Prof. M. J. Koncen's

Quadrille Call Book

AND

THE SCHOLARLY JOURNAL OF THE COUNTRY DANCE & SONG SOCIETY

CD+S Online

Articles

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This Issue

With the 2022 issue of Country Dance + Song Online, we are excited to present three articles on very different topics, two of them by contributors new to the journal. We will time-travel to three centuries of Anglo-American dance—all different, but all evolutionarily connected.
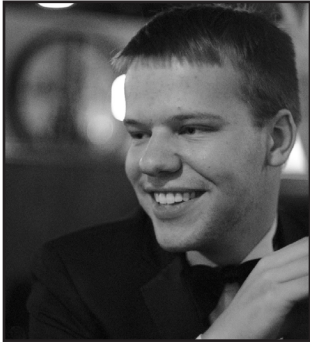
Alan Duffy has been researching nineteenth and early twentieth century dances for the past nine years, and presents his first contribution to CD+S Online on the topic of the Grand March, generally the opening event at balls from 1828 to World War I. More than just a march around the room, these choreographies could form complex patterns like the Grecian Cross, the "X," the Arbor and more. In addition to whetting your appetite for including a Grand March at your next in-person ball, Alan's article will inspire you to examine the many online dance manuals that he refers to. (Photo courtesy Alan Duffy)

First-time contributor Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe explores the way in which, shortly after World War II, EFDSS Director Douglas Kennedy changed the shape of the society by moving away not only from the Sharp-centered Playford repertoire but also away from the influences of a leisure time competitor—old time dancing, a couple dance form whose origins she also explains. (To get a sense of what this dance form was with its sequenced steps, fine attire, and proscribed deportment, view a British Pathé film of [The Waltz of Britain](#) in 1951 (sound kicks in around 10 seconds) or listen to Harry Davidson and his Orchestra play [Destiny Waltz](#).) Chloe's article reminds us that tensions over what is or is not "traditional," or controversy surrounding issues of artistic direction, heterosexuality, and nationality (among other topics) are not new to our own time. We are always navigating past, present, and future. (Photo by Susan Bell)

Did you think the days of collecting traditional dance were over? You were wrong! Bob Dalsemer, [2011 Lifetime Contributor Awardee](#), takes us to a traditional square dance in Oconee, South Carolina in the period from 2007-2011. He tells us that these were big circle style dances, and provides notes about the structure of the evening, the figures, the swing, and the music: [here's William Anders calling to the tune Lost Indian](#). Bob says that after the pandemic shut-down, the dances started up again in the summer of 2021, with admission raised to a whopping three dollars per person. (Photo courtesy Bob Dalsemer)

The Grand March by Alan Duffy

Introduction

This paper will begin with a brief history of the Grand March followed by reconstructions of figures used in the Grand March. These figures (generally only around five per march depending on the attention span of the dancers) can be combined into a larger choreography that the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies/Proctor has planned before the start of the ball.

Throughout this paper, I use the terminology of "Lead" and "Follow." Lead refers to the person on the left of a couple while the Follow is on the right. In the Grand March there is not very much leading or following done by any but the Ball committee/Proctor at the head of the line, but the terms are used to make keeping track of a given role easier.

All of these figures were reconstructed by me in 2020 from the sources listed under the "References" section.

Historical Overview

The March was a part of most balls throughout the nineteenth century. Ball programs back to 1828 feature some form of group or choreographed march that started the evening of dancing. The terms "March," "Entrée," "Promenade" or "Grand Promenade," and "Introductory March" are also used.[1] The first written description of a dance being called a Grand March that I have found appears in 1867 in the handwritten "Dancing Book" or "Dundalk Manuscript" from Ireland: this manual contains two choreographies (Thomson 1867; Hughes et al. 2002).

Balls generally started with a "promenade," "march," and even a polonaise (a march in ¾ time that generally didn't have any figures beyond changing the hands (Coulon 1844: 59)). These dances started as simply the band playing a march while people entered the hall and mingled/finished their costuming ("made their toilet" for those who decide to read the sources). Dancers would join in the march and tour the hall or simply take their seats (Hillgrove 1858:24; Howe 1858:3). At the end of the march, the dancers would take their seats and wait for the dancing to begin with the start indicated with a trumpet call or the call of the Master of Ceremonies. As evidenced by a review of Ball Cards and Programs, the first actual dance of the ball was generally a quadrille, a contra/country dance, or a Sicilian Circle.

One key benefit of the Grand March is that the figures of the Grand March can end in the formations required for the next dance (that is in quadrilles, contra lines, or a Sicilian Circle), a feature that makes the dances flow together quite harmoniously. This was not always the case, as some sources describe breaking and taking seats before starting dancing. I will address this more in the section titled "Notes on Programing and Executing the Grand March."

There are two kinds of march notations found in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the first is simply describing a selection of figures; the second describing full choreographies. Many manuals say that they are only providing a small selection of the figures. They recommend that Proctors, Dancing Masters, and Hosts develop their own figures and choreographies. They recommend that they not be too long nor too complicated for the gathered company of dancers.

To that point, I would also recommend that Masters of Ceremonies, Dancing Masters, Proctors, dance committees, etc. should do the same today. The next section will describe my suggestions and guidance on programing the Grand March.

Notes on Programing and Executing the Grand March

I will begin this section by suggesting that all Grand Marches end in the formation of the dance that follows the Grand March. In this paper, I will describe three ways to form contra dance lines: one from the Dundalk Manuscript, one a modification of that description, and the last a modification of the 1893 Grant Choreography. I will also describe how to neatly make quadrille sets (see the March by Platoons description). I will also observe that forming the Sicilian Circle is just a matter of marching round and forming a circle and having the first, third, fifth, etc. couple turn around and face the couple behind them. Figure 1 shows the form of the Sicilian Circle. The reason behind this suggestion is that it makes the dances flow together in a deliberate and beautiful way.

The Grand March should be a smooth and elegant dance with changes that are sharp, 90° turns that follow the shape of the hall. Choreographers of Grand Marches should never create a bottleneck in the dance. This makes things grind to a halt and all the careful planning of the figures is lost as the dancers' minds start to wander. To avoid this, the leader of the dance should set a pace that prevents the bunching

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[1] A special thanks to Richard Powers for going through his collection of dance cards to help me find these examples.

up and the choreographer should take into consideration the size of the company. The leader should also provide gaps in the figures to let the dancers finish each figure.

I strongly advise the use of floor managers. One should be posted at each point where the dance makes a change. This will also help prevent confusion and bottlenecks from forming.

The Grand March should be led by the person who wrote the choreography as they will best know the changes, figures, and design of the dances. The leader is generally followed by dancers who also know the choreography. Traditionally, these people would be the ball committee in order of rank. Also, the leader of the dance is historically the host, proctor, or someone of distinction (the president of the ball committee, a political figure, honored guest, or other prominent figure). If the honored guest or host of the ball does not wish to choreograph a Grand March, they abdicate the leadership role of the march and the choreographer takes their place, they then follow directly behind the leader, in second place.

All persons of the ball committee should know the choreography. This makes for less confusion when figures take dancers out of their original position (see the description of March by Platoons). It goes without saying that the floor mangers must also know the choreography so that they may direct the dancers properly.

The position of the Grand March in the ball program may vary. The Grand March may be delayed a few dances after the beginning of the ball to ensure that all guests are present. I also think it is a pleasant idea to lead a small march before supper: this may be more improvised than the opening march but should also be shorter at about two figures maximum. The Supper March is historically accurate; the goal of it is to organize the party into a neat line to enter the supper room (Reilley 1870).

A Grand March should not be too long. Most sources state that four or five figures is enough. If the party is large, a choreography with fewer figures is better; if it is small and personal, you may incorporate more figures.

The general rule of thumb for Grand Marches is that they are led Clockwise. Every source I have found uses this convention.

This paper will provide a few choice choreographies from historical sources that I found attractive as well as individual figures that the reader may use to construct a choreography for themselves. The two historical choreographies will be described in their unmodified versions followed by instructions to modify them into more standard contra

dance formations. As stated before, I recommend that choreographies be made to flow into the subsequent dance formation.

Figure 1 shows the formation of the Sicilian Circle from Schell's Prompting: How to do it (1890: 99).
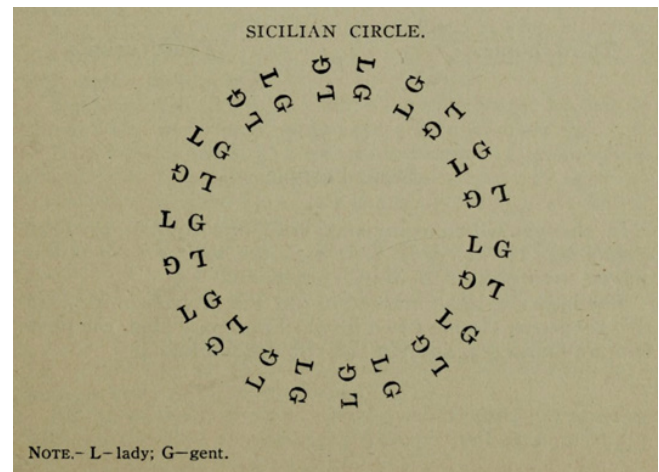

Figure 1

Note that the Sicilian Circle is a general form for Contra Dancing. In the nineteenth Century, the term generally just referred to the contra dance called the "Sicilian Circle." But there are many more dances in this formation in contemporary Contra Dancing. There were many dances in the mid-nineteenth century that used this form as well. The most famous were the Spanish Dance, Soldier's Joy, Circassian Circle, and others (note also that any improper contra dance may also be modified to fit this form). While other names were popular in describing this form ("circular" or as in Spanish Dance from Howe, 1866), history remembers this formation as the Sicilian Circle.

Figures

March in File

The March in File is a figure that generally starts the Grand March. The dancers begin by marching around the room as couples. When all dancers are moving and the Leader is satisfied with the pace, the Leader takes the line up the center of the hall starting from the bottom and moving toward the top. At the top of the hall, the couples split into individual dancers, the Lead going to their left (CCW) and the Follow going to their right (CW). They then walk around the room singly and pass by the left shoulder at the bottom of the hall (Follows are on the inside track). When they meet at the top of the hall, they then march down the center as couples (the leader then turns to the right to lead the company around in the CW direction).

Some manuals state that the dancers pass again at the top. Some describe passing by the left as before and others describe passing by the right (Lead on the inside track). They would then meet at the bottom and march up the hall as couples.

March in Columns

The March in Columns is a figure that weaves around the hall. This figure is more likely to fail than many of the other variations because it is deceptively simple. The number of columns depends on the size of the hall and the Leader should decide on the number once all participants are present to provide for better spacing and timing. Many manuals suggest that 4 columns be made.

