

JOHN I. KOLEHMAINEN IN MEMORIAM



The most distinguished expert and scholar of recent decades on the history of the Finnish-Americans, Professor John I. Kolehmainen, died on 25 August from injuries sustained from a fall while on vacation in Ottawa, Canada.

John I. Kolehmainen was born in a Finnish immigrant family on 2 July 1910 in Conneaut, Ohio. He wrote "A History of the Finns in the Western Reserve", his thesis for the Ph.D. in 1937, on the Finnish immigrants in the Ohio region, and served as professor at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, from 1948 to 1980.

His best known publications on the history of the Finnish community in America were "The Finns in America" (1947); "Haven in the Woods", dealing with the Finns in Wisconsin (1951, reprinted 1965); "Sow the Golden Seed", the story of the Finnish newspaper Raivaaja (1955); and "From Lake Erie's Shores to the Mahoning and Monongahela Valleys" (1977), which tells the story of the Finns of Ohio, Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, relying partly on his own doctoral thesis of four decades earlier. In 1991, John I. Kolehmainen published his memoirs, "Remembering Bygone Days".

John I. Kolehmainen maintained close contacts with his parents' homeland. In 1956 he came as visiting Fulbright professor at the University of Helsinki, and in 1965 again, at the University of Turku, where during the 1960s an extensive program of research into Finnish emigration had been launched under the leadership of Professor Vilho Niitemaa. In 1977, John I. Kolehmainen was awarded an honorary doctorate at Turku, and he donated his extensive history and politics library to the University.

Professor John I. Kolehmainen was proud of his Finnish origins and identity. He will be sadly missed by his wife, Astrid (née Petrell), their three children and their families, other relatives and a wide circle of friends in North America, Finland, and elsewhere.

The laborers pass; the labor remains.

Olavi Koivukangas