

Unique Features of Michigan's UP English among Finnish-Americans

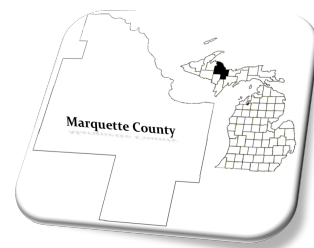
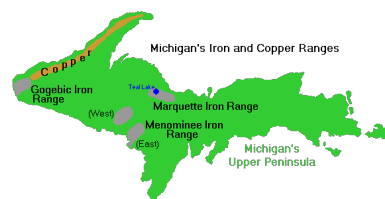
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(For slides, please visit: <https://www.gvsu.edu/csd/>)

Immigration History and Significance:

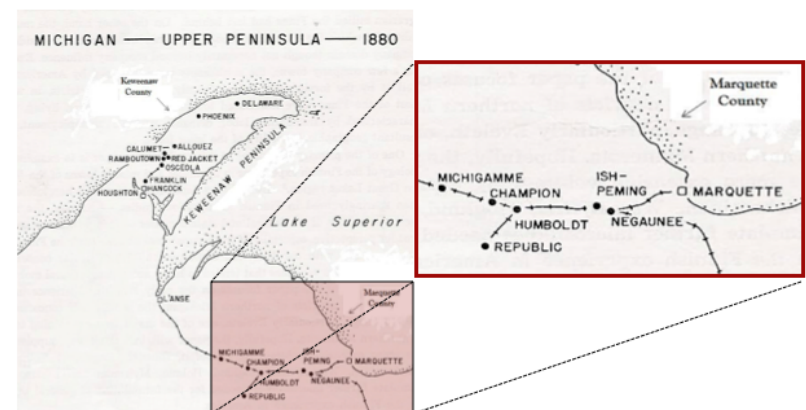


- Heavy immigration from the mid-1800s until the mid-1900s
- Mining Communities included:
 - Keweenaw Range
 - Gogebic Range
 - Marquette Iron Range
- The position in the Midwest:
 - Rural-based communities
 - Not any large cities nearby (i.e., urban centers with ≥50,000 in population)

Road Map of the Presentation

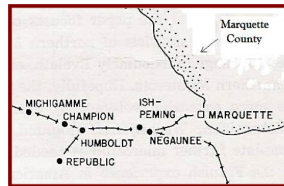
1. Introduction
2. Historical Background
3. Finnish Influenced UP English
4. Conclusions

Immigration History and Significance:

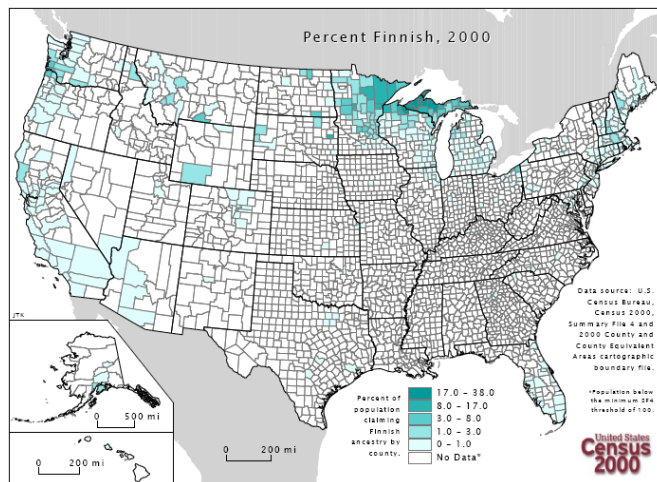


Immigration History and Significance:

- Prior to 1870s:
 - Rustic wilderness until the discover of valuable natural resources in 1840s
 - European/western development was slow at first
 - Many of the communities across the county comprised of 70% foreign-born
 - Predominately Irish-, German-, or Canadian-born
- 1880s through 1910s:
 - Mining industry and population increased
 - Finnish and Italian immigrants arrived in large numbers
 - Maintained language and cultural practices longer than other ethnic-heritage group

