

TAPE INDEX

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND

Frank and Rose Pakiz
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Nagra Mono
Ampex 632 tape
Interviewed by J.P. Leary

1. Announcement. On highway 00 must W of highway 73.
2. Dad left for America at 17 in 1908. Worked in Chicago for Pullman Company as a welder. Worked on first all steel railroad car. Came to Willard in 1915, bought 120 acre farm.
- x 3. Slovenian people lured by land agent Cesnik. All cheap cutover land, was a house on place that Pakiz bought. Stumps. [For DHD: Nothing but stumps, they cut hay around the stumps . . . nothing but stumps and brush and a lot of stump.] Trained animals to haul milk to town on a stone boat.
4. Dad named Vladimir. "Mirko." He taught himself to read music. Was sent off to a monastery (?) school. Bought a piano soon after settling. Bought popular music of the day, liked Slovenian singing and directed plays.
5. They had a male chorus and he wrote out all the parts longhand. Gave piano lessons. Taught local musicians like Kutzler. John "Happy" Routar not so interested in lessons.
- 4 6. Kutzler and Routar were active button accordionists. [DHD: There was Johnny Goertz, quite a musician. He didn't understand music . . . but he heard the melodies and he pushed them out of the squeezebox.] Frank Almond (sp?) played too.
7. Mirko played tamburitza and zither, taught guitar too. Had a gang of 12-15 tamburitza players "before my time."
8. Then started male chorus with a dozen or so. Frank went all the way from tenor to bass. F born 1921. Chorus practiced all over the place before the church was built, even in the old land office building.
9. Male chorus sang for funerals and occasional doings in town. All Slovenian numbers. Accapella. F sang from notes, but a lot of the guys didn't. Lot of singers "monotones." Mirko worked with a lot of these guys. Had no tolerance if the notes were wrong. Would pound the note at the piano until the guy would get that note.
10. Kutzler a hard working fellow. Self-taught player. Quite a musical family in prior generations. Some were accordion builders. Local Kutzler would work all day, strap on his accordion at night and walk down the railroad track to town to play. No pay for this kind of music. Ditto for the singing.
11. John "Happy" Routar. The last day he played is what he played the first day. All tunes he brought over from the old country. Had about half a dozen songs that everybody knew and would keep repeating. People would sing especially in they got a few refreshments. F didn't get to too many of the old home parties. People went to town, radios came in. Before that they had nothing, even the houses weren't warm.
12. When F got his piano accordion, Mirko learned to play it once in a while for a wedding. Would invariably get to singing later in the evening. Ed Pekol might have some recordings of music from those old days. Had an old wire (?) recorder. Ed a little older than Frank, his dad played accordion. Ed is an uncle of polka band leader Jim Pekol. Ed plays a little bit too. Rigged up a recording device in the 1930s.

13. F's dad taught his two sons to play piano and also music theory. F always hated playing piano because he was facing the wall and couldn't see people. Wanted the accordion and got one at fourteen. Picked up a lot of his tunes by ear: "you didn't have money for notes." Learned local folk songs, some songs from radio, then got some sheet music when he started playing out.

14. Had a little dance band in high school. Started playing out on accordion at about age 19. Didn't play Slovenian music in high school. Got only \$4 apiece for playing a New Year's Eve in Loyal.

15. Things pretty slow after married until the kids got into high school. They started a German band. The accordionist moved away and Frank stepped in. Had bass horn, trombone, a couple cornets, accordion, drums. Jolly Musicians. Then Tiajuana Brass. Then played some rock.

16. Then F started playing on his own, or sometimes with a guy or two.

17. Knows "probably hundreds" of old time Slovenian tunes that he learned by ear as a kid. "They've been so overplayed that I hate to play them." The Slovenian group in Willard is trying to learn new songs. F gets tired of the old ones.

[music begins]

18. Beginning cut off of first tune, "Zidanja Marela" (Silk Umbrella Polka).

19. "Pod Mojem Okencem" (Under My Window).

20. A nice twin-tempoed number. "En Hribček Bom Kopal."

21. Some of the Slovenian songs have no dance tempos, then shift into waltz time. This associated with the wine harvest festival.

? 22. Clap dance. [DHD?]

23. Working on a broom dance now. Also likes a dance where four guys pass around a hat.

? 24. Frank and Rose sing. "Prišla Je Pomlad" (Spring Is Coming). [DHD?]

? 25. " " " " . [DHD?] "Suha Muha." They laugh at the end. It goes on and on. There used to be about twenty verses.

26. A number sung the other day at a funeral. F is shakey the first time through with the accordion. "Revered Virgin Mary."

The session ends.

one
for
Slovenian
show