

VOLUME

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THE MODERN REVIVAL OF THE FOLK DANCE

by
Lucile Czarnowski
President, Folk Dance Federation of California

Dance is a racially old fundamental human expression. Its history shows that like all of the other arts it came into being in connection with some urgent utilitarian need, starting as a rite and ending as an art. The story of the origin of the dance is the story of what is known as the folk dance. It has bridged the chasm of time and still shows instances of primitive beginnings. This is particularly true of the dance where it is still found existing traditionally, whether it is in a country like Australia which retains its primitive culture or whether it is found existing in isolated instances among the peasantry of the highly civilized societies of Europe.

The folk dance is the dance of the people. It is a communal expression. It is a blending of music and dance movement filled with the characteristic expression of the feelings and life of the people producing it. Historians who have traced the dance back to its early crude beginnings believe that it was fundamentally expressive of religious feeling, petitioning pagan gods for help in securing food, for protection against enemies and for aid in satisfying other human needs.

Both the music and movement of the dance acquired a pleasurable use in addition to its utilitarian and magical purposes. Thus in the change from a rite to a folk art, the social pleasurable qualities of the dance survived above all of the rest. In the folk dance is therefore stored those precious rich traditions so intimately connected with the cultures of a people or nation.

With the onslaught of this modern industrial period in world civilization, such a natural form of folk expression showed signs of disappearing. For this reason governments, private and public organizations, and interested individuals in most of the countries of Europe have made concerted efforts to preserve these traditional folk dances. Trained folklorists and musicians searched near and far to seek out the "natural musicians" and those who still knew or danced the dances handed down from generation to generation. The tunes and dances were written down and preserved in libraries and national repositories and museums collected folk costumes and the finest examples of the other folk art. This so called Modern Revival of the Folk Dance began at different times in different countries. Some of the best known efforts in this connection will be cited.

The Danish Folk Dance Society was organized in 1801, developing after a demonstration of Swedish folk dances given in Copenhagen in 1899 by the Swedish Society Pholoehores.

The preservation of the old folk dances through records of various kinds and group participation, has been a national movement in Sweden. In Stockholm is the Nordiska Museet or Northland Museum. The indoor section is housed in a beautiful building filled with rare folk dance and other folk arts materials. The outdoor section is Skansen, a beautiful park to which has been moved the building of the most representative farms from different sections of Sweden. Here is preserved a complete picture of peasant life. The cottages show the different styles of architecture, the peasant furniture, furnishings and decorations. Other farm buildings indicate the work performed on the farms, and the old churches which have been moved to Skansen indicate the religious life of the folk.

Arthur Hazelius is considered the creator of the Nordiska Museet and it was at his Skansen home in 1893 that the important association, "The Friends of the Swedish Folk Dances" was founded. This and other organizations have continued to labor in behalf of the Swedish folk dance making this phase of Swedish culture well known to each new generation.

The English Folk Dance Society was founded at a meeting at St. Andrews Hall, London, December, 1911. Its work has been felt all over England and the British Commonwealth and many branches of the Society have been established in other countries, including the United States. Cecil Sharp, a British writer and musician was one of the great leaders in the revival of the English folk dance and in the development of the Society. It was he who was largely responsible for discovering dances with old English traditions in our Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The first opportunity to start a large movement for general participation of folk dancing in this country came in 1905 through Dr. Luther H. Gulick, who at that time was director of Physical Education in the New York City Department of Education. At his instigation, Elizabeth Burchenal was made director and organizer of an after-school

*"Natural Musicians" are folk musicians who have had no formal training in music, but play by ear the traditional music for song and dance that has been handed down from generation to generation.

recreational program at which folk dancing was introduced. Interest in folk dancing then spread rapidly through the United States and in 1918 the American Folk Dance Society was organized "for the preservation of the folk dances, music and related arts of the peoples of America." Elizabeth Burchenal was its chairman.

The American Folk Society was very active during the early half of its existence but recently has been quite inactive. It is hoped that its high ideals and aims can again be achieved.

The greatest single event which helped to revive the folk dance movement after the first phase of the World War was the International Congress of Popular Arts held at Prague from October 7 to 13, 1928. This Congress was convoked by the Assembly of the League of Nations on the proposition of the International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation. It set out to study the geographical distribution of the different artistic forms of folk life, to compile records of the different traditional arts still surviving and to devise methods for encouraging and preserving the popular arts still in existence. Thirty-one nations were represented.

