

Informant: Julius Chopp
Mrs. Chopp

Ethnic Group:

Date: Tuesday, June 19, 1979

Fieldworkers: Matthew Gallmann
Joel Glickman

Telephone-9:45-Julius Chopp-His daughter answered and said that Julius and his wife were still out driving. She said that I could try to call back later tonight or tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. She is very friendly.

Wednesday, June 20, 1979 - Julius Chopp

Telephone - Daughter answered the phone. Julius came to the phone. He sounds like an elderly man. He said we could come over anytime. I made sure that I was bringing a friend. He said that he plays the accordian. He chuckled when I said that I've been trying to play the button accordian.

We left the campsite at about 9:30 and drove to Calumet. Joel and I arrived at Julius' house at 10:15. Julius was outside talking with an elderly woman that was sitting in her car. He walked up to greet us and we introduced ourselves as the woman in the car left.

We all stood by the side porch as Joel and I attempted to present our task presentation. Julius seemed a bit confused about our motives. I asked if he would like to see my button accordian and that was when Julius said, "sure, bring it in the house".

I got the accordian out of the car and we walked into the house and met Mrs. Chopp. I handed the accordian to Julius and mentioned that the man I bought it from cut the thumb strap off. Julius apparently misunderstood me and tried to show me how to use the shoulder strap. Then he noticed that the thumb strap was cut off. He commented that that was a ridiculous thing to do because you needed the thumb strap.

Mrs. Chopp asked us to sit at the kitchen table. Julius was talking with Joel while I asked Mrs. Chopp if they still spoke Croatian. She said yes and

asked if I was Croatian. I simply exclaimed no. I told her that I was interested in the language, but had only learned a few phrases such as "Dobar dan". Then she corrected my pronunciation and told me some more phrases such as "loku noc" (good night), "zbogam" (good-bye). I asked her if zbogam also meant "God be with you" and she agreed that it did. Mrs. Chopp sat down and asked me if I was Croatian. I exclaimed that I was Swiss and Polish. Mrs. Chopp laughed and said, "Oh, Polish, huh?" I agreed.

We all began to pay attention to Julius while he played a Croatian Waltz. Joel Glickman mentioned that he had heard Tom Marincel play that particular tune. After Julius Chopp finished the first tune he asked me, "Are you Swiss?" I acknowledged the fact and then Julius Chopp said, "Well I'll play "The Little Swiss Boy". Julius Chopp and Mrs. Chopp smiled and at the time I wondered whether the playing of this tune was in jest. Julius Chopp played the tune and then he put the accordian down.

Joel Glickman took out his concertina while Julius Chopp poured himself a brandy and water. While Julius Chopp was pouring a drink he asked me if my button accordian was in the key of G and C or C and F. I told Julius Chopp that I thought it was in G and C but I wasn't sure. (Even though I know it is in G and C). Julius Chopp told me he thought it was in C and F.

Julius Chopp mentioned that he got his accordian from Bennet Brothers in Chicago. Mrs. Chopp said that they got a discount in the Hohner button accordian from the Bennet Brothers Company because they were "in business". I think she meant that this was during the time that the Chopps owned Chopp tavern.

Julius Chopp explained that I should "tape the ends of the gold trim that fell off of my button accordian. Then he said that they fix bellows with bee's wax. If there is a hole in the corner you can pour bee's wax in the bellows to patch it up.

At this point I asked the Chopp's if they migrated to this country or if their parents did. They told me that their parents did. Julius was born in Copper City

and lived right next to the school house. He told us that if he stayed home from school he couldn't go out in the yard because he was supposed to be sick and being that he lived next to the school the teacher would see him playing.

Julius Chopp and Mrs. Chopp met each other at a bar in Calumet, Michigan.

Julius' parents were from Lokve, Croatia.

Julius Chopp went and got his accordian and played us an Italian song. Then Mrs. Chopp asked us to go get the recorder in order to record Julius Chopp.

Joel ran and got the equipment out of the car. While I was talking to Mrs. Chopp she referred to the button accordian as a button row.

Joel began to set up the equipment in the kitchen but then I suggested that we record in the living room because the acoustics might be better.

The recording session went very well. Mrs. Chopp was standing in the door way. Joel Glickman was running the equipment on the floor. Julius Chopp sat in a chair and continued to drink brandy and water. I sat at the couch and asked questions and took notes.

Julius Chopp taps his foot while he plays. He has very good control of his left hand especially on the breather button. He sang words on one of the songs in Croatian and English. During some of the songs Julius Chopp closed his eyes and sang along, in tones with the button accordian. He will kick his head back and hum along as the tune moves him.

When Joel Glickman played the tape back for Julius Chopp he mentioned that on the first recorded tune he didn't play "the correct bass notes".

During the interview Julius Chopp mentioned that he first messed around with his father's square concertina. I asked Julius Chopp if he learned anything from his father. Julius Chopp told me that his father died when Julius Chopp was seven years old.

Julius Chopp mentioned that his brother plays the mandolin. Hobert Chopp, Julius Chopp's brother would sit in with the accordian players at get togethers. I asked if they thought that it would be worth our seeing Hobert Chopp. They

said that he wasn't really a good musician. Then Julius Chopp began to explain tamburas. He spoke of them as "guitar size", "mandolin size", "bass size", and "the little one". Julius Chopp said that there wasn't any tambura band in this area. He did mention that there was going to be a Croatian festival in Baraga, Michigan the second week in August. There are supposed to be musicians from Milwaukee at this festival.

I asked the Chopps if they knew of the Gogebic Range Tamburitzans and they said that they did.

I asked Julius Chopp if he knew the old Croatian music of other forms besides the waltz and polka. Julius Chopp and Mrs. Chopp both mentioned that John Kezele was a great musician and that he knew kolos and some of the real old stuff.

I asked if the Chopps tavern was the only work that Julius Chopp did in his career. He said that he used to work out at other jobs so that he could put his boy through school.

The Chopps said that they have a daughter that works at a local bank and a son that lives in Indiana.

By the eighth song Julius Chopp was obviously getting tired. We had run to the end of the first side of tape. I suggested that we take a break and then we turned off the machine.

Julius Chopp said that he was having trouble remembering songs. It ended up that we will call him in a couple of weeks if we make another trip to the Upper Peninsula. That way Julius Chopp can "mark them songs down" and practice up.

Julius Chopp and Mrs. Chopp told us of how they used to have dances and music on Sunday afternoons. They said that it was mostly "middle aged" people around 45-55. Some young people came also; the ones that like that music. They would have the Tavern (Chopp's) "cleaned and ready" by 4:00 on Sunday afternoon.

Stimie's?

We talked about Bill Stimie's band in our first conversations and then

after the recording. Julius Chopp and Mrs. Chopp both seemed to think that the music was too loud. They don't like electric guitar.

Julius Chopp's repertoire consists of Italian, German, Swiss and Croatian songs. He plays some Frankie Yankovich and he watches Lawrence Welk.

I asked Julius Chopp if he learned any songs from the Lawrence Welk show. He wasn't sure but he said that they play the same songs all the time.

Julius Chopp says he only plays a little piano accordian.

The meeting ended on a good note. I played a Finnish polka on the button accordian. Julius Chopp was out of the room but he yelled, "that's a Finnish one, isn't it?" We gave Julius Chopp a release of rights form which he kept and said he would fill out later for us. We all seemed to be happy with the morning.

Julius Chopp mentioned before we left that him and his wife go to see Art Moilanen occasionally at Art's Bar in Moss, Michigan.