



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

AUDIO TAPE LOG

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Fieldworker(s): Julie DeBenedictis

Interviewee(s): Members of Krakowiak: Stanislaw Bogdanski, Krystyna Benson, Paul P., and Eric Pierce

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Brief summary of tape contents: Choreographer's story of learning to dance in Canada, modifying Polish folk dance for stage performances, settings for folk dancing in Poland, Choreographer's past experience with teaching dance, reasons for joining Krakowiak, folk dancing in the home, the importance of dance in Polish culture, North American and international organizations of Polish dance groups, dance festival in Poland, local performances, founding of Krakowiak, Pierce family, social dances for young men and women, music, formal dances of the royals, materials of folk dress, loss of Polish identity after WWI, Oskar Kohlberg, folk dress designs and the making of folk dress, immigration and the loss of traditions, resurgence of interest in culture by younger generations, Pierce family story of first dance festival in Poland, meaning of Krakowiak.

Counter/ABS	Contents
	JD: This is JD and I'm here at the Polish American Citizen's Club in South Boston and I'm here interviewing members of Krakowiak. Can you just tell me your name first, please.
	Stan Bogdanski. [choreographer]
	JD: Stan and I were just talking about how he got interested in Polish dance. I'm wondering, if you don't mind, telling me again [it was] something that your parents wanted you to do.
	SB: I was seven and I was playing hockey at the same time. I started playing hockey at the age of five but my parents wanted me to dance. So they told me, it's either you dance or don't play hockey. And I said, well, so I started dancing and I stayed forever. Well, until right now.

JD: Did you grow up in Poland?

SB: No, I grew up here. I was born in Canada actually so my whole background is Polish. I have Polish friends, Polish life.

JD: What part of Canada did you grow up in?

SB: Montreal.

JD: I wasn't aware - I didn't know there were many Polish [in Canada]. Is it a big population [of Poles in Canada]?

SB: It's not that big but I think it's smaller than Montreal. Not smaller than Montreal, sorry, smaller than Boston [laughter]. The group was once big but then you get older and leave. For some reason younger people do not want to come back to their roots or something, it's strange.

JD: When you were taking dance, did you take formal lessons?

SB: We would have ballet instruction, we would have two rehearsals, once a week we would have a ballet instructor come in for about an hour, an hour and a half, which twisted our legs 'cause it's very - it's hard when you're not used to it if you're doing it on a regular basis your muscles are used to it and it comes easier. But it gives you the stage presence, the ballet, your upper body, your head, your arms. So it helps a lot in that sense. If you want to progress ballet always help. But then Polish folklore is not ballet, the way I see it. So if you make mistakes and you screw up, it's part of it. Because if you really want to be an authentic dance group you have to, you can't rely on everybody being in a straight line because it will never work. Polish folklore, the way it started, people would get together in a yard and start dancing. We choreograph it to make it exciting for people to watch. Because if you go to Poland and see a little group from a specific town dance or sing, they're boring. It's true but you watch them do it, it's great to see it, for me, and probably for them too. For stage it doesn't work. That's why you have groups like [Polish name] - Polish travelling groups are really really good, ballet trained, so they do Polish folk with the ballet background, it looks really good.

JD: So they sort of modify the folk dance so it's more exciting.

SB: I don't think we can reach that. We tried to reach that level so that's why I say we're not a ballet [group], we're Polish folk as opposed to the ballet.

JD: Are the dances that you're doing here with Krakowiak, they're similar to what you danced when you were young in Polish folk dance?

SB: The steps stay the same. Just the choreography changes. I think, like I taught them a new dance, a ??Jachof dance from Jachof region??, southern Poland, everybody knows the steps but the choreography changes. So depending on the choreographer, instructor. Songs vary. You could sing the same song, same melody, different words a hundred times. Like, as soon as you cross the street in the town they would change the words. Like in certain regions, a girl would wear

a particular flower, across the street or down a few blocks over, they didn't like that flower, they wear a different flower or ribbons. They wore, some people had blue ribbons, some people had red ribbons. Just to differentiate themselves from the other neighborhood. But still the same town but they would change the costumes. By ribbons, flowers. So there's a lot of little things like that.

JD: So after ballet, did you actually take structured folk dance lessons or that you learned from your family?

