

TAPE INDEX

Jim Leary
March 18, 1985

Ed Piller
322 Scott Ave.
Waukesha, WI

1. Pretty Dancing Girl, a Bernie Roberts tune.
2. Just Because.
3. Battle Hymn of the Republic.
4. Lindenau Polka.
5. Lauterbach Waltz [furnace kicks on].
6. Mariechen.
7. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You.
8. In the Good Old Summertime.
9. Kinder Polka [from Vitak-Elsnic].
10. Cherry Polka.
11. Round the Corner.
12. Kinder Polka.
13. Lindenau Polka.
14. Repasz Band [from Patek Music in Chicago].
15. Grandfolks came over from Germany. Parents born in the states, now both dead. E. born 8/29/15.
16. Started playing one row button accordion, wore it out. Got a two row Italian, wore it out. Was 8 or 9 when dad got him a Pearl Queen concertina for \$110. Later got a concertina through Pat Watters in Minneapolis, wore it out. Presently has an \$1100 concenterina bought from a shop on Sth. 12th St. in Milwaukee.
17. Born in Medford, WI. Never left home until after 21.

18. At 24 went into service. Had his Pearl Queen with him, but sent it back when the Army went from Iceland to England. Played piano accordion in Germany until the bellows went.

19. Dad was Otto Piller, mother was Mary. Neither played much music. Dad played drum in a drum and bugle corps when in school. Born in Appleton or Neenah-Menasha area. None of E.'s six brothers and sister played.

20. E. just liked music, doesn't know quite how he got started. He was only 8 or 9.

21. Played for house parties. Didn't have too many tunes. Just a "few country families would get together" with home brew or whiskey. Sometimes played all night.

22. Owned a tavern, "Ed & Kathy's," for 12 years. Wasn't enough in it to make a living. Put a floor in the garage for dancing and parties. Sometimes hired music on Labor Day weekends, but he would take over at one a.m. and play all night. Located on highway 64, 8 miles NW of Medford.

23. Did plenty of working in the woods, often alone. Cut popple. E. generally out there alone in the early Spring. One time was knocked out by a tree, life saved by a hard hat. "Wasn't worth a damn" after that season. Wife wanted him to get out of the woods. Worked a few more years. Annual lull from early July until after Labor Day. Found work in Chicago through a fellow he knew "from up home." Stayed a month or so putting in foundations, doing "bull work."

[Tape One Ends]

24. A friend from up north wanted E. to be a mechanic at L&W construction in Brookfield. Worked there a year and a half, overhauling all sorts of engines. Was laid off, worked for another outfit (High & Warner?). Worked 12 years on maintenance, til age 67.

25. Still working on cars and trucks for people all over Waukesha. Hands out a small business card for advertizing, rest is word of mouth.
26. Had filling station 1949-1954 til it burned. Couldn't get a City Council permit to rebuild. Got work in St. Paul with a windshield glass outfit. Bought a tavern in fall 1954, a few days later could have bought a gas station, but was committed to the tavern. Ran the place from August 1954 through Spring 1966.
27. Played concertina every weekend. People came from 50 miles around. Played all Sunday afternoon. A Krueger boy played on guitar, occasionally a violinist came in. Lotta Germans, but all kinds as clientele.
28. Hired a band on "special occasions"--birthday parties for four or five people.
29. Mentions five others who once played concertina in the Medford area. Only one other now playing. Lotta piano accordions in that area.
30. Switched from button accordion because music wasn't as available, concertina was the going thing.
31. Had four lessons from Joe Booher (sp?). "Just a concertina player like myself."
32. Ed follows mostly numbers on the concertina sheets and can tell full, half, and quarter notes, "but that's about it."
33. Sent for much of his music from Henry Silberhorn of Chicago. From Patek in Milwaukee and Watters in St. Paul too.
34. E. can't play just anything, plays "what comes to me."
35. His fingers are very large, but he's used to a small buttoned concertina and couldn't adapt to big buttoned models.
36. E. doesn't have time to play with concertina clubs in Waukesha area. He recalls some gatherings in Medford and Marshfield with local players and people

coming from Minneapolis [probably Pat Watters] to put on displays. Never felt good enough to play in this company.

37. Has played in a few taverns in Milwaukee and Waukesha areas--places where he went with his co-workers on payday or weekends. Younger crowd doesn't go for concertina music today.

38. E. wants to play cards and music with local Seniors on Wednesdays, but hasn't found the time yet.

[THE SESSION ENDS]