

CC's DANCE

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"JUS' SPECULATIN'"--AMERICAN SQUARES By Lt. Ed. Kremers

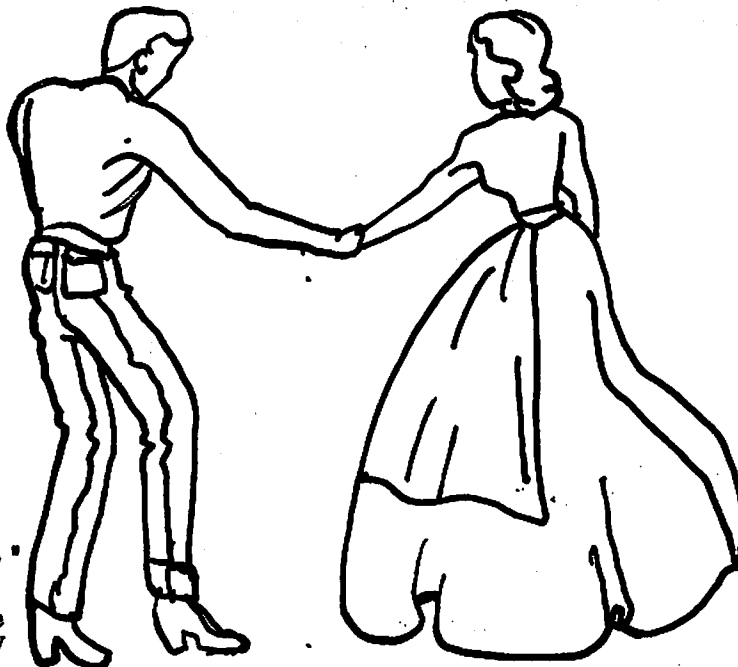
Considerable has been written concerning the origin of American square dances. Much of it is probably based more upon mere speculation than upon any provable facts. However, it's an interesting subject upon which to ponder--if the pondering isn't done too heavily. So let's speculate a bit!

It is with good reason that we use the full term "American square dancing," when referring to our particular brand. For any folk dancer who gives the matter a little thought will readily see that there are many square dances not American. Consider the English Hatter, Newcastle, and Lancers; the Russian-Jewish Sherr; the Swedish Gustav Skoal; the Italian Quadrille; and there are plenty with which we in California are not now generally familiar. All are done by four couples in the same formation as is used in the American square dance

Whether or not the square dances of our continental European progenitors can truthfully be called ancestors of the American variety is a question not easily answered. No doubt they made contributions in formation and figures, though probably in an indirect manner.

A fairly cent, however, such old Eng- ("drill of the stately down through ably derived ces of New through the southern moun- at some of the "prompting" in to support this

A courtesy your partner, "over from the quadrille, as many more of right and left, " "Right and Left Chain (or Change), " and even the people passing occur often in the rille of a century



direct line of des- might be traced from lish quadrilles four couples" as military lancers, the "country" (prob- from "contra") dan- England, and thence Running Sets of the tains. A close look calls (referred to as earlier times) tends theory.

call, such as "Honor appears to be a carry- days of the dignified the Lancers and many, that type. "Grand "Promenade. " Through, " "Ladies" "Sashay (from "Chassez"), "Dos-a-dos" (two back to back), all slow ballroom quad- or more ago.

These same calls are heard again and again in the long-ways (contra) dances so popu- lar in colonial days. These dances (of which the Virginia Reel was only one of dozens) underwent a gradual change of designation, in the popular jargon, from "contra" to the colloquial "contry," later apparently mistaken by city folks as "country," which seemed an apt term for a type of dance surviving principally in rural regions. But the music of these dances was very lively--and the devotees had changed from the courtly gentle- men and elegant ladies of the earlier ballroom quadrilles, to the simpler folk of our early Atlantic Coast. One can easily imagine a New England fisherman conjuring up a call such as "Duck for the Oyster, Dig for the Clam, Dive for the Sardine, Take a whole Can!"

Other calls suggesting such origins are the "Ocean Wave," "Captain Jinks," and "Pop Goes the Weasel,"--traditional tunes to which "singing calls" were fitted.

