

# THE COUNTRY DANCER

VOLUME 1

NUMBER 3



Long Pond  
Pinewoods Camp Dock

FIFTEEN  
CENTS

MARCH  
1941

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# THE COUNTRY DANCER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

Volume I

MARCH 1941

Number 3

## EDITORIAL

### ON FESTIVALS

**R**EPERCUSSIONS from world conditions may affect the nature of festivals of folk dance and music this year—but in spite of everything they are going on. Advance news of the White Top Mountain Festival—but not the date—have already reached us; the Mountain Folk Festival is to be held at Berea College, Kentucky, April 17th to 20th, the National Folk Festival takes place in Washington, D. C., May 1st to 3rd; and the Country Dance Society Spring Festival is to be held in New York on the afternoon of Saturday, April 26th.

Such festivals *must* go on as long as it is possible for people to meet together. They are more needed at this time than ever before as an expression of what can be accomplished when people meet together to enjoy under simple conditions, the fundamental beauty and reality found in folk music and dance. In a festival these qualities are felt by both participants and audience—and one feels that if anything can save the world, this is it. We do not intend to imply that a gathering together of all the unpleasant people of the world to do a folk dance would bring about an instant reformation—they would probably be extremely unpleasant in their behaviour in the dance—but rather that a realisation of the fundamental qualities of a folk dance will foster a capacity to enjoy simple things, free of unnecessary elaboration; to respect the rights of others and to adapt our own demands accordingly, while at the same time retaining our own individuality; to realise that unity does not imply uniformity, and that we can best achieve the former by

developing an understanding of fundamental standards, and by then adapting ourselves to these standards, rather than by slavish imitation of another person; and that only by cooperation can we have a good time ourselves.

If the foregoing seems an over elaborate statement of what to expect festivals to achieve, then we can remember that they are also just plain *fun*, and that anything that brings 500 people together for an afternoon to enjoy themselves in a way that projects their enjoyment over to an audience, has a special use today. A letter received a few days ago spoke of the use of country dancing by American workers in China, as a relief from the horrors of enemy occupation. The writer quoted a friend who works as a missionary in Canton and who had her first vacation after four years of war who said "Up on Laan Tau, the mountain above Hongkong where we go, they had many a gay evening of English Country Dancing." The writer added: "More power to 'The Old Mole' and his companions, in China and elsewhere. I have a Japanese friend who says, 'If my people would only learn to laugh, instead of just smiling!'"

M. G.

### C.D.S. DATES TO NOTE

FESTIVAL—Saturday afternoon, April 26th at 2:30 p.m.—Royal Windsor Ballroom, 69 West 66th Street, New York, N. Y.

SUMMER CAMP—August 9th to 28th.  
General Session—August 9th to 23rd  
Teachers' Course—August 24th to 28th  
Pinewoods Camp, Long Pond, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

# RHYTHM AND THE DANCER

## Part Two

Melville Smith

By this time the reader will be convinced, I hope, that rhythm is not in itself a physical attribute of music (albeit expressed *through* the physical attributes) but something more closely allied with the psychological nature of man. To orientate ourselves clearly in this matter we must constantly place ourselves upon two planes, as earlier suggested in this article, the outer and the inner. Consequently, when we use the word rhythm, we must be fully aware whether we are referring to the inner compulsion to feel in a certain way, or to the outer means by which these feelings are manifested. The time has come to differentiate between these two ideas. Let us, for purposes of clarity, talk about two different things—the inner, or psychological, compulsion which exists in us all to ‘rhythm’ what we feel, and the outer, or physical means by which we are able to express and make apparent to others our inner rhythmic feeling. It is this latter which is usually meant by the term rhythm, and the approach to an explanation uniquely in terms of it has led to failure.

I prefer to use the terms, as do the psychologists, *sense of rhythm*, when referring to the inner need for organizing impressions, and the simple term *rhythm* for the outward means by which we succeed in expressing this organization, whether in music or the dance. No outward rhythm would exist without an inner need to organize impressions, since rhythm, again, is not a physical attribute of tones. Let us pause for a moment, therefore, to examine briefly the *sense of rhythm* which we all possess, in varying degrees.

Listen to drops of water falling at equidistant intervals in time on a tin roof in the middle of the night. It will not be long before they assume a pattern in the mind, sometimes soothing and sometimes maddening. (Whether we go to sleep again or not perhaps depends somewhat upon which kind of pattern we put them into, and what our associations are with it.) Or listen to the click of the rails when riding in a train. They will probably seem to “say something.” Even the innocent ticking of a clock, which our common sense tells us is absolutely uniform both in tone and time, has always been construed as a “tick-tock,” and not a

“tick-tick,” which in reality it is. (Or might it as well be a “tock-tock?”).

It must be apparent that there is something within us which causes us to *group* these impressions from the outside world in some way, in some *pattern*, and that this need is so strong as not to be denied. This subjective rhythm, or sense of rhythm, is one of our happiest inheritances. As a labor saving device it is almost unparalleled. It enables us to understand a whole sequence of impressions as easily as we could an isolated one. As soon as we have *grouped*, we have *grasped*, and we are able to dismiss from conscious thought the impressions, whatever they may be, and are ready for new experiences. Without this involuntary labor saving device, we could scarcely exist, for every impression would be a new and unorganized one, leading to infinite confusion.