SB: The dance group. See, you're dancing comes from the dance group.

JD: Was their dancing in your family as well?

SB: My sister danced. My brother dance with his two left feet [laughter from the dancers]. He couldn't do it but my sister did. My parents danced. My father likes the music and he's the one who told me about when he was young, when he was growing up, an accordion player in the village would show up on Sunday afternoon after church and he'd play. Girls would meet the boys and they'd show off to each other. So, that's the attitude I have, girl meets boy.

JD: How did you get involved with Krakowiak then?

SB: Well, we would tour or go to other cities and we'd see groups performing. You'd always want to see certain groups, Krakowiak was one of them. You'd want to see ??Visolia?? 'cause they were kind of a young group and also strange. It was weird. You'd want to see New York also. And you'd get these friendships with the people and we'd have joint concerts. They would come to Montreal for a split show, we would come down to Boston for a split show and we started like that. And I met my wife in the dance group, in Krakowiak, and that's another reason why I'm with the dance group.

JD: And how did you become the choreographer?

SB: I have no idea [lots of laughter from the members], you have to ask. I started teaching in Montreal with little children and it was fun. I started rehearsing the older kids. It was hard because my mind wasn't set on doing that. When you get older, I got older, and I started thinking differently. When they asked, they asked me, I think, two years ago with the little kids. And I had a good time with the kids. I think they remembered that, that's why. I don't know. I got a call this summer.

JD: And said yes! Have you continued to play hockey?

SB: I stopped when I moved down here. I played once here with the Framingham police department.

JD: Dance has taken over.

Dancer: And kids.

SB: Kids, yeah.

JD: Now I'd like to open it up to everybody if that's okay. [To Stan] Thank you very much. Your group is getting larger. It's time to start practicing, I think.

Krystyna, the president of Krakowiak, and Paul take their seats by the interviewer.

KB: Paul is the talker of the [group].

JD: Anyone who likes to talk come over here!

KB: You can ask [Paul] zillions of questions.

JD: Could I have you tell me your names, please.

Krystyna Benson.

Paul Lempitski.

JD: I wanted to ask you both how did you first get involved with Krakowiak?

KB: Ah, good question. I came to United States nineteen years ago. My landlord, actually, introduced me to the dance group. He used to dance with the group. He told me it was a great group so I came. And I joined. Since then I've been dancing, I took a short break in between, but I've been dancing since then.

JD: And you just became president?

KB: Yes, not that long ago. Few months ago. Interesting, um, position and a lot of work.

JD: [to Paul] How did you get involved with Krakowiak?

PL: I had a similar story to Stan's. I wanted to play soccer when I was younger and I could only play the soccer - my mother said she would only wake up and bring me on Saturdays if, after soccer practice, I went to dance practice. It's torture. Everybody has to follow what their mother says. [lots of laughter from the group] Oh yeah, it's this hold. There's this syndrome, this Polish mother's syndrome, they can get you to do anything they want.

SB: Maybe it's the food.

JD: [to Paul] Where did you grow up?

PL: I grew up in Needham, Massachusetts.

JD: [to KB] And you said you grew up in Poland, is that right? Where in Poland?

KB: In ??jivitz??. It's the southern part close to, about two hours away from Krakow.

PL: In the mountains.

KB: What age were you when you came here?

PL: I was fourteen so now you can add it up. [laughter]

JD: I wasn't going for age! I'm curious to know now, did you grow up dancing? I'm trying to find what the roots of this folklore dancing.

KB: No I did not. There was a dance group in my town but, I don't know, I was too young probably or maybe my parents never introduced me to it. I don't know. I always liked it but it was here when I came here. That's when I [started].

PL: You're looking at it at a different angle. This is performing style dancing but a lot of cultures, especially the Polish culture, my grandparents, they weren't in a semi-professional or performing group but everybody danced. There's not one person in the family, your mother, your father, your brothers, your sisters, even if they're no good they all like the music, they dance. It's very social. It's a whole social experience. If you've ever gone to, you know, a Polish wedding, it's on the same idea as an Italian wedding or a Jewish wedding. They're all, you know all that old culture, everybody danced, everybody participated. So this is just broadening. I want to say it's going back to my roots because I'm, you know, third generation in United States. I really didn't know much of my Polish culture before I joined this dance group. It's kind of an extended family where you learn to dance. It's great when you're growing up you'd be invited to go to a wedding or something, you'd be the only guy out there on the dance floor because everybody else would all be wallflowers or they wouldn't be able to dance to the different type of [music].

