

# On the footsteps of the Delaware Finns and John Morton: An interpretation of the Finnish-American history by Salomon Ilmonen



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*"... it was originally my plan to make a brave effort to register the name and short personal information of each Finn who had moved to America and stayed here, and to mark them in the history books of our immigrant people." (Ilmonen 1923, p. 6)*

Finnish history in America is known for many distinctive features, such as the issues of rival groups, non-socialist and church Finn competition, the extensive building of saunas, the founding of cooperatives, the clearing of woods in isolated areas, and many others. One of the most distinctive is their interest in their own history. Many individual immigrants have written memoirs, articles, and other literary expression to describe their life and environment.

Some professional historians, such as John H. Wuorinen, emerged during the first decades of the twentieth century. Later,

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several historians emerged from the American-born generations, in part due to the expansion of higher education and urbanization of the Finns in America. These include post-World War Two historians John I. Kolehmainen, William R. Høglund, Michael Karni, and Douglas J. Ollila Jr. in the United States, as well as the recent immigrant Varpu Lindström in Canada. A number of scholars from other disciplines, such as geographers, theologians, linguists, sociologists and anthropologists have also discussed historical phenomena. However, few people may realise that a large number of non-scholarly Finns in America have actively participated in preserving their historical heritage and information. This activity can be traced to the turn of the last century. With the rise of ethnic history in the 1960s, even amateurs have become increasingly drawn to their history, as well as to a growing interest in Finnish culture and its preservation in North America. Two obvious institutions have played an important role in this respect. The Suomi College (Hancock, MI) and the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN) have pro-

moted Finnish-American history interest while preserving and gathering their own collections.

Even though the most active Finnish-American historians of the twentieth century have been "professionals" there have been important exceptions. The best-known exception is the topic of this paper, Salomon Ilmonen. How did he become a historian, and what kind of historian he was?

## The making of a historian

Salomon Ilmonen was born in Southern Ostrobothnia, Ilmajoki in 1871, and died in Fort Bragg, California in 1940 at the age of 69. He came from a strongly religious, traditional farming area, which may explain his religious interest and decision to become a priest after emigrating to the United States. In 1891, at the age of twenty, he moved to the United States, joining a growing stream of migrants from that particular part of Finland's countryside. At the age of 51, he married Emma Dickinson in 1922, and they had one daughter, Adelaine. Ilmonen tells that he had a brother in Finland, T. T. Koskela, a vicar in Kihniö parish, who helped him finish his books.<sup>1</sup>

Salomon Ilmonen, born in Ilmajoki, Finland in 1871. He died in Fort Bragg, California in 1940. — *Institute of Migration*.



interest in historical matters very early. For example, we learn that he published an article in 1900 about the harmful effects of alcohol on ancient world history, as well as shorter articles on the development of Finnish-American associations, parishes, and temperance societies.<sup>4</sup> His actual job as a historian started in 1911, when he was assigned the task of writing the history of the Finnish-American temperance movement. That book was issued the next year, 1912, to commemorate the 25-year anniversary of the central Finnish-American temperance organization called *Suomalainen Kansallis-Raittius-Veljeysseura* (The Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood).<sup>5</sup>

### **Ilmonen's work as a historian**

Having a great interest in the early Finnish settlements, Ilmonen gathered materials from church records, interviewed local populations, and collected years of death announcements from Finnish language newspapers, etc. He also received help from many local people interested in history, as seen in the prefaces of his major publications mentioned below.

A few comments on Ilmonen's personality may be found in the post-scripts of these publications. These very general remarks mostly refer to the warm-hearted priest, and his friendly relationship with others.<sup>6</sup> This may be true, although no specific material is available to verify that characterization. On the other hand, something about Ilmonen's way of life

Ilmonen recalls that in America he worked as a painter and common laborer before being employed as a newspaper agent for the paper *Siirtolainen* (The Immigrant) which was published in Hancock, Northern Michigan, one of the strongest centers of Finnish immigrants in the United States. This job as a newspaper agent proved useful during his later experiences, since he travelled throughout various "Finnish" locations and made acquaintances with the Finns all over the North American continent selling orders for the *Siirtolainen* and writing travel descriptions.<sup>2</sup>

Partly because of his Old Country background, Ilmonen had warm feelings toward religious ac-

tivities, and he enrolled in the *Suomi Opisto* (Suomi College) in Hancock, Michigan in the fall of 1897, graduating in 1904. He later completed the theological seminary of Suomi College in 1906.<sup>3</sup>

Deciding to work as a Lutheran priest of the Suomi Synod, the Finnish major Lutheran church in North America, Ilmonen served in various locations around the continent: in the states of New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and California, where he moved in 1927. He stayed in California for the rest of his life. He also served two years as the treasurer of the Suomi Synod.

