

Informants: Sara Smiljanic
Mary Nelson
Mike Orlich

Date: ~~July~~ ^{August} 22, 1979

Fieldworkers: Richard March
Matthew Gallmann

We left the hotel in Marenesco after inquiring for possible leads from the proprietess. We were already aware of the leads that she provided.

We arrived at Mike's house at 1:00 p.m. but he was unavailable due to a furnace breakdown at one of his rental homes. ~~of~~ Flora offered to take us to visit Mary and Sara near Ramsey. She led the way in her car.

Upon arrival we were greeted by Sara and Mary who quickly brought out their many souvenirs from Yugoslavia. With the exception of a pair of sculptures, a man and woman in Sumadina costumes carved out of some sort of soft stone. The items were exclusively typical carved souvenir objects which are very common in Yugoslavia.

Next they showed us the costumes from Posavina which they had purchased on the open market in Zagreb. They were of hemp and flax linen embroidered with commercially produced and dyed thread in a style indicating that they were probably made in the late 1920's or 1930's. The attempt to naturalistically portray flowers, (including green leaves) was styled at that time. The skirts were quite full--six loom widths. One of the costumes was a matched set; the other was composed of mismatched but harmonious individual pieces.

Sarah is talkative and soon began to dominate the interview. Mary only occasionally offered comments. Sarah began to describe her two trips to Yugoslavia in 1971 and 1975. She told a particularly interesting story of how in Ploca-Like, her parent home village near Udbina, she encountered a grizzly looking old man who asked who she was. When she gave the names of her mother and father he said, "You live at Box 55, Viroqua, Michigan." It turned out that he was a former boarder at their home and had returned to Lika prior to

World War II and when Sarah's relatives had lost the address, he provided the information to get the families back in contact. At about this point we started to tape a discussion of the way of life of the Serbian and Croatian families in the Gogebic area including holiday celebrations, work, musical customs, contacts with other American Servian communities and with the old country. Toward the end of the interview Joseph Smiljanic, Sarah's husband, arrived and also offered his comments.

We looked through their very extensive collection of Yugoslav and Yugoslav American records. They showed us about 100 albums and alluded to the existence of many 45's, 78's and additional albums. 1/3 of the albums were Yugoslav produced, either by Yugoton or RTB for the most part. They were mostly of the genre commonly called "Marodujak" or recently composed "folk" tunes. There were also a few purely pop albums by singers such as Mito Kovai.

The American albums included a number of Marjon recording artists ordered from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, from Johnny Krizanich. Also a great many variety pressings from various bands and children's groups. Mary Nelson gave me the album of Djvojacke Tamburitzans from St. George's Church in Duluth. The album was recorded in 1974 and the group has since disbanded.

They seem to follow Yugoslav and Yugo-American music very closely. Their European relatives send them some records and also a music store in Ironwood will order records from Yugoslavia for them.

The talk could have easily gone on for much longer but we decided, about 3:45, that we had better get back to Mike Orlich.

Flora again led the way back, and we began to tape Mike in his basement rec room. The interview was interrupted by supper. Flora prepared an excellent meal of Piedmontese Pollente with beef sauce and steamed zucchini.

After supper Mike had to go to a class reunion planning meeting so we finished up quickly.

After the interview he showed us his records, also about 100 albums similar

to Sarah and Mary's. Mike's collection had a few less Yugoslav records and more American Tamburas. He also had fewer "Narodujak" records.

We chatted a while and finally departed for Ashland.