

THE COUNTRY DANCER

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 2



CBS Television Studio in New York

"Sicilian Circle"

By The Country Dancers

THIRTY
CENTS

JANUARY
1942

CONTENTS

	page
EDITORIAL	19
SQUARE DANCING IN THE PARK	20
George W. Hibbitt	
WEEKEND SCHOOL IN VERMONT	20
TELEVISION NEWS	21
THANKSGIVING BY DANCING	22
Margaret Stanley-Brown	
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY DANCING	23
Douglas Kennedy	
A CHRISTMAS IMPRESSION	24
Walter Clarke, Jr.	
BEREA CHRISTMAS SCHOOL	25
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25
DEFENSE RECREATION	26
May Gadd	
FOR SQUARE DANCE CALLERS	27
GYM CLASSES IN SQUARE DANCING	28
Claude S. Chadwick	
NEWS FROM REGIONS AND CENTERS	29
BOOK REVIEW—AMERICAN GUIDE SERIES	31
Roberta W. Yerkes	

BOARD OF EDITORS

May Gadd - Margaret Judson - Agnes Rogers
Ruth Sanders - Evelyn K. Wells - Roberta Yerkes

Published four times yearly

November to May

by

THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, Inc.

15 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

Telephone: Lexington 2-7137

\$1.00 a year; Thirty cents a copy

Copyright 1942 by The Country Dance Society, Inc.

THE COUNTRY DANCER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

Volume 2

JANUARY 1942

Number 2

EDITORIAL

THE ARTS IN WARTIME

THAT America means to take active steps to see that the real things that we are fighting for are not lost in the pressure of the fight is indicated by an article in the New York Times of Sunday, January 11th. It was written by Mr. Howard Taubman of the music department. Mr. Taubman asks the question "Have the arts a place in the war effort?" and goes on to say: "The answer is obvious. But if we need higher authority look at President Roosevelt's speech on the state of the Union last Tuesday. 'We are fighting today,' he said, 'for security and progress and for peace, not only for ourselves but for all men, not only for one generation but for all generations. We are,' he ended, 'the champions of tolerance and decency and freedom and faith.'"

"If the arts could not fight under such a banner," continues Mr. Taubman, "they could never fight at all. But they can and will fight for this cause, which is the essence of the democratic way of life. America's musicians, writers, sculptors, architects, dancers and their fellow toilers in the vineyard wish to be and can be a potent force in the struggle. For theirs is the affirmative function. They are the most articulate groups in our society, and they can lead the way in giving form and content to the democratic ideal."

The article goes on to say that musicians, writers and artists (music) have already united to draw up a program that all groups can support. It has been accomplished in recent weeks under the aegis of the Citizens Committee for Government Arts Projects, which has Samuel L. M. Barlow, composer and active worker in the

musical world, as its chairman. The organization has a national council and a group of sponsors.

So far the main sections of the committee's study have been devoted to the contributions that the arts have made and can make to the armed forces, the U.S.O. and civilian defense. The recommendations listed in the article are concerned with the use of music, but most of them apply equally to dance; especially to our particular form of dancing. All forms of dancing have their place in this work, for dancing is needed as entertainment and as a means of arousing and releasing emotions through a spectacle, as well as the form with which we are most concerned, which provides for active participation by either large or small groups of people.

Substitute the words "country dancing" (used in the broad sense) for the word "music" in the recommendations quoted below, and we shall find that the application is perfect. First, for the army and navy: "The general functional value of music as a form of recreation and stimulation for the average soldier, sailor and marine is self-evident." Second, for the U.S.O.: "Music as a means of developing team work in small ensembles"—"Chorus singing for health, cooperation and inspiration." And third, in civilian defense: "General recreational function of music in the broad community sense."—"Important morale stimulation in defense centers for both the worker and the worker's family, either as straight music or musical instruction, or just as a means of social coordination." The article goes on to say that the committee has a plan for seeing that the recommendations are put into effect, although it is willing to accept changes in the mechanism provided that the essential

(Continued on Page 23)

SQUARE DANCING IN THE PARK

UNDER the supervision of the Department of Parks and through the generosity of Edward Durlacher, square dance caller, and Al MacLeod with his dance band, hundreds of summer-caught New Yorkers, for no fee whatsoever, danced the old figures in the roller skating rink in Riverside Park at 105th Street. Here at the edge of the Hudson River on Monday nights during July and August (weather permitting), MacLeod set up his fiddlers and Durlacher in his black hat, bandana handkerchief and checkered shirt went into action.

Over two hundred people on each of these nights joined in the old, yet new, square dances while a thousand or more sat by and looked on. The population of this section of New York is of many nationalities, creeds, and occupations. There are Italians, British, Cuban, German, Norwegian, Puerto Rican, Swedish, and, of course, just plain American. All of these nationalities, and others beside, were represented; they came in varying ages, as well, from twelve to over seventy years old. There was also the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker if one wanted to go into trades. Each danced with the other in a thoroughly American fashion; and everybody, without question, had a good time no matter what his background. Each went away with the thought that this had been a true expression of American life in the democratic tradition.

