

Interview with Frank Plautz
Calumet, Michigan
Interviewed by: Ralph Johnson

START OF INTERVIEW

SIDE A

Ralph Johnson (RJ): Okay. I'm talking with Frank Plautz. Calumet, Michigan and this is Ralph Johnson. Well to start things off here, let's start with speaking of the Croatian immigrants from Croatia.

Frank Plautz (FP): Nope, we're speaking of the Slovenians!

RJ: [Laughter]. Excuse me.

FP: Slovenia.

RJ: I got that confused.

FP: That's a very important differential because among these provincial people, there is a tremendous rivalry and mutual contempt for people from very close areas. There was always a strong rivalry between the Slovenians and the Croatians. The Slovenians thought they were the elite gentile ones and they considered the Croatians the barbarians. And the Croatians considered them the snobs and so on and so forth. So, it's very important that we differentiate. We're going to deal with the Slovenian immigrants.

RJ: One thing I'd like to know, okay we've got the Slovenians and the Croatians, and you mentioned the Serbians?

FP: They were real atta boys. [Laughter].

RJ: They are currently the country of Yugoslavia.

FP: Right.

RJ: Are there any other groups?

FP: Yeah, I think modern Yugoslavia has something like, I'm not sure I mean these are all simple historical facts that can be checked on, there are probably something like 7 or 8 provinces up there that make up what is now the modern country of Yugoslavia. But the whole history of Yugoslavia is kind of interesting in that it's really an artificial land. Let me read a little bit from a reference volume here. "Yugoslavia, the land of the south Slavs." That's what the term Yugoslavia means, "Yugo" means south and "Slavia," of course, Slavs. And of course they are, I'd say, first cousins of the Russians who are the northern Slavs. "Is composed of 6 republics." Okay there's 6. "Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and

Macedonia. Situated on the Baltic Peninsula in southeastern Europe the northern part of Yugoslavia spreads into central Europe. It has a population of over 20 million. The 20 millionth Yugoslav was born in 1967. Yugoslavia is bordered on the east by Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary and the south by Albania and Greece. On the west by Italy and the Adriatic Sea and the north by Austria.” The land was actually created after, the modern country was created after World War 2 and it was really kind of a bunching together of peoples who were traditionally you might say not very good friends. It’s really kind of a minor miracle that the country actually stayed together. Even to this days there’s always problems. I mean the Croatian Separatists for instance are an active group. It was only because of iron hand of Tito during all those years that the country managed to persist. In other words it’s not a natural ethnic grouping like France or Germany where the majority of the people really kind of belong together. These are people who are kind of pushed together. The province of Slovenia itself is, let me quote a little background information from this reference book. “Approximately 1,300,000 Slovenian people make up the province of Slovenia. It’s one of the 6 republics. Their country is small, about half the size of Switzerland, but their geographic position makes them very important. Germans travels through here to the Adriatic and Italians pass through to Austria. Roads lead from London and Paris to Belgrade, Athens, and Constantinople. Among the the famous European expresses that cross Slovenia are the Orient Express.” And so on and so on. So it’s kind of crossroads area, and it has always been and therefore there have been many, I don’t know what you want to call them invasions? In fact one of my friends used to humorously say any time any of the people in the immediate area were looking for a little adventure they’d walk over into Slovenia and rape the women, and so on. And therefore when I would brag about being pure Slovenian on both sides of the family they’d say well that doesn’t mean a damn thing because heaven knows how many Turks and so on got mingled in there somewhere in past. “The capital city is a place called Ljubljana, which has about 200,000 people. Ljubljana was built on the site of a Roman city and devastated by the Huns,” they got their kicks in Slovenia also. “Today many attractive old buildings and many modern ones make it a scenic alpine city.” The university there in Ljubljana there is very old, it goes right back into the middle ages. For many years the province of Slovenia was really a part of the Austria-Hungary Empire and I think that many account for the fact, plus the fact it’s the northern most area of Yugoslavia that would kind of account for the fact that you might say it was among the more aggressive province in the entire area.

RJ: I would think being so many different people passing through the area, a lot of new technology and information as well was passing through?