KB: Can we ask you, Paul, how long you've been dancing? [laughter]

PL: Since I was seven.

KB: How many years is that?

PL: I can't remember. Maybe twenty-nine. [laughter]

JD: So that was more of what I was getting at, too. Did people in your family just dance? Was there dancing in the house?

KB: No. No, my father was a soccer player more than anything. My mom - everybody worked. When you live in Poland you concentrate on working and making sure your kids are not starving and that you have enough, you know, to feed your kids. And, like activities, like here, now you have after-school this, after-school that, kids are doing stuff. We really didn't have as much of that in Poland. You know, you come home, you go outside and you play with your friends. That was basically [all]. I don't think my parents even had time to think about should I bring my child to this place. And, plus, they didn't have money if it cost anything.

JD: Now hearing from both of you guys say that your mothers both wanted you to do, so is dance, for Polish children, is it very important? Is dance important to the Polish culture?

PL: Well, it was the easiest way to get you involved in your culture. With that you learn a lot about folklore, the language which I've never picked up. And it's the whole social aspect to because every -- nevermind.

KB: I think the parents here, they're trying to, especially if the kids were born here, they're trying to have them be around Polish culture and this is one of a nicest ways to -if you like to dance and sing- this is a great way to send your kid once a week or twice a week and have them be involved. Plus we go on trips. We go to Poland. Over to other countries, we meet other dance groups. It broadens their horizons.

PL: We're also members, our dance group is a member of an organization in the United States of many Polish dance groups.

SB: North America, too.

PL: In Canada. [to Stan] I'm sorry. Of the whole North America. It's an organization of dance groups that, every year, they have a small festival in different parts of the country. We've had them in Canada, Boston, Chicago, New York.

JD: Are these just Polish dance groups?

PL: Yes but it's from all different groups from all over the Americas coming. You get to meet a lot of friends and get in contact with even different cultures in the United States. You mix with people from New York and Chicago and California. Even though we're all one country we all have a different way of life. Saying that we also have festivals. We go to a festival in this one town in ??Jeshuv?? they have a festival every three years. You meet with Polish dance groups all over the globe where you can go and meet a Polish dance group from Australia or France, from Brazil, Russia. It's a lot of fun. Meet a lot of people. It's very interesting.

JD: It's interesting. I was recently talking with a woman who is an Irish dance instructor and the way their dance is formed, they have a lot of competitions between their groups all over the world. Do you have that, too, within Polish dance or is it more just celebratory and festivals?

PL: Well, it's very social and for some reason when you get other people who participate in dance, you know, the level somehow increases. It's that competition and you don't want to look bad in front of somebody that knows what you're doing.

KB: It's a competition within you. You know, you want to show that you are a great dance group. You want to show them that can do a good job. So it's not, we don't get awards for it, this is something there.

SB: You know the good dance groups. And you know the groups you what you want to see. There's a lot of lesser groups, well, lesser groups but they're not---

PL: As skilled.

SB: Yeah.

PL: But they put a lot of heart into it.

EP: And sometimes they surprise you.

JD: Now you've gone to Poland, you said, and you've travelled as well with the group. Like, all over which is really exciting. When did your group go to Poland? Was it a recent trip? I read it on your website.

KB: The kids went, I believe, last year. When did we go last time? Two years ago?

PL: 1999. Every three -- preceding three years we've gone. The first time our group went was in 1969.

JD: And this was just a festival of sorts, a gathering?

PL: This was an organized Polish festival for groups from all over the world to go.

KB: We went to the same festival every three years until three years ago, was that the first time?

PL: Yes, we were invited to a different festival in the south of Poland, in the mountains, in the town of ??Jivietz?? They had a festival and our group was invited.

JD: Now what do you do locally here? I know you don't have many performances coming up just yet but what have you done, say, within the past year in Massachusetts? In Boston?

PL: Every year we try to have a performance locally. In the past, in the recent past, we've performed in Brockton. We did a performance up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We've done First Night.