The figure is quite simple. The Leader leads the company around the hall in the Clockwise (CW) direction. When the Leader reaches the Bottom Left corner, they will start the figure (marked with an X in figure 2). The Leader turns 90° to face up the hall (to the right) and takes a few steps in that direction (on the left side of the hall). The Leader then turns another 90° to face the right-hand wall (turning again to the right). They then march across the hall with the majority of the party forming the Bottom and Right sides of the hall. Once they reach the farthest point on the right side of the hall, they then turn to face up the hall again (this time to the Left). They take a few steps and turn to face the left-hand wall (turning left again). The party then makes as many of these changes as the leader pleases.

This figure is done marching as couples. The best illustration for this figure is folding the line in on itself. It is tempting to say that the lines snake but that could cause confusion with the Serpentine March. Figure 2 shows the pattern.
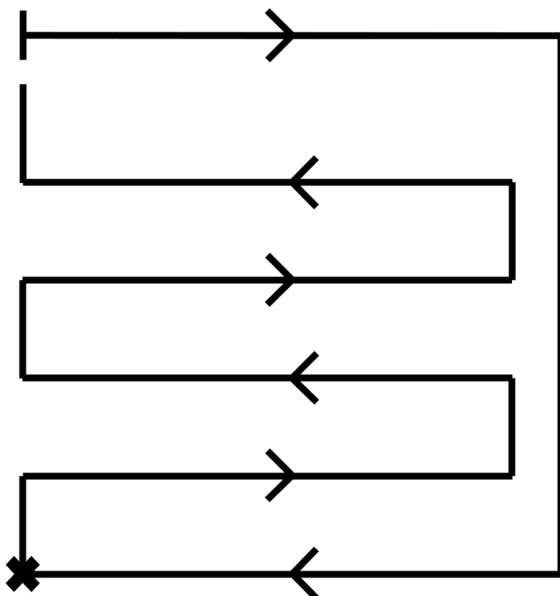

Figure 2: the March in Columns.

March by Platoons

The March by Platoons is one of the most common figures of the Grand March as it is quite simple, and many variations can be made on the figure. Many choreographies end with a March by Platoon as it is quite simple to then form contra dance lines or quadrille sets. But the March by Platoons is also a useful tool in setting up more complicated figures.

Choreographers should be careful to keep track of which dancers are where (especially in the first line). The reason for this is that the person at the end of the line changes when more people are added to the platoon. I recommend that great care should be made in placing the second most knowledgeable dancer in the position that will be on the right most side of the first line (their partner should also be made aware of the responsibilities that they may have placed on them). A common ending variation that is done today is to weave single file with hands, doubling back, adding to the growing single file line (this generally leads into the Serpentine figure) and the person on the end must know how to start and lead the next figure).[2]

The Figure:

The Leader leads the line up the center of the hall as in the March in File. At the top of the set, the first couple leads out to the right (CW) and marches across the top and down the right side (marked as 1 in figure 3). The couple behind (#2) leads out to the left (CCW) and marches across the top and down the left side (marked as 2 in figure 3). The following couples do the same, the odd numbered couples go to the right and the even to the left.

At the bottom of the hall, the Leader and the #2 couple meet and form a line of 4 people that marches up the set (marked as 3 in figure 3). The same occurs for the rest of the company (#3 with #4 and so on). At the top of the hall, the first line (couples #1 & #2) lead out to the right and the following line (#3 & #4) to the left. The rest of the company does the same.

The platoons continue to add members in this manner, doubling each march up the hall. The practical limit for this is generally 16 people (as 32 is quite unwieldy). We will see that the Dundalk Manuscript separates the Leads and Follows and each line is 16 people long (that is 16 couples between the two lines). I will describe my personal favorite way to end this figure in detail but there are other ways to end the figure. For example, some manuals describe adding

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2 This may be avoided by simply adding one couple to a line at a time. This would keep the Leader in the right-most position.

up to 16 dancers to a platoon and then subtracting in the same manner down to couples or individuals, but I find this a very dull/uncreative/time consuming modification and strongly advise against it. (Wilson M., 1899/1904; Skinner 1898).

The ending version found in Dick (1878) ends by having all the lines march up the set. When the first line reaches the top of the hall, each line stops moving forward, and the odd numbered lines face right (the lead steps up beside their partner) and the even numbered lines face left (the follows step up beside their partner). The first line then marches to the right and turns to the right to march down the set (the goal is to march around the hall in couples). The second line weaves up to the top of the hall and follows the first line. The pattern is similar to the March in Columns. All lines are moving across the hall and then up to the next line and march the other direction across the hall.

The March by Platoons may also be set to end in quadrilles by having the dancers line up in platoons of eight people and then each line folds in on itself to form a quadrille set (the top line forming a set to the right and the next line to the left and so on). You may also have a platoon of 16 people and form two quadrilles splitting down the center (one to the right and another to the left such that you have two columns of quadrilles). Kopp describes the eight-person mode and suggests that the rows make circles to help form the quadrille (Kopp 1896: 16).

The following figures show the first change of the March by Platoons (figure 3) and the last end of the March by Platoons (figure 4).
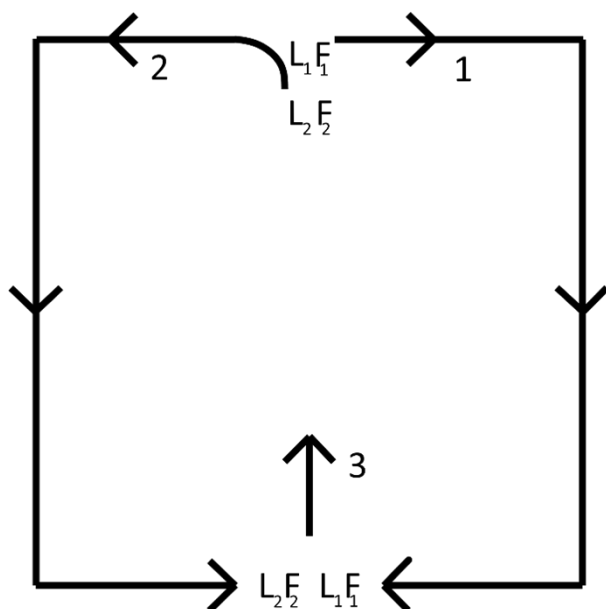

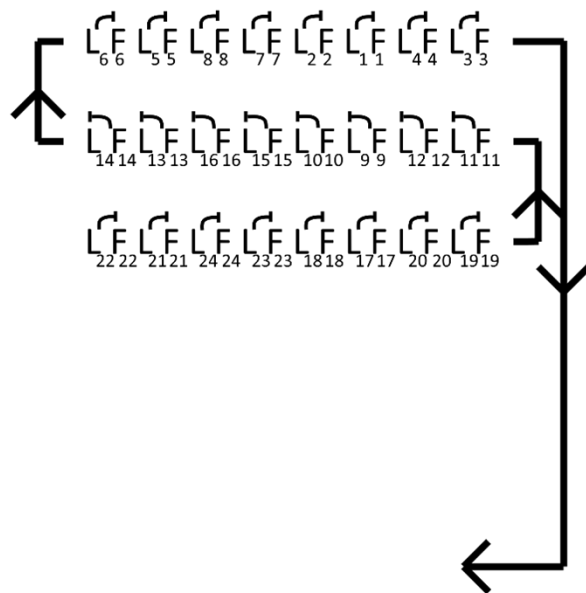Figure 3: the first change of the March by Platoons.

Figure 4: the end of the March by Platoons from Dick 1878.

Another alternative to end the figure is to have the lines take hands and to have Follow 3 lead out and around the second line where Lead 6 catches hands with Follow 11 and so on. The figure then ends with one large and single file line marching clockwise. This can flow nicely into the Serpentine figure described below.

The Arbor

The Arbor march is best thought of as an arch building figure. As with most figures, it starts at the bottom of the hall. The Lead Couple will turn to face each other and raise hands to build an arch. The arch opens from the bottom of the hall to the top. The following couples pass under the arch and then turn to face each other and build a section of arch to continue the arch built by the leader. Each successive couple passes under the growing arch until all are through the now very long arched/canopied path.

The arch is then taken down just as it was built. The Leading Couple join hands and pass under the arch followed by the second couple and so on. Once the leaders reach the end of the arch, they continue the march by marching to the right (CW).

Some manuals state that this building and tearing down of the arches continues indefinitely, but I would advise against this as this figure gets dull very fast. Moreover, it adds to confusion and slows down the progression of the march.

Other manuals suggest that the arches dissolve all at once when the leader signals the band to change to a waltz, and all waltz. I also think this is not a great way to end this figure and much less a whole Grand March for the reasons

stated in the section "Notes on Programing and Executing the Grand March."

Some modern dancers object to The Arbor. Some Follows say that it was not possible to raise their hands above their shoulders in nineteenth Century ball gowns. But the Arbor was very much a common figure and, furthermore, Follows were quite able to raising their arms as shown in the many illustrations of underarm turns (allemandes) and "Graces" figures throughout the entire nineteenth century. Figure 5 shows two examples from the polka in Durang's Ball-room Bijou from 1848 showing dancers in both evening and day dresses with raised arms and doing underarm turns.
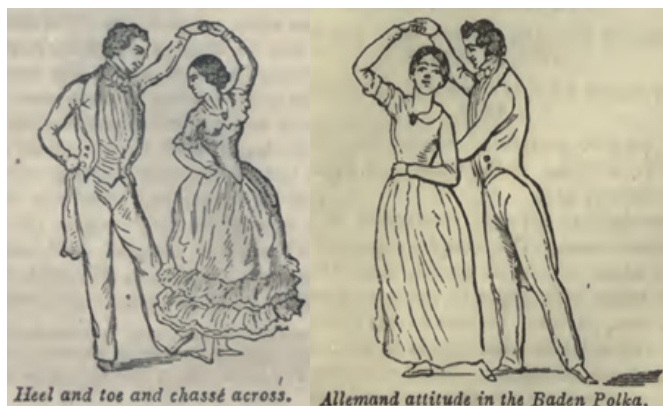

Figure 5: two images from Durang's Ball-room Bijou (128, 135) from 1848.

The issue appears to be that the dresses that are used by some as reference were daywear that was generally more restrictive or other garments that have either stiffened with age or were never meant to be danced in. Many period illustrations show allowances for raising the arms with puffed sleeves and other cleaver features to make dancing possible.

The Serpentine

The Serpentine figure is one of the most entertaining figures of the Grand March. This is the only figure that makes changes that are not 90° or that follow the shape of the room. While it is generally not stated if this figure is done as couples or in single file, I think it is safe to conclude that this figure is done in single file. It is not necessary to have the whole company take hands, but it is quite beneficial as this figure is a bit confusing and easy to get lost in.

The Leader leads around the hall followed by their partner in a single file line (still going CW). The Leader will take a shorter path (curve) on the inside of the whole company. The leader will continue to shrink this circle forming a spiral. At the center of the hall, when the Leader has no more space to march, they will turn over their left shoulder

and march Counterclockwise (CCW) between the spiral paths of the rest of the company marching Clockwise (CW).