This recreational activity came from a desire on the part of the two men, Durlacher and MacLeod, to do something for city people in the summer. They rightly believed that everybody not only liked square dancing but also needed some such recreation of this sort in a time like the present. They put their wish into action by giving their services to this end; and everyone who took part in the dances was fully grateful for this generosity and hoped, most sincerely, that the Department of Parks would find the way to finance it further.

New York, however, is not, after all, an unusual place. Any city could do this same thing for its people. Every city provides tennis courts, swimming pools, golf links, all daytime activities; but what does it supply for those who are free only at night? There are literally thou-

sands of people who like to dance in the open on summer evenings who cannot afford to go long distances or to pay the prices asked for in other parks. Every city not only has a park but a pavilion in that park. There is some shelter even if there isn't a roller skating rink; or if not that, dancing on the ground itself isn't beyond possibility. Where the city has the vision, the place can be easily be found.

Also, every city somewhere has among its people a square dance caller and a square dance band. At small cost, any city could provide this entertainment for its people. A few square dance enthusiasts exist in every community; let them start it. Once started, the enthusiasm will grow so that the project will take care of itself.

Such a community activity as this will bring ample rewards. The times almost demand some such recreational break in the strain of war effort. In square dancing everyone feels better for making a few mistakes with his hands and his feet (as well as seeing his friends do likewise); he is encouraged by doing some step a little better than others; he is pleased by widening his interests and sympathies in the members of the community; he is proud of his city for the vision it has in allowing him free access to wholesome exercise in such a democratic fashion.

GEORGE W. HIBBITT

WEEKEND SCHOOL IN VERMONT

An opportunity to combine dancing with skiing is offered by Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont, during the weekend of January 30 to February 1st. The school is sponsored both by the College and by the Plainfield Center of the Country Dance Society. Teaching will be in charge of Emerson Lang and Marjorie Johnson.

On Saturday night there will be a large country dance with various local fiddlers and callers. The school opens Friday at 8.30 with a teaching dance. Sunday will be devoted to discussions—and skiing. Fee: \$5.00 includes room and board as well as dancing. Apply to Dorothy N. Gould at the College.

TELEVISION NEWS

THE two photographs shown in this issue were taken while the program was in progress, so that the dancers are not grouped to show to the best advantage in a "still" or always caught at the best moment for the individual dancer; but a very good idea is given of the set-up of the CBS television studio.

The picture on this page shows the microphone on a moving boom, ready to pick up sound as the Caller moves around the floor, and in the picture on the cover, the photographer shows one of the television cameras trained on the dancers while the musicians (Mrs. Haigh and André Chambellan) stand out in silhouette.

Langstaff family—all six of them. They presented a delightful program of carols during two interludes. Our dancers repeated the Christmas Party dance around the Boar's Head—the carol being sung by Jack Langstaff—and gave a very condensed version of the Ampleforth Sword Dance Play. The program ended with everyone singing carols around the Christmas tree.

Professional dance guests have included José Fernandez, who danced delightful Spanish dances with a partner, and on another occasion demonstrated the use of the castanets and the technique of the dances by means of a student



One of the very bright lights is seen on the right, and the apparently dark overhead canopy contains the fluorescent lights that shine on the dancers without glare.

The dancers—and we believe also the television public—have had some interesting Wednesday evenings since the account given in our last issue. Square dancing continues to form the basis of the program with English morris, sword, and Playford country dances appearing from time to time. As Christmas Eve came on a Wednesday, we gave a special Christmas program. Our only guests on this occasion were the

group; two couples from the Humphrey-Weidman group came and danced part of Doris Humphrey's charming composition "Square Dances"; Paul Petroff and Nana Gollner gave us another glimpse of very expert ballet; Edwin Strawbridge danced some of his own compositions with a partner; and Benjamin Zemach did the same, dancing both by himself and with his group; last Wednesday Jacques Cartier came, and did a most spectacular Zulu dance—dressed almost entirely in black paint.

Our folk dance guests have included Walter Rybka, Aasmund Goytil and Bronislaw Matusz,

who brought the Ukrainian, Norwegian, and Polish groups to pay return visits; Corinne Chochem came with members of the Rikkud Ami Dance Group to show the dances of Jewish Palestine that she had collected; Lillian Stitson brought Lithuanian dancers to show the charming dances that have so much in common with the Playford country dances; Juggling and ancient Chinese Sword and Spear dances were expertly performed by Chin Wan; Madame Jeanine Dawson brought members of the dance group of the French Folklore Society to show the delightful dances of several of the provinces of France, including one that seemed to offer a clue to the present-day English Maypole dance. The French pole was not a May Pole but a Guild Pole; the dance was the ancient one of the Cordmakers Guild and included the weaving of the red and gold ribbons of Provence, symbolical of the twisting of the cord in making rope. It may very well be that during the interchange of dances between France and England, the idea of weaving the ribbons was adopted for the English Maypole—the old pictures all show that this must have been a fairly recent addition; the dance was traditionally just a circle dance around a decorated pole, developed from the idea of celebrating Spring by dancing around a tree.