That this sense of rhythm exists in varying degrees in different individuals has been ascertained with a certain exactitude by the psychologists. Perhaps the possession of this sense is the greatest factor in dancing, and accounts to a large degree for the outward differences in “style,” “form,” “grace,” etc., which we see in two different dancers. The one who seems unconsciously to organize the individual muscular impulses, movements, steps, beats, or whatever we care to call them, is what we call a “born dancer.” He cannot accept isolated movements even for a moment; he does not need to be told to *phrase*,—he really cannot *help* phrasing. He will still have to learn the outward forms of the dance, it is true, but he will learn them a hundred times more quickly and more effectively than the person whose inner sense of organization is so weak that he can never get beyond a certain level. Furthermore, it is futile to suppose that this sense of organization can be *developed* through teaching. Beyond the threshold of the individual’s capacity we cannot go; we can only help him to reach as far down into his natural capacity as possible. If this seems a somewhat fatalistic point of view, I am sure it is only what every teacher feels, as well as what scientific investigation has proven. The teacher, on his part, must be sure not to relinquish his efforts until this threshold is



really reached, and in the words of the old song: "that will never be."

Thus we might say that the *raw material* of dancing is this tendency to group, this so-called sense of rhythm. Other senses required and possessed in varying degrees by the musician are perhaps contributing factors, such as the *sense of pitch*, the *sense of intensity*, and the *sense of time*. The first two of these we may possibly pass over as of infinitely greater importance to the musician than the dancer, but the sense of time we must examine briefly. This is that inner impression which enables us to recognize at once that the outer impressions coming to us (sounds, visual impressions, tactile impressions, etc.) are spaced between themselves in a certain way. The person with a perfect sense of time, if such a person existed, would be able to detect at once a deviation by as much as a hair's breadth in the occurrence of these impressions. If such a person existed, no machine would be necessary to measure the frequency of events in the outer world. He would be a veritable machine of precision. To varying degrees, however, we all possess this faculty. Suppose, for example, we hear a tap occurring at intervals over a period of time. These taps may be absolutely equidistant. The person with the fine sense of time will recognize this fact at once. Let one of the taps be delayed or advanced as much as a fiftieth or a hundredth of a second, and he will immediately know that there has been a deviation, though it would be beyond his power to define the exact degree of this deviation. On the other hand the person with the feeble sense of time would be all oblivious of any deviation, and in especially defective cases, the deviation might be as much as a fifth or even a half of a second, without causing any particular awareness in the hearer.

It is apparent that unless, in dancing, we instinctively feel the exact moment at which a step or a movement should occur, our dancing will not be "in time." We might often call such a dancer *unrhythmic*, a slight confusion of terms, since what we really mean is that he does not dance in time with the music, or in time with a superior *sense of time which we may ourselves possess*. It would be a false assumption, however, to believe that good dancing or good playing is *always* in strict time. We need a fine sense of time so that we may deviate from it artistically, not that we may keep time, for one of the most potent means of expression in music and in dancing is just this

deviation from strict time which raises what would otherwise be a purely mechanical expression to the realm of an artistic one. The person who deviates arbitrarily or in the wrong places, however, produces an impression of chaos, since his deviations are based upon a lack of a sense of time rather than an appreciation of it, which should leave him free to *use time* in expressive ways.

To summarize the above remarks, let us say that the inner senses required by the dancer are chiefly that sense of time which enables us to feel to a fine degree deviations from a norm, and that sense of rhythm which prompts us to organize our impressions, steps, movements, etc., into ever larger and larger units. Only by means of the former can we create art in the realm of time; only by means of the latter can we *carry through* from beginning to end, creating of a dance or a piece of music a continuous, inter-related, and artistic whole, which to the observer similarly endowed with these faculties will seem *right* in its part and in its whole, and which can give him complete artistic pleasure.

How these inner needs are re-created in the outer world is another story, no less important. When we come to consider this problem, we will speak of *rhythm* in its outer sense, and we will try to examine and define the *means* we have at our disposal to express the *inner dance*, or the *inner music*, without which the outward manifestation would be but an empty shell, if indeed it could exist at all.

(To be continued)

## A PARTY IN MONTCLAIR

This month the Montclair Center members gave a special Country Dance Party with the purpose of raising money for the national Society's funds. They had a delightful party and had a very good time—and they made enough money to take out two national Supporting (\$10) memberships in the Society in the name of the Center and ten additional subscriptions to THE COUNTRY DANCER. We take this opportunity of thanking the Center for its cooperation. Such contributions are of the greatest value in helping the Society to extend its field and give more help to those who need it.

M. G.



# COUNTRY DANCING IN OHIO

Lynn Rohrbough

**I**N the old days in rural Ireland, the cross-roads were a favorite place for country dancing. The country dancing of Ohio shows the influence of several generations of cross-roads migrations of peoples moving West and North and South. The result is a generous variety of dance forms, without certain distinctions which characterize New England, the Highlands, or the Southwest.

Square dances or Quadrilles are found in general use in all parts of the state, but perhaps the most unique and interesting folk dancing is the "Play Party," which was the ingenious invention of several generations of church youth who were prevented by religious prejudice from taking part in formal dances.