Once the entire company is out of the spiral, the leader will march Counterclockwise (CCW) to the bottom of the hall. They will then march up the hall and turn to the right to march Clockwise (CW). The company may form couples as they exit the spiral or they may simply lead a March in File when the Leader reaches the top and meet their partners at the bottom of the hall.

Care should be made to not make the turn too tight at the center of the hall. The turn has the capacity to be fairly violent if made too tight. To avoid this "cracking the whip" feature, the spiral should not be made too tight and space should be left in the center of the spiral to make the change.
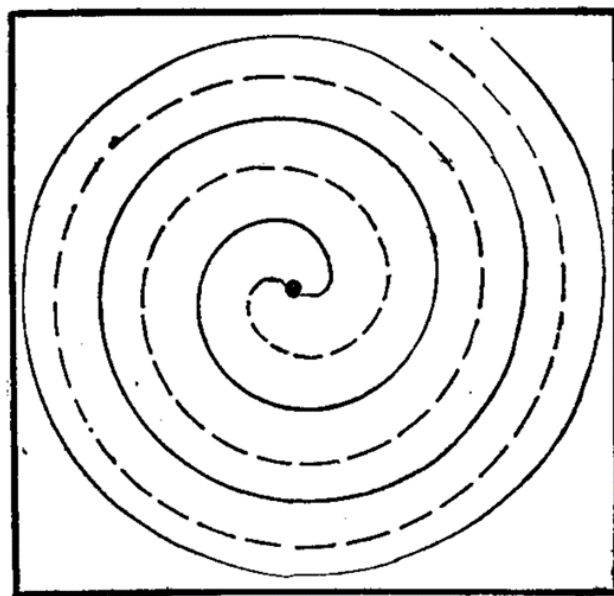

Figure 6: an illustration from Wilson (1898: 23) showing the Serpentine march. I have flipped it to make the transition at the top of the set. The solid line shows the entrance spiral and the dotted path shows the exit spiral (note the direction of rotation).

The Grecian Cross

The Grecian Cross is an interesting and fairly complicated figure that describes a specific shape: the Grecian Cross (a cross with the horizontal member crossing in the center of the vertical member). There are a number of other figures that do the same, such as the Cross and the Hourglass, described later.

The figure may follow a March in File or the Leaders simply separate at the bottom of the hall.

The figure starts at the bottom of the hall where the Lead and Follow separate by six feet (Lead on the left and Follow on the right) (marked as 1 in figure 7). They then march up the center of the hall. They stop short of the center of the hall by about three feet (marked as 2 in figure 7). They then turn to face the nearest wall (Lead to the left and Follow to the right), and march toward that wall. They stop short of the wall by enough (three to six feet) to let the line pass down the hall (marked as 3 in figure 7). They then turn to face up the hall and march six feet up the hall and turn to face the center of the hall (marked as 4 in figure 7). They then march to the center of the hall stopping three feet short of the exact center (keeping six feet away from their partner) where they turn to face up the hall (marked as 5 in figure 7). They then march up to the top of the hall and turn to face the nearest wall and march toward the wall and down the side as in the March in File (marked as 6 in figure 7). The Lead and Follow then join as couples at the bottom of the hall (marked as 7 in figure 7) where they would then lead up the center.
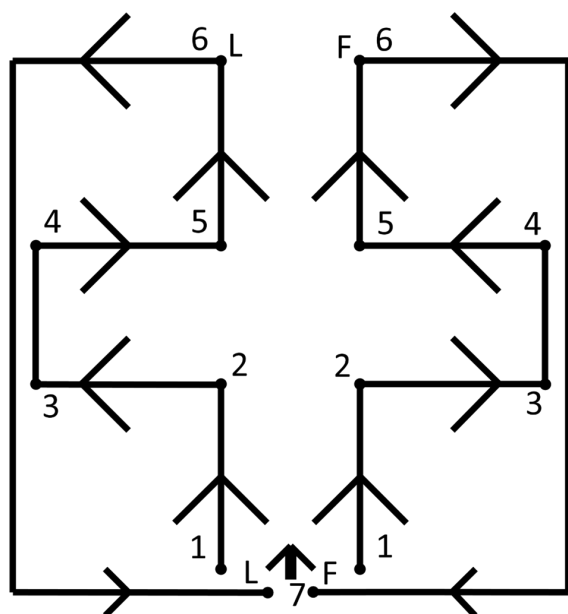
opposite top corner (Lead faces top right and Follow faces top left) of the hall (they do not march across the bottom of the hall yet) (marked as 2 in figure 8). The Lead couple then marches toward the center from their respective bottom corner with the whole company in tow. At the center point of the hall, the Lead passes in front of their partner and continues to the top right corner (Follow goes to the top left corner) (marked as 3 in figure 8). They then turn to face down the hall (marked as 4 in figure 8) and march down the set. They then meet at the bottom of the hall and march up as couples (marked as 5 in figure 8).

This may be done twice by having the Lead and Follow not meet at the bottom and simply turn when they get to the bottom of the hall (without marching across the bottom). Repeating the figure has the added benefit of placing the Lead on the Left and the Follow on the Right to march back up without having to change sides (as shown by 5 in figure 8). When doing this figure twice through, I recommend keeping the Lead passing in front on the second pass to reduce confusion.

Figure 7: the Grecian Cross.

The Cross or X

The Cross or X figure is a satisfying variation that depends on good timing. A line stalling or something else causing the timing to be lost by the dancers can lead to quite a bit of confusion. The key thing to remember is that the Lead crosses in front of the Follow in the center of the hall.

The figure begins by marching up the center of the hall and separating (Lead to the left and Follow to the right) as in the March in File (marked as 1 in figure 8). When the Lead/Follow reaches the bottom of the hall, they turn to face the
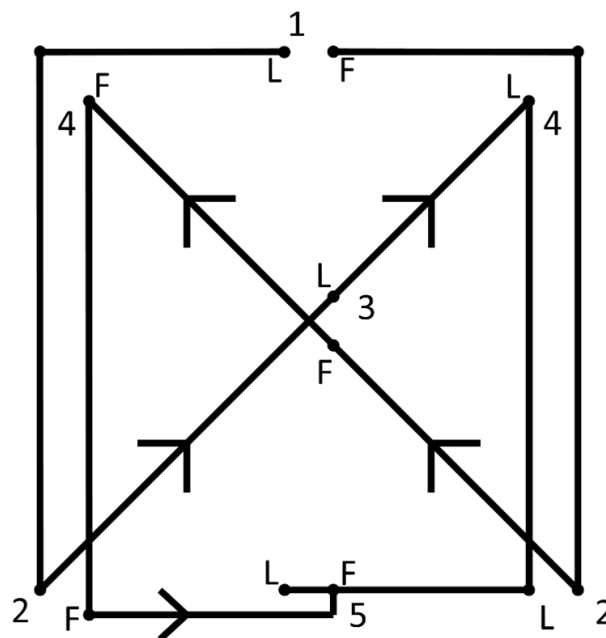

Figure 8: the Cross or X done one time through.

The Hourglass

When describing the Hourglass figure, it can be advantageous to label the corners and center and describe line segments. This is how I have drawn this figure. This figure is done as couples.

This figure begins by marching Clockwise (CW) around the hall. The Leader marches around to the top right corner (B

in figure 9). At B, the leader turns to face the bottom opposite corner and marches along the segment $\overline{BX}$ (marked as 1 in figure 9). At the center of the hall, the Leader turns 90° to face the bottom right corner and marches the segment $\overline{XC}$ (marked as 2 in figure 9). At the bottom right corner, the Leader turns to face the bottom left corner. They then march across the bottom of the hall along the segment $\overline{CD}$ (marked as 3 in figure 9). At the bottom left corner, they turn to face the top right corner and march along the segment $\overline{DX}$ (marked as 4 in figure 9). At the center of the hall, they turn 90° to face the top left corner and march the segment $\overline{XA}$ (marked as 5 in figure 9). They make one last turn to face the top right corner and march the segment $\overline{AB}$ (marked as 6 in figure 9). The march then continues Clockwise around the hall.

This figure is not challenging. The thing to remember is that there is no crossing happening. The path described by the figure is BXCDXAB.
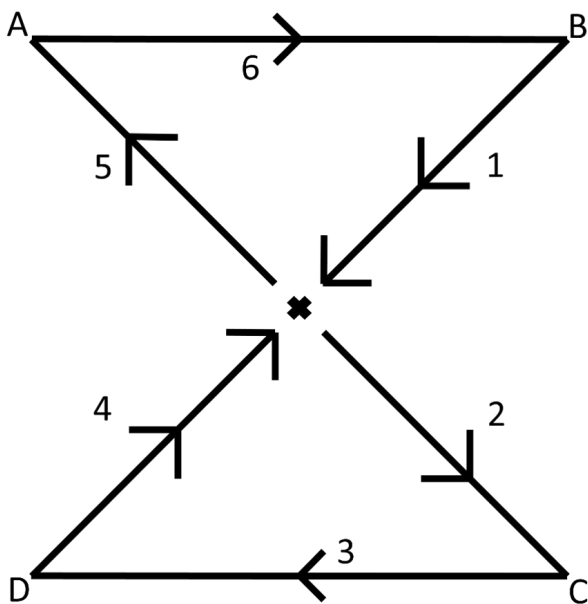

Figure 9: the Hourglass.

Choreographies

Dundalk March Number One

The Dundalk Manuscript has two choreographies. The first is quite nice as it ends in contra dance lines that go across the hall rather than up and down. I will describe the original choreography and then suggest how to make more conventional Contra dance lines.

The dance begins by making two laps of the hall going Clockwise. The March in File is then done coming up the

center and casting to sides. They pass lefts at the bottom of the hall and pass lefts again at the top. They meet at the bottom of the hall and come up the hall as couples.

The company then executes a modified March by Platoons. The first couple cast to the left and walk single file Follow in the front (this requires changing position; I recommend that the change be made just before going down the hall). The second couple leads out to the right with the Follow in front. The rest of the company does the same.

At the bottom of the hall, the first and second Follows march up the hall in line followed by their partners (a line of Follows and a line of Leads). At the top, the first two lines go to the left and the second two lines go to the right (that is to say that the couples stay together with the Lead always behind their partner). This doubling is done until the platoon lines are 16 people long (4 doublings at the bottom 1 to 2 to 4 to 8 to 16).

The dance then simply ends in contra dance lines across the hall. The choreography is quite simple. The only complication is having the line of Leads follow behind their partner.

I recommend that a change be made to make the dance end in more conventional contra dance lines. The change is minor and doesn't alter the character of the dance. I recommend making all the changes on the horizontal axis of the hall. That is, where I have written "bottom" in the above description would be replaced by the left side (the center axis of course). The effect is to rotate the dance ¼ round such that the lines start at the head of the hall rather than the sides.

The obvious next dance would be a proper contra dance.

Grant 1893

This choreography is significantly more involved than the previous one. The original version of this dance ends by taking seats. I am not fond of this action and will provide a note on how to modify the dance to end in two proper contra dance lines.

