

John Berquist

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mining Songs

1994

**Home on the Range**

Oh give me a home, where the hockey teams roam

And the mercury goes up and down

Where the woodpiles grow tall

And the snowflakes they fall

In that little old Iron Range town

Oh home, home on the range

Where the Fins and the Serbians play

Where seldom is heard

An intelligent word

And the beer joints are busy all day

Oh give me a home, built on nice sandy loam

Where the birches and aspens do sway

In a setting serene by a lake or a stream

Where I can rinse all the ore dust away

Home, home on the range,

Where the Fins and the Serbians play

Where seldom is heard

An intelligent word

And the beer joints are busy all day

Now sometimes at night  
While the mine lights are bright  
You heard the Euclid's and the wako's a 'roar  
While a bunch of the boys  
They're making some noise  
In the back of the Roosevelt bar

Oh home, home on the range  
Where the Fins and the Serbians play  
Where seldom is heard  
And intelligent word  
And the beer joints are busy all day

John Berquist (JB): I wanted to sing some songs and play some music tonight that comes from the Iron Range, my home, home on the range. Actually there are a number of different spellings for the range, R A N G E of course, but the one that I like is R A Y N C H [laughter from audience] on the range we have some special kinds of music, and I want to introduce you to this button accordion and play you a song that probably is the one song every iron ranger knows. Sing along Polka. The song goes like this.

### **Sing Along Polka**

Ei-ei-ei-o

Ei-ei-ei-o [background]

Ei-ei-ei-o

Ei-ei-ei-o [background]

Ei-ei-ei-o

Ei-ei-ei-o [background]

Ei-o Ei-o Ei-Ei-O

(Repeat)

JB: I want to get back to that button accordion a little later on. I mentioned in the words to Home on the Range a couple nationality groups that live up in that part of the country, there are some 40 nationalities. I grew up in a neighborhood where next door, downstairs was Croatian family and upstairs were Slovenians. And on the other side a Fin married to an Italian [Laughter from audience] and then next to them was a Finnish family and there was a Finnish family and a Finnish family upstairs there, and another Finnish family then the Italian grocer, and he went down the street and there were Slovenians and Croatians and Serbians to the corner, and across the ally it was all Fins across the ally, and there were some Irish folks that lived a couple of blocks away, oh there was one family across the street, they went to the Presbyterian church [laughter from audience]. I'm half Swede and half Norwegian, and we had to go, I had to go two blocks before I found another Swede, but then there were a couple of families that lived in the one neighborhood up there. A fella like me growing up in a minority group like that [laughter from audience] people would say well what nationality are you? Who knows you were either Finnish or Italian or Croatian or well it depends on where you had supper the night before what nationality you were in the morning when you got up. And I grew up learning songs that I didn't know the meaning to the words, and I learned how to swear in eight languages. Some of those phrases still come in handy. But I want to share a little song with you that is probably another well-known song on the range. It goes like this.

**Diikisika Song \*\*** [Parts of song in other language that is not spoken by transcriber]

Diikisika Piikisika Porqunpine

I's can see you hiding hind the norre vine

I take my shoot gun and shoot you down

Diikisika porqunpine

Coming now a song dat I am singing you

Maybe then you knowing that you singing to

Fifty thousand Fins have been the snow

They all sing the words because they know

Diikisika Piikisika Porqunpine

I's sees you hiding hind the norre vine

I take my shoot gun and shoot you down

Diikisika pouqunpine

JB: I learned a lot of Finnish music from a man who passed away this last summer. His name was Alex Heithela [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] and he played the fiddle, he would say things like well we are just fiddling around. How are you Alex? Oh I'm just fiddling around. What are you doing? Well were just fiddling around. It was his favorite thing to say, and I would talk to him and call him up on the phone or he'd call me and say when are you coming over? Let's have a jam session! We are going to have a big jam session I'll make some stew and we'll just fiddle around. And so he taught me a lot of songs and I just want to share one with you that is more appropriate in the summertime, the opposite end of the year from where we are today, but it is one of my favorite songs of those that I learned from Alex, it's an old Finnish waltz, it's in a minor key it translates as Flowers in the Forest, the Finnish title is Metsa Kukkia.

