

Informant: Julius Chopp
Collector: Joel Glickman
Location: Informants home, Copper City, Michigan
Others present: Matt Gallmann (so-field worker), Mrs. Chopp
Date: Wed., July 20, 1979; Time: c. 10:00 A.M. (arrival)

Matt Gallmann finally reached Julius Chopp at home this morning on the phone after two tries last evening, and we went together to see him at his home in Copper City this morning. Clean, modest neighborhood, newer home. As we drove up in front, Julius was standing across the street talking to a neighbor(?) man, saw us, waved, crossed, told us to park in the drive way (I had parked on the street). Matt walked up with J. while I did so. At the side door entering kitchen, still outside, Matt spoke a little of our intent. J. seemed friendly, but a little suspicious, reserved; Matt told him he played a little on button accordion and offered to show it to him. Very positive reaction at this point, for us to bring the instruments (my concertina as well) and to come right in. Mrs. C., who had been at side door, inside, also welcomed us. They served us beers, Blatz in bottles. Mrs C.: "Is this kind o.k.?" J. played briefly on Matt's accordion; tune called Samo Nemojti. triple meter, re., girl friend seen with another man. I think Tommy Marincel of rural Ashland may have played this same tune for us as his first, must study tapes, re. this possibility.

J. played a few other pieces interspersed with conversation. He performs frequently on week ends with a partner, Jimmy Endrietti, at Mr. Pete's Bar in Hubble. He gave us dates for summer there, in response to our interest in hearing them play on a return visit. He also mentioned a Croatia festival, after we mentioned interest of some Ashland people in starting one, which is second Sunday in August. Mrs. C. was with us at kitchen table through out this segment, answered a phone call in kitchen, seemed anxious to get back to us, cut conversation politely short, explaining to caller that Julius was playing his accordion for "company." She suggested that we bring the equipment in. (Matt had mentioned taping in conversation before entering) J. concurred or at least in no way objected. At Matt's suggestion, we set up in living room. After testing levels on one song and playing back, we recorded a few others which J. then wanted played back as well, which we did. At one point earlier he said, it seemed with some humor, that if there were mistakes we could or should erase "that part." I suggested just letting the tape go and re-recording any songs he wanted to. He didn't seem to mind this and subsequently requested no retakes or erasures. We started tape a third time and J. played a few more selections, interspersed with conversation. He made comments which reflected an awareness and knowlege of the form and key schme of songs, even a few brief analytical comments while playing. Often songs had a I IV I (ABA) form, which barts he refered to by key (G, C, or F). His instrument is a Hohner, model name forgotten. He mentioned a Finnish accord. player-tavern owner in Mass we should see. (see Matt's notes). I asked where their parents were from. They named the town or dist. in Croatia where both sets had lived. (See Matt's notes) J.: c. "We met in a bar right here." Mrs.: c. (laughing) "What a way to just come out and say it." Both speak Croatia. Mrs. C. frequently suggested songs for J. to play, and offered other info. and translations during interview and was eager throughout to be helpful and hospitable. Some songs he declined to play as being to complicated or difficult on the instrument.

We took a break at conclusion of first side of cassette, which turned out to be the end of the taped part of the interview. There was considerable conversation that took place after this.

He was reluctant to get together with us again on or before Fri. (This trip): work to do but positive about us coming back in two or three weeks, at which time he would have a list of songs prepared to record for us. After taped part of int., he threw Matt and I each a peppermint, and was mildly scolded by Mrs. C. for this manner of presentation. His most suspicious moments were admonitions after taping that we not make a record (disc) from the tapes: c. "I ain't got the kind of money to fool with those big-time operators." We assured him or I did (Matt thinks, too much so) that the material was for educational use and he responded positively to this. C. "Oh, yeah, education, that's fine."

We had also ascertained that his brother, Hubert, living in the area, played mandolin, but that he is in poor health and out of practice. He had lost a younger brother in the (Korean?) War. Father had died when J. was 7, had not been a musician or musical influence on J. but had possessed a broken concertina which J. played with. We need to ascertain whether he is self-taught or what if any his main influences were, and where.

I guessed they were anxious to have lunch but visit ended on a friendly note. J. has a good sense of humor, and often a twinkle of sorts, handsome face, white mustache, Tall, seems powerfully built, in good physical cond. Acted fatherly, teacherly but not at all condescending to Matt re. Matt's accordion playing: c. "Next time, we'll play together." Technical advice given Matt early on re. bellows fixing (from inside, with bee's wax), reattachment of thumb loops, then before leaving re. fingerings.

J. is a keen musician, solid player, having excellent dynamic range: capable of very full sound, cresc., soft playing, deliberate contrasts. Solid rhythm, strong right foot tap on d.b. in 3 meter, sometimes heel. Rocking front to back and singing along at times. Played seated. Diverse repertoire: Croatian, Swiss, Ital., German, Perception of National styles and diffs. Early on I played a snatch of "Keel Row" on my Irish Anglo system single reed concertina. It is a Scottish tune. J.: Sounds like a bagpipe. This, though I had not said anything about the song. Later, Matt playing a Finnish tune in kitchen, J: (from bedroom) while putting away his accord. declared it was a Finnish song. His dress: green work uniform, c. 7" work boots. Wife, plain cotton dress, grey(?), bandana.

He had also mentioned that he had to work besides in his tavern (Chopp's, nearby, now owned by Bill Stimmic, also acc. player.) to put son(?) through college. His drinks were "cheap" (inexpensive) He mentioned stiffness and swelling in fingers and need for limbering up exercises on way to perform anywhere. Rubbed sore wrist which he said does not hamper playing.

Must ask about those other jobs done next visit.

Must mike his voice, He sings well but occasionally and softly/

c. 12:00 noon, departed

Outline, visit settings in sequence:

- most time spent
- I. Outside at door-short time
 - II. Kitchen table, all seated or Mrs. C. active
 - III. living room
 - IV. kitchen table area, standing, Julius in back briefly.
Can't remember if Mrs. C was seated or up.