KB: We did the ball just a couple weeks ago.

PL: We did a debutante ball [for the Polish Women's Association].

JD: How did that go?

PL: It was very good.

KB: Good. Very good. It was our first performance under Stan's direction and we survived.

PL: He didn't yell at us too much so we did pretty good.

JD: He's a fair choreographer. I was wondering if you could, and please let me know if at any point you'd like to get started with rehearsal because we can stop this at any time.

← KP: We have another talker right here.

↪ JD: Before we get started, could you say your name then, please.

↪ My name's Eric Pierce.

JD: How did you get involved with Krakowiak?

EP: Well, my parents have been involved in this group since 1939, I suppose, or even in the late thirties.

JD: Pierce. I read that name in the website. That's another question, could you tell me how this was founded? Or how it started?

EP: Well, it was initially founded as a women's club and they would sing and do a little dancing. But they realized, you know, we need partners. We need to do this right. They were learning about it, there's a lot of couples dancing in Polish dance so they got some guys involved. And then it just became, it went from a women's club to the Club. And the organization evolved from there. They did more and more choreographed numbers and had successive choreographers and artistic directors that have come up through the decades. So, I guess, I think at one point in the late seventies we actually were financially in a position to actually sponsor someone from Poland, professional choreographer, to come in. That, I think, marked a really significant change. I was in college at the time and I remember it was like this incredible night and day. Like the first time I saw ??Vilkapolska?? which had beautiful costumes, all newly choreographed. It was just wow! This is like something new now. It was a whole new era. And we've just been progressing ever since.

JD: Were your parents here in the get-go then or they came in later?

EP: I don't remember exactly how they started but they started it early on in the late thirties, the forties.

Your parents meet in the dance [group]?

EP: That's how my parents met, yeah. My uncle and aunt as well. This is so much intertwined into my family. I really had no choice but to join this dance group.

JD: Your mom wouldn't have let you otherwise.

EP: Right. It was Boy Scouts or dancing. I really, pretty much, didn't have much choice in the matter. Just like the same thing with skiing. I had no choice. The family was going to go skiing, I had to learn. And I'm thankful for that. The family did folk dancing, I'm thankful for that. We realized it was a great thing and

it was fun. It wasn't something that a lot of other kids did. There was some tension there but I realized how special it was. And I've been doing it for thirty years.

JD: Would you say, it seems like dancing, in talking to you, Paul, and Stan, and you, as well now, that dancing seems to be more of a part of the life of immigrant[s]? Like the Polish that came here to the states or came to Canada to try to keep up the culture and keep in touch with it more than it is a part of the life-- Not more [I wanted to strike this question as I realized, mid-sentence, that it was a gross assumption and not something to pursue.]

PL: You still have it here. You know, you have the Spanish community, huge into dancing. It's not just new immigrants, it's from people who have been here for a hundred years and the same way with the type of dancing do in the Appalachia and down in Louisiana, they have a lot of with the Cajun dancing.

EP: You can polka to that, too.

SB: If you stereotype Polish people in North America, it's polka. People think of polka. Polka is a social dance as opposed to what we do. I say, like I tell people I'm going dancing - You're going to Polka dance? But, no, it's hard to explain. You tell them, look, there's many regions, different costumes. It's just hard to explain to somebody unless they see it.

PL: There's a difference between what they perceive. There's a misconception, that it's like, you think of Polk dancing, drinking beer and bowling all in the same. [laughter from the group] If you say those three things to people they have a vision of something going on. This is different. You know, talking about different regions of Poland, I remember being corrected one time because one of the choreographers when we were in Poland, we were talking about different costumes, they corrected me. They said it's not a costume, this isn't dress up, this is folk dress. This is what we wore at this time at this time in this town. So this is, you know, to be culturally correct. It's authentic folk dance and we are a semi-professional adapted folk dance group. If it was true folk, as Stan would say, it would be very boring, it would be, a lot of times, it would be a lot of competition with the guys and the girls in the town. Couple guys would grab a girl and they would do some steps and they would step aside and, you know, some other guys and girls would do some dancing. There' sa culture of girls dancing together and guys showing off. What we've done, through the years, it's an adaptation for a stage performance of folk dance. And Stan and, through the years, other choreographers have tried to put a more authentic, adapted folk dance so it would be enjoyable for an audience. As if, you know, difference between dancing for yourselves and dancing for somebody else.