From the less significant publications of his student years, it appears that Ilmonen had a strong

can be found in his books. He appears to be a very careful collector of materials, one who modestly expresses his aims as a historian. He collected materials for years and years in various locations around the continent, and received help from innumerable Finnish immigrants and their families.

His books include much information that would be difficult to verify from historical sources. The question then is, how did he study history, and what were his books and articles like? In short, is he and his information reliable? He states honestly that in many cases the personal information he has collected may be insufficient for historical analysis.<sup>7</sup>

He compiled books on Finnish-Americans, starting from the Delaware colony of the 1630s to nearly his own times in the inter-war years. His major works include nine book-length publications, which are described below in chronological order. Ilmonen's *Amerikan Suomalaisen Raittiusliikkeen historia* (The History of the Finnish-American Temperance Movement) was a major part of the publication called *Juhlajulkaisu Suomalaisen Kansallisen Raittius-Veljeysseuran 25-vuotisen toiminnan muistoksi* (or The Jubilee Publication for the 25 Years of the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood) in 1912. This extensive and thorough history of the growing temperance movement totalled 311 pages. It chronicled the birth and expansion of the Finnish American temperance activities, especially the SKRV brotherhood around the turn of the century. At

that time the membership of temperance movement among the Finns in America had increased to several thousands. The movement had split into several rival groups, although the SKRV brotherhood was the largest and the most important of them. The second book by Ilmonen was called *Amerikan ensimmäiset suomalaiset eli Delawaren siirtokunnan historia* (The First Finns in America or the History of the Delaware Colony). Published in Hancock, Michigan in 1916, with a total of pages, it was a survey of the colonial history of the 1600s and the Finnish and Swedish settlements in the Delaware River Valley.

Thereafter, he published three volumes in a chronologically compiled series called the History of the Finns in America. The first part, *Amerikan suomalaisten historiaa I* came out in Hancock, Michigan in 1919. This 187 page book repeats certain facts of Delaware history, but mainly discusses the history of the Finnish migration to America in the middle of the 1800s, including the gold rush to California and the Finnish sailors who deserted ships and stayed in North America. The second part, *Amerikan suomalaisten historia II ja elämäkertoja* (The History of the Finns in America and Biographies) was published in Jyväskylä, Finland, in 1923. The 334-page book primarily concentrated on the Finnish migration history between the years 1864–1880. It listed migration history personalities and included stories of certain historical events like epidemics and geographical descriptions of the settled areas. Ilmonen tells that he began collect-

ing biographical materials as early as in 1895–1897, while selling newspaper orders in the United States, Canada, and Alaska. By now he had preserved and chronicled biographical materials for more than twenty years.<sup>8</sup>

The third part of the series, *Amerikan suomalaisten historia III. Yhdysvalloissa ja Canadassa olevat suomalaiset asutukset* (The History of the Finns in America Part Three: The Finnish Settlements in the United States and Canada) was printed again in Hancock, Michigan in 1926, including 336 + 16 pages. This book dealt with the post-1880 migration from Finland to America and traced the formation of Finnish settlements all over North America, as well as discussed the histories of many local Finnish immigrants. In many cases the information Ilmonen delivers is very short: "Mahtowa (Minnesota). Several Finnish farmers: Matti Rautio. Matti Hill".<sup>9</sup>