The Congress created an International Commission of Popular Art. This Commission was connected with the League of Nations Committee for Intellectual Cooperation at its Institute in Paris. Some excellent work was started at this Congress which was continued by delegates on the commission after they returned to their native lands.

A second Congress was planned which was to have been held in 1934 in Switzerland. This did not take place, but the following year in July, 1935 an International Folk Dance Festival was held in London which was sponsored by the English Folk Dance Society and the British National Committee on Folk Arts.

From August 1-6, 1939 a large International Folk Dance Congress was held in Stockholm, Sweden. Twenty-one nations with three thousand delegates attended in addition to official guests and spectators. This Congress was divided into two sections, the Scientific Congress at which papers were given and discussions held and the festival aspect of the Congress which included many excellent demonstrations by national groups showing their traditional dances.

The spirit of good will and mutual understanding was marked even though the war started shortly after the Congress concluded. If the folk dancers had been responsible for starting the war it would never have occurred.

With the devastation wrought by the war in many countries in Europe and a consequent breaking down of the old ways of life, the United States has a very vital part to play as guardian of European heritages old and new. Further our ethnic groups provide the greatest variety of folk expression in song, dance, music, legend, and folk tales. To intelligently use these traditions we must recognize their unique quality and strive to retain that distinctive attribute. Music, dance movement and expression become Americanized all too soon.

It is fervently hoped by all lovers of the folk dance that this present upsurge of interest will result in a new national awareness of our great opportunity to preserve our pioneer dance and the rich contributions from other lands, making secure for future generations these colorful threads in the fabric of our national culture.

FOLK DANCING IN BLACK AND WHITE, II

by
Henry F. Koopmann

In a previous ¹ article on the literature of folk dancing several books were recommended for a general background. This list may be expanded ^{2,3} to a limit determined only by the amount of time that may be devoted to reading. The enthusiastic folk dancer is constantly looking for new material on subjects related to folk arts, such as descriptions and pictures of costumes, dances, folk instruments, culture, etc.

Greater knowledge in folk activities is generally obtained by two methods: 1. visits in the country from which information is sought, 2. instruction from material imported from the country of interest. The latter method may be divided into information obtainable orally and information given through the medium of the written word. As a written source "The Folk Dancer" published in New York contains much material that is of interest to folk dancers. The magazine has been distributed since 1941 and is suggested as a reference.

In order to accommodate dancers of the Bay Area it was felt that "The Folk Dancer" should be deposited in some of the local libraries. This project was successfully carried out through the cooperation of Michael and Mary Ann Herman. The libraries that now have back issues of "The Folk Dancer" are as follows:

San Francisco Pub. Lib., Music Dept.	Vol. I, No. 1 (Mr. '41) 1/2
Redwood City Pub. Lib.	Vol. I, No. 1 (Mr. '41) 1/2
Univ. of California Lib.	Vol. 4, No. II (N '44) 1/2
Berkeley Public Lib.	Vol. 5, No. 9 (S '45) 1/2

Acknowledgement: Thanks are extended to Walter Grothe, Mildred Buhler and Frank Groch for their cooperation in seeking to deposit "The Folk Dancer" in the various libraries.

1. "Buzz" Glass, "Let's Dance" Vol. 2, p. 1 ('41 '45)
2. Hilaire, H & M, "Bibliography of Costume" W H Wilson, 1939
3. Magriel, D. P., "A Bibliography of Dancing" W H Wilson, 1936

CHANGES

The Pasadena Folk Dance Group and the Tamalpais Int. Folk Dancing Society asked to withdraw from the Federation. Withdrawal was granted.

