

TAPE CATALOGUE

Informant: George Nousianen
Ethnic Group: Finnish/fiddle
Date: July 20, 1979
Address: Copper Harbor, Michigan
Fieldworkers: Sara Poynter
Matthew Gallmann

George talks about how his family "worked like hell" to get him his violin.

George continues to talk about violin.

Matt: "You know what we pretty much want, don't you?"

George: "I'd want to give you that little tape." (in reference to tape George made for us)

Matt explains what we want

Tape goes off

Tape on again

Matt: "I can't hit 'em like you do though" (In reference to harmonics on a fiddle)

1. Excerpt from "Hungarian Dance Number 5"

George plays while Matt and Sara discuss equipment and setting up microphones.

George shows Matt how to play harmonics and vibrato

George talks of contemporary violinists

George gives opinion of what a fiddler should listen to and learn

Matt: "I want to learn some Swedish and Finnish music."

George: "Stick around here buddy and I'll teach you some Finnish music in a hurry."

George: "You aren't recording now, are you?"

Sara explains why recorder is on

George in low voice: "I'm a bugger, I'm a dirty old man."

George: "I'm an older guy with younger ideas."

George: "Im not that old. I'm 63."

George talks about where he's been during his life.

George talks about his status in World War II and in the copper unions and companies.

Mentions "Snyder" and "Krug" and Gene Saari

Story about when George was in Washington, D.C. when the war ended.

George talks about when he was a teacher.

George talks about hobbies him and his wife have.

George tells how he got started on the fiddle. *[He really wanted to play piano accordion. Took lessons.]*

George played in Copper Country Symphony. Mentions Dr. Marki Nisinen from Suomi College.

Mentions Sibelius' "Finlandia" and playing at the Carriage Theater in Hancock.

Mentions Chicago Civic Opera Center stars

George: "And then we had the Chicago Civic Opera Center star~~s~~up (at Hancock).

George talks of playing drums in big bands.

George: "My one love was violin".

George: "That stuff I played at the station". (In reference to playing jazz tunes earlier at the Standard gas where Sara and I first met George.

George tells how you have to "goof up" a jazz tune when you play it -- "You can't play it straight".

2. Tune: Jazz tune

"I never played it that way before."

George tells how he teaches the Suzuki method

George tells how you can put gum paper on the finger board of the fiddle.

Matt: "How'd you learn all the old Finnish stuff?"

George talks about his father and how he played and other sources he learned from.

↳ "He used to squeak the stuff." Played in some bands.

George mentions John Hill; *he'd sing old Finnish songs.*

George tells story of his father's favorite song.

George tells about the song "At the Spring" and he translates the words.

George tells why his father came to America: *to avoid Russian Army.*

3. Tune: "At the Spring" *Rudy Kemppe identifies it as "Lahteella"*

George tells story of playing song by the willow tree for his father's spirit.

George picks up violin

George explains that he's having trouble remembering songs.

George tells about the Koustinen Festival.

George tells about a Finnish/Swedish fiddle group that came to Calumet in 1976 *for Bi-centennial*

Konsta Yulha compiled Finnish folk tunes

George tells story of song he is about to play.

4. Tune: Unidentified

Matt: "Did your father use vibrato when he played the fiddle?"

George: "No"

Mrs. Nousianen talks to George about some business pertaining to the Standard station.

5. Tune : George sings song with "very strange Finnish words".

George sings this song and points to his wife who is about to leave. She smiles and laughs.

George translates words: *I was, I was a dumb, dumb guy because I married this broad. I did exactly what my mother says, but it brought me nothing but grief.*
George plays the tune on his fiddle.

Tune: Dumbhead

George explains next song

5. Tune: "We'll Get Along" *Dad's out in the forest cutting trees, and mother's home making bread.*

George talks through words in Finnish and explains some of the words. George learned above song from his father.

End of Tape I Side A-1

Begin Tape I Side A-2

George explains and translates song his father used to sing about the biblical Noah.

7. Tune: Song about Noah
sings, then

George plays both parts to this two part round song.

*Trans: Old G'ga Noah was quite a guy.
And when he went in the ark,
He planted very carefully all
kinds of wine vines,
which can even be found today.*

George's wife exclaims that she is leaving

George tells of how he learned the above song with his father: *"I was always a bass and he was a tenor."*

George explains the next tune

3. Tune: "Mustalainen" (The Gypsy) *Everybody in Europe plays it. It comes from German classical music.*

George tells about gypsies in Finland

Matt asks about "kalevala"

George discusses kalevala

George tells about dress he ordered for his wife

George explains how he will play by himself for a concert

George talks about Steven Foster

Matt: "Did you ever play for dances?"

George tells about when he played ^{for 4 years} with Charles Goivesta (Goivestan) *"Gus" Koivesta?* → *Piano accordion with three rows of buttons; George played drums + fiddle.*

Matt: "Were you born up here (Copper Harbor)?"

George: "Hancock"

George had his own band called "The Midnight Serenaders".

