

LOG OF SESSION WITH FELIX MILANOWSKI

November 7, 1980

Collector: Jim Leary
Informant: Felix "Fel" Milanowski
Front St.
Ashland, Wisconsin.

1. Collector's announcement.
2. "Wajna Skza", kind of a waltz. The "old timers used to always play that."
3. F. talks about his folks coming in the 1890's. Dad came with his brother who bought a farm near Sanborn. Dad named "Burt."
4. Mother's family had relatives here. She came with her brother. ~~KW~~ Her name was Stephanie Kwiatowski.
5. Four boys and three girls, lost a boy and a girl. Felix born in 1912. He was the only one who played music. Uncle bought him a button accordion when he was 12.
6. About house parties with dancing and lunch, homebrew and whiskey, "just about every weekend." When about 15 or 16 years old, Felix began to play at these parties for a few bucks a night.
7. Sleigh ride parties in barns east of Ashland. Would leave the party at three or four in the morning, then make it to church in Ashland, 5:30 mass.
8. About learning to play from records. G'ma had a record player, and he knew someone who worked at a record store and got a discount.
9. Felix played manytunes over and over again: polkas, waltzes, and some schottisches.
10. F. describes the broom dance.
11. On playing a favorite tune two or three times as an encore.
12. On playing for weddings. He recalls playing for two full days at Roman Kotny's wedding. Plenty of food, tubs loaded with ice and beer. F. doesn't recall much singing at weddings.
13. The Polish frequently met at Pufall's Tavern's upstairs (where the spot Tavern is now on 14th st.).
14. F. doesn't recall any Polish polka bands, but mentions several Poles who used to play for movies at the theatre or for dances: Ed Kercewski (sp?) and a Rapinski boy. They'd play with violin, piano, maybe a couple cornets, and a saxophone.
15. F. mentions a Polish Club years ago which used to have ~~uni~~ uniforms and hold picnics. He's vague on this.
16. Felix talk about ~~playing at the~~ going to the Bohemian Hall, the "bright spot of the whole east end."
17. F. mentions his Aunt Lucille Milanowski who was "a crackerjack"

- button accordion player and later bought a piano accordion. She used to spell him at dances.
18. F. tells how his uncle bought him his accordion at the Garland City Music store in Ashland some 65 years ago.
 19. F. talks about playing for a party of wealthy people connected with a mining company. Played from midnight to six and made \$5.
 20. F. talks about playing at home for himself, at church the previous Christmas. The house parties ended in the late 30's, early 40's. When the cars came in and people no longer lived near their work.
 21. F. recalls the bustle of the Ashland shoreline in earlier days.
 22. F. gives background about his own employment. Started at 16, working weekends on the docks. Then put in 37 years with Am. Can at the paper mill. Been retired six years.
 23. Plays "Piya Kuba do Jakuba" (Let's All Drink to Each Other") Felix then gives the words in Polish and provides a rough translation: let's all drink together and those that don't drink are gonna get the cane. Used to play this at parties.
 24. Plays "Filon."
 25. Billy Graham's favorite hymn.
 26. There's "a Swedish tune that we gotta get in here." Plays "Nikolina."
- (END OF TAPE ONE)
27. "Bells of St. Mary's" (with sleigh bells).
 28. F. talks about how he would like to record the bells of various area churches.
 29. Plays "Pytala Sie Pani!" He plays it through once again and sings the words this time.
 30. F. talks about speaking Polish at home and learning Polish and English at school, with a little Latin in between. Talks about being whacked with a rubber hose for misbehavior.
 31. On singing Polish in the Holy Family Church. Polish hymn singing stopped "about 1950." Younger generation didn't understand the words. F. recalls the choir had 50 to 100 people and the congregation sang along with the choir. F. calls Holy Family "the most beautiful church around," many other churches around are like gymnasiums.
 32. A "German Dance tune" that Felix doesn't recall the name of.
 33. We make arrangements for our next session.