The Play Party is thus a dance that is not called a dance. It is distinctive in various ways: (1) participation was primarily for adolescents and young adults of courting age. Children wouldn't be chosen, and most adults couldn't stand the pace. (2) The style and formations were informal; newcomers could usually be added to the set at any time; there was frequent change of partners, and a large element of creativity and spontaneous fun. (3) Familiar tunes were used as accompaniment; words often indicating the action, clapping or stamping emphasizing the rhythm, and there was seldom if ever an instrumental accompaniment. The fiddle was specifically banned as the devil's own instrument. (4) Dance positions were carefully avoided; swinging was with hands joined, never arm around waist.

From Western New York to the Rockies and in much of the South the Play Party seems to have met the social approval of pioneer Americans. It was definitely popular for 60 or 75 years in Ohio, passing into oblivion with the sophistication of the late teens and twenties, with the growth of funnies, movies and radio. At the time our collection was set down in 1930 there was little current use of the Play Party except in isolated communities. Our notes came entirely from middle age and elderly people. In the past ten years there is a widespread revival of the play-party games in church, 4-H clubs and community groups everywhere.

There is almost infinite variety in the form

and pattern of the native Play Party. Many have dramatic elements of choosing, cheating, exchanging, and making love. From the square dance it borrowed the grand chain, figure eight, do si do, casting off, reel, star, allemande, promenade, double—L swing; from ancient children's games it inherited elements of choosing, stealing, counting out, and dramatizing. All parts of the Virginia Reel have been adapted and modified as play party games. Many groups like to do the more elaborate figures in preference to any other dancing.

The old time Square dance has quietly flourished in hundreds of Ohio communities since the time of the early settlers. One set of elderly couples in our county, whom we call "The Old Timers", have danced together for nearly fifty years. Our farmer neighbor, "Billy Foster," rounded up this set for a party in our home some ten years ago. When our barn was remodelled seven years ago we enlarged the group and for several years have had country dancing as a feature of our monthly open house. Open House starts in the early afternoon with the shop open for making games; in good weather groups come to hike, play games, archery, badminton, etc. Pot-luck supper is followed by play-party hour and the country dancing usually lasts from 8:30 to 11.

Possibly a third of each group at our Open House parties is new. We try to introduce everyone personally, and maintain a home-like atmosphere. For early-comers we have a number of traditional games, including skittles, dart games, shuffleboard, and ancient table games.

The opening number is usually a circle mixer, in which we try to include everyone. Many of the play-party games are valuable for this purpose. When it comes time for quadrilles we make an effort to see that beginners are mixed in sets with experienced dancers.

Our square dances are composed of three parts, (a) the preliminary introduction, (b) the change, and (c) the chorus. Two changes lasting 12 to 15 minutes make up a dance. After two or three squares, we usually have a schottische, and later in the evening perhaps a polka or the Rye waltz.

As a general rule younger dancers call for



the simple and rowdy changes, while the older dancers prefer the more orderly and complicated figures. The answer is careful teaching. Whenever the set of Old Timers is present, we make it a practice to ask them to demonstrate one of the older changes, such as Do Si Do, Right and Left on Both Corners, and Four in Line. It is not necessary to call attention to their good style, ease, economy of motion, and perfect timing; for beginners soon catch the idea, and develop a taste for the better calls and good form.

About the middle of the evening we usually bring the whole group together, seated around the piano for general introductions, special features and the singing of folk songs. We consider this intermission to be very important for creating group fellowship.

When visiting leaders are present we like to have a new dance demonstrated or taught to all who will join. We recall with pleasure Douglas Kennedy's singing and teaching "Circassian Circle," the McDowell Family demonstrating "Five Tinkers," and May Gadd's "Galopede". Marion Skean introduced us to "Jubilee," the Ritchies taught us "Charlie" and Frank Smith showed us the Smoky Mountain dances. Perhaps our most favored outside dance is "Lady Walpole's Reel."

For music we are fortunate to have an excellent fiddler, Carl Loar, who learned many of his tunes from musical ancestors. He has a special genius for fitting the right tune to the tempo of a call. A pianist "to chord" has served in the past, but we are now inviting folks to bring instruments and share in the music making along with dancing.

At present there is a demand for a special Country Dancing club to meet at other times for perfecting a larger number of figures. We also have a younger group of rural youth who will specialize in the play-party games for a year.

During the last five years there has been a striking growth of interest in country dancing. Our groups include farmers, college faculty, high school and college students, young married couples. Leaders came from points 100 miles away, and several times last year the group exceeded 150.

At the country dancing hour, 5 to 7:30 four nights during Farmer's Week at Ohio State University, the armory has been packed, with 90 sets dancing at once and many spectators. Many colleges sponsor square dances. Billy

Foster who calls at Farmer's Week conducted more than a hundred dances last year. Rural leaders and many summer schools are giving leadership to this movement.

Over several years we have taken down the figures for some forty changes as called by Billy Foster, and early in February published a small edition. These are typical although not exhaustive. A third are very old, a few recent creations. Several have their own special tunes and are sung by the caller. About half the square dances used in Ohio are the type where one couple visits. In a few the first and opposite couple visit. About ten are cumulative, and a small number involve all the dancers continuously.

The future of country dancing in Ohio looks good. We hope to build public opinion favoring sponsorship of folk dancing by schools, churches and wholesome community groups and preventing its exploitation by commercial agencies, and liquor joints. There is a great need for good teaching, such as can be provided in colleges and short courses such as those taught by May Gadd. We like to see country dancing integrated with the other folk arts as a part of the total cultural life of the good community.

