

FIELDWORK NOTES

Interviewer: Philip Martin

November 14, 1984

German-American Project

Informant: Julius Henschel
Elkhart Lake, WI

I first met Mrs. Henschel, on an earlier trip to Sheboygan Co., when I stopped at a country tavern/hall to investigate a large gathering on cars outside. It turned out to be the county Homemaker's Clubs' fall sale, and while I was looking around and talking with some people, someone introduced me to Mrs. Henschel and told me her husband was an accordion player.

The Henschels live on Sexton Road (off Cty. J, several mi. north from Elkhart Lake, then left on Sexton, second house on left). I called and went out ca. 6:30 PM, after a long day of interviews at the Sunny Ridge Home in Sheboygan.

The Henschels were very friendly and made me feel at home from the beginning. I talked with Mr. Henschel briefly about his playing career, as we sat in the living room, a spacious, carpeted room in their recently-remodeled home. Then I set up the tape recorder and Julius got out his old 3 (4?) row button accordion.

I recorded one and a half reels (7") of tape on the Nagra, mostly tunes and background information, including stories of old-time weddings and dances in the home. Tunes included one especially interesting laendler-type brisk waltz, fairly difficult with three or four parts, learned by Henschel from a older local musician, Bennin (spelling?), now deceased. Bennin was a neighborhood butcher; this tune might be one for the documentary LP. Other tunes recorded included Du, Du Liegst Mir im Herzen, Lauterbacher, and Comin' through the Rye.

Mr. Henschel is accustomed to playing for dances, with his normal repertoire covering a wide variety of melodies from more modern sources, Roll out the Barrel, etc. This interview, however, focused on the older German tunes. He mentioned, by the way, that he and his wife had recently been up to a supper club in Kiel to see Myron Floren, the accordion player, perform.

Several times I turned off the tape recorder while Mr. Henschel tried to recall more of the older tunes I was asking about; he seemed to feel there were some others he knew but could not recall on the spot.

A follow-up interview could be interesting, to possibly record other tunes and information, also to get some pictures of his playing. He was a very good informant, seemed to enjoy the recording and reminiscing, and had a nice way of expressing himself and a good, firm voice.

Fieldwork notes by Philip Martin
11/25/84