From here on in, the trail seems fairly clear. The deep south contributed many figures--
"Old Arkansaw," "Texas Star," "Alligator Gal," and such regional patter as:
"Swing 'em to the center an' let 'em stan'-
Gents run away to Alabam'."

"Docey-doe and Docey-dee-
My ol' houn's got a 'coon up a tree!"

and

"Meet your honey an' pat 'er on the head,
If she don't like biscuits, give 'er cornbread!"

(Legend has it that the girls who objected to the regular arm-around "biscuit" swing, were given instead a two-hand "cornbread" swing).

And then the West added its share; dances to such cowboy tunes as "Billy Boy,"
"Buffalo Gal," and "Red River Valley," - and real ranch patter:

"Rope the cow and brand the calf-
Swing each gal with a once and a half!"
"Here we come with the old chuck-wagon,
Hind wheel broke an' the axle draggin'."
"Promenade in single file,
Ladies in the lead, Injun style!"

It would be comforting to round out this "geographical" theory by citing calls emanating from the Pacific Coast region. The lumber camps must surely have had their square dances. But there seems to be nothing by way of "logger" calls. Wonder why? The closest thing to a "far west" call might be "Oh Susanna," and this was borrowed by the covered waggoners from their native eastern and southern states. Perhaps our readers can contribute some Pacific region calls.

There is a final group of calls that should be mentioned here. These are the "singing calls" which seem to be the product, not of a period or region, but of the ingenuity of callers, many of them still active, in devising new material to keep square dancing interesting to perennial fans. Some not now used in the Bay Area to any extent are: Spanish Cavalier, Yankee Doodle, Solomon Levi, Old Gray Bonnet, Log Cabin in the Lane, Darktown Strutters' Ball, Wabash Cannon Ball, Cat and the Fiddle, Hot Time in the Old Town, Oh Johnny Oh, and Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'.

Good "live" music is necessary to do these right. Some of the tunes are old, some are new--but old or new, clever callers have used them as the framework of some mighty good square dances.

MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL

By Harold Pearson

The Oakland Folk Dancers were hosts to the Folk Dance Federation of California at a gay outdoor midsummer festival on Sunday, July 22 from 2 to 6 p.m. The weather was ideal--bright, sunny, and warm, with just enough breeze from the Bay to make dancing on the lawn very pleasant. The festival took place in Alameda's Washington Park with a large number of spectators filling the bleachers and sitting on the lawn, surrounding the dancers. The host group presented "La Jota" as an exhibition, followed by the Scandinavian Folk Dancers in the "Norwegian Rheinlander." The New Century Club Mexican National Dancers, under the direction of Miss Avis Landis, made a striking picture in their colorful costumes as they presented the intricate Jarabe Tapatio and Las Altenitas. The exhibitions were very well done and performed with skill. The highlight of the day was the 25 piece orchestra under the direction of Dean Swindell--who played a large majority of the dances on the program--truly an accomplishment!

The following chairmen and their committees worked hard to make the day the success it was: Fred Johnson, Chairman of the Day; Harold Pearson, Program Chairman; Betty Pearson, Music; Alma Woehr, Refreshments; Virginia Mattsson, Publicity. Special credit should go to Mr. Otto Rittler and Miss Eleanor Scholts of the Alameda Recreation Department who secured the Park for the festival and spent many hours in putting up the greenery, refreshment booth, and large scenic backdrop for the orchestra. Mr. Rittler and Miss Scholts hope to start a folk dancing group in Alameda within a short time, so were glad to have had a Federation festival in Alameda.

COMING FESTIVALS

August 26	--Tamalpais International Folk Dancing Society, hosts.
September 16	--Palomaniacs, hosts, Palo Alto
October 14	--Fun Club Dancers, hosts, Yacht Harbor in Marina
November 11	--Sausalito Folk Dancers, hosts
December	--Berkeley Folk Dancers, hosts

Full details as to the time of business meetings, hours of dancing, place of festivals, etc., will be sent to your club's representative--watch your bulletin board for full details.

