

**Maj-lis Hagglund**

"Finn slips" Finnish Bootie Slippers; yarn; mid 2000s

Submitted by her granddaughter,

Courtney Anne Holcomb

## "Finn slips"

by Courtney Anne Holcomb

These booties were made by my grandmother Maj-lis Hagglund who immigrated to Wisconsin from Finland in 1958. Here, along with my grandfather Elmer they built a home and a family in Combined Locks, Wisconsin. Together they had three children and I am one of eight grandchildren, along with twelve great grandchildren. Every time we'd visit their home they had a cardboard box filled with my grandmother's handmade booties, or "Finn slips" as my husband and I call them. We'd remove our shoes and place our feet in these warm, cozy, and comfortable slippers made with love. If you weren't wearing a pair, she would walk over and hand you a pair because "no one can be walking around with cold feet." New pairs would be made for us for birthdays or special events. You'd take them home and when they became worn you would return them to get their repairs. Most often they needed a newly reinforced bottom near the ball of the foot. Often, the new repaired yarn would not match the original created many years back. They were most often saved and salvaged instead of replaced. You see, things of value are worth saving. Things that took time to create are to be cherished. This for me is home. The care, value, investment, and warmth, and the belief that we are worthy of repair. Together as a family sharing holidays and milestones gathered around in our "Finn slips", we are home. My grandparents helped teach me that home is not a country, home is not a building, home is the commitment to love, provide, support, care, and remain connected through it all. Home is togetherness with warm feet.

I was taught how to knit "Finn slips" many years ago, and I've since become interested in more fiber arts after being inspired by my grandmother. She knit and created many things throughout her life: pairs of slippers, prayer shawls, scarves, and other practical and beautiful things.

After being married for just over 61 years we lost Elmer spring 2017. May 2023, Maj-lis turned 91 years old and was still living independently in the home my grandfather Elmer, who was a carpenter, built for them. In November of 2023 she moved in with my parents who helped care for her during her final months—because family takes care of family. December of 2023 she made it here to the art exhibit to see her Finn Slips on display along with grandchildren and great grandchildren. And on February 3rd, 2024 she completed her time on this earth and was reunited with Elmer. We all carry with us our wonderful memories of Maj-lis Hagglund, forever with warm feet.





**Left:** My grandmother Maj-lis Hagglund and me, April 2022, in front of a rya rug she made.

**Below:** December 17th, 2023 Visiting the JMKAC to see her art on display surrounded by family.