FP: Well yeah.

RJ: It’s not an isolate community?

FP: Oh no, no. Like I said it’s very progressive. They have their own language, the Slovenian language, which is not the official language of the present day Yugoslavia. The official language in present day Yugoslavia is something called Serbo-Croatian. So the people in Slovenia of course have to learn it because it would be like an American learning English. But they do have their own individual, for home use language called Slovenian.

RJ: Okay, as far as, in your family now, who actually came over from Slovenia to the UP?

FP: Well, let's take the maternal side first. My mother came over as an infant, her father whose name was George Strucel had come over earlier and left his wife and baby in Yugoslavia while he earned enough money to send for them. She came over as an infant I imagine, about 2 years old, something in that general category. Went to Manistique, to the Manistique area where her father was employed as a, we could probably say a lumberjack. She grew up and went to school there, and grew up in the Manistique area. When I said went to school it was only as far as about the 5th grade. In those days at about that point they had to get out and work. For most of the immigrant families even finishing grade school was a relative luxury. And my dad, on the paternal side, my dad's father my grandfather who was a veterinarian had originally come to America during the time when Maximilian had been installed as the Emperor of Mexico and he was, being a veterinarian, he was with a military group which was in support of Maximilian. With a cavalry unit because of course he was a veterinarian and took care of the horses. He was captured there and actually was condemned, I mean he was supposed to be shot the next morning. But somehow the little group that he was captured with managed to escape. Then he went back to what we usually refer to as the "old country" and married and started his family. Then somewhere years later decided to come back to America and came originally to an area called, in the iron range in Minnesota, to a little town called Tower, Minnesota where he lived for a certain number of years. Again I couldn't be exact, but I would say roughly maybe 5 or 10 years. And then decided that prospects were better in this area and moved his family to Calumet.

RJ: When you say prospects was he looking at veterinarian jobs?

FP: Well he, I imagine that plus the fact that there was a larger Slovenian community. And he also said, you might say a side job as a vice consul or whatever you would call it for the government in Europe. Which in those days was the Austria-Hungary Empire. Apparently all the immigrants who were not naturalized American citizens, the men especially were subject to military conscription. Every year or so, I believe ever year they had to reapply for permission to postpone that military service and remain here. Unless of course they actually became American citizens, so there was a certain amount of paper work that went back and forth and that was one of his things that he did on side. Served as an area vice consul. Anyway, they moved to Calumet. So my father I believe was probably a very early teenager when he came with his dad to Tower, Minnesota. So he had part of his education in Europe and had to adapt. I don't know how far he got, I'm sure he wouldn't have completed high school in America or whether he had any at all I don't know. But he was a self-educated man, actually so was my mother in a sense. They were a people who had put a tremendous value on education, and what they couldn't get formally they got for themselves. Now my mother for instance spoke Slovenian at home but went to school in America and learned English and had to learn English in school. But because she could speak Slovenian, decided that she wanted to be able to read it and write it. So she taught herself to read and write it merely by using Slovenian newspapers and asking people and slowly but surely taught herself. In her later years she was relatively fluent in reading and writing of her original language even though she had grown up without it, I mean without any formal education in it. The official language of the Austria-Hungary Empire of course was German, so the grandfather and the father and so on were relatively fluent in German. And interesting thing of most of the immigrant people was that they seemed to be able to pick up like foreign languages very easily. They thought, I don't think they even gave it a thought as being any type of an accomplishment.

Automatically if they had neighbors who were something else, I can think of one specific instance where we had a Serbian neighbor, and even though the Serbian language is quite different from the Slovenian, it just seemed natural that my mother had picked up the ability to carry on extensive conversations in Serbian and apparently never thought of it as any special accomplishment. If we had Croatian friends, we automatically picked up the Croatian language. So many of them were surprisingly multi-lingual without really thinking of it as being any big deal. Of course much of this would be at a relatively superficial level. They weren't conducting intellectual seminars in these languages. But for every day activities they seemed to be able to get along very well.

RJ: Okay the spelling of Strucel I didn't get.

