

TAPE INDEX

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND RADIO PROGRAMS

Jerry Schneider of
Chilton, WI
Americano's Hall
Appleton, WI
May 4, 1988

Recorded by Jim Leary
Ampex 632 tape
Nagra 4-L recorder

1. Announcement.
2. Born in Chilton area in Jericho. Family bought a farm in 1950. J graduated from Chilton High in 1957. Had a very good band director. J had taken accordion lessons before high school, went to trumpet in school. Most of the people in J's band, including Ray Wettstein, who's been playing for 53 years, a student of the teacher, Marvin Huffman, who taught at Chilton for 35 years.
3. In 1957 after graduation started playing in Howie Bowe Band for 6 months. Howie not in it, but 3 fellows had taken it over. Then played with uncle Herbie Schneider from 1957-1967 when started his own band.
4. Dad didn't play music, but late uncle, Martin Schneider (died Dec. 1976), played in J's band. He and his brother Chuck learned a lot from him: a clarinet, tenor sax, trumpet, and excellent button accordion player.
- * 5. Button accordion played lots years ago, then not heard from 1940s through 1960s. Lots of instruments around. Music coming back. Chuck, Ray Wettstein, and Jerry all play button accordion. People really like it. J bought one 8 or 9 years ago and taught himself. Has a ways to go, "but we get by." Chuck bought his first in Innsbruck, Austria, on a tour.
- * 6. Thinks the instrument has appeal because of the sound, each one is different. They have a Hohner, a Melodia, and another in their band. People like that variety and the fact that "maybe grandpa played it years ago." Some people bring grandpa's accordion to J at a job, ask him to play a tune so they can hear how it sounds.
- * 7. German bands from J's areayear. Syl Groeschl has "a real good German band." Sings well, has the band going strong today. Lots of good German bands down around Milwaukee. Always brings one in the 3rd Sunday in May. Die Sterne Der Heimat, Austrian Trio Grande.
8. J's band has Bill Halbach on German vocals. B studied some German in school. "He knows what he's singing." Whole family very musical and good singers. B has played with J 17 years.
9. First LP has a polka converted from a German march, Bill wrote lyrics to it.
10. J reckons each polka band has its own sound. Reckons his band has done well "with the German market."
11. Does a lot of tunes Minnesota Dutchman bands do. Don't have a concertina

but have worked a few numbers with button accordion taking a part as concertina might.

12. Manitowoc-Kewaunee-Two Rivers area blessed with a lot of good musicians. J's band does some of the numbers. Bill sings "Tom Cat Polka," "At the Spring Waltz," depending on the audience.

13. J's band learns tunes from Milwaukee DP German bands, sometimes plays down there too. Will play the Schwabenhof on Labor Day weekend.

14. J fortunate to have versatile musicians who can switch instruments. Otherwise you're quite limited.

15. Howie Bowe had left that band when J played for them. Not in on any recording sessions. Doesn't know the vocalist, didn't really know Howie Bowe.

[session ends]