

Folk Dancers We Should Remember

by Larry Getchel

David Boyce

Our choice for this month is one whom many still remember although he was lost to us almost a quarter of a century ago. Dave Boyce and his lovely wife and assistant, Lou Boyce, started many of us in the movement. Although they were both close friends of this writer, I never thought to ask when and what induced them to start their folk dance careers. It most certainly must have been when the movement was in its infancy.

Dave was a natural leader and it is not surprising that early association with folk dancing turned his thoughts to teaching. My first introduction to folk dancing and the Boyces happened on a night when a fellow worker phoned saying he and his wife intended to pay a visit to a beginner folk dance class in Albany and wondered if my wife and I would like to join them. We did. After some three beginner sessions at the Albany elementary school, it came to our attention that the Boyces also conducted an Intermediate-Advanced class at Marin School in Albany. As nearly as I can recall, this was early 1944.

In addition to conducting the two Albany classes, Dave was also a member of the Berkeley Folk Dancers, its president at the time we joined his classes. It was during this same year, 1944, Dave, a president of BFD was responsible for and chaired a Folk Dance Conference. Leaders of various Bay Area folk dance clubs gathered in Berkeley for the occasion. Some who attended and made contributions were Lucile Czarnowski, Associate Supervisor of Physical Education, Division of Women, University of California. She gave a most interesting account of her experiences while a guest speaker in Stockholm, Sweden, where she lectured on dance and its place in physical education. It was in Stockholm that she was awarded the Lingrad gold medal and diploma.

Madelynne Green gave an interesting talk on her travels through Europe gathering dance material. George Moncharsh, who had recently made up the Bylaws for the newly-formed Federation, spoke on the importance of announcers skilled at playing records and keeping the programs interesting. Ed Kremers gave a fine talk on square dance callers. During the day the piano playing of Cheryl Kleinhammer was well received. The conference was something new and a teachers' Institute soon followed, among other activities.

During the late Forties and early Fifties, Dave ran a record shop in Albany which prospered until the Bay Area became saturated with shops, numbering as many as 25 at one time.

We mentioned that Dave was a natural leader and on one occasion it caused him a bit of embarrassment. During the late Forties, the Federation sponsored a series of folk dance programs at

beautiful outdoor Woodminster, located in the Joaquin Miller hills in East Oakland. This first one was not rehearsed. Folk dancers, supposedly those with experience, dressed in their finest costumes and performed the popular dances of that day. One of these was the Swedish Hambo. Only those who knew the dance well were expected to participate. Our natural leader Dave Boyce with his partner Lou took the lead position, the others to follow. When the music began, the Boyces moved quickly out onto the stage, a little too quickly, perhaps. Just who was responsible for the trip I really cannot say, but trip they did, falling flat to the floor. With all the petticoats Lou was wearing, the fall caused no damage except to Dave's ego. Naturally Lou blamed Dave. To their credit they were up and into the dance immediately.

One of Dave's later contributions was his forming of a teenage folk dance division. At one time, through his efforts, as many as 200 or more teenagers were dancing in weekly programs, holding festivals and dancing up a storm.

Unfortunately Dave was taken from us all too soon. Such leaders are difficult to find and should be remembered.