FP: Strucel would be S-T-R-U-C-E-L. And Plautz is a very interesting derivation. The original name in Slovenian was not Plautz it was Plaveć. P-L-A-V-E-C with a diacritical mark above the "c" and it was pronounced *plavick*. It comes from the Slovenian verb "plavati" which means to swim. So really, literally, the name literally meant swimmer. However with grandpa being educated in German and in those days, I suppose it was kind of an elitism, tended when they came over to Germanize their names. Remember this was before World War 1 when German was not a thing to be ashamed of. So they all tended to Germanize their name and he just, apparently somewhere along the line switched it to Plautz, P-L-A-U-T-Z.

RJ: What, do you know the actual area that he came from in Slovenia?

FP: Well, Slovenia is a relatively small province. But according to one of the other reference books, let me read the section for you. "Dr. Joseph Plaveć, or Plautz, had been schooled as a veterinarian in the old country. But as a young man had departed to Mexico as a Maximillian volunteer. After the failure of Maximillian's empire he fled to the United States, then returned to his homeland where he married. For a brief time the Plaveć family lived in M-E-T-L-I-K-A, Metlika, in P-O-Z-H-E-G-A." Whatever that means. "The children attended school in Novo Mesto." Which is a better known, you might say a minor city or a larger town. "Then his father," then you know, the grandfather "immigrated to America. He stopped at Tower, Minnesota where the family followed. From there he moved to a better life in Calumet."

RJ: Okay. What year was that, that he had come into Calumet then?

FP: It would be just before the turn of the century. I would say, I couldn't give you the exact date, but it would probably be about 18...anywhere from 1895 to...somewhere around 1895 let's make it a generalization.

RJ: Did he come over here, you said first to Mexico with a group, was that group mainly Slovenians or?

FP: No. See if you go into your history of the whole Maximillian adventures in Mexico what had happened was the Louis Napoleon had decided that while the United States was engaged in the Civil War that was a good time to maybe establish a monarchy in Mexico. So he kind of looked around Europe and took one of the younger members of the Hapsburg family, this Arch Duke

Maximillian, and convinced Maximillian that the people in Mexico through a plebiscite, had actually requested that he would come over and become emperor of Mexico. It's a very interesting story, I mean you could go on for hours about it. But anyway of course when Maximillian got here eventually he realized it was all a political maneuver and that the people in Mexico really didn't want him. But it was too late and he was kind of stuck here. Eventually of course he was, I suppose you could classify it as a civil war situation and he was assassinated. But it's a very interesting story, there are all kinds of novels written about it and there've been movies on it.

RJ: So because of his conscription?

FP: Slovenia in those days, as I said was a province of the Austria-Hungary Empire, and therefore military units from all throughout the Austria-Hungary Empire were conscripted and sent over to support Maximillian.

RJ: Okay so then he, after he moved back to the old country then after he got married, what prompted him move back?

FP: Well again, this is so far before my time and I couldn't really go into any accurate reason for many of these things. It's mostly a matter of speculation. But I assume that again, the majority of the people who immigrated in those days did so because they had illusions or whatever you wanted to call it, of America being a land with streets paved of gold. It was for personal advancement, the idea of being able to get over there and make their fortune. I mean there were opportunities up here to be better.

RJ: Yeah. Now when he moved to Tower he was moving into Slovenian?

FP: Into a Slovenian community right. But I assume, again these ones were relatively small settlements, whereas the Slovenian community in Calumet was rather large. These were the boom days in the Copper Country. So that the Slovenian community was large enough so they built this rather elaborate church which was strictly a Slovenian church. It was not just a Yugoslavian church, it was a Slovenian church. The Croatians had their own church and so on. But there was a rather extensive group of Slovenians in this area at that particular time, this was one of the major spots in which they settled.

RJ: The present day church was...

FP: The city hall was originally the Slovenian church built by Slovenian people.

RJ: Now was that, I noticed in the reference book here that we're using. *Slovene Immigration History* by Ivan Molek, translated from the manuscript by Mary Molek. That one, the reference book that we're using explained that the church took a lengthy time to build but was funded by the Slovenians not only here in this community here, but funded through the old country Slovenians also. So that's, you know I think interesting because there were ties with the old country.