Another kind of history of the Finns in America came out after a few years. Titled *Amerikan suomalaisten sivistyshistoria. Osat I–II* (The Cultural History of the Finns in America, Parts One and Two), the volumes were issued in Hancock, Michigan in 1930 and 1931, with 256 and 239 pages, respectively. These books include a mixed treatment of the Finnish American "cultural history". Ilmonen looks especially at various organizational developments like the churches, temperance, and the Kaleva Knights and Ladies. A few chapters even deal with the strong Finnish-American labor movement. Those sections are written from a negative stand-

point, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Soon thereafter a smaller book came out: *John Morton. Amerikan itsenäisyysjulistuksen allekirjoittaja* (John Morton: The Signer of the American Declaration of Independence), printed in Hancock, Michigan in 1936 (76 pp.). The date of publication occurred in the same year as the United States celebrated 250 years of independence, hardly a coincidence, as referred to later on in this paper. In the book, Ilmonen discussed the life and ancestry of John Morton, the probable second generation American born Finn from the Delaware colonial period. As a member of the Pennsylvania delegation, Morton signed the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776. An English version of the book was published in 1937, at the time of the tercentenary celebrations of the Delaware colony. It was celebrated extensively as a joint effort of the rival Finnish immigrant groups and organizations. Official delegations from Finland, Sweden, and the United States government participated in the celebrations.<sup>10</sup>

Ilmonen's final book was again about the colonial past, *Delawaren suomalaiset* or The Delaware Finns, a total of 233 pages, printed in Hämeenlinna, Finland in 1938. In this volume Ilmonen presents a comprehensive review of the colonial American history connected with Finnish migration history. In his preface he refers to several authoritative historians, church and other records, but unfortunately, he does not give detailed references in the text. Compared with his former books, not

much new is found in this volume. It serves more as a summary of his colonial history interest. The book was reprinted in Hämeenlinna in Finland in 1988 – quite obviously as a celebration of the 350 years anniversary of the Delaware Colony in 1988 as well as a manifestation of interest in the history of the Finns in America.

In addition to the books mentioned, Ilmonen published many shorter pieces on e.g. the temperance of women and the religious life of Abraham Lincoln. The total number of articles, reports and other writings published by Ilmonen in various Finnish-American calendars, periodicals, and newspapers probably is several dozens, although John I. Kolehmainen lists in his Finnish-American bibliography only eleven articles and six books by Ilmonen, and a more recent bibliography by Olavi Koivukangas and Simo Toivonen a few articles more.<sup>11</sup>

### **”The honest and fair Finns”**

As can be concluded from the titles and short descriptions above, the various volumes by Ilmonen discuss, by and large, the same topics. The history of the Delaware colony and John Morton is especially repeated in several sections of various books in slightly varying versions. The descriptions of the localities, personalities, and geographical features are also repeated to a certain extent.

The most striking fact for the reader is the body of information presented on thousands and thousands of persons in various loca-

tions in North America. While Ilmonen's works concentrate on personal histories, he presents some more general topics as well, such as discussions on Finnish-American organizational, educational, and even political history. His books include three somewhat mixed elements or topics. Firstly, are general histories of Finnish Americans and their societies; secondly, are lists and short notes on various Finnish personalities in various locations at various times; and thirdly, are publications on the 17th century Delaware colony and its descendant John Morton.

When analysed as a whole, the number one "hero" in his works is John Morton. Ilmonen evidently collected information on Morton from various sources, and even looked in original colonial church records, as well as other records from the New Jersey and New York archives. It is, however, problematic that his sources of information are not clearly referenced, although the reader sometimes can conclude certain facts from the text. Also, the introductory sections of the books, as well as the text itself, sometimes give worthwhile information on Ilmonen's sources, his working methods, and his research ideas.

Regarding John Morton, it should be remembered, however, that Morton's Finnish roots had been discussed in Finland from the 1860s; therefore Ilmonen was not the first writer to pick up the issue. Ilmonen and others have often referred to the Marttinen family (in Swedish, Mårtensson or Martenson). They came originally from the province of Savo in Cen-

tral Eastern Finland, moving to the Swedish Värmland area in the late 1500s to clear forests.<sup>12</sup> Some writers have claimed that Morton's ancestry originates from the Finnish Ostrobothnian coastal area.

As referred to earlier, Salomon Ilmonen's writings on John Morton reflect even deeper issues and sentiments on the importance of the Finns and US history. For example, Ilmonen dramatically describes how John Morton arrived at just the last minute to cast his vote in favor of independence. As the last signer of the historic document, Morton's act preceded the pealing of church bells throughout the North American colonies, and the rejoice spread ultimately to the "farthest corner of the world".<sup>13</sup>

Partly due to Ilmonen's publicising activities, the great celebrations of the Delaware Colony in 1938 included, in addition to the Swedes, even Finns who now "rightfully deserved their status as the founding members of the United States society". But of course, Ilmonen was not the only one who publicised the history of Delaware and Morton, as shown by many recent historians.<sup>14</sup>

But what of other "heroes" besides John Morton? Ilmonen's books include thousands of names. For example, in part three of *the History of the American Finns*, Ilmonen himself counts some 15,000 Finnish names in about 350 pages, and presents short biographical information on hundreds of individuals. In many cases he has no other historical sources except oral information heard from older immigrants in

certain Finnish American locations. In most cases he is able only to report the name of the person in question.

