

Biography

- 1871 John J. Makinen born in Kuntka, Finland.
- 1891 He marries Maria Mathilda Nijstkanen
- 1893 Along with his wife Maria Mathilda, he moves to Kalamazoo, Michigan as part of a major Finnish migration to that area.
- 1903 He moved near Kaleva Manistee County, attracted like many other Finns by the inexpensive land. He bought a farm and also worked as a clerk in a general store owned by the Siirtolainen newspaper company, which worked actively to attract Finnish settlers to central Manistee County. Later, he opened his own store, managing it while operating his farm.
- 1909 Makinen built his first bottle clad structure: a house.
- 1922 He formed a partnership with Alex Ketonen to create Northwestern Bottling Company, which produced soft drinks.
- 1932 By this year he discovered he had a surplus of bottles. He then built a stockhouse from the bottles, spelling the company's name in contrasting colors. The bottles, he discovered, provided an ideal insulating barrier due to their trapped air space.
- 1939 Following his retirement, Makinen left the farm and built a house in Kaleva using the surplus bottles ^(over 60,000) from the bottling plant. The bottles were laid with their bottoms pointing outward, and the necks between the studs. The interior was covered with plaster board and plaster.
- 1942 After the house was finished but before he had a

1982 The museum was dedicated as a State Historical site

chance to move in, Matinen died. Because of his ethnic background, the house became a symbol of Finnish determination and fortitude. After Mrs. Matinen died, the house continued to attract tourists, although it remained empty for several years.

1980 The house was purchased by the Kaleva Historical Society to house its museum. Following restoration, the house became the focus of Finnish ethnic celebration in Manistee County. It is the only known battle house in Michigan.

1987 The house was nominated to the National Register.

1987 " " " listed on the National Register.

Bibliography

McDonnell, Marsha and Ken Dewhurst

1978. Rainbows in the Sky: The Folk Art of Michigan in the Twentieth Century East Lansing: MSU Board of Trustees.

Rosen, Seymour

1999 In Celebration of ourselves. Los Angeles: California Living Books.

Schnyt, Michael

1980. Fantastic Architecture: Personal and Eccentric Visions New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Wangler, Jan

1977 All Their Own: People and the Places They Build. New York: Halsted Press.

Manistee News Advocate 9/11/82, 7/23/85, 7/3/86, 1/23/42

Manistee County Sun Times 6/27/86

Detroit Free Press 9/14/41, 9/11/77.

Manistee County Pioner Press 1/23/42

KALEVA
BOTTLE
HOUSE

Sources

The Kaleva Historical Society, Inc. (Velma Bixton, Secretary,
Doris Gustafson, Ruth Cooper)
14551 Wuoksi Avenue
Kaleva, Michigan 49645 (616) 362-3258

Manistee County Courthouse
415 Third
Manistee, Michigan