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DULUTH--The destiny of the tiny community of Finland, Minn., has been shaped by two episodes in Russian history, a University of Minnesota professor told an audience at UMD Saturday.

John R. Borchert of the Minneapolis campus geography department addressed the Social Sciences recognition dinner-convocation in Kirby Student Center. Students and honoraries of the social sciences were in attendance.

Borchert traced Finland's beginnings to the U. S. migration of Finns during the harsh Czarist regime in the 1930's. By 1956 the Cold War and radar had boosted its status from one of economic depression to strategic military base. "Finland's coming of age was due to decisions in Moscow and Washington, not Minnesota," Borchert said.

A 1933 study of the community disclosed farmers struggling with poor soil and a short growing season, living in a "cut-over" forest region near hard-hit iron country.

As a result of that survey, Prof. Darrel H. Davis of the University of Minnesota suggested government acquisition of land, strengthened opportunities for farming, a static population.

But Finland's relative position changed radically with the times, Borchert said. It now lies just 10 miles from Silver Bay's port and taconite processing plant and it has become a key look-out on the potential route over the pole from Soviet air bases to metropolitan targets in America.

Thus an area once shaped for farming has but one bona fide farm. Half its workers are concerned now with taconite or the Air Force. And what was to have been a controlled population is a tripled one.

Finland is just one example that the "best-laid plans" can be reversed dramatically in the context of social mobility, economic principles and unforeseen world events, Borchert concluded.