## THE C.D.S. 1941 SPRING FESTIVAL

THE afternoon of Saturday, April 26th, 2.30 to 5 p. m. (promptly at both ends) is the date fixed for our fifteenth annual Spring Festival in New York. Thirteen of those Festivals—all except the first—have been held in the Seventh Regiment Armory, but this year we have to find a new place. We have engaged the Royal Windsor Ballroom, at 69 West 66 Street (known to some as the former Saint Nicholas skating rink) and although we shall not have around us the vast spaces of the Armory, we think that we shall have ample room. The floor is 185 by 100 feet. We may be a little crowded in the Durham Reel and Gathering Peascods, but the dances in which fewer people take part will show to much better advantage than in the Armory, where they were apt to be a little lost. The dancers will not have boxes as their seating accommodation, but their chairs are placed on double tiers of raised "terraces" so that they should be able to see. Audience seating accommodation is good. Large balconies divided into boxes run along the two long sides

*(Continued on page 40)*



# COUNTRY DANCE AND MODERN DANCE

**A**N enjoyable evening spent watching a performance given by Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Concert Group at their new studio-theater at 108 West 16th Street, New York, in which the opening number was a delightful invention called "Square Dances," led to an interview with Miss Humphrey, with the purpose of finding out to what extent her compositions were consciously affected by her knowledge of folk dances. Miss Humphrey first came in touch with English folk dances at Peterborough, New Hampshire, when Claude Wright came from England to teach for the

A gay suite of familiar dances in the spirit of a party. There is a square dance which keeps coming in like a refrain, and special dances for each couple including a country dance, a tango, schottische and waltz. Neither the steps nor the figures have more than a nodding acquaintance with the originals—they are, in fact inventions, like variations on an old folk song."

These notes prepare the traditional square dancer in the audience to accept the fact that he is not going to see a reproduction of the figures of a square dance performed with modern dance technique. What he sees is very much

"Square  
Dances"  
in  
Practise  
Dress



summer; her interest has continued until this day. During various tours in different part of this country she has taken every opportunity to study the American square dance, particularly during several summers spent in Colorado.

This Country dance background suggested a theme when Miss Humphrey started to compose a new opening dance for a program. She felt that this should be gay and fun, and the square dance spirit seemed to be just what was needed. She interpreted the term "Square Dance" in its broad sense—as it is used by the country people—to indicate a *type* of dance rather than one kept strictly in *square* formation. To quote from the program notes:—"SQUARE DANCES:

Miss Humphrey's own creation. The square dance spirit is certainly there. The "Lead Couple" start off with a fine sense of freedom and rhythm and after every special dance the group joins together to circle left and right with a gay abandon and much enlarged movements, and yet with a unity that pulls the whole composition together. It is one of those satisfactory creations into which one can put a lot of one's own knowledge and imagine that the composer had the same points in mind—whether this is actually so, or not, does not matter—one becomes a vicarious participant in the dance. I certainly joined in, as Charles Weidman in the center seemed to sketch the handing to and fro



of a succession of ladies in a "Three Ladies' Chain"; and the robust Colorado version of "Pop Goes the Weasel" surely suggested the whole-hearted abandon with which the couples leapt at and caught one another in another figure. The schottische, waltz and tango—introduced for the purpose of contrast—all fitted into place in the whole, while patterns changed from circles to longways to diagonals by various devices. A processional exit in the style of a Polanaise provided a change of tempo that brought the dance to a satisfactory conclusion. The swirl and bright clear colors of the dresses worn—and the decorative suspenders of the men—added much to the general feeling of life, beauty, and gaiety.

Miss Humphrey stated that in a composition called "Cotillion" Mr. Weidman had followed the square dance figures much more closely, and that her own composition "Shakers" owed much to folk dance movements. The question of the use of folk dance patterns as an aid to teaching the modern dance technique was discussed and Miss Humphrey said that she often made use of simple patterns, such as the advancing and retiring of couples in the Playford dance "Hunsdon House." Her reason for this was that she felt that she could not attain the results she wished for, if her students did not realise that

they were taking part in a cooperative activity; the sociological aspect was important in her work. Although it was necessary to teach technique much more directly than in a folk dance class—to which people came mainly for its recreative value—she believed that all stiffness and strain should be avoided; that the learning of exercises should be fun and should have meaning as well as purpose. As an example she quoted exercises for developing a living quality in the use of the hands, and stated that after having tried for some time, without much success, to develop this by means of individual exercises, she suddenly found that she could accomplish it much more easily if she combined the exercises with simple patterns that led the students to use their hands in relation to the movements made by another person.

This left me feeling that there was little doubt of a link between Miss Humphrey's technique and that of the folk dance. All of us who have taught country dancing know that when we have succeeded in making our students really feel that every movement they make must have a relation both to their partners and to all the rest of the group, then there is very little else that we have to teach them.

MAY GADD



We are indebted to Miss Ruth Sanders for this photograph, and to Mr. Robert Buckie for the picture of the lake on the cover.

## PINEWOODS CAMP

This is the road at the end of which we hope to meet many of our readers this summer. It is the end of the way into Camp.

Just around the corner is the Camp House, with steps leading down from its porch to the very lovely lake shown on the cover.