Ilmonen is primarily a chronicler, not an analyst. He is most sympathetic towards the Finnish population, which is his focus. For Ilmonen, the personalities are most often brave, active, fair, industrious, and in some cases, even prosperous people. He presents these persons as good examples of the Finnish immigrant population, who in most cases started from the bottom. Finnish mingling with other nationalities is presented as a fact of life in the American multi-ethnic society.

Most of Ilmonen's model persons are men, since he discusses very few female immigrants in detail. Examples of successful Finns in America are mainly found in the book *Amerikan Suomalaisten Historiaa* (1919). In this book, Salomon Ilmonen includes a section called "*Suomalaisia toimen ja pyrkimyksen miehiä*" (Active and Successful Finns). We find the following "representative" Finns summarised in a few words:

Gustaf Wilson (or Poikajoki) came from Oulu, Finland as a young sailor. At first he became a gold digger in California in 1850. After a couple of years, he joined the US Army and participated in the Indian Wars. Later he became a successful businessman and real estate owner in Portland, Oregon. Because of his good position and personal excellency, Wilson was named the vice-consul of Russia in 1883 for the Northwest regions of the United States, since at that time Finland was the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Il-



Gustaf Niebaum became a very successful businessman in Alaska and San Fransisco.

monen tells that Wilson took care of his duty "as an honest, fair and upright Finn" (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 166–168).

Gustaf Niebaum (Nybom) was born in Oulu, had a good secondary education Finland, and was employed by the Russian-American trading company in the 1860s. He was successful in his career as a fur and fish trader and as a sea captain. Later he carried on a profitable fishing and hunting business in Alaska with headquarters in San Francisco. According to Ilmonen, he was one of the richest men in San Francisco, who lived very modestly and "sustained his straightforward and upright Finnishness" (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 169–170).

Oswald H. Beckman, originally from the Southern Ostrobothnian Lake District in Finland, came to America in 1870. He worked as a sailor for several years, but with a secondary school education he decided to study medicine. In the United States he earned a high school diploma and studied medi-

cine at the university. He practised medicine in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and finally in California, where he established a hospital. According to Ilmonen, he was a "friendly, fair and honest Finn" (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 170–174).

J.J. Hoikka was born in Finnish Lapland and moved to Minnesota in 1873. He studied in Augustana College in Illinois, and was ordained a priest in 1883, the first Finn educated in America to become a priest. Hoikka became one of the most prominent religious leaders in Finnish America, and finally received the honorary degree of the Doctor of Theology in 1915. Ilmonen tells that even though Hoikka married a Swedish woman, his children were able to speak Finnish, and his daughter and son attended Suomi College in Hancock (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 175–177).

Among other successful Finns, Ilmonen names George Brown (Virpi pp. 178–180), a successful farmer and businessman in the eastern United States. Johan H. Smith (originally Hiltunen) was an ordinary policeman in New York, but became a prosperous real estate owner (pp. 180–182). Alfred F. Watch (Vartiainen) was shipwrecked on the Delaware Coast in 1871. He went to school in America, returned to Finland, where he was further educated, and then worked in St. Petersburg to learn the profession of optician. Finally, he went to the United States and became a successful optician in Philadelphia. Ilmonen tells that Watch was appreciated for his knowledge and skills, was good in several languages, and

had an interest in philosophy (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 174–175). Arthur Fredrik Soldan (pp. 182) was a railway constructor, teacher, and engineer, who returned to Finland, where he gained an important engineering position in the Finnish government.

Ilmonen also writes about Otto Mauno Geers, a veteran of the U.S. Civil War, who was born in Eura in the South-West of Finland. He landed in the United States around 1860 and served in the U.S. Navy for 21 years, where he was promoted to the rank of Quartermaster. He was wounded twice in the U.S. Civil War. Geers married a non-Finnish woman and grew away from his Finnish culture, but "his bearing, figure and face remained real Finnish during the whole of his life" (Ilmonen 1919, pp. 159).