The dance begins by marching around the hall as normal but from the top of the hall the Lead Couple followed by the others march down the center. At the bottom of the hall, the couples separate (Lead march left and Follow march right). They march round back up to the top of the hall and pass by the left shoulder (that is Leads on the outside). They pass again at the bottom by lefts. When the

meet again at the top of the hall, they march down the hall as couples and the first couple goes to the left at the bottom and the second couple goes to the right (a March by Platoons). At the top of the hall, platoons of 4 people are made and march down the hall. At the bottom, the first platoon turns to the left and the second turns to the right.

As they march up the sides, they stop at the center of the hall. They turn to face the center as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: the first part of the Grant choreography.

The two platoons march toward the center of the hall. At the center, they change partners and march to the nearest top/bottom. L_1A and F_1B go up the hall (followed by all the $LA+FB$) and F_1A and L_1B go down the hall (followed by all the $FA+LB$). Figure 11 shows the formation described.
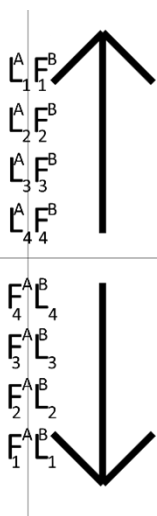

Figure 11: second part of the Grant choreography.

At the top/bottom of the hall, the couples separate and march single halfway round. They then meet their original partner on the side-center of the hall. They then march into the center as couples with a bit of space between them as shown in Figure 12 (to allow passage).
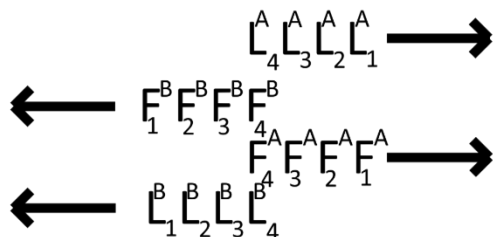

Figure 12: third part of the Grant choreography.

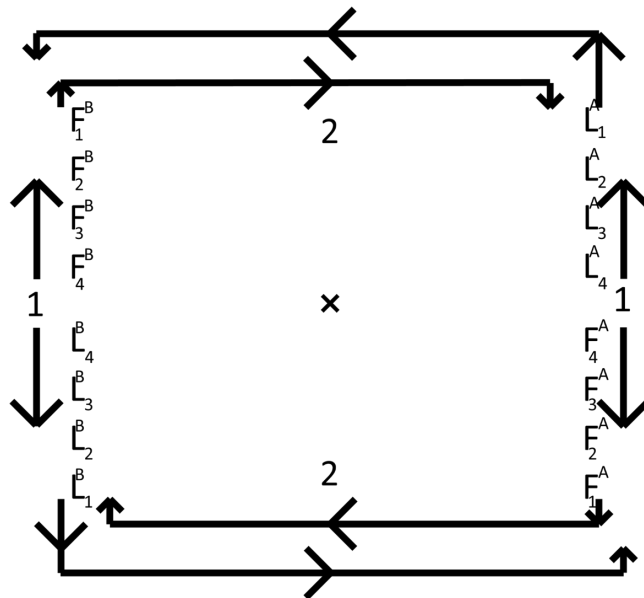Couples then separate at the sides and march single file up/down the hall as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: fourth part, showing the separation at the sides (marked as 1 in figure 13) and marching round the hall with the Leads on the outside path and therefore passing left shoulders (marked as 2 in figure 13).

They meet their partner on the opposite side of the hall (A couples on the left side and B couples on the right). They then march into the center as couples as shown in Figure 10.

When they meet in the center, they form groups of 4 people and march down the set as shown in Figure 14 (marked as 1 in figure 14). At the bottom of the hall, they separate into couples with the A couples going to the right (CW) and the B couples going to the left (CCW) (marked as 2 in figure 14).

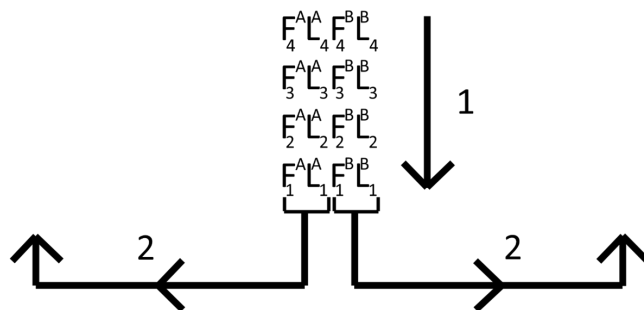Figure 14: couples march down the hall.

All march to the top of the hall (in the original choreography, the dancers would go to the side of the center column that is on the side of the hall where their seats are, but I think this makes things complicated and I recommend against this practice, particularly because we don't generally have assigned seats at balls in the present day). They then march

down the center of the hall as platoons of 4. When the Leading couples (1A and 1B) reach the bottom of the hall, they stop without separating. Figure 15 shows this position.

$$F^A_8 L^A_8 \quad F^B_8 L^B_8$$
$$F^A_7 L^A_7 \quad F^B_7 L^B_7$$
$$F^A_6 L^A_6 \quad F^B_6 L^B_6$$
$$F^A_5 L^A_5 \quad F^B_5 L^B_5$$
$$F^A_4 L^A_4 \quad F^B_4 L^B_4$$
$$F^A_3 L^A_3 \quad F^B_3 L^B_3$$
$$F^A_2 L^A_2 \quad F^B_2 L^B_2$$
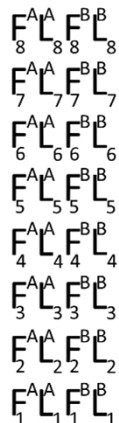$$F^A_1 L^A_1 \quad F^B_1 L^B_1$$

Figure 15: the pause before the columns separate.

Once all dancers are in in this single 4-person wide column, the columns separate, and each couple goes to their respective side to form two 2-person wide columns (A couples are on the left and B couples are on the right). Figure 16 shows the formation.

$$F^A_8 L^A_8 \qquad\longleftarrow \quad\longrightarrow\qquad F^B_8 L^B_8$$
$$F^A_7 L^A_7 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_7 L^B_7$$
$$F^A_6 L^A_6 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_6 L^B_6$$
$$F^A_5 L^A_5 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_5 L^B_5$$
$$F^A_4 L^A_4 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_4 L^B_4$$
$$F^A_3 L^A_3 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_3 L^B_3$$
$$F^A_2 L^A_2 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_2 L^B_2$$
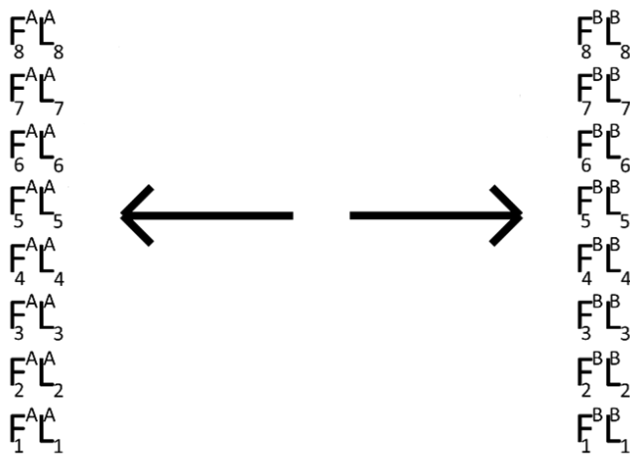$$F^A_1 L^A_1 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad F^B_1 L^B_1$$

Figure 16: the separated formation.

All honor partners and then opposites (across the hall). They then take their seats (this is why the original choreography has them march down on the side of the hall that they are to be seated on).

Once again, the concept of marching down the set to take seats in this manner is complicated and only applies if seats are assigned. Furthermore, the floor managers would need to make certain that each couple line up correctly at the very start of the march to avoid a logjam when trying to get to their own side to march down.

The end position of this march (that is before taking seats) is almost a proper contra dance line. The only issue is that the top and bottom of the hall are swapped. I think it is a very welcome alteration to end in proper contra dance lines.

To end in proper formation contra dance lines, the choreography needs only a small change. The end position is a result of the choice to march down the hall for all the changes. If the dance were to follow the convention of marching up the hall to start figures, the end result would be two contra dance lines. Thus, wherever a reference to marching down the hall is made, I would recommend marching up the hall. The final position would be rotating Figure 15 upside down (180°). This would put the A line on the right side and the B line on the left side.

Watkins' Cotillion Figures

One particularly noteworthy source on interesting march figures is the 1911 book Cotillion Figures by Joel H. Watkins. This book is a great source for interesting and some complicated figures. Additionally, this book is quite an easy read and I recommend it for beginners and experienced dance reconstructors alike.

Watkins describes a cotillion where a leader leads a single figure (a "lead") and then lets the dancers dance as couples after the figure by signaling a "break". After the leader has let the dancers dance for a little while, they signal with a whistle to find new partners and get ready for the next figure. While this is most certainly a cotillion rather than a Grand March, it does present Ball Programmers a great many interesting and unusual figures to incorporate into a Grand March.

I will provide a description of a few of my favorite, practical figures here. I will use the illustrations from Watkins' manual as they are quite clear. The Leads of each couple are black crosses and the Follows are red circles. The Lead couple of the figure is circled and the lines indicate where each role is walking. "A" is the starting point of the figure and subsequent illustrations pick up where the previous illustration ended. When lines are combined, the Leads and Follows are in the same line with the Lead in front.

Watkins' "Figure No. 1."

Watkins' Figure No. 1 is a simple but interesting march. The leaders lead up the center of the hall and the first couple goes to the left and the second couple goes to the right etc. They then come up in lines of 4 like in the March by Platoons (shown by the panel marked) "A" in Figure 17).

After leading up the hall, the right three columns (all but the odd numbered Leads) march out to the right and the leftmost column marches left (shown in the panel marked "B" in Figure 16). When the dancers meet at the bottom of the hall, they march up the hall and the leftmost tree columns march to the left and the rightmost column marches to the right (the even numbered Follows) as shown in panel "C" of Figure 16. They meet at the bottom and march up in fours as in platoons and separate at the top (panel "D" of Figure 17).
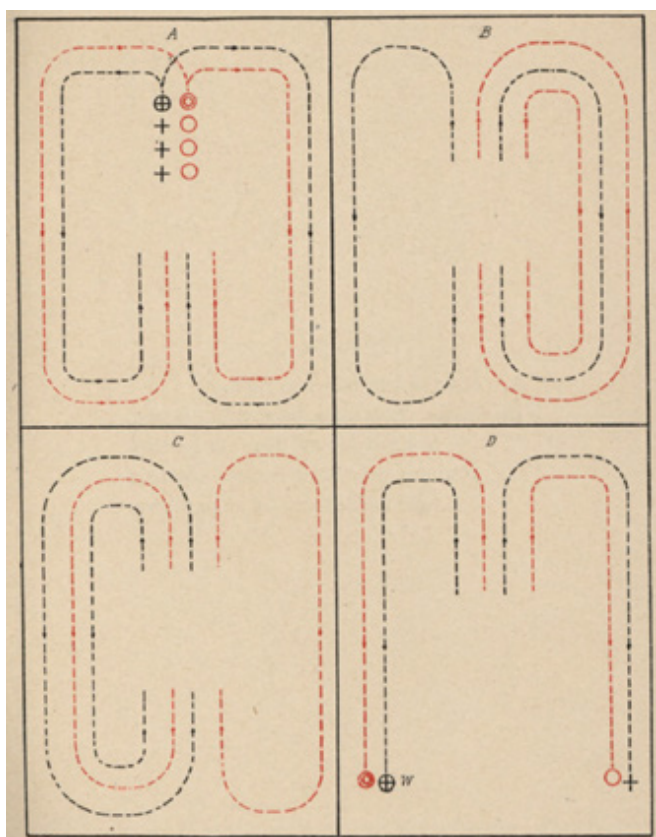

Figure 17: the illustration that accompanies the description of Figure No. 1 (11).

