

WHO'S WHO



JACK MCKAY

By Walter Grothe

When due to the sudden and untimely death of Lawton Harris the Camp Committee unanimously elected Jack McKay to the chairmanship of the 1967 Folk Dance Camp at the University of the Pacific, the "20th Anniversary" year, his name, although

known to most people in the folk and square dance field for many years, came suddenly into the lime light, particularly after the successful conclusion of the 1967 camp and the re-election of Jack to the chairmanship of the 1968 camp. So it may be of interest to know a little more about him as a human being, what he does, what his background is, et cetera.

Jack was born in 1921 in Vancouver, B.C., as a Canadian citizen, and he did not become a U.S. citizen until he entered the army during World War II. He received his education in thirteen different schools all along the Pacific Coast, as his family had to move about a great deal due to professional reasons. Jack entered the army during the war as a private and came out as a captain. He now holds the rank of a lieutenant colonel, retired. After the war Jack went back to school and he now holds an M.A. in sociology.

He is Director of Services to the senior citizens of San Francisco, operated by the San Francisco Council of Churches. He has a staff of 5 social workers and 165 volunteers, operating twelve centers and three visiting services.

It is interesting that his first step towards this position was his folk dance class for senior citizens, which he obtained through the intermediary of Lawton Harris - - first part time; then full time. Jack started folk dancing in the pioneer days of our California Folk Dance Movement. He was president of the Fun Club in 1939, and he played an important part in the founding of the Federation in 1942. In the early years he was the teacher of a number of groups, such as the Fun Club, the Edgewood Folk Dancers, which he founded, the Mission Dolores Belles and Beaux, the Gateswingers, et cetera.

Jack became interested in square dancing in 1947 when, in school, he had to find a means of support. He started calling

JACK McKAY (continued)

and soon made his full living as a touring square dance caller. He started and operated his own center, with classes every night of the week for many years. The center still exists, however, with slightly reduced activity, as his job takes much of his time and sometimes requires late hours. Furthermore, Jack married June in 1966 and bought a house in San Francisco.

As to Folk Dance Camp, he attended 19 of the 20 years (the army kept him out for one year) and he has served on the Folk Dance Camp Committee since the beginning. He is, today, considered, nationally, one of the outstanding square dance callers, teachers and theoryticians, and during this past year, in his position as Director of the Folk Dance Camp, he has proven himself as a good administrator, and through his warm and understanding personality, has gained the love and admiration of all people he has been connected with, particularly the camp committee and the campers.

We are fortunate to have a person of Jack's caliber in our folk dance world, and in one of the most important positions, the Director of the Folk Dance Camp.