FP: Oh there were very close ties. Many of the immigrants came with the idea, I guess if we look at it from our own perspective, if we were to immigrate to another country it would probably be with the idea that we were going to make a lot of money there and then come home and retire at home. I think the majority of the Slovenian immigrants when they came over, in the back of their minds more or less felt that they were going to get rich quick and they were going to go back and be big shots in their little native towns. Of course what they found out when they got here was that it wasn't quite that easy. Let me read you a little section here. "At home a fieldworker toiling from 7 am until sunset earned from 30-40 kretzer" or whatever the currency was "or about 15 cents a day." So in other words they would work from 7 am until sunset for about 15 cents a day, plus meals. "Which was a pittance, considering that at that time ready-made garments were available, nobody made garments, and a handmade cost the equivalent of about 2 dollars. A housemaid earned about a dollar a month, plus room and board. So she could not have many clothes" and so on. So you can see that coming here, even at a miner's wage of say a dollar a day was a hell of an advancement considering if you go from 15 cents a day to a dollar a day. Of course the relative values of other types of work would have been relative so that if most of them saw it as a tremendous chance to advance.

RJ: Now back to grandfather there, when they moved back to Calumet was he?

FP: He was an active veterinarian. In fact up in the attic I have many books, I remember looking through a book that showed, it was all in German of course, but it showed gestation of a mare. In other words horse anatomy and things like this. There are some interesting volumes up there. Now he was an active veterinarian but as I said he was even more active in this more of a consul type job. I think that was fairly lucrative for him because these other immigrants have this official red tape type contact with the old country as long as they were still considered citizens of the Austria-Hungary Empire. In those days, before World War I they didn't think of themselves of course as Yugoslavian because there wasn't a Yugoslavia, they thought of themselves as Austrians, they were part of the Austria Empire. Their contact was with the Austrian government.

RJ: If they were Slovenian, well Austrian, citizens then, did your grandfather then become an American citizen.

FP: Yeah, and again as far as the, there's a similar story with many of the immigrants like I said. They came over I think with the idea of getting rich quick and going home but little by little they became more or less integrated and decided that they would prefer to spend the rest of their lives in America and a majority of them became naturalized citizens. Also one of the big incentives for becoming an American citizen was to avoid this military conscription, which in that particular history period in Europe was almost universal in all the European countries. It was either become an American citizen or go back to Europe and serve in the army for a certain number of years. Again I don't know the exact details but they're all historically documented.

RJ: Okay, when he moved from Tower then, it would have been to Red Jacket here right before the Calumet name was established?

FP: Well I don't know whether, again I'm not familiar with the historical facts.

RJ: I think it was before the Calumet name was established. Where did he actually settle then? Do you know the?

FP: Sure. The house I'm in now, the place where we're conducting the interview, we've been in this house since something in the 1890s. He had the house built and it's a real interesting house because originally it held 4 families, it's a 12 room house and there were 2 families downstairs and 2 upstairs. In those days people didn't have a lot of space, I mean they were used to living in closer cramped corners. So each little unit was 3 years and it remained that way for many years. Slowly but surely as our family grew because we had, I was the 15th child, we took over more and more of the house until eventually we had the entire house.

RJ: Did he practice his veterinarian work out of the house?

FP: Yeah, there was a little room upstairs that used to be office. Yep. Of course, again I don't know too many of the details because this is so many years before my time. But like I said, I think that the veterinarian part of his life kind of fizzled away because he got more and more involved in the consul work with was probably more lucrative.

RJ: Okay so then we'd end up with your father you said he moved over as a teen probably to Tower and then came with the family up here. Your father then, was he going to school established?

