

Slovenian Button Accordion Project

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Tape notes
6/9/84

INTERVIEW WITH: Mary Gotchnik

AT: Gotchnik home
1042 East Camp
Ely, MN 55731

DATE: Saturday, June 9, 1984

Mary Gotchnik is 74 years old, was born and raised in Ely and surrounding mining locations.

Her husband Joe came from Ribnica, Yugoslavia.

Her parents also from Yugoslavia.

Mentions an uncle, Joe Miksha, who played the button accordion

Tells story of mother putting the kids to bed so the parents could go to a dance at the neighbors where her uncle was playing. She stayed awake to listen at the window, vowed to someday learn to play the button accordion.

Uncle lived in Aurora, was known as a good player there and in Ely.

Mary was the oldest of five children

House parties happened once a month or so.

family lived in 26 location, also known as Savoy location because of proximity to Savoy mine.

People were mostly Slovenians, with a few Croatians, too.

Also talks about Zenith mine and location, closer to Ely.

"Them were the days" story about dandelion wine, glass from the neighbor who made it, the kids got drunk. She laughs.

There were boarders at her family home. They had lots of laundry to do.

She started to play the button box after she was married.

Husband Joe bought an accordion, ordered it from Marvar.

She would play it when he was not at home. "It was like gold to him."

He found out because she didn't know how to close the bellows properly.

He noticed. She went to someone to find out how to do it. There is

a hook inside that catches and keeps the bellows closed when the instrument is put away.

Talks about a neighbor from across the street, a man who thought playing the accordion was for men, not for women to do, complained to her husband. She had to take it easy for a while, she says. keep quiet. She began to play for baby showers, women's gatherings.

She played for singing. Later played at cabin and house parties.

At first it was for the women, later for mixed groups, too

Talks about Joe, when he immigrated, his possessive attitude about the button box.

Tells story of how they ordered their instrument.

Mary Gotchnik, continued.

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Mentions other players; Louie Fink, Frankie Kromar from Chandler location.

She learned by herself, is self taught.

Talks about playing at the nursing home, Slovenian Home.

She plays for singing

Talks about husband. He is 79, is a hard worker. Was employed at Pioneer underground mine for 45 years. Has a big garden, tends it constantly.

She worked at Vertin's Cafe as a baker. made carmel rolls. 2,000 two years ago, but only 850 last year, hard times. too many places "You can get coffee in every block, and beer, too!"

She belongs to the Slovenian Women's Union, plays while they sing, plays on the bus when they travel to other towns for meetings and events.

Played at a fund-raising dinner for the hospital auxilliary during Sled Dog Race weekend.

She says she's not a player like Rudy Jandrey or John Erzar. Her songs are mostly singing songs.

Talks about "Glas Harmonika" has the English words for me.

Talks about Slovenian girls and Croatian boys. Croatian men are supposed to be better husbands.

Mentions tamburitza music, boarders who played it.

"Croatian music is sad, not happy like ours."

Stop tape. when tape is back on, I am eating a piece of potica she has made

Talks about her children.

has had no musical training.

"If it's in you, It's gotta come out."

What kind of songs does she play and sing?

Story songs, love songs, some are comical. She inserts her husband's name into the lyrics.

The songs are from Yugoslavia. Talks about "Moja Dekla" a Finnish woman who always asks her to play it.

Tell about Marvar's visit to their house to sell them a new accordion. Came with a station wagon full. Very important man. Everybody wanted his instruments. He couldn't play tho, tell about how they asked him, what he said.

They got \$35 in trade and paid \$155 for the new accordion. See field notes for additional details of this account.

Talks about playing at the Senior Citizen Center.

Refers to Matt Gouze, tamburitza music in Ely.

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Mary Gotchnik
song list

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"Glas Harmonika" English text

"Kadar Boš Ti Vandrat Šu" When are you going to leave to go to war.
I'll pack a bag for you. I'll be sad. But when you come home I'll be happy.

"Shove + haircut & books"

x "Daj Daj"

T"Tre Gore" over three hills, Slov. & English text

A song from Ribniča about straw hats. Nobody has a straw hat from Ribniča to the next town. Mary inserts her husbands name, how he has two strw hats, but they are both torn.

"Tam Doli Sama Zase" a song about a flower. This flower is all alone. The frost kills it. The man asks, why don't you hide yourself. If you were my flower, the frost wouldn't get you.

"I'm From Minnesota" composed by Marge Gersich Ford, English text

"Sinoč Se Mene Rekla" Croatian song

"Angelovo Česčenje"

"Trzinka" polka

"Oj Marička Pegla"/"Oola La La"

"Moj Očka Ima Konjička Dva" my father has two horses

"Soča Voda Je Šumela" about a river that is bubbling

"Poj Diz Menoj" waltz