

SLOVENIAN BUTTON ACCORDION PROJECT

Tape Notes

5/21/84

jwb

INTERVIEW WITH: Ed and John Snidarich

AT: Snidarich Home (Fayal Township)  
2102 Perry Road  
Eveleth, MN 55734

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 1984

Tapes

Reels SBB 27, 28

Cassette CSBB 19

Slides: Sheet 5, 5-13

Father - Ed

Son - John

Ed's family. He was born on Spruce Hill. Parents from Yugoslavia - Slovenia. Svape Prosita. Were married before they came, arrived in 1907 or 1908. Father played a 3-row Mervar. Moved to the farm when Ed was 5. Lived there ever since.

Ed learned from father and brothers, Louie, Tony and John. Learned by hearing each other. All learned on Dad's instrument. Ed inherited his father's instrument, sold it, bought a full chromatic. Bought a diatonic about 3 years ago. Pink. Would play his brothers' button accordions. Heard "quite a bit" of accordion playing when he was growing up.

Other players - Pete Sterine, lived in Chickentown, then Troy location. Had big parties on Sunday. Friends and family from Spruce location. Home made wine. Big copper boiler of booya. People came from Eveleth and Mt. Iron. Crkveniks, Kralls, Vrhovnics. 150-200 with 3 or 4 accordion players. Danced, singing. Learned some songs from son John.

John is 20, playing for 3 years. Took lessons on piano accordion. Was attracted to button accordion, beauty of instrument, sound. Watched his Dad. Would play when parents left the house. Dad wanted his 'last son' to learn how to play, taught him.

Talks about how father is learning from son now. John says, "We're basically all teaching each other." They play together. Only father-son players. John likes the relationship.

Ed shows photo of brother's wedding at Spruce location. Wedding lasted a week. Pete Sterine and his accordion are front and center. 50 years ago.

Ed recalls riding a broom handle while his older brothers scrubbed the floors in the house. "And the next day it'd be nice and shiny. We'd be dancing. So that went on for a whole week."

Frankie Frol is in photo, too. Ed names people in photo. I recognize the names Tomsich, Krall, Lah.

Week long wedding stories.

Ed is retired. Worked for Coons-Pacific (Mining Company, no longer active, had concentrating plant in Fayal Township about 2 miles north of Snidarich farm.) Ed quit school to go to work. Worked 37 years for U.S. Steel.

John talks about learning to play. "You have to tackle it on your own. Somebody can show you songs, but they can't teach you how to play it."

Ed - "The button accordion is like happiness. It's more toe-tapping right off the bat, you know. You listen to a little button squeezebox and you wanna get to dancin'. That's why I like it."

While tape was off, John and Ed mentioned a Chicago button box club, started by Joe.

Umik in early 1970's.

Mentions Rudy Podboy. Al Jevsar has written 'how to play' books. Umik devised notation system and sells sheet music. Benjy Rathbone also sells arrangements.

There is a piece of 'string art' hanging over the fireplace. It's a button box. Was made by Paul Dolimar, 5215 Lew St. Finleyville, PA 15332. 412/348-6302.

John plays a melodija. Ed plays a Pink. Both belong to and play with the Mayfair Button Box Club.

"Hammer Hank" - Polka

"Old Timers Polka"

John says 'Hammer Hank' comes from Ed Gersich

~~"Moja Dekla" - The new one~~

"Moja Dekla" - The old one - "Still everybody's favorite."

"Glas Harmonika" - Waltz

"Trzinka Polka"

Ed &  
Johnny R

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Reel 2 Cassette Side B

Ed talks about fingering differences. Experience with button boxes while he was in the service. Switched to German fingerboard when he got the Pink. Easier than Slovenian.

10 children in the family. 5 players in family. Ed is only one living.

Dances that were done.

Gatherings at the farm.

John plays.

"El Rio Drive" - Polka

"Slovene Genter" - Polka from Joe Mlaker

"Happy Mountaineer"

"Fesli Ribnicin"?

Ed plays.

"Eddie's Waltz"

" - Polka

"An old one. Everybody used to play it." oops

John plays

"Grandpa John's" - Polka

"Silver Chips" - Polka

"Mahoning Valley Polka"

"Novaks Polka"