

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND/TAPE INDEX

Lois Rindlisbacher Albrecht
Cameron, Wisconsin
January 23, 1990

Interviewed by J.P. Leary
Nagra 4-L recorder

1. Announcement.
2. Otto Rindlisbacher used to play the violin for silent movies in Rice Lake.
3. Otto thought a lot of Thorstein Skarning, with whom he toured. [vague recollections by Lois]
4. At one time had a Hawaiian group comprised of five people, Otto and Iva played lead parts, Spanish guitar and Hawaiian guitar. Also had a little dance band in which they both played accordion, also switched off on banjo, mandolin, and piano. Played at Richardson's Pavilion and at various area dance halls, including the Pines in Bloomer.
5. Played at a few Sunday church services, O on violin, I on organ or piano. Barron County Normal School also in Rice Lake, Lois and Laurel students there; parents took the students and teachers to perform at the Duluth radio station, WEBC? Iva had formed a guitar band from some of the students, Lois played a guitar solo.
- * 6. "I can remember my mother playing the Viking Cello . . . " There were no frets. " . . . It was beautiful when she played." [DHD] Played mostly at home, but sometimes played publically, including at the National Folk Festival.
7. Regarding the Wisconsin Lumberjacks. Iva wrote a script for what they would do on stage. Practiced once a week. Eventually did a dress rehearsal. "It was a skit of a lumbercamp, the things that took place there . . . one of the men would tie a scarf around the upper part of his arm. And they would dance together, the men." [DHD?] Also worked a Swedish cook into the skit.
8. Otto played Swiss accordion some with Lumberjack Band. Frank Uchytel sang.
- * 9. On Swiss music played by parents. [Lois shuffles her notes.] "I can remember all my life of hearing Swiss music, because my grandparents came from there . . . " Otto had a large collection of Swiss records he'd play, and every year a large chorus of Swiss singers came up from Monroe. Also played Swiss music for dances among Swiss people in Rice Lake area. [edit so that quote leads from Swiss music to playing for Swiss dances, with records and Monroe chorus cut out?] John Giezendanner of Barron would perform with them, a good yodeler. Otto would yodel "for fun," but on in performance. Iva never sang out either. Moser Brothers before Lois' time, but she recalls hearing her dad talk about them.
10. Otto and Iva performed at the Majestic and El Lago Theaters. Iva gave demonstrations at Rice Lake High School on electric guitar. One of the first in the area to have an electric guitar. Iva authored a guitar instruction book, composed tunes, and taught at the Conservatory of Music in Superior.
11. Family played Swiss Bells at a Cheese Days festival in Monroe. Otto purchased Swiss Bells from a friend and decided the family should learn to play

the bells. Lois knows of a picture of family playing the bells in the Monroe parade on the back of a truck. The Stratman-Thomas phot of bell playing has Lois in it. L first played with family in Monroe around 1937 or 1938.

12. Stratman-Thomas comes to visit with her husband, Mr. Blotz. Very "common," i.e. down to earth people. Lois vaguely remembers recording sessions. "The recording took place at our home on Newton Street . . . usually in the living room." Sometimes the machine acted up and recordings had to be repeated.

13. Otto played Hardanger fiddle every day. At home during lunch times and during the evenings. Usually played at home rather than in the Buckhorn. Surprising that he knew this Norwegian instrument . . . "and yet he himself was full-blooded Swiss." [DHD] Otto attracted to the Hardanger because it was a type of violin.

14. Otto makes and repairs instruments, including wind instruments. Received bundles of bows from different schools to be rehaired. Also an excellent violin maker. Sold one to members of the Minneapolis and LaCrosse symphonies. Worked on his violins in the Buckhorn in between doing other things. Learned by himself, looked at books and practiced.

15. Otto did a lot of woodcarving and mechanical work. Carved little weather houses, put wooden things in bottles, carved chains, did dovetail pieces, erected a mechanical deer hunting exhibition with belts and pullies. One of Otto's bottles had a Swiss man and woman sitting in a restaurant eating, with various things on the wall. Otto was great on making things in miniature, including his miniature violins.

16. Otto helped Franz Rickaby, author of Ballads and Songs of the Shanty Boy. Lois recalls mention of Rickaby, but little more.

17. Otto learned tunes from Ojibwa Indians, wanted to write down the tunes so they wouldn't be lost. Otto could talk a little Chippewa with his Indian friends. After Otto's death, several came to pay homage from North Dakota. Otto reckoned he had been made an honorary chief. He got along well with the Indians.

18. Otto was very proud of his inclusion on the Library of Congress' Wisconsin LP.

[tape runs out/end of session]