You will probably want to swim in its clear waters without delay, but it will be better to get settled in your cabin or cottage before dinner is served in the open-air dining-room overlooking the lake.

Afterwards everyone will meet in C#, the largest of the four open-air dance pavilions, for the opening Country Dance Party.



## WITH VIRGINALS AND RECORDER

PERHAPS the most convincing and most charming way of re-creating in our minds the atmosphere in which English Country dances were performed in earlier times is to hear the tunes to which they were danced played on the instruments for which they were originally adapted. Such an opportunity came to the Boston Center of the Country Dance Society on Sunday afternoon, January 26th, when Miss Evelyn Wells and Miss Joy Sleeper of the Department of Music of Wellesley College gave a recital of dance tunes on the recorder and virginals.

Miss Wells gave a most interesting talk on the music and the instruments; their origin and their connection with the Country dance; and used the descant recorder to play accompaniments to a number of the compositions played on the virginals by Miss Sleeper, who is an authority on early English music. In these pieces we could recognise many familiar Country dance tunes, forming the basis of the endless variations which were characteristic of the music written for this instrument.

For the virginals, a spinet-like instrument popular at the time of the Tudors and one of the first key-board instruments, with its tinkling notes produced from strings plucked by a quill attached to a jack, lent itself especially well to runs and elaborations, and the folk tunes to which we dance today, with their short rhythmic melodies, were perfectly suited for variations and became the basis of keyboard music in Elizabeth's time. Greenwood, Up tails all, Selenger's Round, Goddesses, All in a Garden Green and many other dance tunes were used or developed in this way.

The program consisted of "Variations on Muscadin" by Giles Farnaby, which we find in the Playford Dancing Master as "The Cherping of the Lark"; "Daphne" also by Farnaby, to which we dance "Hit and Miss"; "The Earl of Salisbury His Pavane and Galliard" by William Byrd, to which Miss Wells played a recorder accompaniment; Farnaby's "His Dream and His Rest" and Byrd's "Variations on the Carman's Whistle"; and a Country Dance Suite in which we recognised "Argeers" and "Never Love Thee More."

There are various explanations of the name "virginals." One attributes it to its general use

by young girls; another, and perhaps the more probable one, is its derivation from the mediaeval Latin *virga*, meaning *jack*, an important part of its construction. The instrument used at this recital is a modern one built on 16th century principles by John Challis in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and charmingly decorated in the style of the old instruments; it belongs to the folk singer and collector, John Jacob Niles. So convincing was the atmosphere of the afternoon that we could almost see on its key-board the slender fingers of Mary Tudor, who was an accomplished performer at the virginals, or visualize the young ladies of the castles visited by Elizabeth in her Progresses, as they sat before it to play the tunes for dances for the Queen and her Court.

The popularity of the virginals for many years after the time of Elizabeth is evident from a note in Pepy's Diary, in which he says that after the great fire of London in 1666 the Thames was thronged with boats piled high with salvaged goods and nearly every boat carried "a pair of virginals."

The recorder is a wooden flute, blown by means of a whistle mouthpiece and having holes down its tube to control the tone with the fingers. It had its origin much further back than the virginals, the form of its mouthpiece being almost pre-historic. It also had great popularity but became practically obsolete as the greater possibilities of the transverse flute were developed. Of late years there has been a great revival of interest in the instrument and Recorder Societies and Clubs have been formed. An ardent little circle of members of the Boston Country Dance Society have taken it up and are striving to perfect their playing of Country dance tunes upon it.

MARGARET FITZHUGH BROWNE

## A LEADERS' WEEKEND

WITH the air of famine sufferers given a chance at a full meal, twenty-four leaders of country dance groups in Philadelphia and the suburbs (including Trenton!) greeted May Gadd and Philip Merrill at a "Teachers' weekend course." For six hours on Saturday and on Sunday we gobbled up information, and only



hope that there will be no attacks of mental indigestion from the amount consumed.

Miss Gadd demonstrated the best and easiest ways of teaching all the fundamentals, from sidling to polka-in-place; of helping beginners to get that all-important "lift"; and of correcting the ninety-nine wrong ways of doing everything, without discouraging the dancer. We danced American dances, traditional English dances, and Playford dances; round, square, long and oblong dances, and ones that were combinations of several shapes; running set, play-party, and all the other kinds—many of them new to everyone there.

After each dance there was a rush for pencils and notebooks, and for the piano to look over Philip Merrill's shoulder at the tune. While he suggested other suitable or possible tunes—for, as all but a few of the groups represented use phonograph records, the choice of available tunes is limited—May Gadd answered questions—and questions—and questions. Among the most frequent were requests for help with the balance in the various types of swing; and for dances which would serve best under various circumstances—for mixed groups of beginning and advanced dancers, for large groups all in leather soles, a single evening of recreation at a conference, for the unmusical, the shy, the very young, the very old, the short-winded—and Miss Gadd made suggestions for all.

During the Sunday picnic Adrian Hull arrived (and ate everybody's surplus sandwiches). As a reward Miss Gadd turned over the last dance of the evening to him for some authentic square dance calling. At ten o'clock we gathered up our shoes and notes, grateful to William Penn for having thoughtfully founded Philadelphia sufficiently close to the National Headquarters of the Country Dance Society for us to get our tradition and inspiration direct.