The same kind of descriptions and terminology mentioned above may be found in Ilmonen's books on the colonial Finnish settlers and John Morton. In the last Delaware history of 1938, Ilmonen describes Morton with similar expressions: He was respected by his contemporaries, he was "absolutely honest and rigid with consciousness".<sup>15</sup> Ilmonen lists in his books several thousands of locally known personalities. He gives information primarily on the founders of the Finnish communities, but also on less known, ordinary people. Therefore, many sections of his books consist of lists of names, often with very little additional information.

If we consider Ilmonen in the context of his own times, certain interesting facts arise. Ilmonen did his genealogical research and

history writing at the time when Finnish population in the United States was under pressure. Parts of the Finnish population were charged with non-American activities, the so-called radicals or red Finns. A number of legal trials, imprisonments, and deportations occurred. About one quarter of the Finnish population belonged to this group, while the same amount engaged themselves in churches and religious activities. The polarization of the Finnish immigrant community grew wide and dramatic. A large part of the Finnish immigrant population became involved in various labor activities. Labor or socialist Finn halls and societies, publications, periodicals etc. were founded, along with lots of leisure activities. The radical leaders were active in organizing strikes, resulting in pressure on the radicals from the American society, factory and mine owners, but also from the "loyal Finns" in America.

Ilmonen was a part of the "church group" in this context. While trying to write the complete history of the Finnish immigrant community, he took a stand against the radical Finns. This is clear in his books on the cultural history of the Finns in America. The pages on the labor movement are biased and full of errors, which are due to his lack of sources, but also his willingness to limit his view of history and society to the experiences his own group.<sup>16</sup>

Ilmonen was, after all, a priest in the *Suomi Synod*, the "worst enemy" of the radical Finns. It may even be so that Ilmonen, with his "good" examples, wanted to show that the Finns were the right

kind of people for American society, nothing like trouble makers of the Finnish-American Left.

## The importance of Salomon Ilmonen

Ilmonen was a keen lover of history, who recorded it for his own pleasure. He was primarily a recorder or a genealogist, assisted by hundreds of local informants. Salomon Ilmonen was not an analytical historian, but a collector and reporter. On the one hand, he knew the methods of scholarly historians, but on the other hand, he wrote his books like a chronicler.

As such Ilmonen listed in his books perhaps some 16,000–17,000 Finns in the United States and Canada. His information was based on many types of sources such as oral history, old church records, newspapers, and in many cases the source are quite difficult to verify exactly today. Perhaps Il-

monen's materials are preserved in some archival depository? He also appears to have made extensive use of local archives and church records, but he seldom gives details of those sources in his books. His books are not complete, with inconsistent information and a lack of details; therefore, anyone who wants to verify Ilmonen's text faces a demanding task.

Colonial history has a special place in Ilmonen's books. He studied and wrote about the Delaware colony of the 1600s, contributing his share of information about that period. In this venue his special subject was John Morton, a man of Finnish descent, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Through his writings, Ilmonen has performed an important service for the Finnish population in the United States, claiming their "rightful place in American history". Indirectly, he even helped to rise the status of the republic of Finland abroad.

Finally, Ilmonen made a contribution by publicizing the historical interest of the Finnish-Americans for which they are known even today. He was the driving force in the founding of the Finnish American Historical Society in 1920 in New York and served as its secretary for several years. He also served as a member in the American Historical Association.<sup>17</sup> As a matter of fact, the Finnish American Historical Society partly financed his cultural history book. The Society and its leaders were certainly not radicals, but businessmen, priests, and other "good Finns".<sup>18</sup>

Even if his methods and style of writing history were perhaps not of the highest quality, Salomon Ilmonen was a history enthusiast of high quality. He undoubtedly deserves a place in the historiography of the Finns in America, and his work is a remarkable product of an amateur historian.

## References

The article is based on the presentation by the author in the Tampere North American Studies conference "BorderCrossings" on April 23, 1999 at the University of Tampere, Finland.