George tells about "Old Country Dances" at the "Otter River Hall" *at Tapio.*

Old man Huckula (*Hai Kkala?*) *had a hall there.*

Saturday nights - "The Harmony Twisters".

9. Tune: Finnish Polka-"that's old country" *(says name?)*

learned from Viola Turpenen

George tells about Viola Turpenen. *Saw her play dances at Finnish Hall in Painesdale (sp?) when in his early teens.*

George helps us spell title of next tune

10. Tune: "Kulkurin Valsi" (Traveler's Waltz) *"That's like the Finnish National Anthem."*

George explains how to spell the next tune

11. Tune: "Orpo pojan Valsi" (Orphan Boy's Waltz)

End Tape I Side A-2

Begin Tape I Side B-1

George: "It's a left handed monkey wrench."

This was in reference to a question from Matt asking why the fiddle died out in the Houghton/Hancock area.

George tells about Konsta Yulhä.

George claims he's related to President Kekkonen

George talks about the Russians destroying the surrounding cultures

George talks about the Finnish craftsmen that work on the Moscow palaces in Russia for the 1980 Olympics.

George talks about his vacation to Finland

George tells about bands he saw in Finland → *Very few Finnish. We saw traveling Italian bands + traveling Polish orchestras, Russian, German*
George gives narrative on "folk musicians"

George tells about the patriotic songs he's about to play

12. Tune: Patriotic tune from Savolaisten

"Savolaisten Laulu" *The song of the Savo people. Dad "always sang it."*
(song)

Changed mike placement: put mikes together in a T

13. Tune: "Beer Barrel Polka"

George on Chromatic Harmonica

14. Tune: "Mona Lisa"

on Chromatic Harmonica

Matt: "Sorry to interrupt you" (in reference to changing mikes)

15. Tune: Konsta Yulha's favorite waltz *(on fiddle)*

George explains tune

16. Tune: Savolaisten Laulu

George explains patriotic songs and Savo regiments and how they used the songs.

George recites words to next song

17. Tune: patriotic song

(Northern)

18. Tune: "Pohjolaisten Laulu" or "Marssi" (March)

George: "That's patriotic as heck boy"

*Greetings, land of the north.
Your heroes are returning from the war.*

George recites translation and says it's a greeting song.

George explains next song and difference between R's in German, English and Finnish

George explains swearing in the Finnish language

George explains Finno-Ugric language

Sara and Matt explain their ethnic backgrounds

George: "And me, I'm pure Finnish, 100%."

George explains a song, recites translation

George picks around on the fiddle to find key for the song he recited

George tells about Viola Turpenen song which related story of the sinking of the Titanic.

19. Tune: Turpenen Song about Titanic (a waltz)

20. Tune: excerpts

George: "excerpts"

George messes around on fiddle

George recites words to song in Finnish and then in English

22. Tune: Song about lover leaving for a new country

"Under the Choke Cherry Tree"

George talks about the Finnish language and how it is onomopoeitic

Matt inquires about lullabies

23. Tune: unidentified

Matt asks about embellishments

George explains his style of playing

George pulls out concertina, "I'll play a song in Finnish".

George explains "lumberjack play" → ^{plays} Been playing for 40 yrs. in Finland.

George: "It's a footstomping song".

24. Tune: "Tukkijoella"

George on the concertina

George spells title and talks through and translates words to Raattiko

25. Tune: "Raattiko" ("That's one of the favorites of everybody")
Raattiko is a hidden glen or a vale. To that place all the old maids will be taken so that the bachelors won't find 'em again.

George on concertina

End of Tape I, Side B-1

Beginning of Tape I Side B-2

George relates story of his granddaughter

26. Tune: Pretty Foot

George: "That's American business."

George tells story of playing harmonica in the buggy at a young age.

Relates to
27. Tune: "Pattiko"

George on harmonica

"Pattiko" George on concertina

George talks about his musical talent

George tells about how he acquired concertina

George explains title to next song

28. Tune: "Oma Marijeka Pegli" *[Old Mary Ironing (Clothes)] Yankovich used to play that.*

George explains how to play the concertina

29. Tune: "Smile Awhile And Kiss Me" (Sally do?)

World War I song

George tells about playing in restaurant

Matt tries George's concertina

George quietly plays the violin

Matt plays concertina

George shows Matt how to accompany himself

30. Tune: "Play Fiddle Play"

Hungarian Gypsy melody

George learned that from a band he played with

George talks about his childrens musicianship

31. Tune: Croatian--"My Wife is Drunk and I Have to Take Her Home." *Kereke played.*

32. Tune: "Julidia Polka"

Frankie Yankovich tune

Mrs. Nousianen enters and George repeats how his family plays music together

George talks about the piano that's sitting next to him. Mentions Dr. Martin--

we are in Dr. Martin's house at this time.

George asks where we are from

We tell George about Northland

Matt asks about the Mandan Hayseeds

33. Tune: Unidentified Italian song
cars in background

George talks about Italian singers

George talks about the Calumet theater and all the people that appeared there

George talks about the Copper Country during the mining boom

Tape ends

End of Interview