### **Metsa Kukkia**

[ALL INSTRUMENTAL]

JB: From the other side of the ally comes a song from Yugoslavia. The Slovenians who came to the Iron Range began to arrive there in the late 1880's they came to the million range, to Tower and to Ely. Slovenia was part of Austria at that time and later became part of Yugoslavia. This instrument, this button accordion also comes from Yugoslavia it's a mores recent immigrant that came in 1981 and on the iron range, there are, well someone has guessed that there are 350 players of instruments like this, they've never all been in the same place at the same time so we have no way of knowing and chances are that they never will be in the same place. Oh well, anyway. I learned how to play a few of the Slovenian songs on here and I wanted to share one of my favorite waltzes it's called Daj Daj Srck Nazaj it's a another love song, it means give me back my heart, you whatever you are [laughter from audience].

### **Daj Daj Srck Nazaj**

[INSTRUMENTAL ONLY]

JB: One of the things I have tried to do is play songs that are not Slovenian on this particular instrument, La Cucaracha [laughter from audience] and Spanish Eyes, what's the other one they always ask? Lady of Spain yeah I haven't even tried that one yet, the trouble with those kind of songs when you play them on this box is they all come out with a Yugoslavian accent [laughter

from audience]. I have been able to work out a few Finnish and Scandinavian pieces though and I wanted to share a Finnish Mazurka with you right now.

### **Vuuma-Perttis Mazurka**

[INSTRUMENT ONLY]

JB: The Iron Range of course is a mining region. I want to share a couple of songs about the mines with you tonight. But before I do I want to tell you a story that is an iron range story. It's about Eino and Bronco. I've fooled a couple people over here I already can tell. They were working in the underground mine. The one at Coeur. And Eino was in charge of this little crew he had more seniority than Bronco did, and they were down there and Eino said, Bronco get it for me that lank over there! Now Bronco his English wasn't as good as Eino's, and so he had a little difficulty understanding what it was that Eino wanted, but he went over there and he came back with a tool box, and he set it down and Eino shook his head. Not tool the box, get it for me that lank over there, that lank over there! Bronco went back again, came back with a step latter, no that wasn't it either. He made several trips, brought back a lunch box, a crow bar, some other tools, odds and ins of things, finally he picked up a piece of 2 by 8 about 10 feet long and he lugged it over and dropped it, ku plunk, in front of Eino and Eino said ya that's that lank, put it that lank over there. Bronco looked Eino in the eye and said, what's a matter you dumb Finlander, you been dis country 35 year now you still not know how say planka. [Laughter]. So it's got to be an Iron Range joke, eh? In those underground mines before the mid-thirties, all the power, for hauling the ore from the drift to the shaft was done with mules. And this is a song about those mules.

### **4 Legged Miners**

Tramming the ore on the seventeen level

Me and my dusty old mule

We called her sweet Sal

She is my partner and pal

We're a hard working team that's for sure

And in the summer we would raise 'em to graze

On the surface

And they'd kick and they'd jump and they'd run

And forget for a time the dark in the mine  
And play for a while in the sun

Two ton and half and the hopper was full  
And the work was as hard as the ore  
It was a mile to the skip  
Ten ton to the trip  
And back with the empties for more

And in the summer we would raise 'em  
To graze on the surface  
And they'd kick and they'd jump and they'd run  
And forget for a time  
The dark in the mine  
And play for a while in the sun

Now the foreman he said  
The old days are dead  
He lacked a vacation is here  
Though the mules are all gone  
Their memory lives on  
This old mine it still stinks like manure

And in the summer we'd raise 'em  
To graze on the surface  
And they'd kick and they'd jump and they'd run  
And forget for a time  
The dark in the mine

And play a while for a while in the sun

All of the creatures

In God's great creation

The mule is the smartest of all

Just a four legged miner

Walking the drift

Tramming that ten ton of ore

And in the summer we'd raise em

To graze on the surface

And they'd kick and they'd jump and they'd run

And forget for a time

The dark in the mine

And play for a while in the sun

JB: There's a man named Lenard Copenen [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] who spent his working life as a hard rock miner in the underground, he lived in Michigan, where they have underground mines as well. And he wrote a poem about the closing of the mine where he last worked, and it is a poem that caught my fancy and I set it to music and I want to share it with you tonight, it is all about sheave wheels stopping, those are those big pulleys on the head frame of the mine that spin around.

