

a good share of the repertoire borrowed from country music and from the larger "Polka Music" repertoire (I did recognize "Blue Skirt Waltz", for example). Typical of upper midwest folk music.

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FIELD NOTES

Jim Leary
January 29 & 31, 1985

Watertown, WI.
General Impressions

I drove from Madison to Watertown via Sun Prairie on Tuesday 1/29 in the early afternoon. It was blustery and snowy yet bright. Proceeding east from Sun Prairie on highway 19, I began to notice signs in the landscape suggesting I was entering German-American territory: names on mailboxes, barns, a malting plant at Waterloo. The barns were especially interesting. Although side opening, "English" three bay threshing barns, they had the dairyman's stone lower level and nearly all were "banked" (i.e. built into the side of a hill or provided with an earthen ramp to enter the second level of the barn); I noticed at least one with a forebay or cantilevered extension. The farmhouses too were interesting. Many were in the so-called L-house or Lazy T form, constructed with "Cream City" brick, and affixed with back extensions. I noticed a few free standing smokestacked buildings to the rear of houses that I assumed to be summer kitchens. Prof. Lester Siefert later informed me that they probably were, but he also informed me that some houses had two kitchens extending from the rear of the house: the near one for winter and the far one for summer. The material culture of this area will bear further investigation and I must track down at least three aides: a book, distributed by the Watertown Historical Society on that town's historic buildings; and M.A. thesis in Landscape Architecture by Christopher Whitmer on Lebanon Township's threshing barns; and the advice of U.W. Landscape Arch. Prof. Bill Tishler who's done fieldwork in Dodge County.

Once in Watertown I stopped in at Fox's Music on Main St. in hopes of getting some contacts. The owner, Ken Fox said that many old timers came in from time to time to fool around with harmonicas and to order parts for accordions. Unfortunately, Fox knew no names, so I arranged to drop a press release there and to return in case any of the old timers appeared. Next stop, the chamber of commerce office where Reno Suckow and Lorrie Peterson offered maps and suggestions. The former was third generation German-American and had grown up in Merrill where his dad worked in the lumber camps, while the latter was a Racine native and a Scandinavian. Neither knew any old time musicians, but they suggested that I contact Terri Lechner, the program coordinator at the Senior Citizen's Center on South First St. They also referred to German speakers in Lebanon township as folks whose talk was full of dese, dems, dose, and deys. Finally both they and Fox recommended that I contact Will Eske, head of the local musicians union and proprietor of the Home Plate Inn in Lebanon. I also acquired the name of Fred Loeffler as the man to see about activities at the Turner Hall and was referred to Bill Kwopil, Sr. as the person in charge of St. Bernard Catholic Church's Winterfest, occurring Feb. 15&16 with "five rooms" of entertainment from 7:30-midnite on the weekend immediately before Ash Wednesday (a remnant of Fasching?). Content with this information, I headed back to Madison.

Two days later I was back in Watertown at the Senior lCitizen's Center, a modern, recently constructed building. I found Terri Lechner, a woman probably in here late twenties, and Edna Sander, a seventyish volunteer who was acting as receptionist. As the attached newsletter, Golden Years, testifies, the place is very busy (although there were only a half dozen card players present when I arrived). Dances seem to be an important part of the schedule and Mrs. Sander also informed me that various seniors often travel to the Colonial Inn at Sun

Prairie to dance polkas, waltzes, and schottisches on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Mrs. Sander was especially helpful. She grew up in a German-American community--Grafton, WI--and now lives in Watgertown where her daughter teaches kindergarten. While she suggested various musicians who I might contact, she sang me snatches of German songs, most of which she'd learned as a child from her mother and grandmother: "At Lauderbach I Lost My Sock," Trink, Trink, Bruderlein, Trink," "Du, Du Liegst Mir Im Herzen," "Herr Schmidt," When the Swallows Come Flying Home," "Heilie Heiloo," "O Susannah," "Hopp, Hopp" (a pony song to bounce children, I think), and "Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken." She said that her daughter taught the latter song to her kindergarten class and that they acted it out with paper hats. Mrs. Sander acted out the song herself and said she performed it and other German songs with fellow seniors in a "kitchen band." Perhaps I'll be able to interview later on, although she professed a reluctance to sing by herself. Inasmuch as Prof. Seifert has informed me that all of these songs were familiar to him, I'll probably be able to find more willing performers.

Mrs. Sander delved into a file of members and Terri thumbed through a notebook to come up with the names of local old timers who played and sang German music: among them were Fredrick M. Kaulitz, Edward Peirick, Kenny Platz, "Zeno" Kreuziger, Elmer Krueger, John Parmley, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kaczor, and Frederica Meyer. I've written letters to most of these people and will be calling them soon; their addresses are entered in my addressbook. It's also worth mentioning that Mrs. Meyer has put together a small book, Songs For You, that she uses for her performances to older folks. A copy is included with these notes.

In summation, it seems clear to me that German-American singing and culture are

far from moribund in the Watertown area and that fieldwork here will be a rich and delightful experience.