

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND/TAPE INDEX

Martha Bernet
Betty Vetterli
Clayton Streiff
(Edelweiss & Betty)

Interviewed by James P. Leary
October 7, 1989
Nagra 4-L recorder
Ampex 632 tape

1. Announcement.

Martha Bernet

2. Grandmother was a Moser, talked about the Moser Brothers. Remembers the old records, was only 4 or 5 when they left for the states. When arrived in Monroe, saw a movie of Mosers at Turner Hall that was filmed in husband's home village. [For DHD, "I remember that my grandma . . . we had a lot of the Moser Brother records at home."]

3. In America the polka bands resemble Bavaria, Germany, and Austria. In Switzerland the laendler music is more common, with clarinets, button accordion.

4. In 1951 WEKZ began a Swiss radio program. M was the third DJ, took over in 1956. Plays some German and Austrian music. Tries to have a Swiss variety. Yodel solos and duets, choruses, mixed choruses, and laendler music. Helps people who came from Switzerland feel at home. People want to hear it in the early afternoon.

5. On learning to play. Brothers and sisters took lessons. M didn't want to, but saw a girl yodeling and playing button accordion with just three buttons. Inspired to do the same. Plays by ear. Dad encouraged her to take accordion when she came to America. [Good quote ruined by insertion of leader.]

6. In Monroe began to play for Swiss Club. Asked by Betty to play with her in 1970. Has been doing so ever since. Comes from a singing family, doesn't think a day has gone by without singing. [DHD--use from asked by Betty to singing every day, with some editing in the middle.] Is the only one from her family still playing.

Betty Vetterli

7. Grandmother who raised her was a triplet. Used to yodel old Swiss songs with her sisters. B would try yodeling when getting the cows at night. Just yodeled for herself. [Use for DHD.] Wanted a piano, family got one at an auction. Figured out chords and melodies by ear. Grandma insisted B take piano lessons. Then was introduced to the accordion. Knew a little Swiss music, including Moser Brother records. Told her grandparents she wanted to learn accordion. Went to Monroe each Saturday to take lessons from Rudy Burkhalter. Rudy wanted her to play a solo at a public doings in New Glarus. B played a laendler. Then did her yodel polka. [DHD--"And I got to playing and chording".]

8. Thereafter played with Rudy's accordion band. Sang various places. Then played with Mary May Stuessi Phillips. Played laendler music at alpine festivals. Then performed in 1960 as first female with New Glarus Yodelers, traveled to Europe. Yodeled with Hans Neuenschwander and Robbie Schneider.

1970 asked by Edelweiss Stars to be accompaniest and a solo yodeler. Martha and Betty also got going in 1970. Loves Swiss music.

9. Grandmother and sisters always sang on the farm after chores were done. When they were single used to perform all over the area, father wouldn't let them go sing in Milwaukee, however. Then when they were married, singing went to the back burner. Grandmother was Chrisencia Kneubuehl, aunts were Catherine Marty and Molly Luchsinger. The Hegeli (sp?) triplets. Women weren't as free to do things then.

Martha

10. Nowadays doesn't make much difference if you're a woman or a man. If people like you, they invite you back. Martha recounts getting lost in Kansas City and being helped by a policeman.

11. Betty just made a new tape which is very good.

Betty

12. On Rudy Burkhalter. In his day one of the top musicians and a great arranger. Nowadays hard to find accordion music. "I always thought he was a terrific musician. He could play the button chromatic accordion, he could play the Swiss clarinet like nothing, and he could write music out as fast as he was whistling it." [DHD]

13. When Albert Moser was in Monroe for the Swiss movie, B accompanied Rudy and Albert.

Clayton Streiff

14. Talerschwingen. [DHD]

15. Explanation of talerschwingen. In Appenzell would use a bowl and coin to make music. [Use this explanation and then use # 14 with a fade.]

16. Started Swiss music back in 1950 when original Edelweiss Stars were formed. Learned two songs to sing in Milwaukee. Decided to keep on ever since. [DHD?]

17. Grandfather director of New Glarus city band for over 50 years. Mother and grandmother used to sing duets at band concerts, also sang in church. Never took part in anything Swiss, sang all in English. But C did learn to speak Swiss at home with parents and grandparents.

18. On blowing the alphorn. Needed more variety in programs. C tried out the alphorn. Plays with Edelweiss and Betty and also alphorn duets and trios within the New Glarus Yodel Club.

19. Compares alphorn to the bugle. No fingerings. Eight or so natural notes. Play it with your lip. Must keep up with it. C does this by entertaining for bus tours at the New Glarus Hotel.

[end of session]