### **Sheave Wheels**

Now the dry house is standing empty

No clothes hung up on high

No laughing joking miners

Are a'changing in the dry

The water seeps into the drift

Filling up the sump

No longer can you hear the rhythm of the pump

And the sheave wheels have stopped turning

On the head frame of the mine

No longer does the whistle blow

To signal quitting time

Now the ore shoots they're all rotten

And the rails thin lines have rust

And there's just a ghostly silence

Spider webs and lots of dust

Now the sheave wheels they've been turning

On the head frame of this mine

For as long as I remember

And long before my time

Now the sheave wheels have stopped turning

On the head frame of the mine

No longer does the whistle blow

To signal quitting time

Twenty years I labored there

And some for twenty more

And the sheave wheels kept on turning

And bringing up the ore

Now the houses are standing empty

Where the children used to play

And the fellas I once worked with



They all have gone away

And the sheave wheels have stopped turning

On the head frame of the mine

No longer does the whistle blow

To signal quitting time

Now you've heard my story

About the changing of the times

How the sheave wheels they stopped turning

On the headframe of the mine

And now the water seeps into the drift

Filling up the sump

And no longer can you hear

The rhythm of the pump

And the sheave wheels have stopped turning

On the headframe of the mine

No longer does the whistle blow

To signal quittin' time

Oh, oh

JB: Three vice presidents of U.S. Steel were killed in a plane crash on the way to Majorca for a very important conference. They arrived at the gates of heaven, St. Peter was tending the gates and he saw the three approaching and he quick dashed out down the path and said hold it hold it, I know who you fellas are. I can't let you in. You cannot come into heaven, we have a lot of union members in here, we got a lot of working people here and [laughter from audience] and besides the kinds of things you fellas have been doing lately I'm not sure that I could let you in even if the rest of them weren't in there already. So I tell you what I'm going to have to send you down below. And with a flick of the wrist, they disappeared. Now St. Peter went back to his duties, some time passed. He was standing there in the pearly gates, admiring the view when a telephone rang. It's the hotline from down below [laughter from audience], so he picked it up and said hello? The voice on the other end, Pete, Pete those U.S. Steel vice presidents that you

send down here, you got to get them out of here. They got all but one of my furnaces shut down. [Laughter and applause by the crowd]. In Evelast [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], in Gilbert, in Chisholm, and Virginia, shortly after the Second World War, city officials invited the Cluett Peabody Company in and gave them city buildings for absolutely no cost dollar a year I think is what they began to pay, to put factories in those buildings so there would be some employment. The factories were shirt factories, pajama factories, short factories, the Arrow Shirt Company. And it was women who worked in these factories on the sewing line. Not too many years ago, Cluett Peabody Company decided that those factories up there on the Iron Range, although they were very efficient, and were showing a profit in the company figures, they were just too far north and so they closed them down and shipped operations off to places like South Carolina and Taiwan. And I remember one of my neighbors coming home from work at the factory with bandages wrapped around her fingers because she got her fingers stuck in the sewing machine, and the needles were jabbed into her fingers. The idea was to work by the piece not by the hour, you got paid by how many shorts you sewed or how many shirts you sewed. And if you made a mistake you got docked from your pay. So she goofed up, she stuck those underwear in her purse, which was right alongside her sewing machine, she would come over to see my mother for coffee after she got home from work. And I tell you as kid, I had the most outrageous assortment of Arrow shorts [laughter from audience] I mean boxer shorts, I never want another pair of boxer shorts for the rest of my, they had big hearts on them, and stripes, and different colors. And they were all different sizes too, some fit and some didn't [laughter from audience]. But I remember those rags wrapped around her fingers when she came home, and after they closed that plant down I wrote a little song about it and I want to share it with you tonight.