AUGUST FESTIVAL

The August festival will be held August 26 in San Rafael at the San Rafael Tamalpais Boys' School (not to be confused with the Tamalpais Union High School) with the Tamalpais International Folk Dancing Society as hosts. Dancing will be from 1 to 6 with Council Meeting at 12:30. The Tamalpais Boys' School is located on Grand Avenue. See you in San Rafael on Sunday, August 26th!

CORRECTIONS!

In the July issue of Let's Dance we announced the Scandinavian Folk Dancers would be hosts for the November festival. This is an error--instead the Sausalito Folk Dancers will be our hosts for November. Our apologies for this misprint. This will be the first festival sponsored by the Sausalito Folk Dancers and we are looking forward to being their guests.

In the same issue the name of one of our new clubs was spelled Turnabees--and it should have been TURNOBEEs.

WOODMINSTER AMPHITHEATER PROGRAM

The Folk Dance Federation of California will participate in a program at the Woodminster Amphitheater, Oakland, on August 5 from 4 to 6 p.m., sponsored by the City of Oakland, Park Department. This will be the third year the Federation has been asked to present a program at Woodminster.

Transportation will be provided by the City of Oakland from the end of the "B" train at 2:42 and 3:12 p.m. direct to Woodminster.

A program of 25 dances has been planned, including nine exhibitions. Any folk dancer in full costume is welcome to participate in any of the dances he knows well, with the exception of the exhibitions. Exhibitions scheduled are: Squares (Square Steppers); Fancy Schottische (Scandinavian Folk Dancers); Czardas (Festival Workshop); Peasant Dance (Chang's)- Fryksdal's Polska (Berkeley Folk Dancers); Beseda (Czechoslovakian Sokol Group); Squares (Redwood City Docey Doe Club and Gate Swingers); Hopak (Hoedowners); and Jesucita (Palomanians).

Harold Pearson is chairman for the day's affair, with Henry Koopmann in charge of arranging exhibitions, Walter Grothe in charge of arranging the program, and Elgin Juri, Narrator.

OAK KNOLL WEDNESDAY EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS

While the folk dancing groups affiliated with the Folk Dance Federation of California have been active in exhibitions ranging from the San Francisco Museum of Art to numerous institutions and organizations, their latest project of weekly programs at Oak Knoll Hospital bids notice as being a great success.

The Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland and San Leandro, a Navy institution serving the Pacific Area, has enthusiastically greeted the folk dancing groups that have sponsored folk dance programs and exhibitions.

Under a joint committee of Roy Zellick, Clyde Evans, and Grace Perryman, a series of folk dance nights has been arranged for the servicemen at the hospital.

The Castle Promenaders were the first group to entertain at the hospital on Wednesday, June 27 and found their efforts well received. Many of the men evinced an interest in dancing with various Federation groups. Besides the servicemen, the Red Cross ladies joined in the activities and expressed great satisfaction with the folk dancing activities.

On July 11 the Scandinavian Folk Dancers entertained the servicemen with some of their colorful, well organized exhibitions, as well as organizing general dancing for the men.

The Palomanians on July 26 continued with the programs of dances and dancing by making the long trek from the peninsula to share their fun and fellowship with the fellows. Roy Zellick, chairman of the evening, could not use enough adjectives to describe the evening's success.

A general plan of dancing is being planned for these weekly sessions so the servicemen may continue their progress in learning our repertoire of dances.

Our feminine folk dancers in their gay costumes help to keynote these sessions and interested persons should contact their local committee representative.

The remaining schedule of folk dance sessions at Oak Knoll on Wednesday evenings includes: Oakland Folk Dancers, August 1; Festival Workshop, August 8; Berkeley Folk Dancers, August 15; and Gate Swingers, August 22.

Other groups interested in participating in this program should contact Roy Zellick (Palomanians) peninsula representative, Clyde Evans (Castle Promenaders) East Bay representative, or Grace Perryman (Chang's) San Francisco representative.

Nurses and Red Cross ladies feel there is great therapeutic value in helping convalescent men regain their health. Concrete results have already been developed at the various military and naval hospitals in this area.

