



Fieldworker(s) [(Initials) Name]: (JD) Julie DeBenedictis, ()

Accession Numbers:

JD-01-01-FN

Fieldnotes

JD-01-01-C

Audio recordings

JD-01-01-CS

Photographic documentation

JD-01-01-M

Additional materials

Initial Contact: 11/5/2001 Contact Date: 12/12/2001

Related Accession Numbers: - - - - -

Individual/Group/Event: Krakowiak Polish Dancers of Boston

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Hyde Park, MA Zip: 02136 County:

Phone: Daytime: [REDACTED] Evening:

E-mail: [REDACTED] Website: [REDACTED]

Contact person: Jarek Micherda

Title: Corresponding Secretary

Location of Interview: Polish-American Citizen's Club

Street Address: [REDACTED]

City: Dorchester Zip: [REDACTED] County:

Special Needs (including translation):

Traditions documented on visit (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community): Polish folk dancing

Traditions noted for follow-up: Music. It is vital to the dancing and we did not cover this topic in the great detail that I would have liked due to time constraints.

Other Possible Contacts:

Summary Description: I learned about Krakowiak by searching the web for "ethnic dance groups" in Boston. Theirs was by far the most developed website, complete with the history of the group, descriptions of every dance they perform, the folk aspect of dancing, photographs of the group in performance, as well as performance schedules. The history of this group stretches back to its formation in 1937. They are the oldest Polish folk dance group outside of Poland.

Rehearsals take place at the Polish American Citizen's Club in South Boston. On the door is a sign reading "Members Only" and we had to ring the doorbell to be let in. Before the ring was answered, a dancer, Paul Lempitski, an American of Polish descent, arrived on the scene on his way to rehearsal and led us into the club. On the first floor is a bar/pub where a small group of people, mostly men from what I could see, were gathered. We walked up to the second floor where Krakowiak's rehearsals take place and found a function hall complete with a bar and dance floor. The room was chilly as it is not often used but warm with the glow from hundreds of colored Christmas lights that were strewn along the walls. Polish Christmas music was playing from the cd player in the corner of the room where a few teenagers were sitting and chatting. I set up the DAT recorder as the clock on the wall struck 7:30 - time for rehearsal to begin. There were only six or so dancers in the hall including the newly appointed choreographer, Stanislaw "Stan" Bogdanski. Many more are expected including the group president, Krystyna "Krysia" Benson.

Krysia arrived shortly thereafter and was trailed by other members of Krakowiak, children and adults alike. She introduced me to Stan and the two of us began chatting about the group. A few minutes into our conversation, I asked if we could sit down and turn on the microphone. Up until that moment, Stan seemed very comfortable talking with me and told a story about his childhood and learning to dance. He tensed up after I introduced the idea of using the microphone but soon became at ease with the set up and spoke to me in the same easy manner as before. After roughly ten minutes of speaking with Stan, the rest of the group swarmed over to the table we were occupying. Krysia and Paul took their seats in front of me as the spokespeople of the group. Later to arrive and speak was Eric Pierce - a famous name in the Krakowiak family for his parents helped found the organization.

Rehearsal began an hour later. A shortage in members has paved the way for the joining of the adult and youth ensembles. Stan first led the group in a "Mazur". We watched the group rehearse three dances, all of which would be combined into one long performance. Adults began coming into the hall at 9 p.m. and we guessed they were parents of the young dancers who had expected rehearsal to be over.