

TAPE INDEX

January 19, 1981

Collectors: Leary and Gallman,
With Janet Gilmore
and Sarah Poynter
Informants: Hugo and Hazel Maki
Finn Settlement
Washburn, Wisconsin

1. Hugo talks about his folks coming from Finland to Minnesota lumber camps to Montreal Wisconsin mines, to Washburn's Finn Settlement.
2. Parents had relatives in the area who'd gotten land through a land agent. They arrived around 1910, latecomers to the "Finn Settlement."
3. Father played violin and button accordion. Hugo learned from his dad.
4. Hugo played violin, button accordion, then various piano accordions. He now has his third 120 bass accordion.
5. About how playing for crowds without amplification will wear out an accordion.
6. Hugo's dad played all Finnish music. Used to play at the local Finnish Hall. Hugo first played there on a neighbor's acc. in about 1935.
7. Other Finnish musicians: Karl Kainu on violin (Wayne's uncle).
8. Traveling musicians played at Finn Settlement: the Johnsons from Oulu, the Maki Orchestra from Michigan. Viola Turpeinen played at Ashland's K. of C. hall.
9. Local Finn Hall lasted from ca. 1910 to 1940 or so.
10. Hugo born in 1920. Always "had a deep interest in music." Harmonica was first instrument played, at 14; one with a shuttle. Preferred piano acc. for its tone, range, versatility.
11. H's brother Ray plays; he had a brother Walt who played a bit.
12. Group singing when ministers come to the homes.
13. H admires Viola Turpeinen's playing, his "favorite." She was "precise . . . good timing, rhythm, and good fingers . . ."
14. 1942 Hugo played violin to Alvin Santala's piano acc. (he now lives in Black River Falls). Played at Long Lake school and at Minersville Hall. Gave his violin to Jim Dibbell, later. First song learned on violin was "Alice Blue Gown." Played mostly "modern" with Santala.
15. Played at Fishers' Corner for "five bucks a night" with ^{Alice} Morris Olson as "Mak and Ole." Olson on guitar, Hugo on piano acc.

16. Hugo then played with guitarist Jim Zinski from Washburn. Played at "Morty's Bar" in Bayfield. Zinski and Olson both played acoustic guitar.
17. Hugo also filled in at wedding dances with Knute Wallin from Brandview. They had the banjos and guitars, but they wanted the accordion. H plays a few Swedish songs.
18. Most of H's bands tried to play some of "the modern ones that were popular at the time." Regarding dance tunes, tried to mix schottische, polka, waltz, two step. "Play two or three polkas in a row, then you take a little breather." Occasionally somebody wanted a broom dance: march, then fast polka, then march again.
19. We "played a lot of Finnish numbers." Also played Polish and Bohemian stuff, mentions "Blue Skirt Waltz," "Barbara Polka." Hasn't learned too many "modern" numbers in the last few years. Hugo figures people are more likely to dance to the old numbers.
20. Hugo also plays country/western stuff.
21. H. considers himself pretty much retired unless there's a special wedding dance.
22. His four piece band at Fisher's Corner had accordion, lead guitar, rhythm guitar, and electric bass. Bass guitar player quit and Bill Erickson of the Gambles store came on as a drummer. Erickson now with "Big John and the Badmen." This band together roughly four years.
23. H. retired from the DNR in 1976 after 31 years. Kept cows, up to 35 head. Beef cattle too. On the grind of working a job, playing every Saturday night, and doing the chores too.
24. Raised four daughters, lost the youngest to complications of a kidney transplant.
25. Hazel from "Ondossagon Country, Barksdale." Her brother used to own Fishers Corner. She's German on mother's side, Scottish on father's side. Mother's dad a brewmaster in Columbus, Wisconsin.

(END OF TAPE ONE)

26. Discussion of learning from early 78's, by ear. Picked up most of his stuff in the later 30's. Hugo used to be able to pick up songs on one listen; nowadays many songs are a little more complicated. Years ago, the tunes were more straight."
27. Hugo talks about playing with a band and the importance of having instruments in tune.
28. Hugo begins to play a Viola Turpeinen waltz, "Raakain" (sp?) which translates as "lovingly."