An exciting evening was provided by Chief Horn who brought representatives of the five tribes of the Iroquois nation to dance a harvest dance on Thanksgiving Eve, and a Victory dance; the beautiful costumes added greatly to the dances. Perhaps the most exciting of all was the Scottish evening—it was certainly the noisiest. To some people the bagpipes are just noise and nothing else, but I find them very stirring. Isabell Taylor brought a Piper and three girls in Highland costume who danced a Sword dance, a Highland Fling and a Three-some Reel very delightfully; and four other Pipers came in the interests of British War Relief. They had marvellous costumes with feather bonnets; they played tunes on the Bagpipes, gave a witty exposition concerning their playing, took off their bonnets and danced an eight-some reel with partners from our group while the fifth Piper played, and finished by all playing together while the country dancers danced the American version of the Scottish dance "Petronella."

THANKSGIVING BY DANCING

It is many years since we have had a real Thanksgiving in the country so when an invitation came to spend Thanksgiving week-end in up-state New York we accepted with alacrity.

Cazenovia is a particularly delightful spot for such a celebration, situated as it is on the edge of a lake with rolling hills all about. The weatherman added his bit by contributing a cold "spell" and a light fall of snow. This made it even more pleasant and cozy to sit around a big open fire.

On Saturday night there was a Country Dance Party, for Cazenovia has a C.D.S. Center which is a great asset to the Society. Miss Judson and Miss Herring have set a very high standard for organizing country dancing as a community activity. The class meets weekly in the gymnasium of the school and is wholeheartedly supported by all ages. Practically all the professions, trades and activities of the village are represented. Since its beginning several years ago, many people from nearby towns have joined the group. The cold and snow on the night of the party did not discourage even the more distant ones from coming. These dancers have come to appreciate and love the dances and tunes for what they are and it gives one the feeling that this is not just a passing fad but is something which has come to stay.

About 100 people took part in the dancing and there was a delightfully varied program of English country and American square. Between dances we refreshed ourselves with real country cider, homemade cookies and sandwiches. It was a simply grand evening and it made you wish that the people of every town in the country could get together in such a friendly way and take part in a recreation so well adapted to the country. It seems as though one could feel some of that same spirit which our ancestors felt when they gathered in their warm kitchens to dance many of the dances that we still do.

So Cazenovia Center, in the words of a radio commentator: "We thank you."

MARGARET STANLEY-BROWN

COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY DANCING

DOUGLAS KENNEDY

MANY of us whose war-work has taken us from town to country have found much consolation and refreshment in the change. The soil is a profound educator. It teaches fundamental principles with a directness bordering on cruelty. Often have I kicked myself for my lack of common sense as I watched my hopeful seedlings falter and fail. Thus one learns the first natural law of the grower, "You must pay your debts in advance." What you take with one hand you must give with the other. The modern philosophy of the successful smart man of business "Each for himself and the devil take the hindmost" doesn't work long with old Mother Nature. She imposes her own relationship of the unity of living things of which the soil itself is a massive partner. Everything done to and for the soil has to be in harmony with this unity.

Now this lesson that the country teaches to the amateur agriculturalist is the same lesson that the musician and the artist and the dancer painfully learn. There has to be an organic connection between sounds, colors and movements before they are aesthetically satisfying. This connection is the secret of the more general art of living, a secret constantly being forgotten and always having to be rediscovered. We find it out whether we study nature or whether we pursue a particular art and, after rebuffs, always with a surprised delight. Yet somehow we seem incapable of learning that lesson once and for all. I suppose it is constantly driven out of our minds by our wrong headed ideas of self-assertion and self sufficiency and by the mechanistic conceptions we derive from incompletely digesting the discoveries of modern science.

In any case there is no doubt that we can find correctives in gardening as readily as we do in the practice of the arts. The peasant has always apprehended this complete organic harmony in nature. That is why his Festival songs and dances and ceremonies played such an integral part in his life. He would not himself be likely or able to give sensible reasons and explanations. To him it was only natural.

Folk songs and Country dances are, in this sense, of an absolute truth. There is nothing synthetic or artificial about them although they may be, and often have been, prostituted by superficial persons who seek to use them for self-display. When the folk arts are practised sincerely there is no need for either audience or onlooker. The singers and dancers are sufficient unto themselves. All the beauty that the singer finds in the song has to be paid back in his singing. Dancers taking part in a group dance sooner or later learn to give and take and find, in that participation, the deep enjoyment of harmonic or organic action.

In England since the war began, a large section of the population has made the acquaintance of the country for the first time. Some found it alien and took the first chance to slip quietly back to the familiar streets. Others have tasted of its beauty and will always be different because of that. Others again have taken root and turned to some small husbandry, as to a new world, offering simple contentment not to be found in the old world of urban existence. What will come out of this war no-one knows but I hazard the guess that there will be a new comprehension of the age old truths, that self will tend to be expanded in the service of others; that real things grow and are not, in fact, made; that to create any significant addition of value to human history involves the full recognition of the implications of "Thy neighbor as thyself."

THE ARTS IN WAR TIME

(Continued from Page 19)

principles are preserved. The plans provide for the employment of artists, writers and musicians from every section of the country—willingness to participate within the limits of the budget being a major test while minimum standards for qualifications are to be set up. The article ends: "We are defending our culture and our way of life. We earnestly urge the establishment of the program here outlined as a strong pillar in that defense."