NOVEMBER FESTIVAL

With the Sausalito Folk Dancers as hosts, the folk dancers trekked to the northern part of the San Francisco Bay for the November festival. The Central School in Sausalito made a cheerful setting for the large throng. Perhaps it was the enervating qualities that emanated from the Bay for the dancers and dances flowed as ceaselessly as the white caps in Richardson's Bay. Wilma Young and her group of dancers deserve plaudits for their fine festival. During the afternoon four exhibitions were presented. The Festival Workshop's Fado Blanquita with its accompanying hand cymbals was enjoyed by the audience. Many of the Portuguese costumes worn by the girls were imported costumes. The Santa Barbara Contra Dance performed by the Palomaniacs had a restful quality in mood and execution that made it well received. Chang's in their Dutch Windmill presented a simple yet appealing dance. The costumes were very appropriate. Unfortunately the group were unable to have their wooden shoes. Hrechanki, a Ukrainian square dance, was demonstrated by the Berkeley Folk Dancers. As a lively and spirited dance, this dance should become popular with Kanafaska, the Scherr and other European square dances. A highlight of the afternoon were the boxes of apples passed about to the dancers. The "chomping" and dancing were in tune, needless to say.

DECEMBER FESTIVAL

With the Berkeley Folk Dancers as hosts, the December festival will be held in the Oakland Civic Auditorium, Sunday, December 9. A full day's program is being planned for this festival. Dancing is planned for the hours 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Following the dancing, dancers will be able to have dinner at 15 different restaurants. Arrangements for dining may be made at the festival.

The day's festivities will continue into the night with all dancers invited to the German Pioneer Home for a Christmas party from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. A gala evening's program has been planned with exhibitions, dancing, singing, stunts, games, etc.

The size of the auditorium for dancers and audience should urge all dancers to pass the word concerning this festival--lots of room to dance, lots of seats for spectators.

The time of the Council Meeting will be announced through the publicity sent to the clubs by the Berkeley Folk Dancers.

VOLUME I

Mr. Harold Pearson announced that an assistant had been appointed to handle the orders for Volume I, "Folk Dances from Near and Far." In the future all orders should be addressed to Mrs. Frances Glass, 1924 102nd Avenue, Oakland 3. The price remains the same, \$1.50 for subscribers to "Let's Dance," and \$2.00 to non-subscribers. DO NOT SEND CASH.

BY THE WAY

by
"Buzz" Glass

According to Sidney Moorhouse, in an article in the English Chamber's Journal, the old art of thatching roofs is being revived. It is cited as an old craft but with many advantages even in modern time. This may be an idea to folk dancers who are lacking lumber for their own domiciles!

Speaking of housing, plan a weekend at the Tourist Club above Muir Woods in Marin County. You'll enjoy the delightful hand painted borders that line the eaves and balconies of the various quarters. This place with its unique surroundings is a fine place to follow the hiking paths of Marin County.

Chatted with Leonore Bravo at the Tourist Club who related her experiences teaching Washoe Indians in Nevada and attending their powwows. She gave an interesting description of their maturation dance which marks the entrance of the girl into womanhood. Prior to the maturation ceremonies, which proceeds for three days, the Indian girls follow a designated ritual. One of the tasks includes lying on ones back for three days, as well as another task of walking about with a stick upright in their hands.

Met Joe Muench, a nationally known photographer, around a campfire in the rugged high Sierras during the summer. Joe, who has spent years with the Indian groups in Arizona, describes a Squaw dance with a unique twist. It seems that in this particular dance the woman leaves the circle to grab a male. If the brave is caught by the ear, he must dance in the circle in this fashion, as the woman does not let go. At the conclusion of the dance the "objet d'art" becomes an object of wealth and must pay a forfeit to escape the further clutches of the woman.

Harold Lang who has been achieving national fame as a ballet dancer and who has recently been working in Hollywood films was dancing at the Estonian Village at the International Exposition on Treasure Island at the same time that many of the folk dancers were cavorting for the Estonian Village. Lang in those days was with the San Francisco Opera Ballet.

Time Magazine, in one of this year's issues, mentioned an international conference in London where the delegates took time out for dancing. All agreed that the greater friendship developed by their activity perhaps was a real cue to international agreements.

The Christian Science Monitor, a prominent international publication, has been giving excellent publicity to folk dancing and folk dancers. Recently a full page with pictures of dancers and the description of dancing activities in the East occupied a prominent place in this paper. In the October 21st issue of this paper a colorful folk dance map was printed including figures in costumes, typifying the national dances of European countries, accompanied by the name of the National dances. The Monitor satisfied our folk ego again by describing the activities of the Folk Dance Federation of California in their November 2, 1945 issue, and mentioned the fact we now have over 500 subscribers to our paper, "Let's Dance."

