I have yearned for a visit to Finland, but it is getting a bit late to do that. My wife, Mae, and I invite any Ylonen to stop at our house when you travel this way.

Toivo E. Puro
Richmond, Kentucky”

Toivo Puro passed away some time after his letter was sent to the Ylönen Family Society.