FP: Again I can't give you the exact details. I think what he probably did would be the early equivalent of what we would call "night school." But obviously he had acquired either formally or informally a relatively good education. He was quite fluent in English. I remember even as a child, you have to remember that he was turning 50 when I was born and he died when I was only about 12, so I really have very limited contact with him and very limited memories about him. But I do remember that he was very much interested in American literature for instance. He read Mark Twain and that sort of thing. Whenever we had any types of programs, in those days we would have what we called "general assemblies" at the local high school. Usually what would happen, they would have a program for the children during the school day and then they would have another program in evening for the interested adults which was sort of a variation on the old Chautauqua movement. He attended all these things. He was interested in everything and was very very active in his own local Slovenian group, he had a good voice and was always in their special choirs and they used to present plays in Slovenian at the church hall and so on. He was very active in many of the Slovenian lodges. In those days the early immigrants were all a little distrustful of, let's say American insurance companies and so on, so they set up their own lodges, benevolent lodges, and they were relatively clannish. Much of their activities centered around their own ethnic group.

RJ: What did your father do after his education?

FP: He was a, one of those persons. I look back and it was kind of amusing. He worked hard all of his life and he did just about everything. But he was never what we would call a "good provider" in the sense that he never had a lucrative job. He was a bartender for many, many years

in the old Blooden Saloon, which catered to the miners. And in those days, in the boom town days there were 3 shifts of miners and so the saloons were open practically 24 hours a day so that when the men came off of the night shift for instance many of them went to the saloons. They were kind of a social center of the area. So he did that for many years. He was also a repair man, he was very mechanically inclined. He was a repair man for an old company that is extinct for a long time called the McLogan-Pierce Middleman Company which sold phonographs and so on. He repaired phonographs and did things like that. He was a night watchman and even a village policeman for a short period in the later years. But like I said he was never, he never had what we would call a really lucrative job. He managed to support his family but that was it. I mean there was no, there were no luxuries.

RJ: No luxuries.

FP: No.

RJ: And you said there were 15 children in the family?

FP: Right. Which was not, in those days unusual. From the turn of the century on, of course they were staunch Catholics and any form of birth control was absolutely taboo. The church at that particular time, I think selfishly, promoted the idea of people having large families no matter how much of a struggle was because it meant more church members. I mean they were interested in their own perpetuation, not in the quality of life of the people. So they were fertile people and they just kept having children. There would be 1 every 2 years for a period of about 30 years. That was not an unusual pattern.

RJ: As far as customs and that, Slovenian customs and lifestyle back in the old country, were those?

FP: Perpetuated?

RJ: Yeah.

FP: Oh yes definitely. In fact, god we could go on for hours on that. Much of the social life and so on centered around the church and the holidays were very important. Also food was extremely important because of the fact that, I think with a relatively non affluent group of people the one big pleasure they had in life besides procreating was eating. So food became very important. So all of the traditional Slavic, or Slovenian, foods were prepared and there was always very special foods for special holidays. Easter, as in Russia and any other Slavic country, Easter was really a more important holiday than Christmas. Christmas was relatively important. Of course this was a time when we didn't have many of the modern conveniences so getting ready for the winter was horrendous chore because you had to make big barrels of sauerkraut and then you had to store all your vegetables. Our house, like many of the houses that were built at that time, did not have a cement floor it had a dirt floor with boards on it. Therefore the temperature in the cellar remained relatively stable throughout the year and you could store many things. I remember even as a child myself that it was traditional that by the time that winter set in we would have a couple a barrels of sauerkraut made with sour heads, entire head soured in between the layers of

sauerkraut to be used for cabbage rolls. You'd have maybe say 15 bushels of apples in one bin and you might have 30 or 40 bushels of potatoes in another bin, and you'd have carrots and turnips and so on in boxes of sand which would keep them. Of course, wine was always very important because it was part of the traditional way of life. The wine would always be made in the fall in barrels. So it was really a different life, a different world.

RJ: Did you have a garden in the home that you maintained?

FP: Like most Europeans, gardening was very important. We had not only a garden in the backyard but we also had an area about a half a block away when I was a kid that someone had allowed us to use and we always had a big garden. I remember as a kid always hating it because you had to weed and you had, we didn't have water in the other place and we got to haul water in buckets during any dry period to keep everything watered. Of course you heated with wood and coal, and you had to get your load of slabs and chop them and pile them and throw them in the basement and pile them again, and haul out ashes. It was a lively way of life.