JD: So when these folk dances in Poland - they would be done very social occasions like parties. When would folk dances, just to label them as something, be danced in everyday life in Poland?

PL: It's very difficult for us because we've grown up in a modern era where you had radio, television, movies but in years past everything, a lot of the social activities revolved around the church. And on Sundays, after church, people

would get together. They would have different festivals, different name days, I'm the wrong person to talk about this.

KB: I really don't know too much. Like Paul said, after church activities when families get together they would dance. I don't really know any other.

EP: Weddings. Historical presentations I've seen as distinct from adaptations for the stage are re-enactments of how weddings would take place and what their dress was, what kind of, uh, things they would do as part of the ritual. We've seen a lot of different adaptations for the stage of Polish folk culture. Once you take it away from its element you're changing it. What we've tried to do is not change it too much. In years past, groups like ??Mijovcha??. professional groups from Poland would really heavily stylize it because this is a dance performance. yes, they use the Polish folk costumes but they've got real, these are real professional dancers on stage. And they're doing things, it's not modern dance but it's a professional dance context and adapted for the stage. We, for over the years, really worked a lot with those tensions on what, how can you remain authentic. When my uncle first talked to Agatha he said, well, we're trying to be very authentic. She was like, authentic? She thought of a stage presentation of some ethnographic [laughter] - like a historical lecture. That was just, maybe, a communication problem but that authenticity is trying not to over-stylize it and try and stick to, keep the steps the way history teaches the b--- from the experts in Poland will teach. We try and stay that course and still make something entertaining and fun at the same time.

SB: A true Polish folk musician - no notes. You ask him what to play, he'll get something and he'll play it and he'll build on that one melody, one tune. And they just play. In the mountains you have, they have weird instruments, basically a violin, three violins, a bass and a cello. That was your music. The lead violin would play and then the other guys would follow. Whatever he played, they followed. And then you'd have a fast tempo melody playing and singers would start singing slow in the background. And that's, in the mountain region, that's the way they did it. If you go further north, then you'd have more structured pieces but still, everybody had no notes. Everybody played, they discussed. One guy started and everybody joined in. Or you'd be dancing, music would stop, a guy would shout out "Play this" and he'd start playing it for you to dance.

EP: Unless they wanted money.

JD: I was reading, too, in the website like all the different names of dances. When they wanted the musicians to play, they would say something like Mazurka and then they would know? Would that be how it would work? Like they'd know what kind of dancing they wanted? but as to what song it was ---

SB: Or he'd start singing the song. They'd start singing the song and that song would correlate to this dance. Like, let's say, uh, Nova---- [some more teenagers enter into the hall unaware of the interview] They're fun dances and those are the dances that a lot of interaction between boys and girls. And he'd call out a dance and he'd sing a song and then the musician would play that song. And then the girls would answer back to the boys, vice versa, go back and forth. But then you have Polish folk, it consists of those kind of dances, but also of national dances.

You have proper dances that the royalty dance. We do those types of dances, too, like the Mazur, Polonaise, Krakowiak.

JD: And they're more classical dances?

SB: Yes. And you are, they're relatively quiet dances. They're nice to see.

JD: It's still specific to Poland though?

SB: Yes.

EP: Yeah, there's none of that element of spontaneity in there. Whether it's planned or not it's not projected as much. It's usually very formal and presented sometimes dynamic, sometimes graceful, it varies in the national dances. Getting back to the musicians playing and singing, at festivals in Poland and these North American festivals, a lot of times after, at nighttime, the musicians all get together. There's this whole culture of, sort of sub-culture of all the musicians, of all the folk musicians. They all know each other. They're all happy to see each other. They all get together. Yeah, well, Sue --- is a good example. A lot of people, folk musicians, orbit around her. She used to be our lead violinist. They would just get together and start playing. People would start singing along with them. The element of where the regional came from, like the villages, you could really see that. It's really special because it's like this life blood or the springs where a lot of culture flows. Even, you know, say like classical players like Chopin got so much of his inspiration from the roots, if you will.

