

TAPE INDEX

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND RADIO PROGRAMS

Jerome Wojta
Two Creeks, WI
May 3, 1988

Recorded by Jim Leary
Ampex 632 tape
Nagra 4-L recorder

1. Announcement.
2. Born in home where he lives now in Town of Two Creeks. Went to local grade school, Two Rivers High School. Interested in music from early age. Always inspired by Romy Gosz who made music sound so interesting and so attractive. Listened to 78s on old phonograph, even turned phonograph by hand when it broke. Joined glee club in high school, and Meister Singers in Two Rivers. Learned trumpet with help of high school music teacher. Formed Two Creeks Farm Hands in 1951, playing ever since. Really enjoys the music and entertaining people.
3. Born 1927.
4. From 1943 or so on, went to see Gosz play often. Romy declared "Polka King" then. Saw him at typical country dances. All ages from grandchildren to grandparents. Dances every night of the week. Wedding dances often on weeknights, generally open to the public. Public dances also common on Wednesday nights and during the weekends. Sunday dances at afternoon picnics also popular.
5. In 1949 at Palladium in Sheboygan saw Gosz, Duchow, and Six Fat Dutchmen all together. Seeing all the people dancing like seeing "big waves on the sea," a remarkable experience.
6. Wojta never played with Romy. Always admired his tone and ability. Tone very clear and inimitable. Had a very good lip, a "lip of steel." Tone was penetrating. As one musician says, a fellow like Romy comes along once in every 500 years.
7. Gosz had "a style all of his own . . . he would add a lot." Combination of Harry James and Spike Jones--J cites Cornet magazine. Music smooth and also humorous.
8. On Bohemian style trumpet playing. Flow of music smoother. Polish music choppy. German music similar, but Bohemian smoother and more easy going.
9. On significant bands in Manitowoc area. Lawrence Duchow always had a great band. Bob M'lada. Dick Fricke (sp?). People of Czech and German parentage, followed those musical traditions.
10. Sax Steiner operated out of Manitowoc. 7 piece band. In the 1940s advertised his band as "playing in the Romy Gosz style." A sax player and a good musician. Vigil Petska of Farm Hands plays Steiner's "Saxaphobia" (sp?). A jitterbug number that sax would go out amidst the crowd while playing.
11. Jerome sometimes called "Romy." Two Geralds already in his family, so he

didn't want to be called Jerry. After he began playing, some association with Gosz.

12. Band started in 1951. Had violin, accordion, drums, bass horn, trombone, trumpet, sax. Have had fairly stable band personnel. Turnover chiefly when a death occurred. For past 35 years mostly two trumpets, two sax/clarinets, drum, and bass. Has had piano, but hard to rely on in-tune instruments when playing out. So mostly a 6 piece.

13. Reckons polka music has had its highs and lows. Most popular in J's area until 1950s, but it still is not forgotten. J thinks it won't die because "it's too alive." Has been a lull in old time field, but J thinks it's going to revive. When he was in high school all he went to were polka dances, thinks this may come about for young people again.

14. About variations within WI Czech bands. Reckons music can be compared to voice, each one says the same thing a little bit differently. Some groups try to accentuate their individuality, others try to imitate. Thinks most groups try to do something a little different.

15. J's band similar to Gosz and his band's smooth sounds. Feels that he too is living with the music.

16. Name has to do with the fact that most band members lived on farms and worked on them. So the name was a natural and stuck. Band has always been a group rather than a band run by an individual.

17. Play many weddings, anniversaries, Czech Days at Norman, WI, occasional wedding shower but these have been on the decline. Wedding showers almost a standard occurrence until 10-15 years ago. A big dance, a big meal. General public invited. People contributed money or kitchen items to the couple. A wedding and wedding dance would follow within a few weeks.

18. In Belgian country wedding dance and shower combined in Luxemburg/Casco area.

19. On Czech and Belgian people in the region. Belgians love music and dancing. Kermess celebrated usually on Sundays in late summer early fall after church, after harvest. Giving thanks for all their blessings.

20. On the the "Rain Over" tunes. From "Prsi, Prsi" (Rain, Rain). Romy Gosz credited with talking about "Rain Over Mishicot" during his radio broadcasts.

21. J can't speak Czech. But knows that Romy added "We Left Our Wives At Home" to "Svestkova Alej."

22. J plays opening bars of "Svestkova Alej."

23. Trumpet work is a lot of lip work.

[tape runs out, end of session]