29. A drinking song by Turpeinen: "Let me drink, and let me play and sing my song." The ~~Fin~~ words were something like "Eino Mina Uri . . ." I'll have to check this title against VT's recorded output.
 30. Hugo talks about growing up speaking Finnish, couldn't speak English when he started school; but "most of the Finnish I know is half English.
 31. "Kulkuri~~m~~ Valssi" (Vagabond Waltz).
 32. "Life in the Finnish Woods."
 33. We also decide to break out the beer and wine.
 34. Matt talks about learning songs from Hugo's brother Ray. Then he plays the Swedish version of "Kulkuri Valssi." (The sound is kind of screwy here; I must've moved the microphones to get Matt).
 35. Matt plays "Njulan Talkoo Polka" on button accordion.
 36. Hugo plays Viola Turpeinen's "Kauhavan Polkka" (I think).
 37. Hugo talks about Wild Rose or Vili Ruusi (sp?) which he can't recall how to play.
 38. Hugo plays his "Russian Stomp." Neil Meyer~~s~~ enter~~s~~ at this moment.
 39. Hugo jokes about his wife.
 40. Hugo reckons his bands didn't really have an act but just played.
 41. He talks about how people polkas. At Benoit's Avalong they wanted more and faster polkas as the night went on.
 42. Hugo muses about wedding dances. He's on the second generation for some families.
 43. Hugo danced to Fritz Swanson's music at the White River Hall and thought he was good, played "real nice polkas and schottisches and two steps." Hugo knew Fritz's wife Angie Guski.
 44. ~~Hugo~~ knew Bob Hekenson, but doesn't think he plays much Swede stuff.
 45. Another fast Viola Turpeinen polka. Title ? ?
 46. When Hugo's band played at Fisher's Corner, his wife's sister sang for the band.
- (END OF TAPE TWO)
47. A Swedish waltz. H can't recall the title.
 48. "Your Cheatin' Heart"--what you call "rub belly music." This is what Hugo would play about midnight.
 49. H talks about the pleasures of meeting many people when playing.

50. The Poles and the Yougoslavs "go all out for a wedding." Sometimes Hugo played so long and so hard that his fingers would work in his ~~slip~~ ~~slap~~.
51. H. recalls being dripping wet playing wedding dances in the summer.
52. H. talks about how we should record him with Jim Dibbell.
53. H. talks about songs that never get old: "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue," "Darktown Strutters Ball." He plays "The Waltz You Saved For Me."
54. H. and his wife used to dance alot. They courted for 2½ years. Nowadays he wouldn't wait around so long.
55. H. talks about getting free drinks whenever he goes into local taverns; the result of his notoriety as a musician.
56. H. plays "Maillman Matti."
57. H. " "Rattiko." He recites a few of the words and talks about putting the bachelors behind the hill. They used to dance this as a "Finnish Smooth Waltz" in the local Finnish halls. Something like a two step.
58. H. plays a Finnish schottische (well, so he says); actually he soon realized that this tune is "Johan Pa Snippen," the Swedish tune.
59. Discussion of "Kukuri Kokuri" (sp?). H. recalls some of the words, but can't remember how to play it. "That was a long time ago."
60. H. talks about how he likes to get up early in the morning and make coffeex, hungover or not. Sometimes it's good to "bite the dog that bit you."
61. H. plays "Barbara Polka."
62. H. mentions some old time "English" pieces like "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Then he plays "You Belong to My Heart."
63. Another "old timer," a waltz, the name eludes Hugo.
64. H. talks about some of his daughters playing music; one played a tenor sax inhigh school.

(END OF TAPE THREE)

- ~~65~~. H. talks about how a tenor banjo sounds good with an accordion; mentions Knute Wallin of Grand View; Pete, of Maryann and Pete at Zar's plays banjo. Maryann once played with Hugo at Fishers Corner.
66. Some of Hugo's last sidemen were the xGreen Boys of Washburn;

- their band was called the "North Star Drifters."
67. When they played at Skip's bar (now Patsy's in Washburn), Skip called them ~~only~~ the "Washburn Hot Shots."
68. Hugo once played with Rodney Lahti of the Oulu Hot Shots at Jardine's in Port Wing. Hugo and Jimmy also played there for a smelt fry dance and a hunter's ball.
69. H. talks about Jack and Edna's Finnish tavern on 13 just past Port Wing. He played there one time and people went wild dancing to Finnish tunes. Phil Maki runs the place.
70. H. talks about ethnic mixture through "interlopers" in his home Finnish settlement. Very few of the original buildings left.
71. H. talks about their sauna, built in 1934, by his father who was a fine craftsman with a log construction.
72. H. talks about the process of making his cayote lures from the innards of beasts. It's potent smelling stuff and his wife won't let him have it near the house. He wears three different pairs of gloves to handle the stuff.
73. Hugo continues talking about his trap lines and about fishing. He tells an anecdote about crossing the cold water of the Little Sioux river.
74. About being on the election board in the town of Bayview.
75. Hugo also butchers beef cattle, hogs, and used to raise these beasts. Years ago they had an outbuilding for smoking, but it burned down finally.
76. About the necessity of being able to do a lot on your own when you "live out in the woods."
77. Hugo also works as a castrator in the neighborhood. He used to use a knife, but now works with a "bander." We talk about old timers who'd use their teeth to "dock sheep."
78. H. talks about the goats they've raised, their temperments and their foul smell. They also raised some sheep; one lamb was raised with the chickens and thought it was a chicken.
79. Neil and Hazel join into the conversation. They've been working in the kitchen on town tax information. The conversation shifts to heating with ~~wood~~ wood.
80. H. continues the theme of self-sufficiency in the woods by mentioning a snow plow that he built from his own design.

(END OF TAPE FOUR)

81. We discuss Finnish jokes. "Waino" and "Toivo" were the names used. H. "not much of a storyteller." John Leino in Washburn

"can rattle off" the Finnish jokes. "Some are pretty raunchy."

82. H. asks about how Janet and I got together.

(Break in the tape.)