On Monday the 17th Miss Gadd taught at the Friends' Select School. Publicity for the class read "For everyone who would like to try morris. No experience required. Bring two large white handkerchiefs—or reasonably accurate facsimiles thereof"—and about forty would-be morris men (and women) took this at its face value.

If we had known then what we know now, that publicity might have read "Morris Dancing Made Easy." For the better part of two and a half hours we danced the Shepherd's Hey Jig, Upton-on-Severn Stick Dance, and the Twenty-ninth of May; and while we were rest-

ing we danced the Portland Fancy, Going to Boston, and Lady Walpole's Reel. A tribute to the teaching were the frequent remarks of dancers delighted with their own progress, and wondering why they had been told that morris was difficult, although one gentleman was overheard, at the close of the chorus of "Going to Boston," saying that he thought Miss Gadd's pronunciation of "Barroom" most peculiar!

As a result of this session we are expecting the Philadelphia delegation to emulate William Kemp by doing the Twenty-ninth of May all the way to the Festival.

ONE OF THE DANCERS

## MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL

THE sixth annual Mountain Folk Festival for schools, colleges, community centers, Four-H clubs and other interested groups will be held at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, April 17th to 20th. The opening meeting will take place in the Seabury Gymnasium on Thursday, April 17th, at 7.30 p. m.

The Festival circular states that its purpose is to encourage the preservation of all folk material—songs, games and dances—as well as to have a good time. Folk plays are included. During Thursday evening, the whole of Friday, and Saturday morning and afternoon, the groups meet to dance and sing all together informally and to present interludes to one another of favorite songs and dances or local versions of ballads, carols and singing games. On Saturday evening a public performance is given. Visitors are welcomed at other times but the program is not specially arranged for them, as it is on Saturday evening.

Anyone who is able to attend this Festival will find it an inspiring and unique experience. The sight of these mountain boys and girls on the floor, all having an extremely good time, but without any rowdiness or undue noise, is quite illuminating. Everyone seems to have unconscious good manners and to know how to dance with a partner. Although quite willing to show their dances to the general public at the final performance, it seems that this is far from being the most popular part of the Festival. It is the meeting and dancing together that they enjoy most. The pretty bright dresses of the girls and the white ducks of the boys add a great deal to the occasion.



## NEWS FROM REGIONS AND CENTERS

**BOSTON** On February 14th the Boston Center devoted an evening to American Square Dancing. Ralph Page came from Nelson, N. H. with his orchestra to lead the eager 200 who danced with enthusiasm and considerable abandon throughout the jolly evening. The program was fascinating and everyone enjoyed the variety of the longways, square and old-fashioned round dances.

CHARLES L. HANSON

**CLEVELAND** Junior members of the Cleveland group gave a program on January 23rd to the Sorosis Club of Cleveland. The ten boys and ten girls who took part belong to a dancing club organized by Mrs. Levitt as a school activity. A running commentary was given by Miss Olive Whitworth and there was an exhibit of publications and pictures illustrating the activities of the English Folk Dance Society in England and the Country Dance Society here. At the conclusion of the program all the performers took a member of the audience as a partner and taught them a dance. The success of this ending is shown by the fact that "they laughed and laughed and had a wonderful time."

**FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA** During the Fall and Winter two Classes in English and

American Folk Dancing have been conducted in the beautiful Sports Building of the Madeira, School. The girls in the school dance every Friday evening from seven until eight, and the Difficult Run Country Dancers dance from eight until half past nine. In the school group, the 49 Seniors danced during the Fall term. In the Winter term the 43 Juniors are dancing. In the Spring term the 38 First and Second Year girls will dance,—and at the end of May the whole school—130 girls—will dance on the grass terrace. This is a beautiful sight.

The Difficult Run Country Dancers, 49 of them, are a group of neighbors of the school, both men and women. Their dancing not only gives them happiness but it also serves to promote neighborliness.

The last dance before Christmas was our Christmas Party. The great room in the Sports Building was beautifully decorated with pine, of which there is such an abundance on the

school grounds. Amidst the pungent odours we danced our Christmas dances, the two groups dancing together, 98 in all, and the Seniors sang a folk song. When the dancing was over, we went into the Recreation Room where we had delicious refreshments. Then we sat in a semi-circle around the fireplace, where great logs of pine gave forth light and cheer and we sang Christmas Carols to our heart's content.

The Winter Classes will have their party on Friday, March 14th, when the Winter term of the school comes to an end, and for that party "Happy" Hale will be the caller for the American numbers.

Folk Dancing is flourishing in Fairfax County, Virginia, the most historic County in the United States, where General George Washington lived most of his life at Mt. Vernon and where George Mason lived at Gunston Hall and wrote the Virginia Bill of Rights which we more and more recognize as the basis of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. This is an atmosphere that is conducive to the English Country Dance which General Washington must have danced at Mount Vernon and elsewhere in the county, and to the American Square, which was then developing alongside the parent tree.

LUCY MADEIRA WING

**LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY** With Mr. M. G. Karsner as Director and Mrs. Raymond F. McLain as Chairman, the Lexington Center is slowly but surely soaring upward. The Center now boasts thirty members composed of faculty members from both Transylvania College and the University of Kentucky, interested townspeople, and students from both Universities; however an average of fifty attend the dancing held every Thursday night.