A CHRISTMAS IMPRESSION

When frozen o'er the pastures be
Let us dance around the Holly-tree—

But failing frozen pastures, the Beekman
Tower Ball room proved to be a mighty fine
dance-ground substitute, as hosts

Of gay ladies richly dight
For the frolic of the night
Hurried with their courtly men
To tip the toe from now to then.

Now was the joyous affirmation *We won't go
Home till Morning* and then was reached at

midnight with the warm closing of *Fireman's
Dance*—appropriately titled ending in times
when thoughts of Christmas mingled with no-
tions of air raids, fire wardens and the like; the
point was well made that owing to circumstances
of state, the season's celebration of birth needed
more than ever before the gift of joy.

Such a gift was our glad receiving, as, with
a *Hinky Dinky Parlez Vous*, men from *New-
castle* made a *Bow (to) Belinda* who, with a
giddy shout of *Doodah*, swirled into a *Fan-
dango* much to the *Soldier's Joy*. Men being

Boar's Head Carol
and Dance



"Doodah"

Lady in the Center
and

Seven Hands Round



Swing
Your Partners
All

men, they tried to *Buffalo Girls*, who just for spite staggered a mean *Lady Walpole's Reel*, at which their partners assisted them through a *Nonesuch* of fancy foot work and, in a gesture of slight propitiation, offered them *Cumberland Square*. And ever pervading the sweet harmony of festive motion is remembrance of Piano and Violin, Horn Dance and Boar's Head, Langstaff Caroling and Six Morris Men, and "Gay" and all who bring such joys as cause us to cherish more the Yuletide spirit

And wish to all in our delight
A Merry Christmas with all our might.

It should perhaps be mentioned that all this happened at the New York Christmas Party of the Country Dance Society.

WALTER CLARKE, JR.

group was naturally the most numerous and represented Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee. Folk songs were taught by Marie Marvel. In addition to much dancing a number of very interesting discussions were held. A very well attended Open Evening was given by the school for Berea residents and College Faculty and students. Frank Smith, who organized the school is much to be congratulated.

Social events included seeing the New Year in at Mr. Smith's house; a final "Party after a Party" which uncovered many talents in the field of puppetry, story-telling, creative (!) dance—and cooking; and many gatherings at "Little Mamma's Kitchen" with much impromptu singing.—I enjoyed myself very much.

M. G.

BEREA CHRISTMAS SCHOOL

Owing to demands of space it can only be reported that the Berea school was more successful than ever. About sixty attended, including a number from outside the mountains, from Michigan, Ohio and Colorado. Miss Grace Ryan came for a few days and taught us some of the delightful Michigan squares. The two Colorado representatives made a brave show in cowboy breeches and silk shirts at the final party and taught an exciting cowboy square. Richard Chase led Big Set figures. The Southern

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OUR grateful thanks go to the Columbia Broadcasting System for allowing us to use the photographs taken in the television studio. Also to Mr. David Morland for the lively photographs of the Christmas Party; each time he took a picture he had to miss a dance, so that they represent quite a sacrifice on his part.

DATE TO NOTE. The next New York Open Country Dance Party will be on Feb. 14.

DEFENSE RECREATION

EVERYONE will read with pleasure Mr. Kennedy's article in this issue on "Country Life and Country Dancing" both because it is a statement of a truth that we are all gradually coming to realize, and because of the proof it offers that the people of a country at war do not have to become brutalized, or lose the power of appreciating simple fundamental things; but that, on the contrary, a great deal of artificiality drops away, they gain in perception of what it really is that makes life worth preserving and come to know "the deep enjoyment of harmonic or organic action." It is not in fact the actual *going* to war that matters, but *why* we go and *how* we go.

But even with the best of motives "how we go" does not entirely take care of itself. It is no doubt true that much artificiality in England was removed drastically by wartime living conditions, but careful planning was needed to see that her essential culture was both preserved and made use of as a means of keeping up the morale of the people. Entertainment has been encouraged as much as possible, and from all that one hears has been very different from the often hysterical snatching at pleasure of the last war; participation in music, song and dance has been encouraged by means of financial grants to qualified organizations. That so many people have been able to use the English dances as a means of recreation for all kinds of people all over the country is undoubtedly due to the many years of careful organization work of the English Folk Dance Society, which has spread knowledge of the dancing among thousands of people, and qualified them to pass it on to others. When Cecil Sharp founded the Society in 1911 country dancing as a popular recreation had almost died out in England. It has all come back since then.

Now we have our problem to face here. We have several courses open to us. We can take the view that war-time is no time for dancing; both our time and our money must be put to sterner use; and that is undoubtedly what some people will do. But I believe that they would do better work if they had a little recreation now and then, and helped others to have it too.

Then there is the view that we shall do best

if we try to ignore the war as far as our dancing is concerned; that we can provide an oasis of peace in the midst of turmoil and that this is our best chance of survival. But even if we wanted to do this I do not believe that it would be the way to survive in any real sense. When the turmoil had died away I think that we should find that we had crystallized into something that had no place in a present-day world.

I believe firmly that our best course from all points of view is to make definite plans for our dancing to take its place in defense recreation for anyone—men of the services, defense workers and their children, and the ordinary civilian, who will have to go on with his job under more trying conditions than usual.