To continue the march rather than break (where the "W" is marked in the figure), you would then march up as couples and all lead to the right to march around again.

Watkins' "Figure No. 2."

Watkins' Figure No. 2 is an interesting variation on the figure 1 described as "The Cross" or the "X." It involves crossing many times down the hall. It also involves a serpentine and the unusual variation of starting the crossing at the top of the hall.

The dancers lead up the hall as couples. At the top of the hall, the couples turn over their outside shoulders (Leads

to the left and follow to the right). They march down the hall and turn over the opposite shoulder to march back up leading mirrored March in Columns up and down the hall as shown in the panel marked "A" in Figure 18.

After the dancers have cleared the center of the hall and the leader can begin the crossing figures, the leaders lead up the outside and at the top corners of the hall march diagonally moving down the hall to cross with the Follow crossing in front of their partner. There is no set number of March in Columns or crosses given by Watkins. The crossing is shown in panel "B" of Figure 18. It does appear that the Leads march up the set on the left and the Follows on the right when they get to the bottom.

When the dancers get back to the top of the set, they march down as couples and then separate as in platoons as shown in panel "C" of Figure 18.
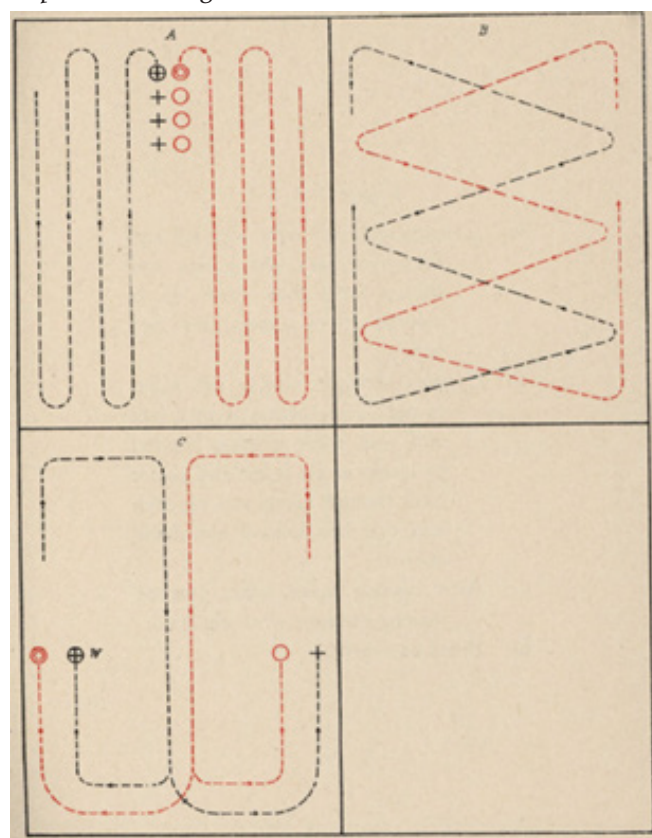

Figure 18: the illustration that accompanies the description of Figure No. 2 (13).

If the programmer would prefer, the dancers can simply march down the hall after meeting their partner at the top and marching to the right when they get to the bottom of the hall. To make the circle again.

Watkins' "Figure No. 14."

Watkins' Figure No. 14 adds to the March by Platoons idea developed in the "Figure No. 2."

Dancers lead up the center and turn single over their outside shoulder as in Watkins' Figure No. 2 (shown in panel "A" of Figure 19). When the dancers get to the bottom of the hall after leading the march by columns, the Leads form a standard March by Columns on the left side of the hall and the Follows do the same on the right. When they get to the top of the hall, they meet their partners and separate as couples (odd numbered couples go to the left and even to the right) as shown in panel "B" of figure 19.

Panel C shows the couples marching down either side of the hall, but the figure is done after panel B. It would be a good idea to modify this to have all the dancers meet and go to the left at the top of the hall to lead around and start a new figure.
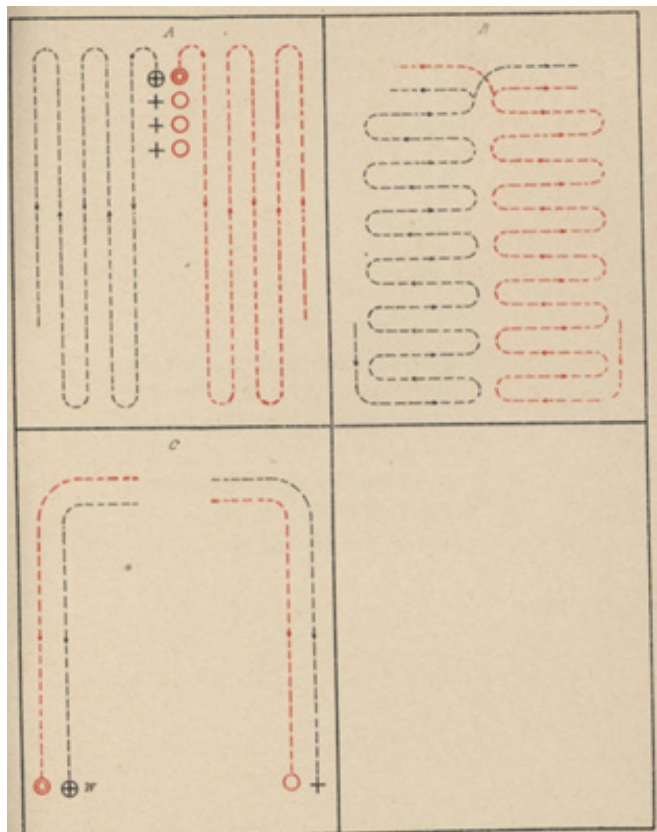

Figure 19: the illustration that accompanies the description of Figure No. 14 (37).

Watkins' "Figure No. 18."

Watkins' Figure No. 18 is an interesting variation of the Hourglass figure. It involves making four little hourglasses in each quadrant of the hall.

The figure starts by leading up the center of the hall and separating as couples as in the March by Platoons (odd couples go left and even go right). They march down the set halfway and turn and march into the center of the hall. When the two platoons meet, they separate as individuals marching to their own respective corner (odd Leads to top left, odd Follows to the bottom left etc.).

The dancers then make four little hourglasses that also resemble a figure of eight. The panel marked "B" in Figure 20 shows the paths of each hourglass. There is no indication of who passes in front of whom in these hourglasses. The important part is that the dancers meet their partners marching into the center of the hall.

Once the dancers have met their partners, they march to the ends of the halls (the right-hand hourglasses march down the hall and the left-hand hourglasses march up the hall) as shown in panel "C" of Figure 20. If the figure were part of a Grand March, the dancers would turn right at the end of the hall and march counterclockwise around the hall to setup for the next figure.
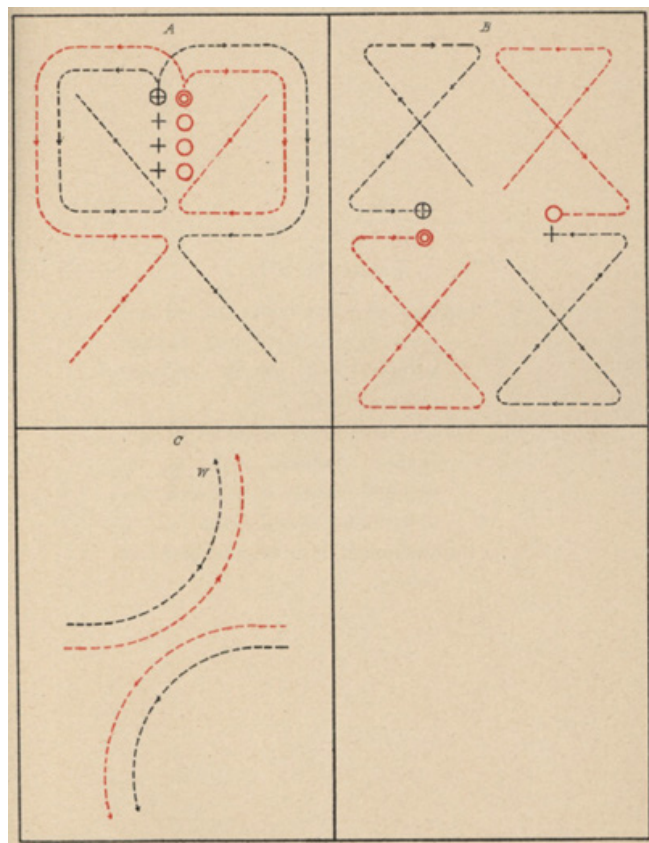

Figure 20: the illustration that accompanies the description of Figure No. 18 (45).

Watkins' "Figure No. 8"

The last of the figures from Wilkins that I want to cover is his "Figure No. 8." I think that this simple figure is quite interesting and not particularly hard to do.

The figure starts by leading up the center of the hall and all leading out to the left. At the bottom left corner of the hall, the Leads and Follows should drop hands (if they are joined) and march across the bottom of the hall. The Leads will march a March in Columns while the Follows start to form a circle around the center of the hall (the First Follow has a lot of responsibility to make the circle wide enough to get all the leads inside).