83. Matt and I look at Hugo's record collection. It includes Viola Turpeinen stuff and Finnish records; also country and western stuff. H.'s daughter got them stuff from Johnson's music store in Ironwood.

84. H. speaks of Jim Reeves as his favorite C&W singer. He also likes "Little" Jimmy Dickens. H. has a Stan and Doug Swedish dialect record.

85. Neil Meyer comes in and talks about Tom Reykdal and others playing Dixieland kind of music at a Bayfield Benefit. Neil departs.

(Break in the tape.)

86. H. talks about how it would take him awhile to pick up the fiddle and the harmonica again.

87. H. talks about Butch and Frank Green who used to play with Hugo at Fishers Corner. "Packed house every Saturday night." Hazel used to wait on tables there. She talks about the crowds.

88. H. talks about how he likes to go dancing with his wife now and then.

89. On the day they demolished Fishers Corner, Hugo went there and watched them tear down the stage. He reminisces about what he saw from the stage: "I could write a book." He had to be relatively sober when he played so he was conscious of other peoples' foolishness.

90. Janet talks about Leary dancing the polka at the Moquah Men's Club.

91. We all have more beer.

92. Hugo talks about his offspring.

(Break in the tape.)

93. H. talks about people bumping into the stage when he plays. He also talks about the trick of pinching a "well endowed gal" with his accordion bellows.

94. H. recalls playing for topless dancers at Fishers Corner. Years earlier he had played at an Ashland VFW stag party for a striptease. He was "sucked into" doing this without realizing who he would be playing for.

95. Hugo redalls playing with Jim Dibbell for grade school dances in Washburn; and at the Ashland Youth Center above Vaughn Lib.

96. Hugo and Hazel talk about Pete McDermott of "Maggann and Pete," who play at Moll's. He plays drums and banjo now and then.
97. On the "grind" of playing New Year's Eve Parties.

(THE TAPE ENDS).

98. Hugo talks about the grind of playing in the winter when you'd come from a hot tavern out into the cold winter weather. Once he got stuck and had to carry his accordion more than a mile through the snow.
99. We talk about the weather

(Break in the tape.)

100. About the Onion River tavern on highway 13, built by Hugo's brother Ray. Along with the C Side and the Top Side in the town of Barksdale, this was where people went to "Sunday School."
101. H. talks about the importance of having a good drummer in a dance band. Billy Erickson is mentioned as being a good drummer--he plays with "Big John and the Badmen" of Wakefield, Michigan. Occasionally, they play at Port Superior or at Molls. Matt mentions times when he's heard them play.
102. Hazel tells about wood tick races in Ino. Hugo offers more beer and some brandy. Matt breaks out his guitar.
103. "Missouri Waltz."
104. "Kentucky Waltz."
105. "Tennessee Waltz."
106. Hugo relates that Jimmy Dibbell used to call the Chmieleckis the "Galloping Kaduszkas." He's a snoose chewer who used to "bait up" (dip his snoose) between numbers when the two played together.
107. A Finnish number "Etentildo Polka" (I'm writing the title phonetically here; certainly my spellin is wrong).
108. "Just Because."
109. Hazel requests "Eee-yi-ee-yi-ee-yi-yo," but he can't remember it.
110. "Five Foot Two," or "Has Anybody Seen My Gal?"
111. "Blue Skirt Waltz."
112. "Pick Me Up on Your Way Down."

113
(END OF TAPE SIX)

113. "Russian Stomp."
114. Another Viola Turpeinen ("Finn") Polka.
115. "Maillman Matti." Hugo hadn't played that for years.
116. "Orpo Pojan Valsi" (Orphan Boy's Waltz). Another from the past.
117. Hugo comments on Matt's musicianship. They play "Nikälina."
118. Hugo mentions that he knows both Swedish and Finnish versions of Vagabond Waltz, or "Kulkurin Valsi." He and Matt play the Swedish version.
119. The Finnish version of "Kulkurin Valsi."
120. "It's a Sin"--one of the "oldies."
121. "Beer Barrel Polka"--"Polish people really like that one."
122. "Red Sails in the Sunset."
123. "Bride's Waltz."
124. Hugo and Hazel offer us "a little lunch." "Darktown Strutters' Ball."
125. "South." A jazz number.
126. A waltz. Hugo can't recall the title.
127. Another waltz, "Beautiful Dreamer," I think.
128. Matt puts away his guitar and Hugo tries another Viola Turpeinen number which I will spell phonetically as "Lammen Lina," it's a waltz.
129. (END OF TAPE SEVEN)
129. "Memory Waltz," "Mustoja Waltz" (my attempted spelling), another Finnish one.
130. Another "Finnish one." Hugo gives the Finnish name for "Over the Waves," then plays it.
131. "Lannen Lokkari" (My attempted spelling). That means the "logger" and is a "real old timer." It took Hugo a while to recall the tune.
132. "Saturday Night Waltz," or "Laavunta Ilda Vals" (phonetic spelling again).
133. A "World War Two song," Hugo can't recall the title, but, after a moment, he remembers that it's "Letter Edged in Black."
134. "Letter Edged in

(THE SESSION ENDS)