### **Cluett and Peabody**

Well I stitched and sewed my life away

For the Cluett and the Peabody

By the bundle and the piece

I earn my keep at the shirt factory

It's been eighteen years I counted them

Three months and seventeen days

I worked my fingers to the bone

Sewing my life away

On the shirts and the shorts men's underwear

I sewed my final seam

On the prints and the plaids

And the colors and the drabs

The cottons and the gabardines

Well I stitched and sewed my life away

For the Cluett and the Peabody

By the bundle and the piece

I earned my keep at the

Shirt factory

Those damn machines I hated mine

And I know it hated me

Cause many was the time

I worked on it

And that needle took a bite of me

To the tip of my finger

Through the flesh and nail

It stabbed me to the bone

That stinging ache

Yeah that was all

All that I took home

And I stitched and sewed my life away

For the Cluett and the Peabody

By the bundle and the piece

I earned my keep  
At the shirt factory

Well in the dead of night  
The trucks pulled out  
And the factory stood bare  
Now I ain't got much  
For the eighteen years that I spent working there

And I stitched and sewed my life away  
For the Cluett and the Peabody  
By the bundle and the piece  
I earned my keep at the shirt factory  
By the bundle and the piece  
I earned my keep at the shirt factory  
At the shirt factory

JB: There is a man from the Iron Range, he is gone now, named John P. Bernard [SPELLED PHONTICALLY], was a union organizer for many years. He was elected to congress in the '30s and voted against the arms embargo for the Spanish revolution. He was drummed out of congress. Went back to Evelast [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], and finally got work as a union organizer. And he has taken a song and put some new words to it and I want to share it with you tonight, it goes like this.

### **America**

We'll make America  
A land all can love  
Organizer her, unionize her  
Make the bright star of right shine above

Make the railroads and the factories

And the farmland all our own

We'll make America

Our home sweet home

We'll make America

Our own sweet home

We'll make America

A land all can love

Organize her, unionize her

Make the bright star of right shine above

We'll make the railroads and the factories

And the farmlands all our own

We'll make America

Our home sweet home

We'll make America

Our own sweet home

[END TAPE SIDE ONE]

[BEGIN TAPE SIDE TWO]

Unidentified Man (UM): Ladies and gentlemen, John Berquist.

**Oh Lutefisk**

Oh lutefisk oh lutefisk

How fragrant your aroma

Oh lutefisk oh lutefisk

You put me in a coma

You smell so strong you taste like glue

Your remind me of my older shoe

But lutefisk come Saturday

I think I'll eat you anyway

JB: I got to get this room tuned up properly here, in the key of bufta [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] well I think I will start with this. I want to do a couple of older Norwegian songs to start off here. This is one that is called the song of the months, Moanadsvise it goes through all of the months of the year and talks a little bit about each one and I want to sing it first in Norwegian and then in English translation is mine.

### **Moanadsvise**

[FIRST SONG VERSION DONE IN NORWEGIAN]

January brings the New Year

February is the next

March and April glad to have them

May and June they bloom the best

July August and September

Bring the boundless fruitful days

But October and November

And December cold and gray

JB: In Fargo, North Dakota there is a park down by the river bank and in that park there are two statues. There is one very nice statue with a rather expensive flower plantings around it in the summer time and it is a memorial to the veterans of the, I think it is of the First World War. And if you go a little further up the hill, you will see another statue, sits on a pedestal and the brick are falling out of that pedestal and there is broken glass all around it. And that statue there is an old one, bronze statue that is turning green and covered in pigeon droppings and things like that. And I was there in that park and I was drawn to that statue, and low and behold it was a statue of Henrik Vergalon [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] we all know who that is right? It is a household

word, some of you probably do. He was a Norwegian poet and playwright who wrote a play that was produced shortly after he died in the year 1856 and the play had some songs in it and it was about emigration, people leaving Norway and going to America. And I want to sing a song that comes from that play, it's a song sung by Caudie, the wife and mother of the family as she takes one last look around the homestead as she says goodbye to all the things that have to be left behind, the things that she will never see again in her life. And of all of those things, from the farm animals to the cradle where the baby Helga is asleep, to all the other things around the home, the one that means the most to her, that she will miss the most is her spinning wheel. Her friend on many long, candle lit winter evenings. So she sings this song goodbye to her spinning wheel. It is called Farvel Gamle Rokken.