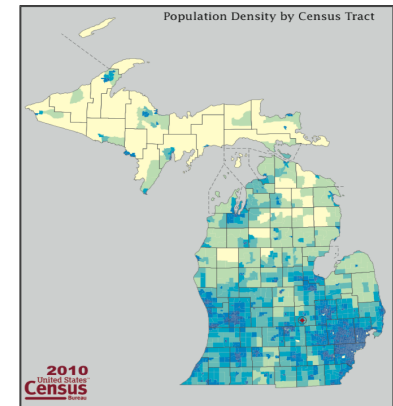


Finnish-American Heritage (US Census, 2000)

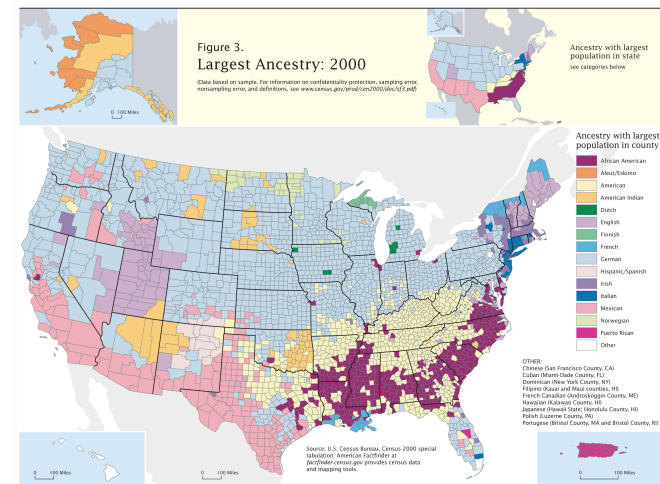


The Marquette County and Michigan's Population:

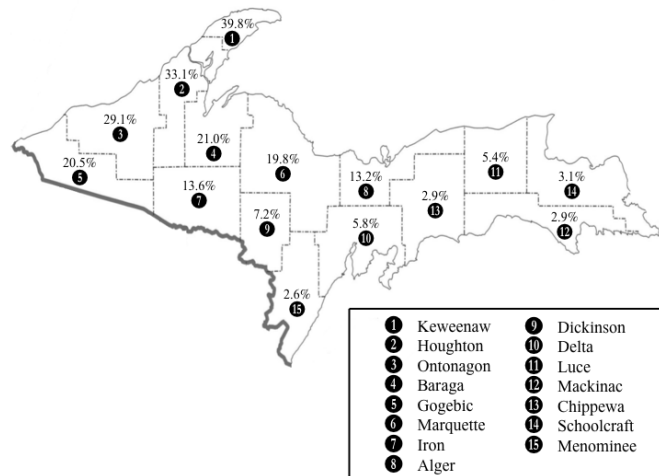
- Today:
 - UP Population:
 - ≈ 300,000
 - 29% MI's land area, but only holds 3% of its population
 - Marquette County:
 - ≈ 67,000
 - Predominately monolingual (i.e., few younger-aged bilinguals)



Finnish-American Heritage (US Census, 1990)



Finnish-American Heritage (US Census, 2008-12)

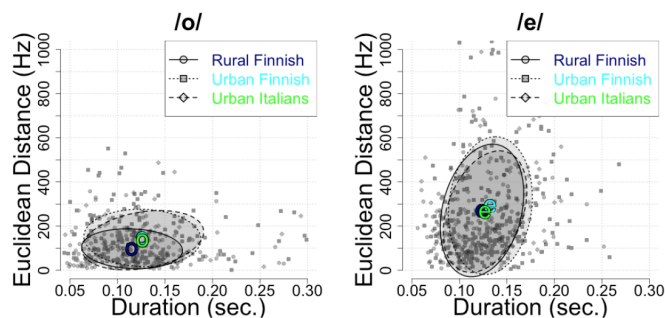


Vibrancy of Finnish-American Culture

- Heikki Lunta Winterfest
 - Annual winter festival in Negaunee, MI (since 1995)
- Heikinpäivä (Henrik's name day)
 - Annual winter festival in Houghton, MI (since 1999)

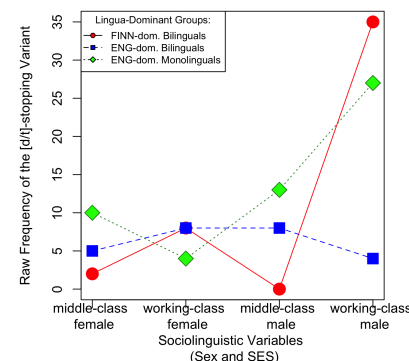


Monophthongal [ow]



- The vowel in *boat*, [oʊ], produced more like [bo:t].
- Most extreme for rural Finns, in comparison to more urban Finnish- or Italian-Americans in the same community.
- Finnish does have [o] but not [oʊ] sound; neither does Italian.

