

Transcript

Olga Miikonen Gallatly, West Paris, tells the story of the first Finn in Oxford County

The first Finn to arrive in the West Paris-South Paris area of Maine was Jakko Miikonen in 1890. He had been living in Quebec, Canada for two years, but having become dissatisfied with living conditions there, he decided to hop a freight train for the United States.

At the South Paris station, he was kicked off because he had no money. He then started walking on High Street towards West Paris and seeing an ax on a pile of wood, started to chop. However, he was told people didn't work on Sundays so Jakko moved on nearer West Paris where he did find work.

He liked this area so much that he started writing to his relatives in Finland encouraging them to come, too. Jakko's son, John McKean was the first Finnish child born in Oxford County. He served as a State Representative as did his grandson Jacob Imminem. Both were graduates of Bates College.

The name Miikonen was changed to McKean because of the difficulty the Yankees had in pronouncing Miikonen.