

Sylvester & Bill Romel  
Posen, MI  
Ed Kania & Art Kole  
Metz, MI  
August 24, 1989

Interviewed by JP Leary  
Nagra 4-L

The Romels

1. Sylvester learned songs from his mother. 5 boys and 5 girls. Boys were the singers. Adolph, Sylvester, Ted, and Leo.
2. Memories of Alan Lomax. Came to Strzeleckis, Strzeleckis asked us to come sing. That's all. [short but okay]
3. Can't remember much about the session.
4. Mother from home Wascynski, a good singer, knew about 100 songs, "not from the paper, from her head, just like we did." [good quote]
5. She would sing in the house, boys would chime in. Learned long verses by hearing them over and over.
6. Used to sing while walking on the roads. Sang lots at weddings.
7. When S worked at Rockport Quarry was called a canary, asked to sing and whistle by the foreman when work was slow.
8. B. 1913 in Pulaski Township, Posen, Michigan.
9. S thought the 1939 recording was forgotten. Heard it 51 years later, was all shook up. [not a bad quote]
10. Three other brothers have died within the last three years.
11. S still a good dancer despite having an artificial leg. Can dance dances of all kind, but never liked square dances much. Preferred waltzes, hop waltzes, two steps, obereks, etc.
12. S sings along with tape of himself and brothers singing about working working the factory. [could be used in the program with some editing]
13. S hasn't got this piece on the tape I sent him, but he remembers the words. I promise to send it to him.
14. S recalls a little about what the song above was about. Someone comes over from Poland and works in a foundry. "He came from the old country and then he came to America. They were taking men's lives and were taking ladies veils away."

Bill Romel speaks about his singing.

15. In grade school the class would sing and, in third grade, teacher asked him to sing a solo. Used to sing while milking the cows with his parents. Then his sister Irene ran for queen of the Posen Potato Festival. She sang for her talent, people liked her singing, and she mentioned her singing siblings.

Brother and sisters sang for the festival of 5-6 years.

16. Bill sings Randy Travis Country songs.

17. Has sung one Polish hymn in church.

18. When he was small had no radio, used to milk by hand. Mother would start singing and family would just sing in the barn. Cows were more relaxed while songs were being sung. [could be used with some editing]

19. B likes to sing. When his mother died 10 years ago, singing recalled her and made life easier.

Interview shifts to Kania basement with Ed Kania and Art Kole on fiddle and Chandi Comfort on piano.

20. [a scratchy fiddle tune] A tune that Ed's dad, Felix, played years ago on the clarinet for square dances along with violin and drum.

21. I Loved a Boy and He Was an Artist (translated from the Polish), Kania on fiddle, Comfort on piano.

22. Ed on his dad, Felix. Wedding marches usually played before bride and groom went to church, another march played on the way back. [good quote]

23. Felix didn't sing too much at home that E remembered.

24. E describes the coming or Alan Lomax setting up a battery at their place. [good quote, splice with part of #23, telling Lomax to stop in Polish?]

25. F learned to play clarinet in the USA. Immigrated in 1900. Was in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Illinois, Minnesota, before finally settling in Posen. Was looking for a place where he liked the season.

26. E describes a photograph with his dad and two other musicians, Tony Wieczbyski (sp?) and a Skiba.

27. F would play with violins, drums, sometimes a mandolin or banjo.

28. E thought it was great to hear his dad. At first wasn't really certain that it was him.

29. Ed introduces and then plays a march his dad used to do the return from church. [not too bad, not as strong as Joe Strzelecki]

30. Marching just a short distance from their car to a granary or hall, no special steps done to the marches.

Art Kole plays and speaks.

31. Night After the Wedding (translation from the Polish). Art Kole, fiddle, and Chandi Comfort, piano.

32. Art describes a cassette he made for me from a house party. His dad's birthday in 1958. Walt and Bob Bartholomiej came over. The four had never played together. Played from 1 PM for seven hours. Art's dad on drums, Walt on violin, Bob on accordion, Art on guitar, violin, and accordion. Bob played some drums too. [use some of this, spliced with number 34?]

33. Art had just bought a tape recorder, just set up the microphone and let it roll.

34. On Walt as a fiddler in his prime: real good, played Canadian, Michigan, Polish.

35. Art has a bunch of old reel tapes made, but hasn't sorted through them all.

36. E recalls his dad's impression of why he was being recorded, didn't know it would go to L of C. [brief but might be useful]

37. A Schuplattler Dance, with Art Kole on fiddle, Chandi Comfort on piano.

38. An oberek in D. Screwed up version.

39. Grasshopper Polka.

[tape runs out before tune ends]