Interdentals (th) vs. (t)/(d)-stopping



- (t)/(d)-stopping involves a phonological process whereby the (th) sound is produced something more akin to (t) or (d).
- Most frequently produced among Finnish-dominant bilingual and English-dominant monolingual working-class males (older-aged speakers only)



Interdentals (th) vs. (t)/(d)-stopping

YOOPER CREATION STORY

IN DA BEGINNING DERE WAS NUTTIN.
ON DA 1ST DAY GOD CREATED DA UPPER PENINSULA.

ON DA 2ND DAY HE CREATED DA PARTRIDGE,
DA DEER, DA BEAR, DA FISH, AND DA DUCKS.

ON DA 3RD DAY HE SAID, "LET DERE
BE YOOPERS TO ROAM DA UPPER PENINSULA."

ON DA 4TH DAY HE CREATED DA UDDER
WORLD DOWN BELOW.

ON DA 5TH DAY HE SAID, "LET DERE BE TROLLS
TO LIVE IN DA WORLD DOWN BELOW."

ON DA 6TH DAY HE CREATED DA BRIDGE SO DA
TROLLS WOULD HAVE A WAY TO GET TO HEAVEN.

GOD SAID IT WAS GOOD AND..
ON DA 7TH DAY HE WENT HUNTIN.

- Typically, word-initial (th) are particularly susceptible to this phonological change.
- Speakers are not simply being "lazy," but are being influenced by the Finnish language.
 - The (th) sound does not exist in Finnish.
- Over time, and even through generations, this feature has become a linguistic marker of the Yooper identity

Words, words, words...

- Many Finnish words have come into UP English due to the cultural impact and prominence of this ethnic-immigrant group.
- Some particularly salient ones include:



- Loan words can act as shibboleths separating insiders from outsiders.

Other note worthy features:

- The sounds (p), (t) and (k) within a word can sometimes be produced with longer durations (i.e., gemination)

Ex: "ripple" → *rip-ple* "ripen" → *ri-pen*
 "little" → *lit-tle* "liter" → *li-ter*
 "bicker" → *bic-ker* "biker" → *bi-ker*
- What could be causing this?
 - Finnish has "strong" and "weak" consonants, while English only has weak consonants.
 - (pp), (tt) and (kk) are strong consonants, compared to (p), (t), and (k)
- Further research required to investigate this feature in UP English.
- First syllable of a word is stressed. (e.g., *CALumet*, *BARaga*)
 - Finnish always stresses the first syllable of a word (Remlinger, 2007, 75)

Prepositional Omission

- English is regarded as a prepositional language.

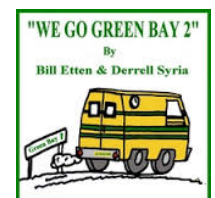
Ex: I went *to* the store.
- Finnish, however, is a postpositional language.

Ex: Mina menin kauppa*an*

- In UP English, optional prepositional omission is permitted in certain situations.

Ex: I went (to) the store to get groceries.
 Toivo went (to) Walmart this weekend.
 Matti goes (to) work everyday.

- Restricted to locative "to" and to general motions verbs.
- Present tense form of "go" is highly stigmatized.



What we know so far...

- Michigan's Upper Peninsula has been uniquely influenced by Finnish culture and language over the past century.
- While predominately now a monolingual English speaking community, speakers of UP English exhibit certain features that can be directly linked to a Finnish L1 influence (i.e., past down generation to generation).
 - Other languages and ethnic-immigrant populations have also had their own part to play in the development and propagation of UP English; though, arguably, none had the same degree of impact as Finnish.
- In recent years, an invaluable amount of ethnographic and sociolinguistic work has been done on UP English.
 - However, there is so much yet that is still unknown.

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