In America it has not been the case of reviving an almost dead art. Country dancing has always been very much alive. The job has been to bring it out and make it available to all people. That job is the same now, and trained leaders are needed to do it. The very fact that the dancing has continued as a living changing art creates its own problem. The director of social activities in a service club in Louisville, Kentucky felt that square dancing was just what was needed, and introduced it. There was no lack of interest, many of the men already had knowledge of the dancing, but they came from all parts of the country and everyone wished to dance his own local version, and there was no one with enough knowledge and experience to bring them all together. Meeting together to dance on a Saturday night with a caller whose calls you know, and who knows you, is a very different matter from handling a large group whose knowledge of the dances, if they have any at all, will differ according to the section from which they come. Trained leadership is needed.

It is our problem to find out how we can provide this leadership on a scale large enough to be effective. It is a simple matter for a teacher of experience to surmount the difficulty of "different versions" but a great deal of careful planning needs to be done in order to provide enough of these people. Our Society is equipped with the knowledge and experience needed—we have to find a way of making it

available and of covering the minimum costs.

We are anxious to hear from all groups about the country who are linking the dancing with defense recreation in any form. Our efforts in New York so far have been limited to inviting service men to our regular country dance parties. The photographs of the Christmas Party in this issue will show that the army, the navy and the air force are all represented. The January open party also had a good showing from both the American forces and the British merchant marine service. On January 17th we are inviting sixty service men to a square dance arranged especially for them—partners, hostesses and refreshments will be provided.

MAY GADD

FOR SQUARE DANCE CALLERS

LETTERS on the subject of Square Dance Calling seem to be slow in coming in, so we will make use of our space to bring to your notice a new book of dance calls, which may be of help in increasing your repertory of calls and your knowledge of the general style and technique of these dances.

The book is named *ALL-AMERICAN SQUARE DANCES* and is written by "ALLENMANDE" AL MULLER. The author learned his dances in the Adirondack Mountains and presents them with the following timely statement: "Some folks in different parts of the country are likely to say: 'Those calls can't be right—they're not the same as I learned 'em.' All I can say about that is: They *are* the calls as I learned 'em. . . . So may I ask you who have danced these calls differently to accept mine as a variation of your own, and use them as such, because, after all, variety is the spice of life."

The book contains five sets of three changes each, ten additional second changes, five contra dances in longways formation and three in circular formation; and ends with a section on round or couple dances—waltz, schottische and polka—with appropriate tunes (one being our old friend "Country Gardens" used as a schottische.)

The author explains that in his part of the country it is customary for each "set" to consist of a group of three changes. The First

Change is the introduction and consists of a fairly standard set of figures with little variation for each new dance; the Second Change contains the greatest variety of figures; the Third Change is a breakdown or jig figure, for which the music is usually very fast and the different sets are often combined to form a large circle. The author points out that all the changes given are interchangeable in their own class, and that in certain cases, especially with beginners, it would be well to let one change form a complete dance.

A useful feature of the book is that an appropriate tune, with piano arrangement, is printed for each change. All the calls are timed. A few are of the type in which the caller chants his directions in the general rhythm of the tune, but the majority are the singing calls, and in these help in timing is given by printing the call under the appropriate bars of music.

The book is illustrated by amusing line drawings which are helpful in making positions clear, and there is a good glossary of terms with clear explanations. The suggestion that in the Buzz or Pivot Swing, the left foot is used as if you are pushing a scooter is a good tip for beginners; also the suggestion of an ankle movement in the right foot, in the Call: "Up on the toe and down on the heel, the harder you swing the better you feel."

We fully agree with the author's statements concerning one's general conduct at a Square Dance—and one's costume. We quote: "Country folk never go to a Square Dance looking as if they just came from a masquerade. They wear their best and cleanest clothes, and you can do the same. Remember that Square Dancing is, and always was, UP-TO-DATE. . . . Posture is very important, and the best thing to do is to forget all about it. It is unnatural and tiring to stand with folded arms. Stand easily and on your toes. Swing your arms and sway your body with the rhythm. But don't exaggerate—be natural. . . . Don't hop up and down—stand quietly. Don't holler or laugh loudly—the caller has to be heard. Don't turn around in circles—you are not dancing alone. Don't worry—the other fellow may be wrong. Don't do anything—if you don't know what to do; stand still and listen."

Both callers and dancers will find much useful information in this book. It sells for fifty cents and is published by the Paul-Pioneer Music Corporation, New York.

GYM CLASSES IN SQUARE DANCING

WE have something new and unique here at Vanderbilt in the way of gymnasium classes. Every Friday afternoon from 4 until 5:30 P. M. the lads and lassies get together for an old fashioned Southern Big Set Square Dance. In return for this hour and a half of exercise and fun the students are given half a week's credit in physical education, the latter being a requirement for all freshmen and sophomores.

Last spring your correspondent went to Dr. Tom Zerfoss, genial head of the Department of Health and Physical Education, with the idea that we inaugurate such a course. Dr. Tom was a bit skeptical at first, thinking that perhaps square dancing would not be sufficient exercise to warrant gymnasium credit. A demonstration convinced him that he was wrong. In September we announced that a limited number of boys and girls could enroll for the square dance class. Hoping that at least a dozen couples would sign up, we were amazed when 64 students wanted to take the course! They were all welcomed, of course, and the first regularly scheduled course in folk dancing at Vanderbilt University was inaugurated.

