

Collector: Jim Leary

October 31, 1980

Informants: Fritz & Angie Swanson  
Sanborn Road

I arrived at the Swanson's around 12:30. The previous week I had suggested that I come back with a 78 record player so that the couple could listen to some of their old records before deciding which ones to sell to the Folk Music Project. When I got to the house Fritz was napping, but he got up quickly. As I played the records, Fritz was especially attentive, particularly when any accordion music came on. In between cuts, Fritz lamented that his fingers used to move swiftly, but now he's "all played out" (an appropriately bittersweet metaphor for an old musician). His main pleasure he reckoned was chewing snoose. Angie scolded him a bit, telling him to "get up and chase women like the doctor told you." Unfortunately Fritz, leaning heavily against his walker, had trouble even getting up to walk to the sink and spit. He told Angie again that he was "all played out."

After a few 78's had spun around, Angie declared that she had to leave for awhile to help her daughter-in-law. I could have any record I wanted for 75¢ each. As she left, I put away the record player and pulled out some tapes. Aided by Northland's fast cassette copier, I had made copies for Fritz of the sessions I recorded from Rose Swanson's tapes (see notes on my 10-31-80 session at Rose's). I asked Fritz if he would mind listenin to the tapes so that I could get him to identify the tunes he'd played, and give me their spellings as well. He agreed and we spend a pleasant hour or so going over the material. Then Fritz offered to let me make a copy of a tape he'd made with Ole Lear. I accepted and we went over that session too, getting the titles in Swedish, their spellings and translations (see tape index for details). From time to time, Fritz allowed himself a little modest bragging. Speaking of another accordion player, Bob Mathiowetz, Fritz reckoned that Bob played at the Indian Lake tavern, but people wouldn't dance until Fritz started to play. Toward the end of the session, Angie returned. I packed up my equipment and thanked them for their patience and generosity. They returned my thanks and asked me to come back any time - particularly if I could bring "my friend that plays the button accordion" (Matt Gallman). I'll have to do that.