In February the treasury found itself with \$5.37 and as Mrs. McLain said, "When one has \$5.37 something happens,"—and it did. We had a party. Invitations were extended to all our folk dancing friends in central Kentucky which brought forth Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith and Miss Gertrude Cheney from Berea and Miss Elizabeth Wilson, Miss Mary Louise Vetter, Mr. Tommy Noonan and Mr. Howard Hollenbeck from Louisville, all of folk dancing fame



in this part of the country. (Incidentally we are very pleased that Mr. and Mrs. Smith have been back every Thursday night to dance with us—since we like to dance with them). Mr. Karsner planned a suitable program of dances but we enjoyed the ones at the first of the program so much that when the evening was over the program of dances had only been half completed and the dancers were too exhausted for any more. At intermission Mr. Noonan entertained with a puppet show which made the party more fun than ever. Center members and their guests amounted to about eighty persons present at the party.

From this date until April 16, Mr. Karsner is leading dancing on Tuesday nights, in addition to the dancing for the Center on Thursdays, for those interested in going to the Festival in Berea. About six boys and six girls will go from the Lexington Center for the entire Festival and others will commute from Lexington for single sessions.

Our aim is to increase our Center membership—and to dance more and longer (if we only could have eight days in a week!).

LOVAINE LEWIS, *Secretary*

## OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL, CALIFORNIA

Mrs. Kingman writes of an enthusiastic dance group at the school and of a pleasant link with school days for the old boys, who returned from College in time for the Christmas play at the Art Center and found themselves dancing Tideswell and Bacca Pipes and providing a Hobby Horse and a six foot three Besom Betty. The Santa Paula group combined dancing with a pot luck supper at its November meeting and planned a similar evening for January.

## SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

The evening of Saturday, February 15th, found a group of over one hundred dancers from the College and the vicinity of Philadelphia assembled in the Swarthmore Field House for a Country Dance Party. The program ranged all the way from the Danish Napoleon—led by John Morgan—to Twin Sisters, Parson's Farewell and Jenny Pluck Pears—the last being taught, by request, by Miss Gadd, who was our guest for the evening. After refreshments had been served the Swarthmore group presented its version of the Ken-

tucky Running Set, which, we are pleased to say, received loud acclaim. The American section of the program included several Quadrilles and the vigorous (at least as performed in the Swarthmore College tradition) Shoo-Fly Swing. This year's party was even more successful than our first one, held last year; we sincerely hope that it will become an annual event. Meanwhile the group turns its attention to the Society's Spring Festival in New York which is the most important fixture on our Spring list of activities.

MARY PULVERMAN

## VIRGINIA REGION Report for February:

A full day at State Teachers' College, Farmville—country dancing, singing of folk songs, Horton Barker's ballad program and a country dance party at night. One week at Saint Anne's School in Charlottesville—country dancing. Mr. Barker's ballad program at the University of Virginia. One day at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton—country dance classes and party at night. Two weeks in Powhatan County—folk games taught at the County High School and country dance parties throughout the County each night. Powhatan County is trying to get folk games established as a regular social activity. Our Spring schedule is now in the making; the Emory and Henry Country Dance team hopes to go to the Festival at Berea.

RICHARD CHASE

## THE AUTHOR OF "DANCING IN OHIO"

Mr. Lynn Rohrbough, the author of this article, is doing a remarkable piece of community work. He has turned his house and barn, just outside Delaware, Ohio, into a gathering place for the neighborhood, where everyone can come to dance, play games or make things in the shop. A printing press is an important part of the equipment and with this Mr. Rohrbough turns out the handy little 25 cents books of dances and games. They are published by the Cooperative Recreation Service of which he is director and contain his own collection and contributions from other people. They include "Favorite Square Dances" as called by Billy Foster. If you are visiting Ohio—or you live there—you would be well repaid by visiting one of the "Open Houses"—and you would be very heartily welcomed by Lynn Rohrbough, Mrs. Rohrbough, and three charming daughters.



## THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE 1731 TO 1907

COMPOSING new Country dances on the pattern of the old has interested many people since John Playford's day and from time to time we come across new evidences of this activity. We have to thank Smith College indirectly, and Miss Ellen Chafee directly, for new and interesting additions to our dance collection. An assignment in an 18th Century English course led Miss Chafee to examine volumes of *The Gentleman's Magazine* issued during the period 1740 to 1754. She found them full of fascinating contemporary material.

The magazine was published in London during the period 1731 to 1907 by "Sylvanus Urban, Gent.," a pseudonym used by a succession of editors. It stated that its material was "collected chiefly from the publick papers" and it contained news items, essays and articles on a diversity of subjects—discoveries made by Benjamin Franklin, treatment for mad dog bites, biographical and obituary notices, news events listed in a separate section under countries, a page or two devoted to music, dances or stage productions. One would expect to find that the social dance of the day received attention in such a publication and in the volumes that Miss Chafee examined she found the figures and tunes for fourteen country dances of the longways triple minor variety. This seems to have been the favorite 18th century form. Many of them can be easily adapted to the duple minor formation, or as a set dance for three couples, by those who dislike being a rather inactive third couple in a triple minor dance.

