

## TAPE INDEX

1. Announcement.
2. Betty is reluctant to reveal when she was born and is a bit tape recorder shy. [Born in 1921.]
3. Born Elizabeth Mary Arnold, on a farm, parents had an orchestra, dad played violin, mother played piano.
4. Betty has brought out pictures of her Swiss grandfather, and her uncles, Martin, Henry, and Jacob, from Stein am Rhein. Landed in Stillwater, MN. They were "all musical." One of them supposedly "wrote the Minneapolis Polka and the St. Paul Waltz. B was eight when her grandfather died. Never saw him play music, but parents did. Has no pictures of them playing.
5. Dad was Frank Arnold. A good violin player, as were his brothers, Ed, Jacob, and John. Mother played pump organ. Had a four piece with two guitars, violin, and pump organ. Had two palomino ponies that got them around to play for dances at all the neighboring towns. Mostly played for weddings. Fiddle tunes, square dances. B was 16 when her dad was killed in 1937.
5. Family had house parties at home. "They'd play and I'd lay on the floor. I was just crazy about it."
6. Family was visiting in Shakopee, B played "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Dad's brother, Uncle John, "gave me two cents. I thought that was the best money I ever got. I've been playing ever since."
7. B took piano lessons for eight years, as soon as she was in grade school. Started to play out right after he dad was killed.
8. Wanted a guitar "real bad," mother bought her one from someone in Eden Valley. "I only had that a few weeks and I was singing on the radio in St. Cloud." KFAM. Cowboy songs.
9. Was on Slim Jim and the Vagabond Kid's radio show twice, on WDGY, "and I stayed by Uncle John's place." Was also singing at a church festival and Slim Jim and the Kid were there giving free airplane rides and she got one. Known as "Cowgirl Betty."
10. On meeting her husband. "Tony was playing the concertina. Years ago they had home plays in the schools. So this was at Pearl Lake, I was supposed to sing as Cowgirl Betty and then Tony played the dance after that. And when he started playing the concertina, I guess I just went wacky. I went up there and I played the piano all night. And that was the beginning of it. That was at Pearl Lake."
11. Tony had his own group. Bass horn, drums, trumpet, and concertina. Cyril Vogt, Muggy Burr, and Louie Fischbach were sidemen. Playing old time waltzes and polkas.
12. Went with Tony for two years and they got married. Didn't start the Deutschmeisters until 1958. Played with Frank Godzella before and a little after they were married. Frank was "kind of a music writer in St. Cloud."

Group was the Musical Reveliers. After marriage Betty got pregnant and didn't play out for awhile.

13. Moved from Eden Valley to St. Joseph. Eventually had eight children. Tony and Betty started playing at the Blue Blazer in St. Cloud, did this for 7 and 1/2 years. Concertina and piano. Then played at the Golden Acre (sp?) at the same time.

14. Started Deutschmeisters in 1958. Got the name from a contest over the radio. Frank Godzella would bring his arrangements over and stress that the best range of old time tunes for concertina would be in E flat. Betty learned from him to write music for the band. Oldest son, Arnie, was playing concertina and really started the band--Tony and Betty still playing at the Blue Blazer. Arnie only played with it for two years, then went in the service, so Tony took over on concertina.

15. Other guys in the band: Ollie Kirban, first trumpet; Virgie Johnson, second trumpet; Jay Pattison, bass horn; Ray Dahlman, saxophone; Junior Pfannenstein, drums. (Check spellings.) Played an Albany radio show every week.

16. Betty teaching concertina in the meantime. Took students on the radio shows, KASM. Started at KFAM, were there three months and went to KASM. Betty and Tony played for half an hour, then Deutschmeisters played half an hour. "It was a request show. Just promoting old time music, concertina music. We had the students up there and Tony and I played every Saturday up there. That was at 1:15, that's when our show was. And letters came in." Over 100 letters every week. Betty has kept all her fan mail. Also has lots of four track tapes of the radio show.

17. Betty backs up in time. Before the Deutschmeisters started, Arnie Wolf, Jay Pattison, and Junior Pfannenstein went by the name of The Magic Hearts. Betty has posters of them. They played as The Magic Hearts, Betty and Tony played as a duo. Jay Pattison also pushed them to start a big band, so Betty wrote a few arrangements. The kids "practiced and they went on the radio . . . Boy they got so many jobs you just wouldn't believe it." First job at the Lakeview Ballroom at Avon on May 11, 1958.

