

TAPE INDEX

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND RADIO PROGRAMS

Richard Ostrowiecki
Cudahy, WI
May 17, 1988

Recorded by J. Leary & R. March
Ampex 632 tape
Nagra 4-L recorder

1. Announcement.
2. Born in Milwaukee, folks from Mosinee. They played polka music, took R to dances. He sat on the stage and listened to bands.
3. Got a concertina at 12. Lessons at Lincoln Music from a 3-finger button box player. Now plays with four fingers.
4. Parents signed him up for lessons, took them for ca. three months. Rented a concertina at first, then got an old Italian Stradovox. Then got a used Star, wore it out, bought a new one.
- * 5. Likes Star. Lighter than Hengels, reeds better on Star than the Jet series. Never has had to have reeds worked on on his Star.
- * 6. Was already playing with just a drummer before high school. At Don Bosco high met a sax player whose folks were from up north too, then a three piece band. Went to Lincoln Music after school to look over sheet music. Maynard Dulak of sax.
- * 7. Folks had Stycznski and Dombrowski records, R loved trumpets. No local bands seem to have them. Got a trumpet player. Their sound a novelty in the area.
8. R's brother couldn't quite play concertina, took up drums. When R's original drummer quit after 12 years, brother eventually played for a few years.
9. Need a snappy, fast, upbeat drummer, almost a fifth beat for the Polish style. Not an easy drummer to find.
- * 10. Not many Polish style bands in Milwaukee. Mostly played Slovenian. Some local musicians in the Chicago style. Other locals from up north in two piece, concertina/drum "Bevent Style" (after area in southern Marathon County near Portage County border).
- * 11. R has a shirt-tail relation from Bevent. Joanie played concertina differently. R would try to play a full sound, she would chop it and break it.
- * 12. R tries to illustrate Polish concertina substyles. A Chicago/Stevens Point old time sound comes first, "The Old Barn Dance." Plays "Johnny's Knocking," tries to drop a finger out, to capture the Bevent Style. Extra grace notes on melody line, second melody with left hand.
- * 13. Concertina/drum combination popular in Milwaukee because it's cheaper. Parents no longer paying for much of the wedding, young folks need to economize.

14. Five years ago, R would pay \$50 a man for a five piece: \$250. Now generally \$80-120 a man.

15. Played at Melody Bar once a month, Blue Canary twice a month, Marchesi's near Holy Hill. Two Rivers was a place where they were well received. [Peculiarly R under the impression there were no local bands in this heavily Bohemian area.]

16. Parents would take R to see Art Altenburg play quite a bit. Dad had grown up with Art. Also went up north, inspired by Norm Dombrowski, Alvin Stycznski, the Polka Stars, the Cavaliers.

17. R's own band stayed pretty consistently in the same style, but would do a wide range of songs.

18. R enjoys all style of music. Thinks of Dutchman style as oom-pah-pah beer garden music. Concertina in the band with Dutchmen bands to carry the rhythm, other instruments carry the other parts.

19. R used to do some bellow shaking until he had to get bellows rebuilt. Doesn't do this anymore.

20. Thinks Blazonczyk does an excellent job, different from Stycznski, can't really explain the difference.

21. R plays a tune to Leary can take a picture, "one of my Pa's favorite songs," "Mary's Knocking."

22. March reckons we have to leave for Altenburg's.

23. R's daughter Toni plays "A Tisket, A Tasket" on clarinet. She's just started on the instrument in school. Eleven years old, lessons for four months.

[end of the session]