## Notes

1. Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan suomalaisten historiaa I* (The History of the Finns in America, Part One). Hancock, Michigan 1919, p. 8. For Ilmonen's biographical data, as well as links to Finland, see esp. Raymond W. Wargelin, *Salomon Ilmonen, Early Finnish-American Historian*. – In *Siirtolaisuus/Migration* 3/1987, pp. 2–11. Wargelin, a priest himself, gives a most positive picture of Ilmonen as a historian.
2. Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan suomalaisten historia II ja elämäkertoja* (The History of the Finns in America Part Two and Biographies). Jyväskylä 1923, p. 5.
3. Ibid.
4. See, e.g., S. Ilmonen, *Vanhan ajan valtakunnat ja alkoholi* (The Empires of the Ancient World and Alcohol). – *Raittiuskansan kalenteri 1901*. Hancock, MI 1900.
5. *Juhlajulkaisu Suomalaisen Kansallis-Raittius-Veljeysseuran 25-vuotisen toiminnan muistoksi. Toimituttanut S.K.-R.-Veljeysseura*. (The Jubilee Publication for the 25 Years of the Finnish National Temperance Brotherhood). Ishpeming, MI 1912. Pages 7 to 317 include the history the Finnish Temperance Movement in

- America by Ilmonen. It is still today the largest treatment of the topic.
6. Cf. *Siirtokansan kalenteri 1932*. Duluth, MN 1932; M.M.M. in *Kirkollinen kalenteri 1941*. Hancock, MI 1940.
  7. Cf. Ilmonen 1923, preface pp. 5–8, 82–83.
  8. See, *ibid.*, p. 5.
  9. Ilmonen 1926, p. 187.
  10. See e.g., Auvo Kostiainen, *Delaware as the Symbol of Finnish Migration to America*. – Finnish Identity in America. Ed. by Auvo Kostiainen. The Turku Historical Archives 46, Turku 1990, esp. pp. 58–60.
  11. John I. Kolehmainen, *The Finns in America. A Bibliographical Guide to Their History*. Hancock, MI 1947, pp. 14, 20, 21, 23, 40, 46, 51, 53, 103, 105; Olavi Koivukangas and Simo Toivonen, *Suomen siirtolaisuuden ja maassamuuton bibliografia. A Bibliography on Finnish Emigration and Internal Migration*. Turku 1978, pp. 104, 116.
  12. See, Reino Kero, *Finns in the New Sweden Colony*. – In Finnish Identity in America 1990, pp. 1–12.
  13. See, Auvo Kostiainen, *Delaware as the Symbol of Finnish Migration to America*. – In Finnish Identity in America 1990, citing original sources, pp. 61–62.
  14. For example, *ibid.*, pp. 55–66; Melvin G. Holli, *Emil Hurja, 1938 Delaware Tercentenary: Establishing a Finnish Presence at the 300th Anniversary Celebration*. – Finnish Identity in America 1990, pp. 33–48; about Hurja's career, see even Olavi Koivukangas, *Aikansa kuuluisin amerikkansuomalainen, vaalianalyytikko Emil Hurja 1892–1953*. – In Pitkät jäljet. Historioita kahdelta mantereelta. Professori Reino Kerolle hänen täyttäessään 60 vuotta 2.3.1999. Toim. Eero Kuparinen. Turun yliopiston historian laitos, julkaisu 48, Turku 1999, pp. 120–161.
  15. Ilmonen 1938, p. 233. Ilmonen wrote in Finnish that typical for Morton were "... *tin-kimätön rehellisyys ja oman-tunnon tarkkuus hänen kaikissa asioissaan*".
  16. See, Ilmonen 1930, esp. pp. 169–188, in which text Ilmonen appears to be offended by the non-religious attitudes of the radical Finns.
  17. Cf. the founding and activities of the Minnesota Finnish American Historical Society (founded in 1943), in Hans R. Wasasterna, *History of the Finns in Minnesota*. Transl. By Toivo Rosvall. New York Mills, MN 1957, esp. pp. 283–288.
  18. S. Ilmonen, *Lyhyt selostus Amerikan Suomalaisen Historiallisen Seuran tämänvuotisesta toiminnasta*. Publ. in *Amerikan Sanomat*, June 6, 1927 and *Amerikan Suometar*, June 14, 1927. In the beginning of 1927, it was told there were 540 members in the society. The membership of the historical societies of the Finnish-Americans was probably made of mostly "church and loyal" Finns, but after the Second World War even others joined them while the ideological conflicts in the immigrant community slowed down.