### **Farvel Gamle Rokken**

[SONG SUNG IN NORWEGIAN TRANSCRIBER NOT FLUENT IN THE LANGUAGE]

JB: I wanted to share a song with you tonight that was just, that I just collected. This is a song that I got from a women who lives in western Minnesota, and it is called Langt Upi Minnesota, and it's a Swedish song written here in Minnesota and is the other end of the transatlantic journey. And I want to share it with you, it goes like this.

### **Langt Upi Minnesota**

[SONG SUNG IN SWEDISH, TRANSCRIBER NOT FLUENT IN THE LANGUAGE]

JB: I was in Roseau a couple of summers ago, I did a program up there a man came up to me afterwards, his name was Carl Carlson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] and he said, I have a song I want to teach you. And I said okay, and he began to tell me about Axil Mattson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], Axil Mattson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] was the butcher in Badger, a suburb of Roseau. And Axil Mattson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] had some friends in North Dakota who had a big farm out there and he knew how to go out there and hire out his team and wagon for the harvest and the threshing season in the fall. So he would organize a group of men folk to go to North Dakota, now Mattson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] since he was the ringleader of this operation, he had the wagon and the team, the wagon and the team was worth more than you were when you got paid, his wagon and team went first and he drove. And they hitched all the other teams and wagons behind Mattson's [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] wagon, and then all the fellas would sit in Mattson's [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] and they would play cards and they'd drink all the way to North Dakota, and

then they'd come back and they would do the same thing. Carl Carlson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] went along once, and on that trip Axil Mattson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] made up a song that he sang over and over and over and over and over and over and over again, so many times that Carl Carlson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] remembers it to this day and taught it to me, cornered me there in downtown Roseau and he sang it to me over and over and over and over [laughter from audience] until finally I learned it, and I want to share it with you, it's not very long, it has just two verses and it translates to come on my boys come all together we are on our way to North Dakota, for the harvest and the threshing to earn a little money for the winter, to north Dakota that's where I've been but my money didn't do so well, we drank cider and ginger ale and now all I have left is a headache [laughter from audience]. These are immigrant songs, this is real Minnesota folk music, the real thing, the song goes like this, and I'll only sing it over okay? You want to learn it see me later we'll go to Palmers [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] or somewhere else [laughter from audience] it goes like this.

### **Kom Mina Pojkar**

[SUNG IN LANGUAGE NOT SPOKEN BY TRANSCRIBER]

JB: Now I have a purpose here in singing these songs, we have first of all an Old Norwegian song and then we had an immigrant song, and then we had an immigrant song from this side and then we had one written here in Minnesota about life in Minnesota. Now I notice in these songs that as they get more modern, should we say, as time passes, English words begin to appear in these songs or English words that are sort of mispronounced or Scandinavianized, until finally we get the evolution of a Minnesota musical genre that is probably our greatest gift to the world [laughter from audience], the Scandinavian dialect song. And there are, there are hundreds of these things, some people think they are best forgotten, and some, from time to time I tend to agree, but before I give you an example of one I just want to talk a little bit about Scandinavian dialects, now they are my favorite dialects. I grew up on the iron range so I heard a lot of different kinds of dialects, but Scandinavian accents are, what are you looking at me for? You think I got a dialect? [Laughter from audience] I just talk normal English like we talk back home you know? I think everybody else has a dialect. In any case, among Scandinavians you will find dialects that range from the announcer on the Swedish broadcasting corporation, you have just here the Stockholm symphony orchestra while recorded live at Uppsala for the North American radio service. To the professor from the University at Madison who is studying immigrants' settlement in southwestern Wisconsin and southeastern Minnesota, to a \_\_\_ who is a pair in Oklahoma came to visit relatives by Wilmer. To the farmer from North Dakota say this is a time for vacation no no. To the characters on the WCC oh ya you bet your. To the ultimate Scandinavian dialect, the Swedish chef on the Muppet show [laughter from audience] [NOISES BEING MADE]. Now I don't watch the Muppets too often, I don't get a chance too but the last time I did I understood every word that guy said [laughter by audience] so let me give you an