18. Arnie went in the service in 1960, then Tony started playing with the band. Betty didn't play with it then. Was pregnant, daughter Lisa was born in 1961. Shortly after she was born, B started playing local jobs with the band. Never sang with the band at first.

19. Then Al Rademacher from Long Prairie wanted them to make a record, so they did. Betty was writing some tunes, including "Oriole Waltz." People went wild over that, so that became the first record. "You take something from one, you hear this and you hear that, and you kind of put things together . . . and I put 'In the Concertina Mood' together." Made a single and an album on the Flint label, in Long Prairie.

20. Then was picked up by Jim Madison of Minneapolis. <sup>Oxboro.</sup> ~~Pleasant~~ Pleasant?

21. On radio show beginning in 1954. Was teaching concertina and every

Saturday would take two students up there. Can read music and can play a little, doesn't have the muscles to be a good player, but can teach.

22. On Tony Wolf. Born in Scott County between Jordan and New Prague in 1916. Just liked Whoopee John's music and followed it on the radio, no other musicians in his family. They were Germans, but B doesn't know what part of Germany.

23. Pat Watters, a concertina salesman, stopped at their place, wondered if they were interested in teaching concertina, early-to-mid-1950s. They began selling and teaching concertinas. Lessons given in the Wolf home, taught by the numbers. Betty wrote her own teaching book, Wolf's concertina book. Felt that Henry Silberhorn's book was too hard. B really enjoyed helping young kids learn to play. Pretty much dealt exclusively in Star Concertinas, then went to a German concertina later, Arnold Concertina.

24. Quite a few of their former students went on later to have bands. Andy Stangler, Bob Brenny (sp?), the Merrymakers, the Hayseeds, lots of them.

25. B has a full run of Pat Watters' polka paper, Music and Dance News, has doubles of some. Pat Watters was "a super guy. He loved the concertina although he could not play it."

26. In 1977 Betty and Tony inducted for teaching into the Concertina Hall of Fame at Union, Michigan. B & T had special vests made for the occasion. Knows Dan Gruetzmmacher, Concertina Millie and other members of the Concertina Hall of Fame. B learned "E-I-O" Polka from Concertina Millie, then had to put it out on a record.

27. Deutschmeisters played at a lot of "big places": Schlieff's Little City, the Belrae, the Majestic, the Prom. "We'd leave her on Friday afternoons and we'd got play for Schmidty at Wausau, Wisconsin, at Schmidt's Ballroom, and then we'd go to Milwaukee and play Phillip's Ballroom, and then we'd play Watertown on Sundays and be back in time Monday mornings in time for the kids to go back to college." Played at Turner Hall in Watertown. This was mostly in the 1960s. Played Minnesota, Wisconsin, some in the Dakotas, a little in Iowa. Played a lot in Wisconsin, Merrill, Appleton.

28. Tony had old Whoopee John records and played along with them. "I guess we had a sound of our own. New Ulm Bands all used for horns [not counting bass horn] and I only used three . . . I don't know why." Easier to write for three and they could fit everybody in the car. Either a two trumpets and sax, or a trumpet with two saxes and sax men switching in clarinet. Tony's approach to concertina solos was similar to Scheid.

29. Tony died in 1980 of cancer. B kept band going. Arnie and Butch, sons, helped out at first. Then in 1982 present husband, John Buermann, started to play. Got married in 1988, September 26.

30. In 1978 Betty and Tony started to go to Germany. Betty has been going every year since. Oktoberfest, Passion Play, Switzerland, northern Italy, Vienna. People who travel with them are mostly from the local area. Got a lot of initial publicity from their Albany radio show. Started using records not playing live in 1961, but B kept up the show until 1988.

31. B also tapered off on giving lessons and doesn't give them anymore.
32. Group learned new tunes as a result of going to Germany. "Schneewalzer," and a few others. Some of these on a tape with John Buermann.
33. B used to yodel years ago. Still has books of Patsy Montana's songs. Liked Gene Autry too.
34. B reiterates that she has lots of pictures. A few years ago they had a Deutschmeisters reunion sponsored by the radio station. Put up pictures over the years and other memorabilia at the Delwin Ballroom.
33. B and John now playing Italian Stradivarius Concertinas. After Pat Watters quit dealing with concertinas, he was bought out by Bill Brown of Brown's music in New Ulm.
34. B reiterates that one of her relatives composed the St. Paul Waltz and the Minneapolis Polka.

Minnesota Polka Oral History Project  
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