As a source of music we tried first the piano; this was soon given up in favor of a portable phono-radio and square dance records (without the calls, if you please). During the eleven week fall term the students were taught some fifty square dance figures. The eight most graceful couples were chosen from the class and given special attention. They became the Vanderbilt Varsity Square Dance Team. When the news was noised abroad that we had such a team we began to receive invitations to put on shows, or demonstrations. Our first show was for the Lion's Club. We received such an ovation here that we were asked to put on shows for the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs in short order. Then followed a show each for the A.A.U.W., the Nashville Engineering Club and the Nashville Insurance Woman's Club. In between times there were demonstrations for P.T.A. groups and church organizations.

The "chillun" really got a thrill out of putting on the shows. There was always transporta-

tion, several free dinners and often there were cash donations for the good of the team. These donations were used to purchase new square dance albums, books, costumes, etc. Occasionally we were asked to put on a big square dance after the show. To expedite the learning of the figures, team members mixed in the crowd in such a way that for each four novice couples there was a team couple. Only the simpler figures were called so that the novices could catch on quickly. In this manner we gained many new converts to the art of square dancing. On these occasions we had a string orchestra from WSM's Grand Ole Op'ry to play for us.

Prospects for another term are very bright. Many more students want to take the course and we have already received invitations to put on several demonstrations during the winter. We believe square dancing classes are in Vanderbilt University to stay.

Admittedly universities train young men and women for positions of leadership in business, in education and in the professions. It is logical that they should train leaders also for social and recreational activities. While we have probably not set a precedent by inaugurating classes in square dancing as a part of the university curriculum, we have certainly seen how social leaders can be trained on the square dance floor.

CLAUDE S. CHADWICK

EDITOR'S NOTE: Professor Chadwick grew up in a square dance community in Texas. During travels in the South he added about fifty Big Set figures to his repertoire. The interesting and successful experiment at Vanderbilt University that he describes, is the result. He is Assistant Professor of Biology at the University—and square dance instructor. From the College the dancing has spread to Nashville itself and many square dances are being held. It will be interesting to hear from other colleges whether or no the method of using the dancing at Vanderbilt is unique, or if it has been introduced elsewhere as a credit Physical education subject for all students.

NEWS FROM REGIONS AND CENTERS

BEREA Berea College students have never shown greater interest in folk dancing than at present. The use of folk dancing is general at parties and on special occasions on the campus. In fact, it is now decidedly "the thing." I wish in the present brief report, however, to refer to a group known as the "Berea College Country Dancers."

During the past four years I have built up the Country Dancers. They are the representatives of Berea College at the Mountain Folk Festival. They sponsor country dance parties on the campus. Also Berea College accepts for them invitations to further the growth of folk dancing in various organizations in Kentucky and occasionally in other states. The program on these occasions always concludes with audience participation.

In the past year the Country Dancers have represented the interest of folk dancing at Cumberland and Union Colleges in Kentucky; at annual conventions of the Kentucky Christian Endeavor Union; and the Kentucky Sunday School Association; and in Montgomery County, Tennessee.

The most recent engagement took place on November 14, 1941 in Montgomery County, at the home base of Miss Grace Post. The occasion was a thrilling one. We gave two programs before capacity audiences. Our repertoire was English, American and Danish country dances; and the morris dances, Rodney and Lads a Bunchum. The leaders assured us in generous terms that our contribution would aid the further development of their county-wide folk dance movement.

May I conclude by quoting an excerpt from an editorial in The Lexington Herald. It is true that the reference was to the last Mountain Folk Festival, but we can claim its value for the program of the Country Dancers and for all the activities of the Centers throughout America which together make up The Country Dance Society:

"No one who has ever witnessed one of these folk festivals will ever forget it, or can fail to be impressed with the fact that such things are basic and fundamental in the preservation of the much-vaunted 'American Way of Life.'"

FRANK H. SMITH

BOSTON The Boston Center held its second country dance party of the season on Friday evening, November 14, 1941, at the Winsor School Gymnasium. There were 145 enthusiastic dancers participating in the program of English and American dances. Shepherd's Holiday, Childgrove and an American square dance were demonstrated. It was a great pleasure to have our dancing friends from Connecticut come to join us.

There is great interest in the dancing in this locality and the Center has received requests for teachers to run special evenings in American square dancing in Boston and vicinity.

Regular classes are held weekly for morris, and English and American country dancing. Drop-In-Evenings for American dances are enjoyed twice a month. Fresh interest has stimulated more enthusiasm which has increased the number of dancers.

The Christmas Party was held at the Winsor School on Friday evening, December 19. The gymnasium decorated with beautiful greens made a fine setting for the holiday dancing. New dancers increased our numbers to 186 people and added much enthusiasm to the evening. The special demonstration was a Processional followed by a double set of "The Lancers." The party finished with the customary concentric circles of "Sellers Round" and the singing of "Adeste Fideles."