SB: Same with Tchaikovsky. "The Little Russian" is based on a Russian folk melody.

EP: They just take it and refine it. Where the wellspring is is right down on the farm or in the village.

JD: I just want to ask you a couple more things just about costumes and music. Are your costumes here.

Paul corrects me and says "folk dress".

JD: I mean folk dress, I apologize. Are your folk dress, your attire, is that from a specific region in Poland? Are they modern design?

PL: Each, talking about each village, each town, each region had its own specific folk dress.

EP: It's part of their identity.

PL: Yes. We have between old examples because most of the materials they had were all natural materials. Wool, all hand-made, hand-dyed. Over the years and centuries you have paintings of the folk dress. You have some elements saved. You have the way of making it because there was a lot of lace. Everything would be hand-made and it would be taught from mother to daughter to granddaughter to great-granddaughter and that's how the clothing was made back then. We have

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some of our ??Wovitz?? costumes, we have a couple that are over a hundred years old. A lot of the old -- there was a great divide in Poland in the 18th century where Poland disappeared from the map and a lot of the culture was suppressed. Between that time and the time right after World War I there was not a sanctioned Polish identity. It was just held in the villages, in the roots, in the basic, peasant levels so that all came back. A lot of the stuff had to be recreated from old drawings.

EP: Then there's the work of one of the great Polish heroes, Oskar Kohlberg, who, literally, devoted his life to going from village to village, plowing through attics, talking with the hundred year old woman sitting on a stool in the corner. This guy spent his whole life and has volumes and volumes and volumes of this stuff recorded. The Poles have always recognized this as a national treasure because when they had no nation it's one of the things that kept them together. Even, like Paul said, sometimes the culture was suppressed. Sometimes it wasn't, it really depended on what was going on and what partition and, in some areas, where it was repressed like in the ??Lubelski?? region, one of the things they did was they incoded their culture in the songs of children. So a lot of the folk culture that we have from these regions are actually kids' songs. They did that, it was okay to teach the kids Polish and they would sing these songs and they kept it alive that way. No matter what they needed to do they did it.

SB: If you take some regions like ??Su-- and Movitch??, central Poland, wheatfields, farmers, and in the costumes they would have lines representing fields of wheat or whatever they grew. So everybody would put their things into the costumes.

EP: And you can see so much about the history and the geographics of an area just in how the costumes are like. In some of the regions they're decorated with lots of things because they might have been, this region, might have been a big trade crossroad so a lot of things might be ornate. Like what Stan said with the stripes and the fields. In the north, they even had wooden shoes, you know, clogs because it was damp up near the ocean. It was interesting.

SB: You take ??Lubl--??, it's black. Go down south, ??Goraski?? it's white. Then you've got some black. ??Jejov?? is blue. Then you've got ??Novas--?? is blue and black. Krakowiak is going to be, I call them pajama pants, the white and red stripes. Peacock feathers. Everybody's got their own little thing.

EP: They have almost like those mortar kind of hats. I don't know if that comes from the same place where we have those in graduations and stuff today. I mean, that style in Europe came from scholars. Krakow was sort of a seat of higher learning from going way back.

JD: What are the designs of your folk dress for the dances?

PL: We have very many.

KB: All different.

PL: Each, like we're saying, region has its own specific.

JD: And here in the group you show all different kinds.

PL: I believe we have - Eric's mom and dad are the directors, the costume directors, for our dance group. And complete suites that we would have enough male and female costumes for eight couples to be on stage. I believe we have twenty-two regions covered and then individual costumes, individual pairs of folk dress, I think we have probably another 15-18 which you can--

EP: It could be replicated.

PL: Yeah, it could be replicated if needed to be.

JD: Where did you get your costumes from? Are they from Poland?

PL: Originally, when the group was started, they would go, they would be hand made with designs they would get from books. During, with these first trips to Poland for the festivals, they made contact with actual people who hand-made them in Poland and they started purchasing hand-made folk dress.

EP: They started making a lot of contact with--

SB: Locals.

EP: Locals that were actually like a network of people that sewed in the village and knew the designs. These people would coordinate these artists.

PL: You wouldn't go to a store to buy a ??Wovitz?? costume. You wouldn't do that. You would make a contact with a person that makes them and you would go talk to them.