RJ: As far as the Slovenians themselves, was there, did you detect any difference between the Slovenian group and other immigrant groups in treatment?

FP: I would say, to me the outstanding thing which was I suppose partly a prejudice, was the way in which the way the Slovenians tended to be much more culturally oriented. They put a tremendous emphasis on education and music. They're a very musical people. We still in America have group called a Duquesne University Tamburitians who have perpetuated or preserved as much of the Slovenian music, well actually all of the music from that area but including the Slovenian music. One of their major instruments was something called the tamburitza, which is sort of a variation sort of a bastard crossing of the guitar and the mandolin and something else, it's a strange instrument. But there seems to be a tremendous emphasis on music and drama and in fact there is even a Slovenian opera company today. And their music was very happy, and yet as in the case of many ethnic cultures when you read their poetry so much of it is extremely sad. I read that it seems like practically everyone starts out with "as I look into the open grave." There is a certain amount of...and yet I mean their lives were hard and they seemed to have a great deal of sadness and yet they were a very resilient people. It seems like they bounced right back and when they celebrated they really celebrated. So it was either extremely sad or extremely happy.

RJ; The groups that, besides the Slovenians, the Croatians and Serbians was there any... the groups closest to the Slovenians I would say the Croatians geographically?

FP: Right, they're just across the river. You could get from perhaps Germans or Austrians, whatever they considered...I guess they considered themselves Austrians when they came over.

SKIP IN TAPE

RJ: Okay, the question was the groups closest to the Slovenians geographically in the old country, the Italians, Germans, Croatians, what kind of relations?

FP: Interrelations!

RJ: Interrelationships between those here?

FP: I think other words your question is driving at, and it almost embarrasses me to answer it because like so many, maybe I'm old and cynical, but like so many groups all of you see it actually even here. I mean the athletic rivalry between people in say Houghton and Hancock in more intense than the rivalry between the people in Hancock and Calumet. It seems that the closer they were to each other and the more reason they had to really be, shall we say kind to one another, the more bitterness there seemed to be. To give you a concrete example, the Slovenians and the Croatians are only separated only by a river. I mean the province of Slovenia and Croatia, there is just river running by. And they are both very small areas and most people theoretically should be very close. But there was this ridiculous kind of contempt for one another. As I said the Slovenians tended to think of themselves as being more culturally, but very superior and they kind of an elitist attitude and the Croatians tended to think of them as a bunch of snobs. I can I remember this one specific incident that kind of exemplifies the whole thing. When our television first came in and we would be watching television and my mother would see say a scene that was taking place in the jungles of Africa and there would be a bunch of savages along the bonfire and so on and she would look and shrug her shoulders and say, "Oh, just like the Croatians!" I mean there was this intense kind of like a... And yet on the other hand, the irony of human nature, if there was any outside problem then they would clump together. They could be very supportive of one another as far as the real outside world, the real outlanders were considered. But yet in their everyday activities be very jealous of one another and very antagonistic.

RJ: My uh...

FP: Let me expand on that one. The very idea in this area, you could see it. There was a Slovenian church, strictly for the Slovenians. There was a Croatian church strictly for the Croatians. There was Italian church, just for the Italians. There was a French church, just for the French. And yet they were all Roman Catholics. It just kind of shows you how, of course you see this now. This is a human nature characteristic because you saw it with the Scandinavians. There was an intense inter-rivalry say between the Finns and the Norwegians, or the Finns and the Swedes. The same sort of thing existed in all these groups. I mean it's just one of the characteristics, historical characteristics of the time, the basic philosophy of people in that particular moment in history.

RJ: Now, we covered a lot of stuff here as far as the Slovenian immigrants, your family specifically and also a lot of the customs and important things that I think a lot of things have come out. In closing here I would just like to ask, whatever happened to the Slovenian population here? It seems the church and perhaps the community did have a newspaper at one time strictly for Slovenian community. Like you said there is still a choir that is strictly Slovenian. Is there a still a recognizable community? A Slovenian group perhaps not within this area but maybe perhaps someplace else? Or do they still maintain ties with the old country? The area there?