LOUISE CHAPIN

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY The membership of our Center has now tripled the membership of last year, and we have hopes that by the early part of the new year it will be quadrupled. Our two parties of the season have been most successful, with 75 attending each time, and guests from Louisville, Pineville and Wilmore, Kentucky.

Since the knowledge of the people attending the Center concerning dancing was so diversified, they were divided into two groups according to ability, and each group meets one night a week. These two are in addition to our more advanced group which also meets once a week. The three groups enjoy the parties together.

Our advanced group gave a 45 minute demonstration of country, morris and sword, be-

fore the P.T.A. of the University School and at the end of the demonstration the parents joined in—even to the President of the University of Kentucky, who said he had enjoyed his first attempt at folk dancing.

Six members of the Center attended the school at Berea from December 28th to January 4th. These included the three officers of the Center and three students from the University.

LOVAINE LEWIS

MONTCLAIR, N. J. This group continues to enjoy the use of the First Baptist Church House for regular classes and parties on Thursday evenings except when these coincide with public holidays. The attendance to date has averaged 35 per night, and we seem fortunate in having a very good male representation. The group continues ungraded, as there is only one floor available for one night each week. However, Mr. Hider is trying the experiment of arranging for the opening of the premises a half-hour earlier than the regular class time, so that those who are keen enough may avail themselves of some additional practice. So far this arrangement appears to justify itself, as generally a minimum of eight dancers take advantage of it. The dances taught so far this session are: Chelsea Reach, Grimstock, Dull Sir John, Mr. Isaac's Maggot, The Barley Mow, Lady Walpole's Reel, and Hulls' Victory, besides the better known American squares and some Kentucky "set-running." Increasing emphasis is being placed on technic and style, and, as far as observations go, we are able to "take it and like it."

ROBERT H. BUCKIE

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL, CALIFORNIA Letters from Mrs. Kingman tell of a Twelfth Night party which was to include all the branches of the Center, the people of the Valley and the folk dancers from Santa Paula; and a production of "Sleeping Beauty" given by the children of the Ojai Valley School—an interesting picture was received showing how country dances may be used in a school festival—this was taken during one of the scenes of the play. The Ojai group continues to meet at the Art Center, and the Santa Paula dancers are increasing in numbers and enthusiasm.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

We are finding a greater degree of campus interest in our group this year than heretofore. This is partly due to the new organizational policy adopted. Last year we restricted our size by the number of men who attended, so that we should have an evenly divided group. This year, because of enthusiasm expressed by many girls excluded by the old system we are dividing our time in two. For the first hour everyone is welcome who cares to join us, and the group is always large, though mostly girls. During the rest of the evening the evenly mixed Demonstration Group continues by itself, and even this restricted group is slightly larger than it was last year.

Our schedule this year included the following events, as well as others which will be noted later on: Participation in the Adult-Collegiate Dance Festival of the Cultural Olympics in Philadelphia in December, attending the Christmas and Spring Festivals of The Country Dance Society in New York; and giving our own party for people in this area sometime in February.

A faculty square dance group has been started by Miss Alice Gates and seems to be going very well. This group also includes various people from the village who are eager to dance.

An interesting feature of the fall program was the visit of John Jacob Niles, who spent nearly a week at the college lecturing on balladry, and singing ballads and carols at various afternoon sessions with students and faculty. He joined our Tuesday evening folk dance session and gave us some valuable "pointers" on the running set.

Hewson Swift is our new student leader and is doing an excellent piece of work. We miss Mary Pulverman and the others who are no longer dancing with us.

ALICE GATES AND JEANNE CURTIS

VIRGINIA REGION There is a promising group started at Damascus, our new headquarters, which we try to work with regularly each week. Their objective is to attend the Spring Festival at Berea. Classes have been held during the fall in connection with the University Extension at Roanoke. One class in Roanoke and one at Hollins College, held once each week over a ten week period. A Wythe County class is being organized, and some two and a half weeks have been spent in working with the schools and the older

youth of Prince William County. A similar program is planned for extending the work in Shennandoah County. Other activities include the conducting of a square dance at Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg—under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A.—and the introducing of our dances to the gym classes at Jefferson High School in Roanoke. These now carry on once a week under the direction of their own gym teachers, who have attended our Roanoke class.

KAY CHASE

BOOK REVIEW

AMERICAN GUIDE SERIES. Compiled by workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration. Guides to the states, with photographs, drawings and maps. Issued by various publishers at prices from \$2.50—\$3.00.

Although all 48 of the Federal Guides to the states are out, and more than 48 reviewers have reviewed them, and there has been an American Guide Week into the bargain, these surprising books still aren't getting the kind of reading they deserve. No one comes in Monday morning to report that he spent the week end out in Oklahoma reading the state guidebook. But it is worth trying. Take the Connecticut book some winter night to an inn in the northwest corner of Connecticut, and see whether you don't find the Devil's hoofprints in the snow by the kitchen step.

The guides are well written, excellently illustrated, and besides providing the expected guidance and tours, each runs informally through the history, ethnography, folkways, and economic and cultural development of its state. The best reading of all is often the folkways. Many of the volumes are packed with it, highlighted or incidental: the dances, songs, and customs of a score of countries which have crossed the ocean and persisted here, old folkways peculiar to this continent, and new ones which are still in the making.