example of a Scandinavian dialect joke, two characters. Did you hear what happened to Yaumer? Nay what happened then? He had a terrible accident? Ya don't say? Ya! He tripped and he fell down into the cellar. Nay! Ya! And he banged his head. Ya and he died! Nay! Ya and he broke his glasses too. [Laughter by audience]. Now there are whole, there is a whole book that could be written, a treatise on interpersonal relationships about Ole and Lena. You all know an Ole and Lena story I'm sure, or one that could be adapted to this couple. But I want to share just one with you tonight. This is one that comes from now you know, the stories begin when Ole and Lena first met, and they end when they are in their old age. I haven't heard them all yet I don't think but quite a few. This story comes immediately after they were married on their honeymoon. Now they were married here in Minneapolis, and they decided for their honeymoon to drive to Duluth, and so they got in the ol' Yella and they drove up towards Duluth and they got to the top of the hill, and it was just getting dark, and a full moon was rising over Lake Superior. And all the city lights were coming on, it was all twinkling gold. And they got to the crest of the hill it was such a beautiful romantic sight, they pulled the old yelapy [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] over to the side of the road and stopped and the two of them sat there looking at the view until finally, Lena she snuggled up a little closer to Ole. And Ole he snuggled up a little closer to Lena and they, [breathing], they were just enjoying being together. And then Ole put his hand on Lena's knee, and Lena giggled, and she cuddled up a little closer, and Ole moved his hand up a little further Lena's thigh and squeezed it a little bit, and Lena giggled, and she said Ole, you could go a little furdur. So he started up the car and they drove to Thunder Bay [laughter from audience].

[Break in tape]

JB: Now I want to share one of these dialect songs with you. A lot of them were love songs, and that's what this one is. Except this one, it spans the upper Midwest geographically, and most of the Scandinavian dialect songs, love songs were written about Hilda. Who she was I don't know but she sure got around [laughter from audience] and so this one is called Hilda O Hilda.

### **Hilda O Hilda**

In Wisconsin Ole Onson

Fell in love with a sweet Swedish lass

Hilda Senson he wooed her

He pursued her

Now I say that the Onsen sings Senson a song

O Hilda O Hilda I been thinking grand

Hilda O Hilda let me hold your hand

If I should ask you if you love me too

Say ya sure you bet you I done think I do

In Minnesota, Ole Olson

Fell in love with a sweet Swedish lass

Hilda Karlstrom

He wooed her, he pursued her

Now I say that Olson sang Karlstrom a song

O Hilda O Hilda I been think your grand

Hilda O Hilda let me hold your hand

And if I should ask you if you love me too

Say ya sure you bet you I been think I do

Ya I do, oh I do, by golly by jiminy I sure do love you

Hey if I should ask you if you love me too

Say ya sure I bet you I done think I do

In North Dakota Hieman Fligalmen

Fell in love with a sweet Swedish lass

Hilda Peterson

He wooed her, he pursued her

Now I say that Fligalmen sang Peterson this song

O Hilda, Oh Hilda I done think your grand

Hilda O Hilda, let me hold your hand

And If I should ask you if you love me too

Say ay sure you bet you I done think I do

Ya I do, ya I do, by golly by jiminy I sure do love you

And if I should ask you if you love me too

Say ya sure you bet you I done think I do

JB: Now I want some help in singing a little song here. I had a dream one night, we had the makarita [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] we had some pickled herring and we had some other things too that I can't even remember, and during the night after I had fallen asleep I had a dream that I was in a room just like this. And everybody was singing this song and there is four parts to it. So what I want to do is ask you to help me out. First was got to have a base part, do we have any bases here? Okay okay, the base part is O ya O ya O ya O ya, now keep the tempo O Ya O Ya. Okay good now that's not bad, a little more practice and you'll have it. Then there is the tenor part, I'm beginning to get nightmares already, O ya you bet ya, O ya you bet ya, O ya you bet ya, okay let's try those things together. Okay that's good. Now we got the hard part, the syncopation. Which goes ya you bet, it come on the after beat. So we got to have some O yas, who wants to do the ya you bets? We must have some volunteers, oh we got a few over here. Let's have some a few O Ya O Ya, Ya you bet, ya you bet, ya, o ya bet. [Song put all together]. Oh terrific! Wasn't that great? [Laughter and applause]. The lesson is, don't eat too much pickle herring. I want to tell you my favorite dialect story. It's a true story about my three uncles. First I have to give you a little background, now this is historical perspective. Scandinavians generally are affiliated with the Lutheran church. Not all of them but most of them. And in the old days in the Norwegian Lutheran church in order to be a member in good standing you had to partake of communion once a year, but before you could partake of communion, you had to undergo an examination by the pastor on your catechism lessons which you're supposed to remember all your life. That's gone by the wayside here in the last 20 or 30 years but back when this story takes place that was true. Now this involves my three bachelor great uncles, Ole, Larse and Pere [ALL SPELLED PHONETICALLY], who lived in a shack in the woods not too far from Roseau. And when they went into town which wasn't very often, it wasn't to church where they went. Now the Pastor, he knew they were out there and he saw them from time to time in town but he decided it was his duty to pay a call on them. And so one day when he was out in their neighborhood he walked up the trail thought the mud up to their tar paper shack in the woods and he knocked on the door and Pere opened up the door and said oh pastor what are you doing, Ole, Larse the pastor is here! Would you like to come in pastor? Come in would you like to sit down? Would you like a cup of coffee? No I am not here on a social act. I am here to test you on your catechisms. [Laughter from audience]. Be it all the brothers here Ole Larse, Per I begin with you, tell me what does Easter mean to you? Oh it's a holiday. Oh there in you go in the field, and you get the biggest pumpkin you can find, and you bring it in the house and you carve a face and you put a candle in there ya? Nay! Nay I am ashamed of you! Larse, Larse tell me what does Easter mean to you? [Making noises] Oh ya you go in the woods and you cut down a little tree ya and you bring it in and put candles on there, and you wrap up gifts and you give things away ya in the middle of the winter ya! Nay, I'm afraid you don't remember do you? Ole, Ole, you were the eldest, I'll give you one last chance, tell me, what does Easter mean to you? Oh you don't have to worry over me pastor, Easter dat a holiday, but there in the springtime, ya, there they took Jesus and they hung him on the cross until he died, and they took him down from there, and carry him away to a hole in the ground. A cave! And they laid Jesus there in that cave and roll a

big stone in front of there. And Jesus he laid there three days, and on the third day and angel come down from down from Heaven and roll the stone away and Jesus and he got up and he walk out into the morning light and he look down on the ground and if he sees his shadow, we get six more weeks of winter [laughter from audience]. I want to thank you all ladies and gentlemen I want to close the program with one last tune this is a little Swedish waltz, goes like this.

### **Styrmans Waltz**

[INSTRUMENTAL ONLY]

JB: This is a very special one I'll throw in here, it's very short. It does two things for me. It shows that Scandinavians were always willing to laugh at themselves and also, that the immigrants to Minnesota were always looking for ways to improve their standard of living.

### **We Had an Old Ford**

We had an old Ford

With an one due spring

Two connecting rods and one piston ring

She had no fender she run on the rim

But she's a golden good car

For the sypsy sin [SPELLED PHONETICALLY]

Sell this old ford

That per chance we got

Or buy us a new one

They call Chevrolet