As in the Playford publication, it was assumed that everyone would be familiar with country dance terms and figures, so no explanations are given. Some of the dances are very clear to anyone familiar with the country dance of any period, while others require considerable experimentation in order to find a workable solution. Two dances are given below. "A Trip to Hanover, A new Country Dance, May 1750," is delightful to dance to a change-hop step (right, left, right, hop, etc.) and is reminiscent of the Northumbrian "Corn Riggs." Each figure is danced to four measures of music in common time; the tune has 16 measures in all (two strains of 4 measures, each strain being played twice). The second dance, "Locking's

Whim, or the Conjuror. By Mr. J. F. Davis, March 1753" is given in order that our readers may exercise their ingenuity in working it out. It is danced to 32 measures of music in 2/4 time (two strains of 8 measures, each strain being played twice). The tunes may be obtained from the Society's headquarters or by consulting "The Gentleman's Magazine" at a library.

### A TRIP TO HANOVER

The first couple cast off behind the 2nd couple and cross over into the 3rd couples' place •

Then cast up again, and cross over the 2d couple in your own place ••

The first couple lead down below the 3d couple, cast up behind the 3d couple •

Then right and left with the 3d couple ••

• apparently indicates the end of a strain, while •• indicates the end of the repeat.

### LOCKING'S WHIM

1st and 2d couples hands set and turn; then 1st couple thro' the 2d, behind the 3d and lead up to the top; cast off below the 2d couple; 2d couple do the same —

1st man and 2d woman change places; 2d man and 1st woman the same — hands round till in proper place 1st man and 2d woman together; face the wall and clap hands; then turn to face and clap hands — right hand and left round till the 2d couple in proper place again.

### FOLK DANCE COURSE AT BRASSTOWN, N.C.

JUNE 2nd to 14th at the John C. Campbell Folk School. Beginners should come the first week. *Folk Dances and Songs—Discussions on Background—Place in present day community life—Choice of material and teaching methods.*

Anyone interested in taking part in the above activities with Mrs. Olive Dame Campbell, Marguerite and Georg Bidstrup, May Gadd and Philip Merrill, should apply early, as space is limited.

### C.D.S. GENERAL MEETING IN NEW YORK

SATURDAY, MAY 10th at 7:20 p.m.  
Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East 22nd St.  
All national members and center representatives are eligible to attend. A Country Dance Party will follow at 8:30 p.m.



# HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY 1915 TO 1940

## Part Three

May Gadd

It was due to Mr. Douglas Kennedy's report at the end of his 1939 American tour, as well as to our own widening experience, that at the 1939 summer meetings of the National Council and of the members of the Society, we began to consider the question of an adaptation of our name, that would be less cumbersome; that would remove the barrier raised between us and our potential membership because of the false impression, given by our name, that membership in our Society is open only to people with English ancestry and that we are concerned only with English dances; that would help us to make clear that since 1917 our interest in the Southern Mountain songs and dances awakened by Cecil Sharp had increased and widened, as the research we carried on showed us that these were only one expression of the tradition of American dance and song that existed all over the country and that the English and the American traditions were so closely interwoven that they could not be separated without loss to both.

At this meeting there was a large majority vote in favor of a change of name and all that remained was to select the name. Many suggestions were made but by means of a postal vote of national members and Center members taken in February, 1940, it was ascertained that an overwhelming majority were in favor of adopting the name of "The Country Dance Society," because of its simplicity and because the term "Country Dance" is used to include both English dances and American "Square" and "Contra" dances. It was felt that our other interests—folk music and song, Morris and Sword dances—could be made clear on our letterhead and that the continuity of the Society should be stressed by placing "formerly The English Folk Dance and Song Society of America" underneath our new title. There were a few natural regrets for the loss of a name that had many pleasant associations and a very few objections from people who had a very distinct preference for the English dances and wished to do no other. But it was very evident that the large majority of our members approved of the change and the name of "The Country Dance Society" was formally adopted at a meeting of the general membership held in February, together with the necessary

changes in the Society's constitution and by-laws. It is worthy of note that during the last few months many of our members have told us that any prejudice they had against the American dances has faded away. This is probably due to the fact that our wider use of the dances has led to more understanding of their fundamental qualities and that we both dance and teach them better.

At an earlier general meeting a resolution in favor of the incorporation of the Society had been adopted. It was delayed until the new name had been settled but was completed in May, 1940. So that we begin our second Quarter Century by looking forward to a long and interesting career as THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, INC.

## C.D.S. FESTIVAL (Continued from Page 32)

and a very large balcony—but with less comfortable accommodation—runs along one end.

All arrangements for making it easy for dancers to find their places on the floor without a general rehearsal and without confusion, can be carried out as usual. So come in your prettiest dresses and whitest ducks and make this Festival in a new place the most successful one that we have had. If you cannot take part in the dancing come as an audience-participant and bring as many other people as possible. We find that our plan of giving the Festival as a benefit for British War Relief cannot be carried out owing to existing laws. Nevertheless we are hoping for a big success financially, in order that our augmented funds will allow us later on to contribute to some useful cause.

We hope that any of our readers who have not yet seen this Festival will take the opportunity to come this year—in addition to all our regular supporters. Both English and American dances are on the program—Country - Square - Morris - Sword. The sight of 500 dancers whirling round in the Durham Reel, swinging partners in Lady Walpole's Reel, weaving intricate patterns in the Playford country dances, or with tapping sticks and waving handkerchiefs performing the ritual Morris and Sword dances, is an inspiring and heartening spectacle.

# THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, Inc.

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15 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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