YOUR CLUB AND MINE

GARFIELD FOLK DANCERS by Elizabeth Ann Howard

Tuesday, October 30, the Codornices Club House was the scene of a gala Hallowe'en party. Dancing, refreshments, and novelty dance games were enjoyed by all. The present Thursday group was graduated to the Tuesday class and a new series was started for beginning dancers. Earl Bodenshot is the instructor for the month of November. The first edition of the club's news letter came out at the party.

FUN CLUB FOLK DANCERS by Dan McDonald

"Yours for more fun for folk dancers at the Fun Club every 2nd and 4th Saturday night," is the slogan for the Fun Club Dancers, with a "bangup" pot luck dinner every 5th Saturday which will be furnished free to paid up members. Dancing on those 5th Saturdays, of course, is open to all, "never a dull moment". We hope to find a hall where we may have dances every Saturday, thereby welcoming more fellow folk dancers. While we are on the subject there is also a movement afoot to find another week night for beginners. Requests are pouring in for this class.

SQUARE STEPPERS by R. C. Kennedy

Goblins, witches, and jack-o-lanterns were present at a grand Hallowe'en pot luck dinner and dance given by the Square Steppers. The hall was decorated and dinner served under the direction of Arvilla and Ed Goins. The members all came in costumes ranging from gypsies to pirates. Saturday, November 10, a group of Square Steppers went to San Jose to help a group there get a start. The new group is sponsored by Joyce and Ester Farr and is quite enthusiastic about the dancing. They served a nice supper after the dancing. Tuesday, November 13, an open house was held, and members invited their friends to come and see and take part in the dancing. It was a gay and lively evening for all.

SCANDINAVIAN FOLK DANCERS by Dan McDonald (son)

Judy (Olson) Renzetti will be back with us on December 1, when we will begin work on a beautiful Norwegian Sword Dance to be presented for the party after the December festival at the German Pioneer Home. Frank Nelson, one of our instructors, tendered his resignation to take effect next month. We are happy that he will stay with us to dance, as Frank really knows the Scandinavian dances and will be able to help clarify some points.

SAN CARLOS-BELMONT FOLK DANCERS

George L. Ritchie is the new president of this group, elected at the October meeting.

CASTLE PROMENADERS

The Castle Promenaders had a capital evening on Saturday, November 3 at Durant Park. On this occasion a delightful pot luck dinner and dance interspersed with community singing met with full response from the dancers. All are welcome to these Saturday night parties, held the first Saturday of each month. On November 30 the Castle Promenaders will exhibit folk dances at the Arroyo Viejo Varieties show. The Promenaders should win many new folk dancers through performing for such a large audience. Recently the Castle Promenaders have been enjoying a delightful version of the Skater's Waltz with many colorful figures, arranged by "Buzz" Glass, dance director. This busy month has also included performances for the West Oakland Schools, P. G. and E. meeting, Masonic Clubs, and others.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS HEEL AND TOE CLUB by Dorothe Brand

The new director of the Young Christian Workers Heel and Toe Club is Miss Mary Murphy, who will continue to lead the group at the club rooms located at 109 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco. The group still meets on Wednesday evenings from 8:45 to 10:45 p.m.

TULARE FOLK DANCERS

The Tulare Folk Dancers recently elected the following officers to serve for the 1945-46 term: Milford Cook, President; Mildred Wites, Secretary; and Helen Woods, Treasurer. The advanced group meets Thursday nights at the high school gym, and the beginning class on Tuesdays from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. In October Three Rivers group came to enjoy the Hallowe'en dance party. On December 15 a Christmas party is planned with several groups joining in the fun. The groups planning to attend are Tipton, Earlimont, Orcoran, and Three Rivers Folk and Square Dancers. And anyone else who happens to be nearby at the time is cordially invited to attend. Seven members of the Tulare group attended the Sausalito festival, staying overnight at the Tourist Club in Marin County. For some it was the first festival they had attended and they were high in their praise of this activity.

STAFF

Mrs. Ruby Biel, Editor	8007 Hillmont Drive, Oakland 3, Calif.
Mr. Clyde Evans, Business Manager	8141 Idlewood Street, Oakland 3, California
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Glass, Assistants	1924 102nd Avenue, Oakland 3, Calif.
Miss Annemarie Steinbliss, Illustrations	