Once the circle has been completed, the First Follow meets their partner at the top of the circle and marches off with them clockwise around the hall until everyone is out of the circle (panel "C" of figure 21). To make this dance part of a grand march the leaders simply continue to march around the hall clockwise.
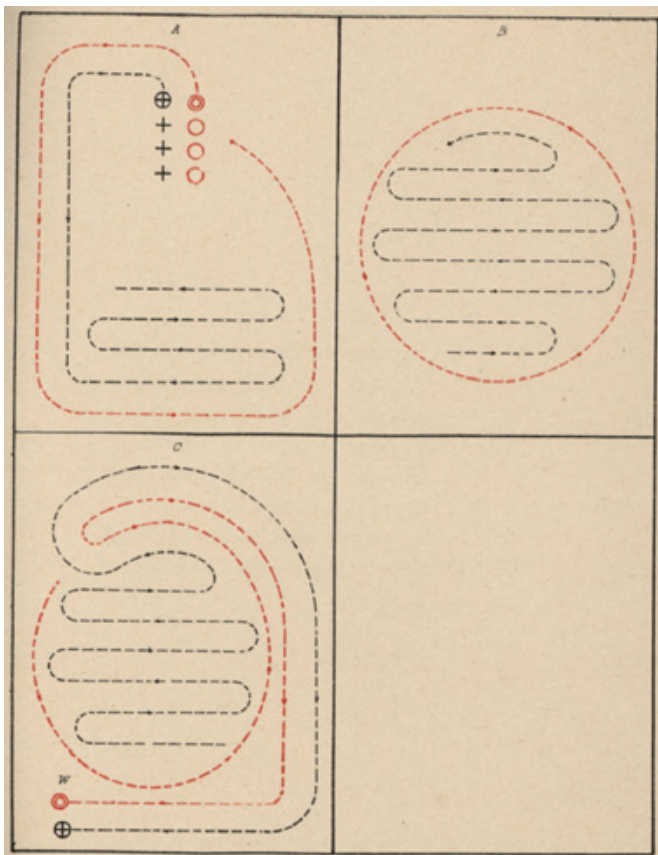

Figure 21: the illustration that accompanies the description of Figure No. 8 (25).

This is only a selection of the figures from Watkins' manual. There are a total of 25 figures. All of them are quite well described and illustrated and I would encourage the reader to take a look at the figures and determine how they would integrate them into a Grand March.

Conclusion

This paper is a collection of figures and choreographies that I found interesting and pleasing. There are no limits the types of figures that one may create. For instance, one source describes making the initials of the host/organization hosting the ball at the start of the Grand March and references making the shapes of "horses, cats, dogs, elephants, hearts, etc.," [Wilson, 1884, pg. 29]. Other sources mention more complicated figures but forgo describing them. Therefore, I would encourage the creator of new figures to be faithful to the original descriptions' intents.

Author

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Couple Dances, Douglas Kennedy's English Folk Dance and Song Society, and The British Old Time Dance Revival

by Dr. Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe

Introduction

In the 1940s and 1950s the English social folk dance repertoire was irrevocably re-shaped by the challenges presented to the English Folk Dance and Song Society by the existence of the British old time dance revival. Despite this, in 2022 many English folk dancers, especially those under the age of sixty, are more likely to associate old time with the string-band music revival of North America than with British Victorian ballroom music and dance. This article explores the mid-20th century interactions of the old time and folk dance movements, and as a corollary I suggest a reason for the relative absence of couple dances from the English social folk dance canon today.

To clarify, this article is concerned not with performative styles of English folk dance (such as sword and morris) but with the social repertoire, now seen at barn dances, ceilidhs, and folk dances in England. While most English folk dances comprise a core dancing unit made up of couples, with dances needing, say, six couples (12 individuals) to form a set, these dances are not referred to as *couple dances*. Instead, this phrase is reserved for dances where the dancing unit is only two individuals. Waltzes, polkas, and schottisches are also occasionally referred to as *round* dances because the couples circulate the room while executing the steps and rotating on their own, personal axis.

The British Old Time Revival

The years after WWI ushered in a popular dance revolution: the foxtrot took pride of place among the bright young things with tango and animal jazz dances for the more adventurous (Abra 2017; Franks 1963:159-195). In an attempt to save the waltz, which in its Victorian form had become practically moribund, it was re-modelled by a group of teachers, many of whom were based in London (Abra 2017:44-77; Buckland 2018). The so-called modern waltz was developed as a smoother dance based on a diagonal turning movement. This is the waltz type which is demonstrated on the popular UK dancing program *Strictly Come Dancing*, known as *Dancing with the Stars* in the USA.

Not everyone was enamored with these new dances and some teachers, particularly in the North of England continued teaching the older repertoire (Franks 1963:190). These included sequence dances such as *The Veleta, The Military Two Step*, and *The Barn Dance* and complicated quadrilles, known as *set dances*, the most famous being *The Lancers.* Dance events using the terminology *old time* started to appear in the late 1920s (Nott 2015:113). While holding definite appeal for individuals who were revisiting the dancing favorites of their youth, a 1928 issue of *The Dancing Times* also noted the surprising inter-generational appeal of the style (Nott 2015:113).

It was the 1940s, however, which saw the real explosion of old time (sometimes also spelled olde tyme) dancing clubs and a more structured teaching approach (Mainey 1953:11). A watershed moment came in 1943 with the arrival of the regular BBC radio show *Those Were the Days*, a program of old time dance music, which proved to be popular and long-lived (Corbett 2013).[1] An amateur group The International Sequence (Old Time) Dance Circle was established in 1944, at which point interest from the professional dance teachers' associations really started to bloom (Mainey 1953:14). The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing established its own Victorian and Sequence Branch in 1947 (Wykes 2014). Many old time dance teachers and promotors had links to these professional dancing organizations, which offered certificated teaching in the old time style and repertoire (Mainey 1953:13). Enthusiasts formed groups and hired out venues for specialist old time dance nights for which they would book an orchestra well versed in the repertoire and style demanded by the form (Franks 1963:190). Indeed, a survey of dance halls from 1947 indicated that 50% of the commercial dance venues targeted in the research regularly hosted specialist old time dances for a "keen but minority audience" (Nott 2015:126).

British Pathé footage attests to the popularity of old time dance events into the 1950s and 1960s with films showing competitions featuring some child dancers, as well as

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1 The BBC orchestra was conducted by Harry Davidson. Thanks to Topic Records some material from his orchestra can be accessed on Youtube: Chivalry March and Destiny Waltz (Accessed 24.8.21).

themed events in full Victorian attire.[2] Often old time dance events were run with comparative formality, with many operating a policy of booked dances (booking dancing partners into a printed program), white gloves, and strict dance floor etiquette (Corbett 2013:228). However, not all old time dances were highly sophisticated affairs: Major Cecil Taylor, then president of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing chose *Old Time and Novelty Dances* (1947) for his handbook title, as he considered these dances to be of a primarily 'party' nature, rather than a true continuation of Victorian ballroom glamour (Nott 2015:118).[3]

Over the years the old time dance movement incorporated ever newer sequence dances, especially those that had won prestigious national competitions. By the 1950s they even included dances such as the saunter, foxtrot, and tango, which had become somewhat passé amongst modern dance enthusiasts (Mainey 1953:17). Indeed, the dancing aesthetic became increasingly aligned to the very same modern English ballroom style (see Buckland 2018) which it originally countered. Dancers moved away from polkas and schottisches towards waltzes and glides, and by the 1960s old time dance programs did not portray a style that was always recognizable to the older generation. Lancastrian Elizabeth Gibson, who was born in 1883, complained to dance researchers Joan and Tom Flett in 1960 that: "When they put the old-time dancing on [the TV], it makes me mad, because they aren't 'old time dancing'" (Gibson 1960). Presumably Gibson objected to a repertoire of recently composed dance sequences, performed in the smoother modern style of ballroom dancing. While much diminished, old time dancing still exists and there are a number of clubs which teach old time dancing (in its latter guise) in Britain today.[4]

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2 The following films can be accessed on the British Pathé Website www.britishpathe.com : "'Old Time'" dancing at Prestatyn Holiday Camp in North Wales 1951" part one and part two.

 "Dancers International" old time dance at the Empress Ballroom in Blackpool, Lancashire 1946.

Silent footage of the same event. Some 1950s old time footage can also be found on "Dancing 1950-1959"

3 The dances included in Taylor's volume can be found here. (Accessed 16.9.21).

4 Such as The Old Time Dance Society (est. 1984) and The English National Old Time Dance Society (Accessed 16.9.21).

The English Folk Dance and Song Society

In 1924 Douglas Kennedy succeeded Cecil Sharp as the Director of The English Folk Dance Society (hereafter the EFDS) and remained in position until his retirement in 1961. In 1932 the EFDS merged with the Folk Song Society to become the English Folk Dance and Song Society (hereafter the EFDSS). Although Douglas Kennedy inherited the leadership of a society which had a large national presence, including an influential position in the educational establishment (Middleton-Metcalfe 2021: 268-269), Kennedy felt that the EFDS/EFDSS had an unfortunate public image. In a 1946 article for *The Dancing Times* he even went so far as to suggest that in the view of the general public, folk dancers were nothing more than a "few pale-faced intellectuals" (D. Kennedy 1946a). This was a stereotype he wanted to change.

Due to the Society's strong links to the pedagogic establishment one particular challenge was the overwhelmingly female membership of the EFDS/EFDSS (D. Kennedy, [1973]:187). Kennedy was keen to re-contextualize folk dancing as a social activity, an alternative to the couple-based repertoire of foxtrots and quicksteps (D. Kennedy 1939:268). The EFDS/EFDSS was not alone in perceiving a need for more sociable dances (Russell 1958:14). In addition to the old time dance revival, novelty ballroom dances such as the *Palais Glide, Lambeth Walk, and the Chestnut Tree* had taken dance halls by storm in the 1930s (Abra 2017, D. Kennedy 1939). Kennedy was of the overt opinion that all-female dancing groups could never result in the (re)establishment of folk dance as a community dance form. Re-heterosexualization was key to Kennedy's goal of conventionalization and his desire to encourage folk dance as a normative social activity (e.g., D. Kennedy 1946b:44).

To service his vision Kennedy made a number of changes to the EFDS/EFDSS, not only to the structure of the organization itself, but also to its repertoire, music and teaching practices. Kennedy moved the Society's focus away from teaching and demonstrating 17th century material based on the *Dancing Master* manuscripts of the Playford publishing house (1651-1728), towards material collected from rural communities in England in the 20th century, known by Kennedy as 'traditional' dances. Kennedy's new repertoire focus is displayed in the *Community Dances Manual.* This collection of tunes and dance instructions was published in seven volumes between 1947-1967. The first edition of the first installment

contained dance and music descriptions for fourteen dances. The majority of these were collected in England in the early twentieth century. Only one was a Playford dance (*Hole in the Wall*), and one a simple recent composition (*The Belfast Duck*). Kennedy's relegation of the Playford dances was by no means universally popular amongst the EFDSS membership. One London based member was incensed enough to pen a letter to the Society's house magazine *English Dance and Song* complaining of the "foreign elements savouring rather of 'Old Tyme' or even 'Modern Ballroom' dancing of a 'not particularly high level' creeping into the EFDSS's offerings" (Richardson 1951-1952:88). While remaining affiliated to the EFDSS, a number of clubs went their own way, continuing to concentrate primarily on Sharp's interpretations of 17th century longways country dances.