JD: And there are people like that here in Massachusetts?

PL: I'm not sure. Honestly, I'm not sure. I know there were, and are, people in Poland that do that. One outfit, they might work, depending on how intricate they are, they might work on for three or four months just for one couple.

SB: The last time I remember an order of sixteen costumes -that's for eight men, eight women- it took over two years to get the whole thing. Everything was made from scratch. You ordered this, they started making it as soon as you gave them the money.

PL: If you needed this lace which was made in a certain way, you don't go to a store and buy. There was no machine that made. Someone had to sit and stitch the lace and cut out the patterns.

EP: Some of these people used to come and stay with us when I was growing up and it was fascinating. They didn't just make costumes, they were folk artists. One time I came home and there were these incredible things hanging, they were made of straw and crepe paper. You know those--?

Stan's wife names the object but her response was not clear on the tape.

EP: There were artists in my house. It was amazing. They would come over [from] Poland and visit my parents, stay for awhile and help us with making certain things sometimes here or sometimes just visit. Sometimes I thought my house was a crossroads at time. My parents were always having guests over.

SB: For some reason, when you're living in Poland, you take all this culture for granted. When you move out of Poland that's you start looking for all that stuff.

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[side two of cassette]

JD: With many people that I do interview for this position as a folklorist, or folklore hopeful, we are talking to people about how these things are passed on. How traditional arts and dances are kept despite the fact that people have immigrated and have left their own. It's truly just about parents and family passing it on, remembering their culture and wanting to pass it on to their children. So that's just as you were saying.

EP: Sometimes the first generation doesn't have the luxury of doing that. They're coming over here and are trying to re-establish themselves. What they maybe knew of folk culture or whatever might have been a lower priority and here they are trying to establish themselves in America. They don't want to know about the old stuff, they want to know about all the new stuff. Sometimes subsequent generations now, because of their hard work, have that luxury to rediscover their background.

JD: I feel like I've been noticing that a lot with people in my age group. I'm from an Italian background, my grandparents all immigrated here from Italy but my parents didn't learn the language because their parents were so into learning English and trying to get used to ways here. My parents didn't grow up with other than social events that-- the food was the big thing that was passed on in my family. Now it's me, coming second generation saying "I want to know this language. I want to know where my family came from." So, just as you said, second, third generation then it starts to come out, kids start to get curious. And I feel like the parents are starting to say Hey, I do want to reach back. and I miss where I came from or I miss the parts of the culture that I had to leave.

How are we doing on time. Did you want to stop so you can get rehearsal going?

KB: Do you want to see us rehearse?

JD: I would love to see you dance.

Dancers: It's cold.

EP: Do you want to hear a really cool story before we go?

JD: Yes.

EP: I'll tell the story my uncle likes to tell.

KB: I don't know all these stories so it's good for me to hear it.

EP: You have. My uncle used to tell this story all the time. In the very first festival in Poland there was actually a competition. There were only a few groups and the poster for the festival, they showed these silhouettes of swallows coming together. There was one from over here [using his hands and arms to illustrate this] that was Krakowiak's that 'cause we were the only group from America in that first festival. I think there were only a handful of groups, really. There was a competition and the night of the final gala concert was the same night that the Americans landed on the Moon. And so when the guy came out to announce first place, he said we want to interrupt the proceedings to inform you that the Americans have landed on the Moon. And then he said, and also we'd like to say that the Americans have also landed first place in this festival. It was an incredible moment. I wasn't there. I was at home asleep in front of the T.V. trying to stay awake watching the spacemen. When they came back they told the story. That was a remarkable time in our group because that's when we started making all the contacts with Poland, started making a lot more-- learning a lot more, as a group, about Polish folk culture. I'm not trying to diminish all the great work that all the previous choreographers did but I think we started really making connections into Poland and that was just one more sort of story of the continuing saga in how we've grown.

JD: One last question, what does the name mean, Krakowiak? I mean, I know you have your city.

EP: Someone from Krakow. A lot of groups pick a city or a name like Stan came from a group called ??Potala?? that's the name of a region in the southern part of Poland.

PL: There's a group from Chicago named ??Viso elud?? which is Happy People.

JD: I want to thank you all very very much for doing this. And please warm up and start dancing.