A country dancer could wish to be told that there's square dancing in Higganum on such and such Saturday nights, or that "dancing" was not indexed only under "folkways." But that would be asking too much. What they do tell you is that New Hampshire men like to invent their own dances—the inventors of the "merry dance" are still living in Stoddard; that

in South Carolina you bring your box supper, square dance, waltz, and play broom tag—or for variety join a "graveyard-cleaning" party and straighten the tombstones; and that the West can provide anything from a cowboy ranch party to a dance the Aztecs were performing when Cortes landed in Mexico. Not to mention the fact that everyone from the Finns to the Ukrainians are stepping their own steps in towns throughout the country.

There's a lot about ballads and "sings" and Fiddlers' Conventions, too. The Sacred Harp Singers of Texas learn from the same old-fashioned music with shape notes" that the folks do at Benton's Big Singing in Kentucky. And they're still making ballads all over the land. Molly Jackson of Kentucky wrote one of her first at the age of twelve when the sheriff threw her in jail for dressing up in men's clothing and blacking her face:

Hello, Mr. Cundif, if you'll open the door
I won't put my breeches on no more
Mr. Cundif turn me loose.

The Moravians have trombone choirs which like to play in the cemetery at sunrise on Easter morning. And Connecticut even has a legend of a Pied Piper whose violin charmed rattlesnakes, varmints and goats into following him into Norwich.

Inevitably, the researchers who worked up the material for these guides found the legends and lore they met easier to take back to the editorial office than the songs and dances. They seem to have had entrée to several of those select tall-story-telling sessions where you have to be a pretty good believer to be admitted. *Arkansas* has no superior here. There isn't any razorback hog, but this tells you how he came to be invented; and a state official has since offered a reward for finding one. The joint snake is also an Arkansan. When a farmer broke him to bits and pocketed one of the pieces, the snake angrily "coupled in a corn cob." New York State seems to have a sizable population of ghosts—of headless horsemen and British spies, of Dutch and Indians and Tom Paine—while Connecticut has its own headless horseman who still rides in the machine age and lo, the headlight beams go right through him.

One can go on this way indefinitely, learning more and more about the U.S.A. But it might be just as well to stop here before a witch puts a hex on your automobile, mistaking it for a cow.

ROBERTA W. YERKES

THE COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, Inc.

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

PRESIDENT

Mrs. James J. Storrow, Sr.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Mrs. Arthur O. Choate
Dr. Leonard Elsmith
Mrs. David Laforest Wing

TREASURER

Benjamin Harrow

SECRETARY

Helen Denton

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

May Gadd

ADVISORY BOARD

Mrs. John C. Campbell
Mrs. Richard K. Conant
May Gadd
John M. Glenn
Douglas N. Kennedy
John Martin
John Powell
Carleton Sprague Smith
Melville Smith
Evelyn K. Wells

REGIONS AND CENTERS

*C.D.S. Representative

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

Mrs. George T. Hendrix (Chairman)
* Mrs. Fred Farrar (Director)

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Mrs. James J. Storrow (President)
* Louise Chapin (Director)
* Mrs. R. K. Conant (Artistic Advisor)

CAZENOVIA, NEW YORK

* Margaret Judson (Director)
Mrs. Ivor Curtis (Secretary)

CLEVELAND, OHIO

* Olive Whitworth (Honorary Director)
Virginia Whitworth (Chairman C# Club)

ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

* Helene Van Zandt

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Doris Williams (President)
* Katherine Colton (Director)

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Mrs. Raymond McLain (Chairman)
* M. G. Karsner (Director)

MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY

Jeanette Taylor (Chairman)
* Robert Hider (Director)

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

* Bruce Simonds (Director)

PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

* Clarissa Wells (Chairman)

PLAINFIELD, VERMONT

Washington County Folk Dance Association
* Mrs. Jerome Johnson
* Emerson Lang

VIRGINIA (South-West Region)

* Richard Chase (Director)
Katherine Chase (Secretary)

WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

Helen Jones (Chairman)
* Evelyn K. Wells (Director)

CENTERS WITHIN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

BELLEVUE SCHOOL OF NURSING NEW YORK, N. Y.

* Geraldine Smith

BEREA COLLEGE, KY.

* Frank Smith

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE, PA.

* Ethel Grant

CONFERENCE OF SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN WORKERS, BEREA, KY.

* Frank Smith

FRIENDS SCHOOL (Parents' Association) GERMANTOWN, PA.

Mrs. Pierce Delaphine (Chairman)
* John Hodgkin

HENDRIX COLLEGE, CONWAY, ARK.

* Mary Louise McElwee

JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL BRASSTOWN, N. C.

* Marguerite Butler Bidstrup

KIMBERLY SCHOOL, MONTCLAIR, N. J.

* Mrs. P. G. Griffen

LOUISVILLE FOLK INSTITUTE, KY.

* Thomas Noonan
* Mary Louise Vetter

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL OJAI, CALIFORNIA

* Mrs. Cordelia Kingman

PINE MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENT SCHOOL PINE MOUNTAIN, KY.

* Glyn Morris

POTOMAC SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

* Carol Preston

SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA

* Mrs. Cordelia Kingman

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, PA.

* Alice Gates
* Hewson Swift