Kennedy's approach was boosted by financial support from the Ministry of Labour's Further Education and Training Scheme for Service Men and Women, which post-WWII allowed Douglas Kennedy to train EFDSS field staff members whose primary duty was to convert individuals to folk dance (Davies 1996:28, Fink 1975:30, Maycock 1996:14). In the retrospective words of Kennedy, he was creating "dance missionaries, or minstrels, capable of taking over a region and guiding its development" (D. Kennedy [1973]:254). By the early 1950s Kennedy's make-over was in full swing. He had turned away from the Playford dances which had formed the backbone of the EFDS under Cecil Sharp. Instead, he was promoting choreographically simpler dances and these were taught not through classes, but clubs. There was an explicit focus on parties led by the Master of Ceremonies (hereafter MC) or caller, rather than teachers. The post-war reconstruction funding allowed Kennedy to exploit a group of men and women trained in his new approach who were ready to go out to every region in England to get people folk dancing. While they did teach and assist folk dance clubs, much of the work of these advocates was focused outside of the Society, spreading the word at a host of voluntary membership organizations and charitable events.

Is it a folk dance or an old time dance?

There was much similarity between Kennedy's folk revival and the old time movement. Both were nostalgic social dance genres which were rooted in a firmly white British paradigm, and which deliberately ran counter to popular dance trends, particularly those that involved North American style jazz (Corbett 2013:402, Nott

2015:118, Thompson 1956:9). In addition, as many of the dances involved multiple couples, and/or synchronicity of movement across couples, both styles were considered to be more social than the popular styles of their day (Thompson 1956:9, Franks 1963:191). Echoing some of Douglas Kennedy's concerns about the popular image of folk dancers, old time teacher Francis Joseph Mainey also worried about the popular image of his genre, voicing concerns that some regard old time as a "queer cult" (Mainey 1953:12).

Choreographically speaking, it remains unclear where Kennedy's traditional dances started and the old time ones stopped. At times it would seem that dances were selected for publication by Kennedy if they were not popular in the old time movement and were ignored if they were. For example, the first edition of the first volume of Kennedy's *Community Dance Manual* (1947) included the *Waltz Country Dance*, a nineteenth century dance for sets of two couples (EFDSS 1947:9; for more on the *Waltz Country Dance* see Houston 2012).[5] Judging by its paucity of representation in printed handbooks, the *Waltz Country Dance* was not popular in old time circles. Tellingly, the note in the *Community Dance Manual* describes how it was the Scottish Country Dance Society (later known as the RSCDS) which first revived this dance. This further distances the choice of material from the old time movement, aligning it with other folk dances. Contrarywise *Waltz Cotillion*, a square dance in waltz time which was very popular in old time dance publications of the 1940s and 1950s was not published by the EFDSS until after Kennedy's retirement. In 1967 the dance was published in *Community Dances Manual 7*, which was compiled by Nibs Matthews, who became Director of the EFDSS in 1966. This omission is especially odd if the dance's popularity among old time dancers is not taken into account because in the 1940s and 1950s the EFDSS was making a concerted effort to promote dances collected in England (such as *The Cumberland Square Eight*, and *La Russe*) which were in the then highly-popular square or quadrille formation.

In 1988 folk music collector and musician Reg Hall reflected that:

> They [EFDSS] didn't want to know the couple dances, even though there was a popular tradition of couple dances all over England. Instead of

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5 Presented in a truncated form, this dance was also re-printed in *Community Dances Manual* 5 (1957).

building the folk dance revival on this popular tradition, they ignored it and destroyed it. But the approach was illogical. It was alright to do the Waltz Country Dance but not the Valeta and the Barn Dance, even though the Valeta is danced as part of the Waltz Country Dance. As a couple dance it wasn't valid, although—perhaps because—it was in the popular tradition. (Hall in Schofield 1988:25).

In the same article he also commented that some folk dance callers, used as they were to planning the program and instructing dancers for each dance, were more than loath to allow couples to do an old time waltz without their instructions. Supporting Hall's view, it is notable that it took until 1964 for the EFDSS to publish dance notation for *The Barn Dance* and *The Dashing White Sergeant*: two 19th century-originated compositions which had seen renewed popularity in the old time revival (Clark and Evans 1964).

Even if their musical arrangements were different, many of the melodies such as *Shepherd's Hey* and *The Keel Row* which could be found at old time events of the 1940s and 1950s would have been known to English folk revival musicians (Corbett 2013).[6] Another intersection was the occasional inclusion of a chorus song at both old time events and English folk events. At one old time dance in 1962, issued as a radio broadcast on *Those Were the Days* the chosen song was *Come Landlord Fill the Flowing Bowl* (Corbett 2013:188). This particular song was known to English folk music enthusiasts and was recorded by a number of artists including The Southerners on *Dancing for Fun No.2* which was released by the EFDSS in 1969.

There was at least some overt co-operation between the EFDSS and the old time dance movement. In 1949 the EFDSS embarked upon the Merrie England Ball and Old Time Dance, a joint venture with old time dancers, organized by *The Star* newspaper. Promotion for this event advertised community dances with Douglas Kennedy as MC, an old time dance competition, displays from both the EFDSS and the Royal Academy of Dancing, and 'Old-

6 Also: *Floral Dance, Blow the Man Down, When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again, Marching through Georgia, Skye Boat Song, What Shall we Do with the Drunken Sailor?, Cock O' The North, The Irish Washerwoman, A Hundred Pipers, Little Brown Jug, Villikins and his Dinah*, and T*he Lincolnshire Poacher*. These sat alongside other music such as: Verdi, Mendelson, The *Teddy Bear's Picnic* (John Walter Bratton), *Merrie England* (Edward German), Gilbert and Sullivan medleys, *Hearts of Oak*, and *See me Dance the Polka* (George Grossman).

Time dancing until 1am' (ED&S 1949:17). A few years later, in 1956, the old time radio show *Those Were The Days* included a folk dancing spot with EFDSS callers including Douglas Kennedy's son Peter Kennedy, Ron Smedley, and Jack Hamilton (Corbett 2013:119-120). The program for the 10th of March 1956 included two folk dances *The Morpeth Rant* and *Three Meet.* Peter Kennedy arranged the music and a folk dance band was created out of the existing dance orchestra and an accordionist was brought in for an "authentic sound" (Corbett 2013:117).

A telling document drafted in the late 1950s by the EFDSS gives an indication of the overlap between social folk dances and regular social dance events at this time. EFDSS MCs were briefed on how to work with old time musicians, and EFDSS bands were also warned that they should be prepared to play The National Anthem at the end of the event if it was requested (Bell 1962). This was typically played to close most social events at that time, but curiously not folk dance events. Douglas Kennedy also encouraged the use of old time dances at occasions where the folk dance repertoire would have been unknown. He was to preface the *Community Dance Manual* (1947) advocating just such an approach, which he reiterated in *English Dance and Song* some ten years later:

> The more the programme can embody the "local favourites," not the favourites of the folk dancers, but the favourites of the local dances—round, "couple" dances, Old Time, etc.—the more the layman will feel reassured. (D. Kennedy 1957:116)

The suggestion that old time dances could be a "way in" for folk dance callers was still being mooted into the early 1980s (Skipper and Skipper 1981:19). However dancing competencies in the general population have now declined to such an extent that this is no longer the case.

Each to their own

Aside from the examples discussed above, old time and folk dancers generally preferred their own specialist events. EFDSS members of the 1940s and 1950s could and did criticize old time dancers for their style of presentation; their "mincing steps and other fussy irrelevances" (Hall 1949:78). Similarly, Douglas Kennedy argued that: "The element which marks the distinction lies in the traditional music used and in the lack of sophistication in the [EFDSS] style of dancing" (D. Kennedy 1951-52:88). Peter Kennedy would argue that not only the "rather conscious 'Olde Tyme' style" but also the newer choreography "composed dances to composed tunes which have never been through

the 'Folk Mill' to have their crudities softened" made the old time offering inferior to that promoted by the EFDSS (P. Kennedy 1948:44).

Many old time dancers did not appreciate the laissez-faire approach to dance etiquette promulgated by the EFDSS. For many enthusiasts, such as the British actor Patric Curwen, who was born in 1884, it was the grace and elegance of the Victorian ballroom which attracted them to this style in the first place. Curwen hoped that old time dances might "bring back some of that grace into this rapacious and mechanised age" (in Latimer 1948:6). Interestingly, formal audience responses to the aforementioned 1956 broadcast of *Those Were The Days* which featured folk dance alongside the usual old time offering, have been recorded. Corbett, in his history of the radio show summarized the reactions to the folk dancing section of the show by the BBC audience panel:

> …exactly half thought it a good idea; a quarter thought it made no difference; and the remaining quarter didn't like it …it seemed clear enough that the majority thought that the different genre lent variety to the programme, and was therefore to be encouraged. A small group suggested that it might be a means of interesting young people in the programme and also in old time dancing … The rest of the sample felt strongly that folk music was out of place "Those Were the Days" had for years stayed firmly in the ballroom, and that was what they liked. Folk dancing belonged to the barn and the village green. (Corbett 2013:120)

Similarly, folk dance caller Ron Smedley recalled:

> Harry Davidson's inclusion of Folk material in "Those Were the Days" was brief and a failure—with the Old Timers who took part. They hated it. Why should we have village green rubbish they said. It was a total misunderstanding of the folk material of course. It was a radio programme so the audience couldn't see that the Old Time dancers on the floor refused to join in. But the atmosphere was miserable. (Ron Smedley e-mail 8.7.2018)

While he saw the benefits of using couple dances as ice-breakers at events for non-folk enthusiasts, Douglas Kennedy appears to have been skeptical about wholeheartedly embracing the dances-for-two which were at the heart of the old time revival. That his Edwardian predecessor Cecil Sharp's vision of folk dance confined the genre to the older historical choreographies rather than the

fashionable polkas, waltzes, and schottisches of his own era is not surprising (Sharp 1909:7-8, Schofield 2021:253). What is surprising is that his successor Douglas Kennedy, who turned away from Sharp's Playford focus to embrace late Victorian choreographies (notably quadrilles) did not seek to add couple dances into the repertoire of the EFDSS.

After all, couple dances such as the *Barn Dance, Highland Schottische*, and *The Gay Gordons* had played an important part in the programs of dance in the traditional rural settings from which Douglas Kennedy had taken his inspiration (see repertoire in P. Kennedy 1950:10). However, in his writings Douglas and his wife Helen Kennedy followed Sharp by emphasizing the benefits of group dancing and of working with the whole set rather than being exclusively focused on one's dancing partner (see D.&H. Kennedy 1939 & 1959). In addition to following the path laid down by Sharp it is likely that the relative absence of older couple dances in Kennedy's folk revival stemmed from their strong association with the old time revival. This was certainly the opinion of Roy Dommett, a long time folk dance enthusiast best known for his morris dance teaching and research.

