

Collectors: Jim Leary & Greta Swenson

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Informants: Moquah Dancers
Moquah, WisconsinETHNIC HERITAGE
SOUND ARCHIVE & RESOURCE CENTER
NORTHLAND COLLEGE, ASHLAND, WI

In late February Greta and I attended a blood pressure clinic at the Moquah Town Hall. On that occasion Greta suggested to members of the Moquah Men's Club and the Women's Community Club that a session for sharing ethnic pictures and artifacts might be a good plan. Accordingly, we arranged for a March 19 gathering. As luck would have it the session with Tom Johanik and friends had fallen the night before (see 3/18/81 notes). Tom, his wife Ann, Elmer Johanik, Joe and Helen Johanik all arrived. Absent from the previous gathering but present tonight were Jerry and Irene Novak, John and Tilly Lunda, Aili Lindahl, John Kramolis and Agnes Cervinsky. Excepting Mrs. Lindahl (a Finn wed to a Swede) all those present were of Czech or Slovak background, and most had been involved with the Moquah Dancers of the 1930's, late 40's and early 1950's.

Consequently, it seemed only natural for Tom Johanik to fetch his dad's old accordion following the picture taking session and coffee. With Jerry Novak assisting with an occasional vocal, Tom played the handkerchief dance, the Cardas, "Annie in the Cabbage Patch," and others while Joe and Helen Johanik, Elmer Johanik, John Kramolis, Tilly Lunda, and Ann Johanik danced. I was particularly pleased to be able to record these tunes since they were performed the night before only after the recorder had been put away.

After five dance tunes the men gathered around Tom to sing three or four songs, including the "Muzikanty" with its pantomiming of musicians performing. That number was the last of the evening as it was 10:30 and another late evening. As I packed up the equipment and the singers and dancers made ready to go, the usual fond recollections about the worth of their tradition were exchanged. And, as usual, sentiments were exchanged about how the Moquah Dancers ought to be revived. Perhaps, as Tom Johanik said, "If we can't find time to do it, maybe we'll have to make time."