SCRAPBOOK

Co-Historians Ginni DeLong and Henry Koopmann indicated at the last Federation Council Meeting that they have outstanding ideas and plans for the Federation scrapbook. Among the new ideas developed were the addition of good paper stock, re-organization of material, binding of pages, and greater use of photographs. The Federation scrapbook in reality is a living description of the Federation's manifold activities marking our development as it continually expands and increases. All clubs should send photographs (action photographs) and items of interest, newspaper reviews, publicity articles, etc. to the co-historians. The re-organized scrapbook will not be open for review until it has been completely refurbished. Keep your eyes peeled for the Federation Scrapbook at some future festival.

NEW CLUBS

Two new clubs were accepted at the July business meeting and were welcomed into the Federation.

The Glen Park Folk Dancers, directed by Mrs. Dorothy Moore, and sponsored by the City of San Francisco, is the first San Francisco group to join the Federation sponsored by the City of San Francisco. This group meets in the Glen Park Recreational Center, San Francisco on Tuesday evenings.

The Village Folk Dancers, directed by Miss Ruth Ruby, was the second group to be welcomed. This group meets on Tuesday evenings at the Whittier School in Berkeley and is sponsored by the Berkeley Evening Schools. With a membership of about 34 and an average attendance of about 24, the Village Folk Dancers are mostly P.T.A. members who really enjoy their folk dancing.

YOUR CLUB AND MINE

GATE SWINGERS by Patricia French

The Gate Swingers report: that their July baby party was a huge success, highlighted by extra special music and squares; that some of their gang have well over 800 hours in as USO mobile junior hostesses. To date, 33 of these gals have a total of 9,943 hours of USO entertainment among them. Also, that there is still another festivity! Comes September and their party-minded executive committee has a surprise in store with a wisp o' the west and a hint of hay. Gate Swingers, take note!

SQUARE STEPPERS by R.C. Kennedy

The theme of the Square Steppers formal party on June 26 was Flag Day and was carried out in the wall decoration, consisting of flags, pictures, and red, white, and blue bunting. Flags were also used in the floral decorations and on the dance programs. Chairmen for the affair were Mr. and Mrs. Blandino, assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Larsen. At a farewell party on July 10 for Mr. and Mrs. Joyce Farr, the Square Steppers presented them with a set of folk dance records.

GARFIELD FOLK DANCERS by Elizabeth Ann Howard

The beginning and advanced groups of the Garfield Folk Dancers combined for an evening of fun and frolic on Thursday, July 19. Part of the evening was devoted to instruction and the rest of the evening was dancing "just for fun." Elizabeth Ann Howard is the new Federation representative for this group.

TURNOBEES by Betzi Flurshutz

Recently the Turnobees gave a fine performance at a Bond Rally sponsored by the U.S. Navy at Treasure Island. The Commanding Officer stated that the folk dances exhibited were novel and offered splendid entertainment. The group was commended for their fine spirit in appearing before the employees at the Naval Base. The Turnobees meet Mondays at 8:00 p.m. at the Berkeley Y.M.C.A., 2001 Allston, Berkeley, and are really growing as a healthy club should.

SAN CARLOS-BELMONT COUNTRY FOLK DANCERS by Helen M. Harris

The San Carlos-Belmont Folk Dancers wish to notify you (their members) of a change of mailing address. The new address is 391 Laurel Avenue, San Carlos. The dances, however, are still held at the Community Hall in Belmont on the second Saturday of each month.

BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS by Walter Grothe

The Berkeley Folk Dancers deeply feel the loss of one of their oldest members, Paul Vorenkamp. Folk dancers extend their sympathies to Nancy Vorenkamp and her young son, Rex. Jimmy Favinger, who recently received his honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy, is the new vice-president, replacing Connie Moncharsh. Connie Moncharsh, recently in Washington, D.C. wrote, while there, of a folk dance festival she witnessed. One of the outstanding events listed was the exhibition of Kentucky Running Sets in which the dancers all moved in continuous motion at a full gallop. Contrasted with the squares, the calls for these dances were only called at the beginning of the figures. Connie emphasizes that with all its merits, the festival did not compare with our Federation Festivals with hundreds of costumed dancers. (Many of their exhibition dancers were not in costume.)

OAKLAND FOLK DANCERS by Virginia Mattsson

Arthur D. Ellis and Virginia Mattsson are the new Federation representatives for this club, and Mrs. Alma Woehr is the newly elected treasurer.

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