> Because we have an "Old Time" dance movement most of the Quadrilles and couple dances are not considered folk although they are so considered everywhere else in the world. The Scots, Irish, Americans and north Europeans have used their equivalent period as the basis of their national dance style and technique where the English flounder (partly as a consequence of reviving Playford) with the too few relics of other traditions. Meanwhile the Old Time world has thrown away the genuine thing. (Dommett [1975])

Peter Kennedy recalled that couple dances were left out of the *Community Dances Manuals* "because they are not easy to notate, and, to be fair, partly because different members of staff were using their own particular favourites" (P. Kennedy 1989). He had apparently prepared a manual in the early 1950s which included dance and music material for couple dances. He later publicly alleged that the book was not published:

> [P]artly because the other E.F.D.S.S. staff at the time were not ready to share my enthusiasm for the extant rural tradition, and partly because Round Dancing, like Music Hall songs, were not considered to be an old enough tradition; and partly because the E.F.D.S.S. were anxious not to offend the Old Time Dance Societies or the Imperial Society of Ballroom Teachers. (P. Kennedy 1989:15)

Conclusion

It cannot be said for certain whether Kennedy's remodelling of the English folk dance repertoire would have been different if the EFDSS had not faced competition from a rival genre. However, it is obvious that old time dance provided a palpable challenge to the English folk dance revival. In the 1950s it was simply not possible to convincingly argue that the EFDSS alone provided the only, let alone the best, interpretation of older dancing repertoires. Whilst the white gloved formality enjoyed by many old time enthusiasts was not indulged in by many EFDSS members, throughout the 1940s and 1950s old time and folk dancers shared an interest in overlapping music and dance repertoires. Couple dances, which were seen as anathema to the concept of folk dance in the Edwardian revival, were never given a proper chance to shine in Kennedy's re-branded EFDSS.[7] Today, couple dances remain very much on the periphery of English social folk dance, and Sharp's focus on the longways dancing group still predominates.

Author

In 2021 Dr. Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe completed her PhD titled "Barn Dances, Ceilidhs, and Country Dancing in England 1945-2020: An Examination of Non-Specialist English Social Folk Dance," written under the supervision of Professor Theresa Buckland and Dr. Sara Houston. Recent outputs have included a chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of English Folk Performance* (2021) on the subject of folk dance and the English educational system, and *The History and Development of Dark Border Morris* (2021) for The Morris Federation. Working professionally outside of academia, Chloe continues to write, lecture, and deliver dance workshops, as well as performing traditional material under the auspices of the Grand Union Canal Entertainment Co. A keen promotor of textiles and costume artifacts related to the 20th century folk dance revival, she also runs The English Folk Costume Archive.

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7 Later attempts in the 1980s to reinvigorate couple dancing within the English folk dance revival (Howson and Panton 1988:27) were largely "eclipsed" by a fashion for French couple dancing which started at a similar time. This is the word used by Dave Townsend in an e-mail to the author received 13.9.2021.

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A Traditional Square Dance in Upstate South Carolina, 2007-2011

by Bob Dalsemer

When I moved to Brasstown, North Carolina in 1991, I started looking for traditional square dances—the kind with no teaching, live music and a relatively continuous local history. I had found and written about such dances during the 1970's and 1980's in Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. I was a bit discouraged when I couldn't find any thriving traditions within a reasonable drive from Brasstown. Part of my job at the John C. Campbell Folk School involved producing concerts, and in that capacity, I met Curtis Blackwell and the Dixie Bluegrass Boys, one of the best regional bluegrass bands. Curtis told me about the square dances at Oconee State Park in Upstate (i.e., northwest) South Carolina, about 70 miles away. He and his band had been playing for the square dances there for thirty years. They were held in "The Barn," a large gym-like structure built in the 1970's. Before that, dances had been held in a building that later became the park office. Dances were held every Friday night from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Admission was $2.

I visited the Oconee dances three times: July 6, 2007, August 27, 2010, and August 5, 2011. Curtis Blackwell had told me that there were usually three to five callers who rotated calling the dances through an evening. The nights I attended there were four, three and two, all (I would estimate) over 70 years old. Attendance ranged between 50 and 125 dancers: more in July and fewer toward the end of August when high school football games were played on Friday nights. The dancers included a small group of older local experienced dancers and many tourists camping at the park, including teens and children.

The dance started just after 8:00 pm and ended promptly at 10:00 pm with a twenty-minute break in the middle during which a woman (who was not one of the callers) led a clogging demonstration and then walked the many beginners through the basic figures in a very cursory way with no demos. Otherwise, there was no teaching or walk through before any of the square dances.

I was surprised to find that the evening program consisted entirely of "big circle" style square dances, one after another, without any couple dances in between. Most of the traditional square dances I have visited intersperse waltzes, polkas, slow country two-steps, even rock and roll or the occasional schottische with the squares. The band did play a waltz just before the break and one at the end.

This was the only time that Curtis Blackwell, one of the finest tenor singers in bluegrass, sang. The rest of the time the band played instrumentals for square dancing (with fiddle and banjo alternating breaks) at tempos that ranged from moderate to extremely fast. Tunes included Down Yonder, Mississippi Sawyer, Liberty, Foggy Mountain Breakdown, Cuckoo's Nest, Old Joe Clark, Lost Indian, Bonaparte's Retreat, Daley's Reel and Big Sandy River. Many of the dancers did some sort of basic clogging step and were encouraged to do so by the woman who taught during the break. The callers who weren't calling and other experienced local square dancers attempted to guide the "tourists" through the figures—but there were just too many of them. Nevertheless, everyone seemed to have a great time—in spite of the fact that the acoustics made it very difficult to hear the callers. What follows is a description of the dance figures.

The Swing

The swing is performed in ballroom hold but with the dancers standing right hip to right hip and dancing mostly forward and back, turning slightly clockwise as they do so. This swing makes it easier to clog while swinging, although not everyone was clogging.

The Dance

Introduction

The caller invites the dancers to form a big circle. Once all the couples are on the floor, the caller calls circle left, back to the right, swing partners and then find another couple and circle four. There is no attempt at numbering off "odds" and "evens" or in maintaining a large, neat circle of couples. Progression is "scatter promenade." I noticed that when a couple couldn't immediately find another couple, they would join 2 other couples in a circle of six. All the small circle figures could be danced with 3 couples as well as 2.

Small Circle Figures

All small circle figures are preceded by circle four to the left (NOT back to the right), and followed by swing "corner" and then partner and promenade on to another couple. They can be called in any order the caller wishes and not all are called every dance, or by every caller. Usually about 5-6 small circle figures are called.

1. "Right hands up, left hands back." This is the only time I've seen this variation on the traditional star figure. At the call "right hands up" the four dancers, moving single file to the left, hold up their right hands about shoulder height and point the index fingers of their right hands "up." And then do the same with left hands going the other way.

2. "Texas Star"—another variation of the star figure. This time dancers make a star by laying their right hand, palm down on the forearm of the dancer in front just below the elbow. Then change directions and hands to go the other way back.

3. Four leaf clover. One couple makes it the usual way, going under the other's arch and turning back without dropping hands. The other couple "turns it right over": i.e., breaks the clover by going under the other couple's arch and unwinding. The figure is usually then repeated, led by the other couple

4. "Eight hands over, the ladies bow and the gents know how" is the common basket figure. The two men join both hands straight across, while the two women join hands beneath the men's hands. Without letting go hands, the men raise their hands over the women's heads and down behind their backs, then the ladies do the same over the men to form a basket and circle left.

5. "Ladies do-si-do. . . gents with a little more dough"— Most often called immediately following Four Leaf Clover or Shoot the Moon. From a circle left, the two women cross, passing right shoulders, give left hand to partner, right to "corner," so the women are facing out and the men in. Circle to the men's left. "Gents with a little more dough"—men turn "corner" by the right halfway and give left to partners so the men are facing out and the ladies in, circle to the men's left (i.e., the other way).

6. "Birdie in the cage. . . bird hop out, crow fly in." One lady (the birdie) steps to the center of the circle of four who circle left around her. Then she switches places with the partner (the crow).

7. "Shoot the moon"—this seems to be a variation of a regional figure called variously "Double Bow Knot," "Cowboy Loop," or "Lace the Shoe". From circle left, one man drops his corner's hand and leads his partner through an arch made by the other couple, around the other man and back to the original circle. The other man then does the same thing. One of the callers told me that they used to lead through a second arch, as in Double Bow Knot, but the figure has become simplified.

Endings

The caller calls "promenade," and all the couples promenade into a big circle, then one or more big circle figures are called:

1. "Open up the pearly gates." From a promenade in a circle, lead couple (designated by the caller—usually one of the other callers and his partner), turns around individually and joining nearest hands, makes an arch over the other dancers. Each of the other couples does likewise and follows in turn as they reach the head of the line. When the lead couple gets to the end, they change hands and then go through the tunnel until they reach the head of the line again.

2. "Gents go left, ladies go right" (sometimes known regionally as King's Highway): from a promenade in a circle, lead couple separates and casts down the outside of their line, meets at the end and promenade back up to the head of the line. "Gents go right, ladies go left" (aka Queen's Highway). Ladies cross in front of partners and all cast single file down behind partners' line to the end, where they cross in front of partners again and resume promenading.

3. Ladies move forward "x" number of gents, swing and promenade. This is a mixer figure and is done until all are back with original partners. This generally caused a lot of confusion since it was difficult to hear the number, which changed every time.

4. Wind up figure. From a big circle, circling left, the caller or other lead dancer, drops left hands and continues moving left, winding up the circle into the middle and then finally casting left and unwinding the circle.

5. Caller, joining the circle, or other designated lead gent drops hands with the person on his left and, moving to his right, leads the whole circle (who keep hands) in and out of arches made by the other couples. Eventually all are back in a big circle.

6. After any of the above figures which end in a promenade, the lead couple may lead all the other dancers out the back entrance to the hall, around the outside and back in the main entrance.

An unuual feature of this dance (at least in my experience) is that sometimes, after the final big circle figures, the caller will again have everyone couple up four and dance one more small circle figure ending with a partner swing and promenade off the floor.

The Audio Recordings

Unfortunately, I did not have any video equipment at the time, but I was able to make some audio recordings of the callers and band. I am providing two of them below. I note from the Oconee State Park website that the dances have started up again (summer, 2021) after the pandemic shutdown, from 7:00-9:00 pm with admission now $3.

These recordings were made on August 5, 2011. The band members were:

Chuck Nation, fiddle
Charles Wood, banjo
Curtis Blackwell, guitar
Sam Cobb, bass

Recording #1: Caller, Jack Lombard, Mountain Rest, South Carolina. Tune: Big Sandy River 10:51

Recording #2: Caller, William Anders, Pickens, South Carolina. Tune: Lost Indian 7:27

For more information about my collecting methods, see my article "Collecting Traditional Appalachian Square Dances" in Susan Spalding and Jane Woodside's book, Communities in Motion, Dance, Community and Tradition in America's Southeast and Beyond, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1995, p. 239.

Author

North Carolina based caller and musician, Bob Dalsemer is the author of "West Virginia Square Dances" and has collected traditional square dances in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Bob received the CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award in 2011. In 2013 he retired as Coordinator of Music and Dance Programs at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC after serving in that position for 22 years.

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