

A Gift to the University of Pittsburgh

The Finnish Nationality Room will be built as a gift to the University, which will then maintain it as part of the University's Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs. Twenty-eight of the 30 Rooms are used as classrooms where students take their scheduled courses. Through ethnic artifacts and designs they provide a way to introduce the students and visitors to other cultures in an authentic setting.

A Huge Undertaking

This is a huge undertaking for the small Finnish community in Pittsburgh. It is an ambitious goal for us to raise the money to cover all the expenses of constructing this heritage classroom. To reach this goal, we need the support of other Finns and Finnish-Americans throughout the United States and Finland. It will be an accomplishment to be proud of.

How Can You Help?

Get Involved--You can help by sharing this information with your friends, family, local cultural organizations, and educational institutions.

Join the Committee! Become a Member or Contributing Member of the Finnish Nationality Room Committee (fee \$10/year). If you are a University of Pittsburgh alumnus this is a great opportunity for you to contribute to your alma mater and recognize the great Finnish heritage in Pennsylvania and across America.

Please consider sending a contribution.

Your support is urgently requested for the work to continue.

Please, send tax-deductible donations to **Finnish Room Committee, Nationality Rooms Programs, 1409 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburgh, PA 15260**. To give by mail, write your check to *Univ. of Pittsburgh*, memo *Finnish Room Committee*, and give your name and address so we can send you a receipt. To give online, go to www.giveto.pitt.edu (**PittGiving**) click **Ways to Give**, then **GIVE ONLINE**. After filling in Donor Information, go to the bottom and click Gift Information and make sure to enter the amount of your donation to the right of the **Finnish Room Committee** label. Then click Add'l Information and fill it in, and then fill in Pay by Credit Card.

Informational Web Sites: www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu and www.pittsburghfinns.net



The Finnish Nationality Classroom

*to be built in the
Cathedral of Learning at the
University of Pittsburgh*

Recognized far and wide, the historic Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh give the visitor a profound sense of the diverse ethnic backgrounds of Western Pennsylvania. The Rooms, 30 in number with several more to be realized within the next few years, are a source of pride to each group represented.

The Nationality Rooms are seen by tens of thousands of visitors every year through a vibrant tour program. All but two are used as classrooms.

The Finnish Nationality Classroom will reflect the culture and customs of Finland and will serve as a memorial where the relatives of

early Finnish immigrants will learn about their heritage and remember the contributions of their ancestors to the vibrant American culture.

Student Design Contest

A competition for the best design for the Finnish Nationality Classroom was sponsored by the Finnish Nationality Room Committee at the University of Pittsburgh. In March, 2006, Professor Anna-Maija Ylimaula (left), of the University of Oulu, came to Pittsburgh with three plans that were selected as winners of the design competition in Finland. The University of Pittsburgh Finnish Committee members, together with Nationality Rooms Director E. Maxine Bruhns (middle) and the University of Pittsburgh architect Park Rankin (right), selected Gröndahl's design, Big Dipper, for first prize.



culture.

Mika Gröndahl's elegant design, based on a traditional Finnish smoke house will be expanded to include details of Finnish log construction and motifs of the time period will be displayed. It will contain the essential elements for a showpiece of Finnish culture.



The Finnish Nationality Room at the University of Pittsburgh will highlight two important aspects of Finnish culture in 1778: first, *the high literacy rate and variety of schools* and, second, *the unique construction technique found in Finnish log houses*.

Education in Finland and America

A primer to teach reading, *The ABC Book*, was published in 1543. Reading and writing soon spread widely, through instruction in two-week schools sponsored by the Lutheran church. Two hundred years later, in 1778, reading and writing were common, and additional education was offered in vocational and academic schools. In the American colonies, in 1640, the first Lutheran Church in the New Sweden settlement, near Wilmington, Delaware, had a Finnish pastor, Reorus Torkillus¹. [1 Engle, Eloise, *Finns in North America* (Annapolis, MD: Leeward Publications, Inc., 1975).] The Finnish ABC book was used there.

Finnish Log Construction--Unique in the World

Finnish log construction, displayed in the smoke houses of Finland, is preserved in the Seurasaari Open-Air Museum in Finland and in the Valley County Museum Complex at Roseberry Idaho in the United States. Finnish log construction is a precise and exact art, utilizing custom-fit logs and dovetailed corners. Only generations of building and living in log houses could have brought it to this state of excellence.



Mr. Frank Eld, Idaho, watched with great admiration as a log building was constructed by his father and other Finns, with a systematic technique and detailed handyman's work, using special tools brought from Finland. He has found the structure of Finnish fitted logs to exist in buildings everywhere Finnish immigrants have settled, and also in the oldest log houses built by Finns in colonial times New Sweden. This was the work of skillful men following a tradition of generations of Finns. The Finnish Nationality Classroom will be built with Frank Eld's guidance and tools, including the Finnish axeman's "secret" tool, "vara."

Savu-pirtti Smoke House



A smoke house had a massive stone fireplace without a chimney--the smoke exited from this hole and circulated through the upper part of the room to conduct the heat. Nearby, towards the center of the room, was an opening in the roof covered with a flap which was let down to draw the smoke up and out of the house when the fireplace was heating; the flap was then closed by lifting it up again. On the upper part of the wall there were smaller holes from which the smoke also exited. After the fire had burned down, ashes and smoldering embers were cleared from the fireplace, and an even heat remained in the house. At the back of the fireplace, behind a wall, there were separate bedrooms, often four. The smoke house was a common dwelling in Finland in the 1800s and earlier. The walls were built with fitted logs, with the upper log being carved to fit over the lower log, which was left round. In the corners the logs were interlocked with traditional "salmon tail" joints. The floor consisted of thick planks.

Sisu does it!

Get the Room finished in 2017, the celebration year of Finland's 100 years of independence. It means that we need to get all the funding ready for the summer of 2017. To reach our goal, we need the support of other Finns and Finnish-Americans throughout the United States. It will be an accomplishment to be proud of.

Inside Look at the Finnish Nationality Classroom



Picture 1: Entry way.



Picture 2: View from back to front

Picture 1 At the door to the classroom where students enter. Immediately on the right is a column demonstrating dovetailed corner construction. On the left wall is a mural of trees in an outdoor scene and at the end of the hallway is a sauna. In the ceiling are seven stars of the Big Dipper as symbols of the first novel in Finnish, *Seven Brothers*, by Aleksis Kivi in 1870.

Picture 2: View from the back to the back toward front of the room



Picture 3: View from front towards the back.

Picture 3

A Landmark and Important Media Attraction

This Room will be in the Cathedral as an historic landmark along with 30 other Nationality Rooms and a permanent memorial to the Finns who, with their skills and dedication, were an important group of people cultivating and creating opportunities to others to live in areas where only the Finns, who did not fear the cold or the snow, were able to build churches, cities and schools. Through vibrant tour programs the Finnish Room will be seen by tens of thousands of visitors yearly and the Public Media frequent features of these rooms and the different ethnic programs which they provide enriching the International contacts of the University and its students.