FP: Well, let me answer. I think it's kind of complicated. In the first place there are 2 or 3 aspects of it.

SKIP IN TAPE.

RJ: Where were we?

FP: Well I said there were several kind of general aspects of it. Number 1, in this specific area because of the fact that the mines have closed and so on and the general population has dwindled, you wouldn't find as much of a permanent perpetuation of the...

SIDE B

RJ: Okay, yeah.

FP: Now as I said, there are other areas in the country like Sheboygan, Wisconsin to take a specific example where there is still a very large Slovenian community that is still relatively active. That situation probably would have existed here to a greater extent if it weren't for the fact that the mines closed and the majority of people went away. However, as in any other area I think another factor is the fact that the old melting pot idea. The ethnic group, once they got established and got over a little bit of their fear and so on, tended to become more assimilated. They kept some of the customs such as the food and so on, but as generation after generation came they tended to lose their language and they tended to lose many of the things and became much more Americanized. However, another factor I think is that they tended to intermarry. I suppose again if you want to get corny about it you could say "opposites attract." Many of the second generation Slovenians tended to marry Finns or they married people from other groups. The whole entire area kind of became like one big smorgasbord. There is an old joke about the Italians are taking saunas and the Finns are eating pizzas and so on. But that factor, I think the intermarriage probably more than anything else kind of contributed to the ending of a real close ethnic situation because as they intermarried and accepted each other's customs and traditions and so on. They also at the same time were educated in America in the English language, the whole thing kind of dissipated itself. So now all you find are really casual traces. Like I said probably more in the food than anything else and in the, that's about it. The local community is so, I don't know I suppose internationalized you might say that there just isn't room anymore for what you might call a careful preservation of "ethnicity" or whatever that word is. It's just something that's happened all over the country and we're no exception. But there are still areas in the country where the group was larger and remained larger and where there was more marriage within their own group and where perhaps some of the characteristics are much more pronounced than they are here. Now in this area, there are only a handful of people left I believe that really have any basic knowledge at all of their original heritage. Which in a way is a shame, but perhaps is also good.

RJ: Any final thoughts or parting words to either from Slovenia or from family that's involved with... do you still carry on with povitisa or is that strictly a Slovenian?

FP: Again I've never done any really what you might called scholarly research to the actual origins and so on. It's difficult to tell because the Croatians also make povitisa and so remember it's a general...

RJ: Nondescript?

FP: Yeah, general thing in Yugoslavia. I really don't know and because I've never traveled there I couldn't give you any accurate information. But I would say that nowadays the difference between say the Slovenians and the Croatians is so blurred that it's almost impossible to know what is what or where any one particular thing came from or which group should get the credit or the blame for it.

RJ: Very good. Thank you for the information.

FP: As I said I have several reference books, let me mention these books. One is called *From Slovenia to America* by Marie Priland and the other one, the major one is *The Slovene Immigrant History 1900-1950* by Ivan Molek, or Ivan John, John apparently. Ivan I guess is the Slavic equivalent of John.

RJ: Okay, and you've also got an article?

FP: There's an article that I thought might be useful from the New York Times of Sunday, October 24th, 1976. The heading is *Jobless Yugoslavs Moving to Slovenia*, and the subheading is "prosperous republic is concern that influx of thousand may cut living standards." The whole idea of this one is again, my Slovenian pride in trying to bring out the fact that even today Slovenia is the most progressive area of Yugoslavia and the Slovenian people, again this horrible pride, are really the best educated. Those who are the most culturally sophisticated of the entire group in that area. Of course you're going to be talking to people from other ethnic groups of Yugoslavia and you'll probably get some rebuttal on that. But I really just produce this as kind of a final proof that it's not just my idea of it. This is something that is pretty well documented.

RJ: Also we have this...

FP: I have this doll which is the authentic costume of Slovenia.

RJ: Is that a festive costume?

FP: Yeah, the traditional. The type that they would use for dances and ceremonies and so on. It is always kind of I think a little more interesting to have something that's 3 dimensional. This doll of course came from Yugoslavia. Okay.

RJ: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW.