History and Heritage of Modern American Square Dancing

http://www.eaasdc.de/History/sheindex.htm

Background

Text by Bob Osgood,
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Everyone yearns to know more about his ancestors. Even the simplest American feels a thrill when a researcher digs up his „family tree“ and unearths his „coat of arms“, and finds far back along the line, perhaps, a king! The farther back he goes the more exciting it becomes. Here is a small, not-to-far-back study of the family tree of our **American Square Dance**.

Dancing is the oldest of the arts. Only one other art, the art of architecture, goes back nearly so far into man's past. And dancing is probably older than his attempt to build a shelter for his family, for we know that primitive tribes have become expert dancers long before they have bothered to build what we would call houses. Dancing was a **fine** art before it was a **folk** art, and a religious and ritualistic performance long before it became a recreational art. It is only quite recently in the history of mankind that all of the the people, if they chose, could join in the dance. And, as for women, there was a vast majority of dances in which they might not join at all, and there were some that they might not even see.

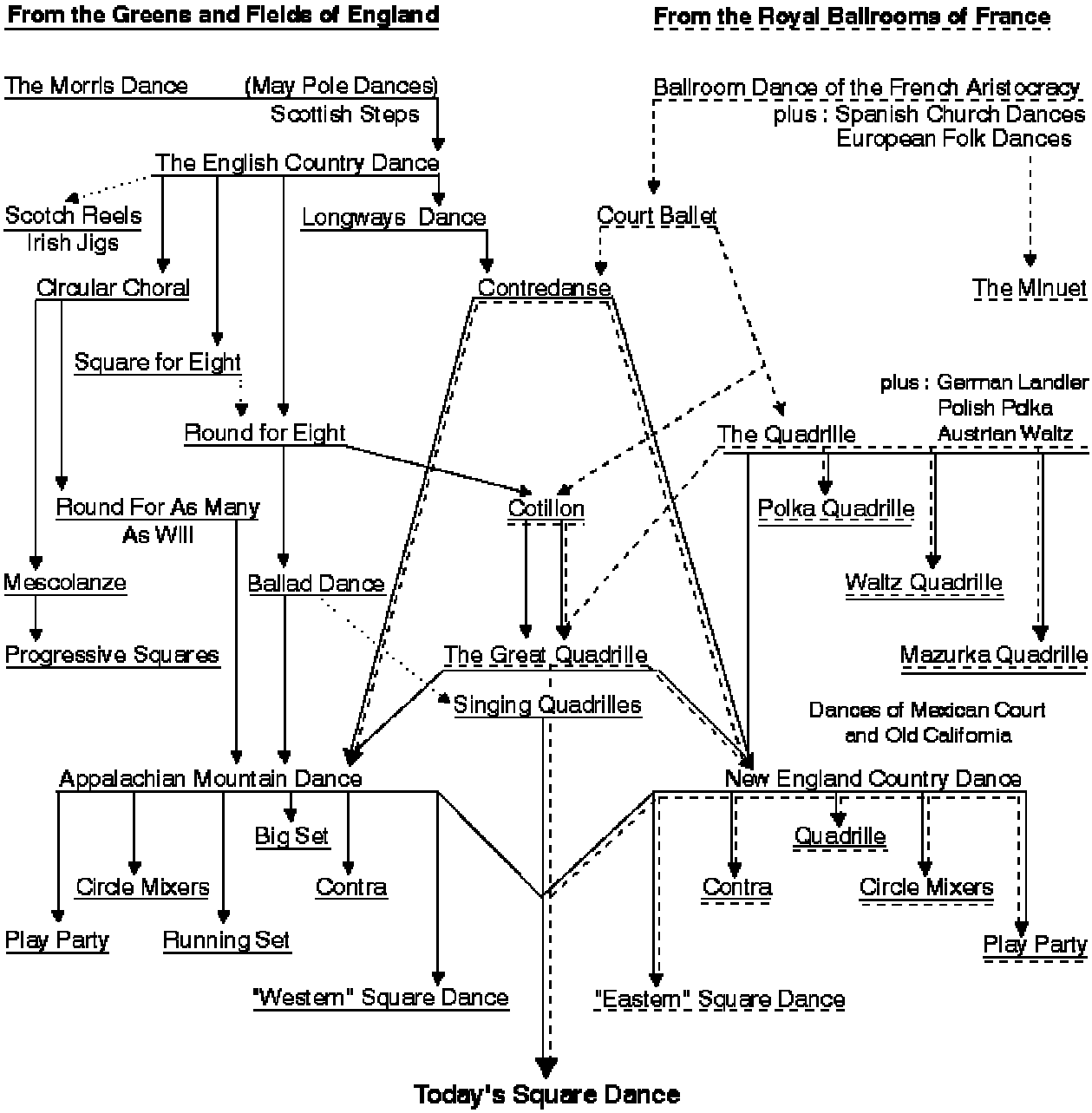
Historically, dance seems to have reached its low point during the days of the classical Greece. There it was looked upon as an ignoble activity. Aristotle was supposed to have said: „*No citizen shall be active in these arts* (music and dancing), *but shall leave it to the slaves, the released slaves and the strangers*“. The great Roman Cicero said : „*No one shall dance, except he might be drunken or mentally disorientated*“. Italy saw the return of dancing during the 15th century, but France may be said to be the Mother of the modern art. Many of our dance terms show this French connection, in square dancing too. Calls like dos-a-dos, which can be described as back-to-back, and allemand can't hide their French origin.

In a little study like this one, we cannot take time nor space to go back very far into the past. Let us decide that we shall travel back about 500 years. And let us prune out, before we start, the many tiny twigs that clutter the remote branches of the family tree. Let us reduce our story to approximations!

First something about the main author. There is no one we know is better qualified to take you on a guided tour through the fascinating past of square dancing than the author **Dorothy Stott Shaw**. Mrs. Shaw and her husband, **Dr. Lloyd „Pappy“ Shaw**, became the centre of the rebirth of the great square dance movement in the 1930's. For many years the leaders in square dancing have sought out the Shaws at their home in Colorado Springs for guidance, philosophy, history and encouragement. From their great storehouse of information, Mrs. Shaw has gathered the special gems that fill these pages. It is her hope, and ours too, that they will serve to enrich your enjoyment of this great activity.

Evolution of Square Dance

Within these chapters we will discuss in the history of square dancing only the most important French and English ancestors, and the development from the early America to the present. As said above, a detailed description of the family tree would break up the available space by far. The following diagram shows a more widely view of the square dance family tree. For a better overview the „tiny twigs“ are pruned.



The English Heritage

Text by Kenny Reese

Unquestionable, the English ancestor of our modern square dance was the great **Morris Dance**. It was an Exhibition dance done by trained teams of Morris dancers - six men (women did not participate) in two rows of three. Later on, in the 17th century, **Country Dances** became all the rage in England. Many were longways or line dances, and some believe that the contra got its name either from a mispronunciation of „country“ or from the fact that the dances were done in two opposing lines. At the same time, people did „rounds for as many as will“, some of which resembled the choral dances often danced in the naves of English churches.

Within the following two chapters we will have a closer lock on the **Morris Dance** and the **Country Dance**.

The Morris Dance

Text by Dorothy Shaw

American Folks Dancing has two great ancestors, one English and one French. The subtle contribution of the French ancestors we shall discuss a little later. The English ancestor was a strong, mysterious stranger, but deeply our own, gathering into itself elements from all the ritual lore of the ages, and giving out from itself a vast treasure of figures, feelings, music and attitudes. This English ancestor was the great **Morris Dance**. It must already have been very old in 1450 when we start our story. No one seems to be perfectly sure whether it preceded the **Country Dance** that seems to have grown out of it, or whether they grew up more or less side by side. For the purpose of simplicity, let us assume that the Morris Dance was the immediate parent of the Country Dance. It was a professional dance in a sense, as are our „Exhibition dances“ that are done by amateurs at festival and conventions. It was not done by just anyone who felt like dancing, but by trained teams who called themselves „Morris Men“ and it was done with great gravity, for it went back to a time when the coming of spring was a thing so yearned for that it must be „danced“ into being by the beating feet of the children of men.

It went back to a time when winter was a spectre of dread after a lean harvest, and sacrifice (sometimes wheaten, sometimes animal, sometimes even human) was necessary in order to propitiate the gods of growing green. A century or two before, these Morris Men had been **sword dancers**, pantomiming a ritual that ended in human sacrifice. And, centuries before that, the sacrifice had actually taken place with the beheading of one of the dancers. *London Bridge* is a remnant of such a dance, so is *We've Come to See Miss Jenny-a-Jones*. Do not let this disturb you. Almost everything we do is a symbolic gesture for something out of our pagan and primitive past. It is good to know where the deep roots are. By 1450 the dance was

just a vigorous and beautiful symbol, and the dancers used wooden slaves, or even clean handkerchiefs, instead of the awesome properties.

A Man's Dance

Morris Dances were danced by six men (remember, the women didn't count!) in two rows of three. Each wore a leather pad of bells fastened around each calf, and, because the purpose if the bells was to ring, the steps had to be vigorous enough to ring them. Try to imagine yourself dancing in a shortened set (lacking one couple) and visualize all the square dance figures that you could do. You could start with „forward six and fall back six". You could also do „forward and back vertically" (or „up and down"). You could do a „Dixie chain" and some of ist variants. You could open out into a circle and „weave the ring" or „form a star". You could execute „pass through". All of these things they did. But all the time you would need to be ringing those bells, and you would do a sort of polka step in which instead of hopping on the last beat, you „kicked" that foot vigorously straight forward until the bells rang like mad. All the time the balls of your feet would be beating the turf.

© Commonwealth Morris Men, Boston, MASS / Photo by Debbie Lewis

When you did „weave the ring" with great bounding steps (you would call it a „hey"), it would be so beautiful to behold, as your lath „swords" or your white handkerchiefs worked themselves into the pattern. There would be a jester in some outlandish costume at the head of the set, but not to call. There was no caller, and whatever cues were necessary were given by the leader of the six dancers. There would be an improvised hobby horse, controlled by a man who stood in its middle. There would be a man dressed like a woman, who represented MAID MARIAN, and there might be FRIAR TUCK and other characters from ROBIN HOOD. There is a 500 year old stained glass window in a house in Staffordshire (England) that shows exactly how everybody looked. A bag piper would be playing the tunes: *Glise a Sherbrook*, *Green*

Sleeves and *Rakes of Mallow*. In spite of all this, if you were perceptive, you might say: „It looks a lot like square dance“.


© Deer Creek Morris Men, Palo Alto, CA

It took a strong man to be a Morris Man, a real athlete. There is a precious story of how a great Shakespearean jester, WILL KEMP, once danced all the way from London to Norwich (it is something like 80 miles (132 km) and it took him nine days) and of how, in one town, a lass came out and danced a mile with him to keep him company - bold wench. That was in 1580, as he made a bet, that he could do this in less than 10 days. As you know, he won the bet in what has since been known as „The Nine Daie's wonder“ or, to Morris Dancers, „Kemp's Jig“.

Whence came the dancing, and from how far, onto the greens and courtyards of Henry's England? Is it Moorish (Morris) from North Africa? Could you have found it millenniums ago in ancient Crete? Who can say? How certainly it crossed the sea and found itself on the greens of Kentucky is somewhat easier to follow. Ask any good dance man (ballet, ballroom, folk or square) and he is very likely to say: „It all goes back to the Morris. Everything goes back to the Morris“.

We have done square for eight and rounds for eight, and our inexpert eyes may have difficulty in seeing any difference between them, but difference there is. *Dull Sir John* actually feels like an eastern quadrille, and *Newcastle*, which is a round for eight, feels like a western square dance, with its Texas star, and with everybody active at once.

A Varied Program

We shall have done a number of „rounds for as many as will“, marvellously varied, and some of them going back to the circular choral dances or the straight choral dances that were done in the naves of English churches, and are still danced an Corpus Christy Day in the Choir of the Cathedral in the city of Seville. (If you want to see what they are like, but on a record and dance *Good Girl*.) We may possibly have done a round with „two“ couples facing „two“ couples, weaving through each other in the beginnings of a „mescolanze“, which was later to become „progressive square“. And we shall have done several of those little „four“ dances that were to be developed into more longways and squares. When we come back from our magical journey, we shall remember some of the beautiful tunes - *Blew Cap*, with its Scottish lilt - *Faine I Would if I Could*, *Kemp's Jegge*, *Cathering Peascods*, *Spanish Jeepsies* and that great *Staines Morris*. We shall remember how we sang some of the tunes

and danced our own singing, while the bystanders joined in, just as we to today in *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*.

If we were just ordinary tourists, we have been entertained on the village green, but if we were Very Important Persons - great merchants or ambassadors - we have been dancing at court. The English country dance went light-heartedly to court without a trance of an inferiority complex. Everybody danced it.

It was so much more fun than the branles, gavottes and minuets that were being imported from the French court, that, during the reign of James I., the country dances were actually danced in the court by royal decree.

A Lively Dance

As to the steps, they are free and expansive. The running steps are swift and light, the skips gay, and „slips“ leap high, the walking steps are joyous. The little „pas-de-basque“ of the „set“ step is a joy to see. The knees are kept straight and the movement is in the ankle. The tempo of the music is quite fast. Later, when Scottish steps and figures began sifting in the noble Scottish steps brightened the pattern like a red thread in a tartan. And, still later, Irish jig steps were included. But the English country dance never accepted the wonderful „seven and two threes“ of the great Irish circle dances, nor has it to this day.

As the years go by, thoughtful researchers begin more and more to feel that the country dance in English, „our“ dance is English. Just because there are German square and French circles and Spanish lines we used to think that one must derive from another, but dance patterns are inevitable. Greek soldiers danced squares in the time of Xerxes, and Scottish soldiers dance them today. Of course, there must have been interchange from country to country. This is what makes the top of the tree so airy with twigs. But the English seem to have developed their own dance, and consequently ours, and the heart and soul of it is the great longways, containing as it does almost every conceivable square dance step and pattern.

It was this „longways“ dance that actually did make an alliance in the French court, and forget the strong link between the ballroom and village green, bringing forth the „contra“ that in turn gave us so much of what we have today. Do not forget that this longways dance is older than the memory of man.

The Country Dance

Text by Dorothy Shaw

Our chart shows two great trees, pruned for simplicity's sake. But, like any two trees growing side by side, the topmost twigs interlaced so thoroughly that it was sometimes impossible to tell which branch grew upon which tree.

For instance, looked at from one angle, the Morris seems to be completely English, but, from another angle, it slants back to Spain, and, along with French dances, seems related to the great Spanish „church dances" and the Spanish and French church dances in turn reflect the English church dances. And so they shuttled back and forth from country to country until we have a fine fabric that simply refuses to be unravelled.

The ancestors of our square dance did go to church, you know. As late as the 16th century, churches in England had their teams of „Morece dawnsers", supplied with costumes and bells by the church warden. (It was the Puritans who drove them out.) They were a part of praying, as dancing has always been in the deep hearts of the people.

But, long before Elizabeth's England, they had become „fun". A man and his maid went together to the green, and met their friends and fellow-townsmen, and danced for hours, the same simple figure that you know, to tunes some of which still ring through square dance halls today.

If, by some wizardry, you could be dropped into the village green of a town in 16th century England on a long, long summer evening, you may hear a single pipe playing the most enchanting and singable tune, and, while your ears are still pricked to the music, you will be snatched up along with your partner into a great circle of couples. You will find yourself going „forward and back" with the couple on the right, and then „circling three" with the man alone, and then with the girl alone, and, presently, as you are beginning to catch on, you will find yourself doing a series of „Dixie chains" in threes along the circle. The steps will be a little strange, with a lift of the balances and a run instead of a glide, but you will begin to feel very much at home, as you realize how much this is like a western square dance in a big circle. If you inquire about the tune that some of them are singing along with the piper, they will tell you that it is *Rose is White and Rose is Re*d, and, if your background in English history is in good order, you will probably speculate that this is going back to the „War of Roses", when the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster fought over England.

Before you have much chance to think about this, you will be caught up by another couple into a little square dance set of four. Two couples in a square dance? After all, why not? Put two together and you'll have a square. What lovely music! Let's try it! „Sashay four steps to the left" - but we are leaping, not sliding.

What fun! Now we are lost in a series of what they are calling „rises“, and then „swing the opposite girl“, and we can't catch on. But in just a few phrases we are doing the old „Spanish Circle“, if you please, and we settle into it happily, and come up doing a sort of „two men's chain“ – the whole thing so strange yet so familiar. We have been dancing *Parson's Farewell*. Don't stop! Someone is calling for *Drive the Cold Winter Away*. This is a very old tune in 6/8 rhythm. Take an Elizabethan partner and do what she tells you. It's a sort of reel and makes a lovely tangle that unwinds itself beautifully. Perhaps this was one of those old Morrises that went out to get ready for spring, but now it is a „longways for as many as will“ and it is beauty. It is a contra dance.

You can't sit down now. They are calling for *Dull Sir John*, and that is a „square-for-eight“ - just your meat. First couple divide and around just one and the others the same, and then a little syncopated pass-through, and then that Dixie chain again, with no hands. And then the old „family waltz“ figure of New England, with the men going around instead of the girls.

We have been skipping part of the time, walking part of the time, and running part of the time, and everyone but us seemed to know when to do which but, aside from that, what we have been doing is clearly square dancing, and fun.

By the time this long evening is over we shall have done an astonishing variety of dance patterns, many more than we ordinarily do today. We shall have done mostly „longways“-dances - some for six, some for eight and some for „as many as will“. The ones for six are Morris dances - gone frivolous. The ones for eight are square dances - stretched out as lengthwise as on the day they were born. And the ones for „as many as will“ have all the figures and subdivisions of our modern contra. They come in triples and in doubles and in reels, but they are „never crossed over“.

Kemps nine daies wonder

Text by William Kemp

Performed in a daunce from London to Norwich. Containing the pleasure, paines and kinde entertainment of William Kemp between London and that Citty in his late Morrice. Wherein is somewhat set downe worth note; to reproove the slaunders spred of him: many things merry, nothing hurtfull.

Written by himselfe to satisfie his friends.

LONDON

Printed by E.A. for Nicholas Ling, and are to be solde at his shop at the west door of Saint Paules Church. 1600.

To the true Ennobled Lady, and his most bountifull Mistris Anne Fitton, Mayde of Honour to the most sacred Mayde Royall Queene Elizabeth.

Honorable Mistris in the waine of my little wit, I am forst to desire your protection, else every Ballad-singer will proclaime me bankrupt of honesty A sort of mad fellows seeing me merrily dispos'd in a Morrice, have so bepainted mee in print since my gambols began from London to Norwich, that (having but an ill face before) I shall appeare to the world without a face, if your fayre hand wipe not away their foule colours. One hath written Kemps farewell to the tune of Kery, merym Buffe: another his desperate daungers in his late travaile: the third his entertainement to New-Market; which towne I came never neere by the length of halfe the heath. Some sweare in a Trenchmore I have trode a good way to winne the world: others that guesse righter, affirme, I have without good help daunst myselfe out of the world: many say things thatwere never thought, But in a word your poor servant offers the truth of his progresse and profit to your honorable view, receive it I beseech you, such as it is, rude and plaine, for I know your pure judgement, lookes as soone to see beauty in a Blackamoore, or heare smooth speech from a Stammerer, as to finde anyting but blunt mirth in a Morrice dauncer, especially such a one as Will Kemp , that hath spent his life in mad jigges and merry jestes. Three reasons moove me to make a publik this journey, one to reprove lying fooles I never knew: the other to comend loving friends, which by the way I daily found: the third to shew my duety to your honorable selfe, whose favours (among other bountifull friends) makes me (dispight of this sad world) judge my hart Corke, my heeles feathers, so that me thinkes I could flye to Rome (at least hop to Rome, as the olde Proverb is) with a morter on my head. In which light conveit I lowly begge pardon and leave, for my Tabrer strikes his huntsup, I must to Norwich: Imagine Noble Mistris, I am now setting from Lord Mayors, the houre about seaven, the morning gloomy, the company many, my hart merry.

Your worthy Ladyships most unworthy servant,
William Kemp

Kemp's nine dayes wonder

Performed in a Morrice from London to Norwich. Wherein every dayes journey is pleasantly set downe, to satisfie his friends the truth, against all lying Ballad-makers; what he did, how he was welcome, and by whome entertained.

The first dayes journey

being the first Munday in cleane Lent, from the right honorable the Lord Mayors of London.

The first mundaye in Lant, the close morning promising a cleere day, (attended on by Thomas Slye my Taberer, William Bee my servant and George Sprat, appointed for my overseer, that I should take no other ease but my prescribed order) my selfe, thats I, otherwise called Caualiero Kemp, head-Master of Morrice-dauncers, high Head-borough of heighs, and onely tricker of your Trill-lilles, and best bel-shangles betweene Sion and mount Surrey [Sion neere Brainford, and mount Surrey by Norwich.] began frolickly to foote it, from the right honorable the Lord Mayors of London, towards the right worshipfull (and truly bountifull) Master Mayors of Norwich.

My setting forward was somewhat before seaven in the morning, my Taberer stroke up merrily, and as fast as kinde peoples thronging together would give me leave, thorow London I leapt: By the way many good olde people and divers others of yonger yeeres, of meere kindness, gave me bowd sixpences and grotes, blessing me with their harty prayers and God-speedes.

Seeing past White chappell, and having left faire London, with all that North-east Suburb before named, multitudes of Londoners left not me: but eyther to keepe a custome which many holde, that Mile-end is no walke without a recreatio at Stratford Bow with Creame and Cakes, or else for love they beare toward me, or perhappes to make themselves merry, if I should chance (as many thought) to give over my Morrice within a mile of Mile-end. How ever, many a thousand brought me to Bow, where I rested a while from dancing, but had small rest with those that would have urg'd me to drinking. But I warrant you Will Kemp was wise enough: to their ful cups, kinde thanks was my returne, with Gentlemanlike protestations: as, truely sir, I dare not: it stands not with the congruity of my health. Congruitie said I: how came that

strange language in my mouth: I thinke scarcely that it is any Christen worde, and yet it may be a good worde for uoght I knowe, though I never made it, nor doe verye well understand it; yet I am sure I have bought it at the word-mongers, at as deare a rate as I could have had a whole 100. of Bavines at the wood-mongers. Farewell Congruitie for I meane now to be more concise, and stand upon evener bases: but I must neither stand nor sit, the Tabrer strikes alarum. Tickle it good Tom, Ile follow thee. Farewell Bowe, have over the Bridge, where I once heard say, honest Conscience was once drownd. Ist pittye if it were so: but thats no matter belonging to our Morrice, lets now along to Stratford Langton.

Many good fellows being there met, and knowing how well I loved the sporte, had prepared a Beare-bayting: but so unreasonable were the multitudes of people, that I could only heare the Beare roare, and the dogges howle: therefore forward I went with my hey de gaies to Ilford, where I againe rested, and was by the people of the towne and countrey there-about, very very welcomed: being offered carowles in the great spoon, [a great spoone in Infor holding above a quart] one whole draught being able at that time to have drawne my little wit drye: but bieng afrayde of the olde Proverbe (He had need of a long spoone that eates with the devill) I soberly gave my boone Companyons the slip.

From Ilford by Moone-shine, I set forward, dauncing within a quarter of a myle of Romford: wherein the high way, two strong Jades (having belike some great quarell to me unknowne) were beating byting either of other. And such through Gods help was my good hap, that I escaped their hoofes, both being raysed with their fore feete over my head, like two Smithes over an Anvyle.

There being the end of my first dayes Morrice, a kinde Gentleman of London lighting from his horse, would have no nay but I should leap into his saddle. To be plain with ye, I was not proud , but kindly tooke his kilndlyer offer, chiefely thereto urg'd by my weariness: so I rid to my Inne at Romford.

In that towne, to give rest to my well labour'd limbes, I continued two dayes, bing much beholding to the towns-men for there love, but more to the Londoners, that came hourely thither in great numbers to visite me: offring much more kindness then I was willing to accept.

The second dayes journey

beeing Thursday of the first weeke.

Thursday being Market day at Burnt-wood, Tom Slye was earlyer up then the Lark, and sounded merrily at the Morrice: I rowsed my selfe, and returned from Romford ro the place wher I tooke horse the first night, dauncing that quarter of a myle backe againe thorow Romford, and so merrily to Burnt-wood: yet now I remember it well, I had no great cause of mirth, for at Romford townes end I strained my hip, and for a time indured exceeding paine: but being loath to trouble a Surgeon I held on, finding

remedy by labour that had hurt mee, for it came in a turne, and so in my daunce I turned it out of my service againe.

The multitudes were se great at my commin to Burntwood, that I had much a doe (though I made many intreaties and staies) to get passage to my Inne.

In this towne two Cut-purses were taken, that with other two of their companions followed mee from London (as many better disposed persons did:) but these two dy-doppers gave out when they were appregended, that they had laid wagers and betted about my journey, whereupon the Officers bringing them to my Inne, I justly denyed their acquaintance, saving that I remembred one of them to be a noted Cut-purse, such a one as we tye to a poaston on our stage, for all people to wonder at, when at a play they ae taken pilfring.

This fellow his half brother being found with the deed, were sent to Jayle: their other two consorts had the charity of the towne, after a dance of Trenchmore at the whipping crosse, they were sent back to London: where I am afraid there are too many of their occupation. To bee short I thought my selfe well rid of foure such followers, and I wish hartily that the whole world were cleer of such companions.

Having rested well at Burntwood, the Moone shining clearely, and the weather being calme, in the evening I tript it to Ingerstone, stealing away from those numbers of people that followed mee: yet doe I what I could, U had about fiftie in the company, some of London, the other of the Country thereabout, that would needs when they heard my Taber, trudge after me through thicke and thin.

The third dayes journey

being Friday of the first weeke.

On Friday morning I set forward towardes Chelmsford, not having past two hundred, being the least company that I had in the day time: betweene London and that place, Onward I went thus easily followed, till I come to Witford-bridge where a number of country people, and many Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, were gathered together to wee me. Sir Thomas Mildmay standing at his Parkepale, received gently a payre of garters of me: gloves, points, and garters, being my ordinary marchandize, that I put out to venter for performance of my merry voyage.

So mauch a doe I had to passe by the people at Chelmsford, that it was more than an houre ere I could recover my Inne gate, where I was faine to lacke myselfe in my Chamber, and pacifie them with wordes out of a window insteed of deeds: to deale plainely I was so weary, that I could dance no more.

The next morning I footed it three myle of my way toward Braintree: but returned bacek againe to Chelmsford, where I lay that Satterday and the next Sunday. The good cheere and kinde welcome I had at Chelmsford, was much more than I was

willing to entertaine: for my onely desire was to refraine drinke, and be temperate in my dyet.

At Chelmsford a Mayde not passing foureteene yeares of age, dwell with one Sudley my kinde friend, made request to her Master and Dame, that she might daunce the Morrice with me in a great large roome. They being intreated I was soone wonne, to fit her with bels, besides she would have the olde fashion with napkins on her armes, and to our jumps we fell. A whole houre she held out: but then being ready to lye downe I left her off: but thus much in her praise, I would have challenged the strongest man in Chelmsford, and amongst many I thinke few would have done so much.

The fourth dayes journey

beeing Munday of the second Weeke.

On Munday morning very early, I red the 3. Myles that I daunst the satterday before: where alighting, my Taberer strucke up, and lightly I tript forward, but I had the heaviest way that ever mad Morrice-dancer trod: yet

> With hey and ho, through thicke andthin
> the hobby horse quite forgotten
> I follow'd as I did begin
> although the way were rotten

This foule way I could finde no ease in, thicke woods being on eyther side the lane: the lane likewise being full of deep holes. sometimes I skipt up to the waste: but it is and old Proverb. That it is a little comfort to the miserable to have companions, and amidst this merry way, I had some mirth by an unlookt for accident.

It was the custome of honest Country Fellows my unknowne friends, upon hearing of my Pype (which might well be heard in a still morning or evening a myle) to get up and beare mee company a little way. In this foule way two pretty plaine youthes watcht me, and with their kindness somewhat hindred me. One a fine light fellow would be still before me, the other ever at my heeles. At length comming to a broad plash of water and mud, which could not be avoyded, I fetcht a rise, yet fell in over the anckles at the further end. My youth that follow'd me, tooke his jump, and stuck fast in the midst crying out to his companion, come George, call yee this dauncing, Ile goe no further: for indeede hee could goe no further, till his fellow was faine to wade and help him out. I could not chuse but lough to see howe like two frogges they laboured: a hartye farwell I gave them, and they faintly bad God speed me, saying if I daunst that durties way this seaven yeares againe, they would never daunce after me.

Well, with much a doo I got into Braintree by noone, tarried there Munday night and the next day: onely I daunst three miles on Tewsday, to ease my Wednesdaies journey.

If I should deny that I was welcome at Braintree, I should slander an honest crew of kind men, among whome I far'd well, slept well, and was every way well usde.

The fift dayes journey

being Wednesday of the second weeke

Taking advantage of my 3. miles that I had daunst ye day before, this wednesday morning I tript it to Sudbury, whether came to see a very kinde Gentleman Master Foskew, that had before travailed a foote from London to Barwick: who giving me good counsaile to observe temperate dyet for my health, and other advise to bee carefull of my company, besides his liberall entertainment, departed leaving me much indebted to his love.

In this towne of Sudbury, there came a lusty tall fellow, a butcher by his profession, that would in a Morrice keepe mee company to Bury: I being glad of his friendly offer, gave him thatkes, and forward wee did set: but ere ever wee had measur'd halfe a mile of our way, he gave me over in the plain field, protesting, that if he might get a 100. pound, he would not hold out with me, for indeed my pace in dauncing is not ordinary.

As he and I were parting, a lusty Country lasse bing among the people, cal'd him faint hearted lout: saying, if I had begun to daunce, I would have held out one myle though it had cast my life. At which wordes many laughed. Nay saith she, if the Dauncer will lend me a leash of his belles, Ile venter to treade one mile with him my selfe. I lookt upon her, saw mirth in her eies, heard boldnes in her words, and beheld her ready to tucke up her russet petticoate, I fitted her with bels: which he merrily taking, garisht her thicke short legs, and with a smooth brow bad the Tabrer begin. The Drum strucke, forward marcht I with my merry Mayde-marian: who shooke her fat sides: and fotted it merrily to Melford, being a long myle. There parting with her, I gave her (besides her skin full of drinke) and English crowne to buy more drinke, for good wench she was in a pittious heate: my kindnes she requited with dropping some dozen of short courtsies, and bidding God blesse the Dauncer, I bad her adieu: and to give her her due, she had a good care, daunst truely, and wee parted friendly. But ere I part with her a good fellow my friend, havin writ an odde Rime of her, I will make bolde to set it downe.

A Country Lasse browne as a berry,
Blith of blee in heart as merry,
Cheekes well fed and sides well larded,
Every bone with fat tlesh guarded,
Meeting merry Kemp by chaunce,

Was Marrian in his Morrice daunce,
Her stump legs with bels were garnisht,
Her browne browes with sweating varnish;
Her browne hips when she was lag,
To win her ground, went swig a swag,
Which to see all that came after,
Were repleate with mirthfull laughter.
Yet she thumpt it on her way,
With a sportly hey de gay,
At a mile her daunce she ended,
Kindly paide and well commended.

At Melford, divers Gentlemen met mee, who brought me to one master Colts, a very kinde and worshipfull Gentleman, where I had unexpected entertainment till the Satterday. From whose house having hope somewhat to amend my way to Bury, I determined to goe by Clare, but I found it to be both farther and fouler.

The sixt dayes journey

being Satterday of the second weeke.

From Wednesday night til Satterday having bin very troublesome, but much more welcome to master Colts: in the morning I tooke my leave, and was accompanied with many Gentlemen a myle of my way. Whicn myle master Calts his foole would needs daunce with me, and had his desire, where leaving me, two fooles parted faire in a foule way: I keeping on my course to Clare, where I a wahile rested, and then cheerefully set forward to Bury.

Passing from Clare towards Bury, I was invited to the house of a very bountiful widdow, whose husband during his life was a Yeoman of that Countrie, dying rich no doubt, as might well appeare, by the riches and plentie, that abounded in every corner of the house. She is called the Widdow Everet.

At her house were met above thirty Gentlemen. Such, and so plentifull variety of good fare, I have very sildome seene in any Commoners house. Her behavious being very modest and freendly, argued her bringing up not to be rude. She was a woman of good presence: and if a foole may judge, of no small discretioin.

From this widdowes I daunst to Bury, comming in on the Satterday in the afternoone, at what time the right Honorable, the Lord Chiefe Justice antred at an other gate of the towne, the wondring and regardles multitude making his honor cleere way, left the streetes where he past to gape at me: the throng of them being so great, that poore Will Kemp was seaven times stayed ere hee could recover his Inne. By reason of the great snow that then fell, I stayd at Bury from Satterday in the second week of my setting foorth, til Thursday night the next weeke following.

The seaventh dayes journey

being Friday of the third weeke.

Upon Fryday morning I set on towardes Thetford, dauncing that tenne mile in three houres: for I left Bury fomewhat after seaven in the morning, and was at Thetford somewhat after ten that same forenoone. But indeed considering how I had been booted the other journeys before, and that all this way ar the most of it was over a heath, it was no great wonder: for I far'd like one that had escaped the stockes, and tride the use of his legs to out-run the Constable: so light was my heeles, that I counted the ten mile no bettr than a leape.

At my entrance into Thetford, the people came in great numbers to see mee: for there were many there, being Size time. The noble Gentleman Sir Edwin Rich, gave me entertainment in such bountifull sort, during my continuance there Satterday and Sunday, that I want fitte words to expresse the least part of his worthy usage of my unwortines: and to conclude liberally as hee had begun and continued, at my departure on Munday, his worship gave me five pound.

The eyght dayes journey

being Munday of the fourth weeke.

On Munday morning I daunst to Rackland ere I rested, and comming to my Inne where the hoast was a very boone companion, I desir'd to see him: but in no case he would be spoken with, till he had shifted himselfe from his working dayes sute. Being armed at all poyntes, from the cap to the codpeece, his blacke shooes shining, and made straght with copper buckles of the best, his garters in the fashion, and every garment fitting Corremsquandam (to use his owne word): hee enters the hass with his bonnet in his hand, began to crye out.

O Kemp deere Master Kemp: you are even as welcome as as as, and so stammering, he began to study for a fit comparison, and I thanke him at last he fitted me: fo saith he, thou art even as welcome, as the Queenes best grey-hound. After this dogged yet well-meaning salutation, the Carrowles were called in: and my friendly Hoast of Rackland began with. All this: blessing the houre uppon his knees, that any of the Queenes Majesties well-willer or friends would vouchsafe to come within his house: as if never had any such had been within his doores before.

I tooke his good meaning, and gave him great thankes for his kindnesse: and having rested mee well, began to take my course for Hingham, whether my honest hoast of Rackland would needs be my guide: but good true fat-belly he had not followed mee two fieldes, but he lyes all along, and cryes after me to come backe and speake with him, dauncer quoth hee if thou daunce a Gods name God speede thee: I cannot follow thee a foote farther, but adieu good dauncer, God speed thee of thou daunce a Gods name.

I having haste of my way, and he being able to keep no way, there wee parted. Farewell he, he was a kinde good fellow, a true Troyan: and it ever be my lucke to meete him at more leasure, Ile make him full amendes with a Cup full of Canarie, But nowe I am a little better advis'd, wee must not thus let my madde hoast passe: for my friend late mentioned before, that made the odde rime ob my Maide-marian, would needes remember my hoast. Such as it is Ile bluntly set downe.

He was a man not over spare,
In his eybals dwelt no care,
Anon anon and welcome friend,
Were the most wordes he usde to spend,
Save sometime he would sit and tell,
What wonders once in Bullayne fell;
Closing each period of his tale,
With a full cup of Nut-browne Ale.
Turwin and Turneys siedge were hot,
Yet all my Hoast remembers not.
Ketsfield and Muselborough fray,
Were batlles fought but yesterday.
O twas a goodly matter then,
To see your sword and buckler men;
They would meete them every where:
And now a man is but a pricke,
A boy arm'd with a poating sticke,
Will dare to challenge Cutting Dicke.
O t'is a world the world to see,
But twill not mend for thee nor mee.
By this some guest cryes ho the house,
A fresh friend hath a fresh carouse,
Still he will drinke, and still be dry,
And quafee with every company.
Saint Martin send him merry mates
To anter at his hostree gates:
For a blither lad than he
Cannot an Inkeeper be.

Well once againe farewell mine Hoast at Rockland: after al these farewels I am sure to Hingham I found a foule way, as before I had done from Thetford to Rockland.

Yet besides the deep way I was much hindred by the desire people had to see me. For even as our Shop-keepers will hayle, and pull a man with Lack ye :'what do you lack Gentlemen:' My ware is best cryes one: mine best in England sayes an other: heere shall you have choyse saith the third: so was the dyvers ?oyees of the young men and Maydens, which I should meete at everie myles ende, thronging by twentie, and sometime fortie, yea hundreths in a companie: One crying the fayrest way was thorow their Village: another, this is the nearest and fayrest way, when you have past

but a myle and a halfe: an other sort crie, turne on the left hand, some on the right hand: that I was so amazed, I knewe not sometime which way I might best take: but hap hazard, the people still accompanying me, wherewith I was much comforted, though the wayes were badde: but as I said before at last I overtooke it.

The ninth dayes journey

being Wednesday of the seconde weeke.

The next morning I left Hingham, nor staying till I came to Barford-bridge, five young men running all the way with me, for othrewise my pace was not for footemen.

From Barford bridge I daunst to Norwich: but coming within sight of the Citty, perceiving so great a multitude and throng of people still crowding more and more about me, mistrusting it would be a let to my determined expedition, and pleasurable humour: which I long before conceived to delight this Citty with (so far, as my best skill, and industry of my long travelled sinewes could affoord them) I was advised, and so tooke ease by that advise, to stay my Morrice a little above Saint Giles his gate, where I tooke my gelding, and so rid into the Citty, procrastinating my merry Morrice daunce through the Citty till better opportunitie.

Being come into the Citty: Master Roger Wiler the Maior, and sundry other of his worshipfull Brethren sent for me: who perceiveing howe I intended to daunce into the Cittye that nyght: and being well satisfied with the reasons, they allotted me time enough not to daunce in till Satterday after: to the end that divers knights and Gentlemen, together with their wines and Children (who had beene many dayes before deceyved with expectation of my comming) might nowe have sufficient warning, accordinly by Satterday following.

In the meane space, and during my still continuance in the Cittye afterwards, they not onely very courteously offered to beare mine owne charges and my followers, but very bountifully performed it at the common charges: the Mayor and many of the Aldermen often times besides invited us privately to theyr severall houses.

To make a short end of this tedious description of my entertainment: Satterday no sooner came, but I returned without the Citty through Saint Giles his gate: and beganne my Morrice where I left at that gate, but I antred in at Saint Stephens gate, where one Thomas Gilbert in name of all the rest of the Cittizens gave me a friendly and exceeding kind welcome: I have no reason to omit, unlesse I would condemne my selfe of ingratitude, partlye for the private affection of the writer towardes me: as also for the generall love and favour I found in them, from the highest to the lowest, the richest as the poorest. It followes in these few lynes.

Master Kemp his welcome to Norwich.

With hart, and hand, among the rest,
Especially you welcome are:
Long looked for, as welcome guest,
Come now at last you be from farre.
Of most within the Citty sure,
Many good wishes you have had.
Each one did pray you might indure,
With courage good the match you made.
Intend they did with gladsome hearts,
Like your well willers, you to meete:
Know you also they'l doe their parts,
Eyther in field or house to greete
More you then any with you came,
Procur'd thereto with trump and fame.

Your well-willer,

T.G.

Passing the gate, Wifflers (such Officers as were appointed by the Mayor) to make me way through the throng of the people, which prest so mightily upon me: with great labour I got thorow that narrow preaze into the open market place. Where on the crosse, ready prepared, stood the Citty Waytes, which not a little refreshed my weariness with towling thorow so narrow a lane, as the people left me: such Waytes (under Benedicite be it spoken) fewe Citties in our Realme have the like, none better. Who besides their excellency in wind instruments, their rare cunning on the Vyoll, and Violin: theyr voices be admirable, everie one of those able to serve in any Cathedrall Church in Christendome for Quiristers.

Passing by the Market place, the presse still increasing by the number of boyes, girles, men and women, thronging more and more before me to see the end. It was the mischaunce of a homely maide, that belike, was but newly crept into the fashion of long wasted peticaotes tyde with points, had, as it seemed but one point tyed before, as I was fetching a leape, it fell out that I set my foote on her skirts: the point eyther breaking or stretching, off fell her peticoate from her waste, but as chance was, though hir smock were course, it was cleanely: yet the poore wench was so ashamed, the rather for that she could hardly recover her coate againe from unruly boies, that looking before like one that had the greene sicknesse, now had she her cheekes all coloured with scarlet. I was sorry for her, but on I went towards the Maiors, and deceived the people, by leaping over the Church-yard wass at S. Johns, getting so into M. Mayors gates a neerer way: but at last I found it the further way about: being forced on the Tewsday following to renew my former daunce, because George Sprat my over-seer having lost me in the throng, would not be deposed that I had daunst it, since he saw me not: and I must confesse I did not wel, for the CIttizens had caused all the turne-pikes to be taken up on Satterday, that I might not

bee hindred. But now I returne againe to my Jump, the measure of which is to be seene in the Guild-hall at Norwich, where my buskins, that I then Wore, and daunst in from London thither, stand equally devided, nailde on the wall. The plenty of good cheere at the Mayors, his bounty, and kinde usage, together with the General welcomes of his wurshipful brethren, and many other knights, Ladies, Gentlemen Gentlewomen, so much exceeded my expectation, as I adivg'd my selfe most bound to them all. The Maior gave me five pound in Elsabeth angels: which Maior (faire Madame, to whom I too presumptiously dedicate my idle paces) as a man worthy of a singuler and impartiall admiration, if our criticke humorous mindes could as prodigally conceive as he deserves, for his chast life, liberality, tempreance in possessing worldly benefits: he lives unmarried and childlesse, never purchased house nor land: the house he dwels in thes yeere, being but hyred: he lives upon marchandies, being a Marchant venturer. If our marchants and Gentlemen would take example by this man, Gentlemen would not sell their lands, to become bankrout Marchants, nor Marchants live in the possessions of youth-beguiled gentlemen: who cast themselves out of their parents heritages for a few out-cast commodities. But wit whither wilt thou: What hath Morrice tripping Will to do with that: it keeps not time wt his dance: therefore roome you moral precepts, give my hands leave to perfect this worthlesse poore tottered volume.

Pardon me Madame, that I am thus tedious, I cannot chuse but c sacred liberality, which makes poore wretches partakers of all comfortable benefits, besides the love favour already repeated: M. Weild the mayor gave me 40. s. yeerely during my life, making me a free man of the marchant venturers, this is the substance of my journey: therfore let no man beleeve how ever before by lying ballets rumours they have bin abus'd: yr either waies were laid open for me, or that I delivered gifts to her Majesty. Its good being merry my masters, but in a meane, al my mirths, (meane though they be) have bin ever shal be imploi'd to the delight of my royal Mistris: whose sacred name ought not to be rem bred among such ribald rimes as these late thinbreecht lying Balletsingers have proclaimed it.

It resteth now that in a word I shew, what profit I have made by my Morrice: true it is I put out some money to have threefold gaine at my returne, some that lave me, regard my paines, respect their promise, have sent home the treble worth, some other at the first sight have paide me, if I come to seek th , others I cannot see, nor wil willingly be found, and these are the greater number. If they had al usd me wel, or al ill: Iwould have boldly set downe the true sum of my final gain or losse, but I wil have patience, some few daies I ger. At ye end of which time, if any be behinde, I wil draw a cattalogue of al their names I ventur'd with: those yt have shewne th mselves honest men, I wil set before them this Caracter H. for honesty: before the other Bench-whistlers shal stand K. for Ketlers keistrels, that wil drive a good companion without need in them to contend for his owne, but I hope I shall have no such neede. If I have, your Honorable protection shall thus far defend your poore servant, that he may being a plain man, call a spade a spade. Thus fearing your Ladyship is wearier with reading this tow, then I was in all my merry travaile, I crave pardon: and conclude this first pamphlet that ever Will Kemp offred to the Presse, being thereunto prest on the one side by the pittifull papers pasted on every poast, of that which was

neither so nor so, and in the other side urg'd thereto in duety to expresse with thankefulnes the kind entertainment I found.

Your honors porre servant.

W.K.

Kemps humble request to the impudent generation of Ballad-makers and their coherents; that it would please their rascalities to pitty hi paines in the great journey he pretends, and not fill the country with lyes of his never done actes as they did in his late Morrice to Norwich.

To the tune of *Thomas Delonies* Epitaph

My notable Shakerags, the effect of my sute is discovered in the Title of my supplication. But for your better understandings: for that Iknow you to be a sort of witles beetle-heads, that can understand nothing, but what is knockt into your scalpes; These are by these presentes to certifies unto your block-headships, that I William Kemp, whom you had neer hand rent in sunder with your unreasonable rimes, am shortly God willing to set forward as merily as I may; whether I my selfe know not. Wherefore by the way I would with ye, imploy not your little wits in certifying the world that I am gone to Rome, Jerusalem, Venice, or any other place at your idle appoint. I knowe the best of ye by the lyes ye writ of me, got not the price of a good hat to cover your brainless heads: If any of ye had come to me, my bounty should have exceeded the best of your good masters the Ballad-buiers, I wold have apparrelled your dry pates in party coloured bonnets, bestowed a leash of my cast belles to have crown'd ye with cox-combs. I have made a privie search, what private Jigmonger of your jolly number, hath been the Author of thesis abhominable ballets written of me: I was told it was the great ballet-maker T.D. alias Tho. Deloney, Chronicler of the memorable lives of the 6. yeomen of the west, Jack of Newbery, the Gentle-craft, such like honest m : omitted by Stow, Hollinshead, Graft , Hal, froysart, the rest of those wel deserving writers: but I was given since to understand, your late generall Tho. dyd poorely, as ye all must do, and was honestly buried: which is much to be doubted of some of you. The quest of inquiry finding him by death acquited of the Inditement, I was let to wit, yt another Lord of litle wit, one whose imployment for the Pageant, was utterly spent, he being knowne to be Eldertons immediate heyre, was vehemently suspected: but after due inquesetion was made, he was at that time knowne to lige lika a man in a mist, having quite given over the mistery. Still the search continuing, I met a proper upright youth, onely for a little stooping in the shoulders: all hart to the heele, a penny poet whose first making was the miserable stolne story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat: for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it: hee tolde me there was a fat filthy balletmaker, that should have once been his Journeyman to the trade: who liv'd about the towne: and ten to one, bat he had thus terribly abused me my Taberer: for thet he was able to do such a thing in print. A shrewd presumption: I found him about the bankside, sitting at a play, I desired to speake with him, had him to a Taverne, charg'd a pipe with Tobacco and then laid this terrible accusation to his charge. He swels presently

like one og the foure windes, the violence of his breath, blew the Tobacco out of the pipe, the heate of his wrath drunke dry two bowlfuls of Rhenish wine. At length having power to speake. Name my accuser saith he, or I defye thee Kemp at the quart staffe. I told him, all his anger turned to laughter: swearing it did him good to have ill words of a hoddy doddy, a habber de hoy, a chicken, a squib, a squall: One that hath not wit enough to make a ballet, that by Pol and Aedipol, would Pol his father, Derick his dad: doe anie thing how ill so ever, to please his apish humor. I hardly beleeved, this youth that I tooke to be gracious, had bin so graceless: but I heard afterwards his mother in law was eye and eare witness of his fathers abuse by this blessed childe ona publique stage, in a merry Hoast of an Innes part. Yet all this while could not I finde out the true ballet-maker. Till buy chaunce a friend of mine puld out of his packet a booke in Latine called Mundus Furiosus printed at Cullen written by one of the vildest and arrantest lying Cullians that ever writ booke, his name Jansonius, who taking upon him to write an abstract of all the turbulent actionsthat had beene lately attempted or performed in Christendome, like an unchritian wretch, writes onely by report, partially, and scoffingly of such whose pages showes hee was unworthy to wipe, far indeed he is now dead: farewell he, every dog must have day. But see the luck on't: this beggerly lying busie-bodies name, brought out the Ballad-maker: and it was generally confirmed, it was his kinsman: he confesses himselfe guilty, let and man look on his face: if there be not so redde a colour that all the sope in the towne will not washe white, let me be turned to a Whiting as I passe betweene Dover and Calles. Well, God forgive thee honest fellow, I see thou hast grace in thee: I prethee do so no more, leace writing these beastly ballets, make not good wenches Prophetesses, for little or no profit, nor for a sixe-penny matter, revive not a poore fellowes fault thats hanged for his offence: it may be thy owne destiny one day, prethee be good to them. Call up the olde Melpomene, whose straubery quill may write the bloody lines of the blew Lady, and the Prince of the burning crowne: a better subject I can tell ye: than your knight of the Red Crosse. So farewel, and crosse me no more I prethee with thy rabbel of bald rimes, least at my returne I set a crosse on thy forehead, that all men may know thy for a foole.

F I N I S. William Kemp

Written by William Kemp,
Supplied by Matthew Wright

The French Heritage

Text by Dorothy Shaw

While the country dance was developing with such great variety in England, the same primitive choral dance that sired the English dance was producing a rather different and much less lively offspring in France. The English dance moved from the people to the aristocracy, as a good art should. The French dance moved downward from the court to the people, making a different sort of contribution and adding a different flavour as far as we who inherited it are concerned.

The French had a round dance called a „branle“. It was done by couples in a circle, as our rounds are done today, and had become a ballroom dance done by aristocratic society long before our story begins. There are pictures on mediaeval tapestries of lines of elegant dressed couples doing these dances in magnificent halls. In the 17th century, every ball started with a series of three branles : a „Branle Double“ for the older people, a „Branle Simple“ for the younger married couples and a „Branle Gay“ for the young people. There was also a Gavotte, a true round dance, in which the couples turned freely around the floor.

The Minuet

Text by Dorothy Shaw

By the time of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, the „minuet“ had been added to this repertory. The minuet had begun as a rather crude peasant dance, but as a court dance in became so important that we must include it in our chart; for all our sense of stepping beautifully goes back to this exquisite dance which reigned in a more or less modified form for several centuries. So short a time ago as the nineteen twenties, we had several very popular „square dancer's rounds“ that were called minuets and were simplifications of the old steps (the *Oxford Minuet* is an example), and gavottes (the *Glow Worm Gavotte*). We would scarcely dare to say so, for fear no one would dance them, but some of the popular round dances of the current season are bound to be minuets or gavottes in this limited sense. Every round-dancing square dancer owes a very great debt to the minuet.

We shall have to be very important people indeed to get ourselves invited to a court ball in the time of Louis XIII, but, when we do arrive, we are going to be very interested to see the king himself, with Anne of Austria on his arm, lead out the first branle and dance through one sequence before to sit on the throne and watch the others doing the long lines of stately and sometimes flirtatious figures all evening. It does not look in the least like anything we do today, but we are impressed to discover that the king is an excellent dancer.

If we live long enough and are lucky enough to be invited back during the reign of the great Louis XIV, we shall find something astonishing going on, for here is the ballet beginning to flower, and the participants are amateurs! (This is almost the exact counterpart of a fine round dance exhibition team at a square dance convention.) Louis himself, resplendent as a god, is dancing the leading role, and aristocratic dilettantes fill in the cast. We are reduced to the role of spectators. We cannot join in that dance, and you must be beginning to wonder what it can possibly have to do with us.

The answer lies in the fact that at about this time, the English Country Dance came leaping across the channel, with a basketful of its weaving patterns (patterns in which people like us could join) to be fitted to the careful stepping of these good dancers. It came chiefly in the form of the „longways for as many as will", and it tuck France by storm just as the 17th century turned to the 18th.

There were country dances in Spain, in Germany, in France itself to which the French might have turned; they had dances of all shapes and sizes. But the English Longways had one feature that none of the others had: the gradual entrance of couple after couple, what Curt Sachs calls „the pleasing combination of the choral dance and the single couple dance".


Colonial Couple - 1700's © CHD


Colonial Group - 1700's © CHD

Flexibility a factor

You did not have to have an exact number of couples, nor form an exact square or round. One after another the couples danced the same pattern to the same tune, working their way down from the head to the foot of the line, and, if a couple arrived late, they simply stepped in at the end of the set. By the time theaction reached them,

they knew what to do. Longways dances for as many as will used to work out like the boring modern version of the Virginia Reel, the first worked all the way down before the next took over. The Scots clung to this system (after all, what's your hurry?).

The dance became enlivened by permitting every other couple to work through the figure with the alternate couple at the same time, so that no one was ever idle in the line. The dancers worked in little sets of two couples, doing the 'square for four', or sometimes every third couple was active in which case you had little sets of three couples (the Longways for six within the long longways!).

The dance contained the seeds of all our quadrille figures: right-left-through, ladies chain and men's chain, Dixie chain and square-through, stars and bend-the-line, circles and balances, swings and allemand lefts.

A Good Old Dance

There were also delightful odds and ends, like this introduction for a part of a longways for six called *All in Garden Green*:

> *„first man out and shake his owne*
> *woman by the hande;*
> *then the 2nd;*
> *then the 3d by one hande, then the other, kisse her twice and turne her.*
> *Shake the 3d by the hande;*
> *then the 2nd;*
> *then your owne by one hande, then the other, kisse her twice and turne her"*

This is pure American square dance!

And ... these English dances were magnificently available to French dancing masters. The London publisher Playford brought out in 1650 the first printed and purchasable book of instructions for these country dances, and followed it up with larger and larger editions, until the final edition of the „English Dancing Master" contained some 900 dances, most longways. What a treasure trove! These dances were fun! Indeed, at first, some French dancing masters considered them downright rowdy, and objected to the way the dancers leaped and turned and clogged and swung their bodies about. (A rowdy child of this rowdy dance exists to this day in the Can-Can.)

But the patterns were marvellous, and soon the dancing masters got into the habit of travelling to England for new collections to take back to the Dauphin or the Duke. This sounds familiar!

And so ... to the French we owe our gratitude for the „contredanse", for they took the longways, and gentled it down and polished it up and gave it a new name. Contre, in

French, does not mean at all the same thing as country. It means counter ... the dance that is arranged with a line facing a line. (The Country dance includes ALL the English forms.) We accepted the name and called the dance a 'contra-dance'. Later, in New England, they shortened it to contry.

The country longways and the courtly contra acknowledged each other across the set like good dancing partners, and then went reeling down their own lines, joining each other at the right-and-lefts, the stars and the chains. When they met and joined how they cluttered the twigs of that family tree! Some of our modern line dances are purely country and some are purely courtly. Dances with courtly titles, like *Queen's Favourite* and *Queen Victoria* indicate that they crossed the channel a second time, back to England with French manners.

What about the Scots, whose relations with France were usually less strained than their relations with England? They contributed the „reel", most likely; via France? or via England? Their beautiful set step they hold in common with the English, but their fancy way of 'casting off' that they call a poussette ... well, it is a French word!

If you would like to see the contre-danse today at its elegant best, you have to go no farther than California, where the glorious contradanzas of old Spanish California are being revived by loving round dance groups. Those Spanish colonists, like the rest of us, must have had to make a courteous little bow to France, as they devised these lovely squares and lines and circles in waltz time.


South West Couple - 1800's © CHD


South West Group - 1800's © CHD

The Quadrille

Text by Dorothy Shaw

By the beginning of the 18th century, the English gentry were beginning to forget their country dance, and were doing little jigs and round-abouts, and, later, polkas. They were forgetting the longways, the round for as many as will, the round eight, and the square eight. If you will study the chart for a minute, you will see that this square for eight - the **TRUE** square dance - came very near to being left, ungathered, far out on the end of a limb, like a nice, ripe peach out of reach of the ladder.

Its survival seems to have depended on the round for eight, which the French discovered next. They whisked it across the channel and transformed it into a thing they called the „contredanse francaise“, and they must have included the square for eight along with it because they, like the rest of us, had a hard time
telling the difference.

What did it matter

Petticoat Dance

What they built out of this material was not a contra dance: it **WAS** a square dance. They soon evolved a name for it of its own – **Cotillon**. Cotillon means petticoat, and the name may have come from a popular song of the time that says *My dear, when I dance, does my petticoat show*? We suppose that she hoped that it did, for it was a very pretty one. It was as if they had taken a little thatched and steep roofed English cottage with a garden and a brook, and transformed it into French chateau with lawns and clipped hedges and a fountain with a pool.

The cotillon was strictly square in formation and strictly country as to figure. Its great fault was monotony. Endless repetitions of the same few figure in endless dances killed the cotillon.

An attempt was made to revive it during the 19th century by introducing so much variety that the dance degenerated. In America, a cotillion (spelled with an „i“) developed as a certain kind of wonderful party at which no two dances were alike and the whole arrangement was most elaborate, with little favours for the ladies at the end of each dance. The true cotillion, which deserves to be revived, has been lost for half a century, and, while the word is still used, it is meaningless.

The only reason that we include the cotillon in our story is the fact that it seems to have led up to the great quadrille, and this is a name that must be written in capitals.

THE GREAT QUADRILLE!

The word, of course, means „foursome“ - a dance done by four couples in a four-sided figure. The light-hearted square eight found itself all dressed up in a setting of five figures, the first of which was usually some kind of cross-over, such as „head couples right and left through and the side the same“. Then there might be a forward and back figure; and than an Alamo style balance four in line, with frills; then perhaps a circle eight with a four ladies' grand chain; and then a basked figure. You modern square dancers could do any of them at the drop of a hat.


Quadrille Couple - 1850‘s © CHD


Quadrille Group - 1850‘s © CHD

The dance must have missed its gay music, the wonderfully-wrought English and Scottish tunes, but the new music was beautiful too, played by strings and woodwinds instead of pipes and oboes and bombardons. They used semi-classical dance music, opera tunes, and a great deal of music composed especially for these quadrilles by well known composers.

We are in the middle of the 19th century by now, and you cannot possibly do this dance on the village green. The ladies’ skirts are yards and yards around, ruffled and puffed over hoops until they look like huge walking lampshades.

The gentlemen are wearing long trousers at last tight trousers and shirts with linen ruffles, and elaborate waistcoats. You need a glistening dance floor, a big one. You need light from hundreds of candles in crystal chandeliers. You need a platform for the musicians. And you really need, for the first time, a **Prompter**. Not a caller, yet,

but someone to indicate briefly what is coming next. It would be unthinkable for one of the dancers to shout – „ladie's chain“.

The square dance, strong grand-child of the longways and the court ballet, sweet child of the square eight and the round eight, had come into the ballroom. And there it stayed, for a century and a half, with a glorious heyday in American ballrooms at the end.

At the same time that this was happening, occurred one of the great breakthroughs in the history of the dance; the **Polka** came bouncing in on thistle-down toes, hand in hand with the **Waltz**, and the „couple dance“ was born. Not that the couple dance had not always been done, for it is an ancient dance form, deeply ritualistic in its representation of the relationship of a man to a woman, and often truly virginal in its manner of performance. There was nothing ritualistic about it in the late 18th century, when a tall man took a lovely woman close in his arms, and whirled endlessly around a gleaming dance floor to the most beautiful dance music the world has ever known, the waltz. Or when he doubled his erstwhile dignified knees into the most delicate of hops, and the little peasant polka became the darling of the teakwood floor.

We should speak of the difference between a „couple dance“; and a „round dance“;, and ask why we call a round something quite different from that „round for as many as will“ of the English country dance. Actually, it is not so very different.

Our round dance is a dance with a definite pattern, done not by a couple but by a group of couples, moving in unison in the same direction, doing the same step on the same beat of the music. The individual couple has no freedom of movement whatsoever - only ofstyling.

A couple dance, on the other hand, belong to the individual couple. If there is room, it can sweep all over the floor, improvising its own pattern. The gentleman may whisper into his lady's ear, (or he may be skilful enough to whisper with his hands alone), when the cadence of the music demands: „twinkle“, or „lift“, or „cross over“. It is the only truly creative dance we have left (unless you are interested in *Jitterbug*). It was shocking when it first invaded the ballroom, and, like many things initially shocking, it turned out to be one of man's better inventions.

What has this to do with the history of square dancing? Much! For here were two things born to be wed!. You could do the patterns of a quadrille to the steps of a waltz, and what resulted was the queen of all square dances. You could do it to a polka too, or a mazurka, or a redowa. On the branch of the plain quadrille a whole bouquet of the loveliest flowers burst into bloom: the polka quadrille, the mazurka quadrille, the waltz quadrille. We should have clung to this waltz quadrille like grim death. It was our dearest treasure, our dance of dances.

The early Dance Masters

Text by Kenny Reese

The vital link to the past was the dancing masters that came to the new land called America with the first settlers and brought with them the dances of their homeland. One of the earliest records (and there are not many) of these dances is contained in the works of John Playford, a musician and dance master. His book „The English Dancing Master - Plain and Easy Rules for The Dancing of Country Dances, with Tunes of Each Dance“ was published in seventeen editions between 1650 and 1728 and contained 918 dances. Meanwhile, couple dancing was keeping pace. The French had a round dance called the Branle, and there was the Gavotte and the Minuet. It was that most daring of all dances, waltz, that created quite a stir when it was introduced, for it permitted the gentleman to hold his partner in close embrace as they moved about the floor. That position, which we now call closed dance position, was known for many years as the waltz position.

Early American Forms

Text by Dorothy Shaw

What about the **Lancers**? History is confused about the Lancers. It is a quadrille, of course, more elaborate than most, but orthodox in its five-part arrangement. (It may even be much older than the standard quadrille.) On dance programs it was always distinguished from the quadrilles, for some reason. A program from a century ago reads:

Grand March, Quadrille, Waltz, Lancer, Schottische, Caledonian Quadrille, Waltz, Basket Quadrille, Redowa, Lancer, Polka, Lanigan Quadrille, Varsouvienne, ...

etc., etc., until you reach number 38 and five o'clock in the morning. This program contains 11 quadrilles, 7 lancers, 19 couple dances, two grand marches, and a few odds and ends like a Virginia Reel. This is at least five hours of solid dancing, plus long pauses between dances, and supper in the middle of the evening.

A Lancer is really a program of five square dances: the 1st in 6/8 time, the 2nd in 2/4, the 3rd and 4th in 6/8, and the 5th in 4/4. This last figure was always military in style and in march time. This made a field day for the composers. They loved to write lancers, and what lovely things they were!. Our happiest inheritance from the lancers at present is the **Grand Square**, which is a lancers' 5th figure. Imagine it in military uniform - the ladies in dimity and taffeta.

And so, in its every phase, the English Country Dance had gone over to the glamorous enemy. Here and there, in isolated areas of England and Scotland, an increasingly degenerate form hung on (Scottish soldiers danced the old dances with fierce dedication). It was we who saved it. We brought it with us, pristine and precious, when we came to the new world.

The Appalachian Mountain Dance

Text by Dorothy Shaw

In 1917, The great English folklorist, Cecil J. Sharp, was prowling the southern Appalachians, hunting for folks songs and ballads. England was trying to seek out and restore her almost-lost folks arts, and there was a rumour that, in these mountains, a strange and wonderful thing had happened: descendants of the early settlers who had come to the new world during the reign of James I and later, had drifted into the back country, established little settlements, and remained so out of contact with the world over many generations that their customs, their speech, their songs and their crafts had been preserved unchanged, as a fly is caught and held intact in amber. This proved to be true about the ballads, and the Elizabethan strong preterites did indeed linger on in their speech.

An Important Discovery

No one had given much thought to dances, and when Mr. Sharp was told that the people of this region had an interesting dance called a **running set**, but that it was rather uncouth and remarkable chiefly because it required great physical endurance, he had no desire to see it. One moonlit night, at the settlement school in Pine Mountain, Kentucky, he unexpectedly encountered this dance. His description of his excitement as he began to realize that he was making the great discovery of his career is somewhat hair-raising, but our hair stands straight on end as we realize that he was discovering the deep tap roots of our western square dance.

What Mr. Sharp saw was unquestionably an English country dance, but it was like nothing in Playford's books. It was a spacious dance. Promenade figures bound the figures of the dance together, something not encountered before. There were no courtesy movements, no sets, nor balances, nor courtesy turns. Figure evolved into figure with great speed, and the patterns themselves seemed very ancient, some of them harking back to children's singing games. Mr. Sharp reasoned that this dance must be older than the Country dances in Playford, perhaps much older. The ancestors of these people had come from northern England and the lowlands of Scotland, where they were out of touch with developments in metropolitan England, and where, perhaps, they were even then stubbornly clinging to their old customs. Had they brought this dance intact to America, when they came?. It seemed a likely conclusion. Like the ant-eater and the duck-billed platypus, here was a living fossil!


Appalachian Couple - early 1800‘s
© CHD


Appalachian Group - early 1850‘s © CHD

Remarkable Resemblance

It was danced in a proper square, and, strangely, the couples were numbered as we number our square today, instead of the heads being 1 and 2, and the side 4 and 3. In *Cowboy Dances*, Lloyd Shaw says:
„After an introductory *circle left* similar to the introduction of the western dance, the first couple moves to the second couple and executes a special figure, then on to the next couple and repeats the figure. As they go on to the fourth couple, the second couple follows up and executes the same figure with the third couple, and repeats the figure with each couple in the set. As soon as possible, the third couple follows up and dances with the fourth, and follows around the ring. This goes on until every couple has followed in a sort of looping or crocheting chain stitch of continuous and furious dancing“.

The figures that they execute between couple and couple not only bear a resemblance to the western figures, but, in some cases, are identical. And the do-si-do, with which each couple ties off when they finish the circle, survives in an altered form in the „western dance“.

Dance without Music

If we are to be invited to dance some running sets, we have a few things to learn. There may be no music and we must feel the rhythm in the floor beneath our feet. The step is a light, bounding run, and Cecil Sharp says of the posture: „The body should be held erect, motionless, with every limb loose and relaxed, and inclined in the direction of the motion, as in skating". All of the movement is in the feet and ankles. This is Country dance posture. It is also Morris posture! The arms hang straight and loose and swing comfortably in rhythm with the motion of the body. This is necessary because the dance is so long, sometimes an hour or so, as it consists really of a tip of four to a dozen dances. Our tip might consist of:

Shoot the Owl
Chase the Squirrel
Wild Goose Chase
Box the Gnat
Going Down Town
Treat'em All Right (Arkansas Traveler)
Ladies In The Centre (*Gents run away to Alabam'*)
Old Dan Tucker,
and
Wind Up The Ball Yarn

which is the spectacular figure used by many square dance teams for the conclusion of an exhibition.

Lloyd Shaw, who possibly used it first for this purpose, took it straight out of Cecil Sharp's „Country Dance Book", and Sharp took it off the throbbing floor of the Pine Mountain Settlement School, and the ancestors of these dancers danced it with profound solemnity around a great tree, 1500 years ago, thus intending to communicate life and action to it. And *Old Dan Tucker* is one of those human sacrifice dances, like *London Bridge*, and, 1500 years ago, the one who was caught as „Old Dan" in the centre, as the dance ended, really had his head cut off!

A Round Square

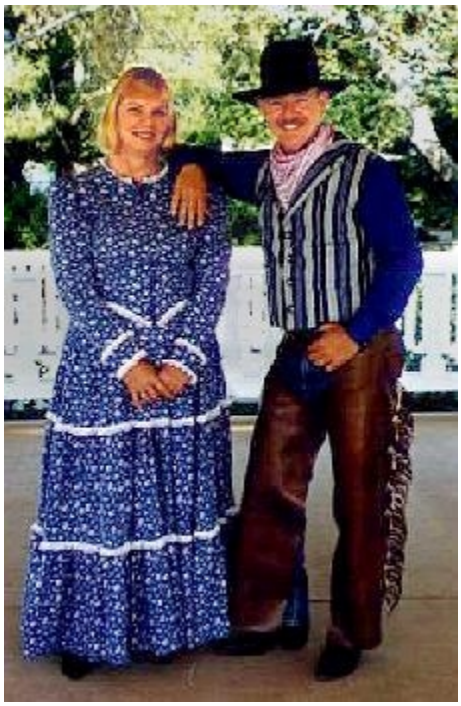
The running set is more truly a round eight than a square eight. The action goes „around" the square rather than „across" it. You could almost separate round eight from square eight by whether or not you could do them in a „big set". The running set is done in a square; but the big set is like a „round for as many as will". Here - ten, sixteen, twenty couples join in a great ring and proceed exactly as described above. The effect, by the time the tenth couple start to follow up, is downright exciting. From a balcony above the floor, it looks like corn starting to pop, building up to a climax with a full popper, dying down after all the grains are popped. It is purely beautiful. Make a list of your favourite dances and see how many of them could be done with

any even number of couples. Those that could not are hopelessly square dances - quadrilles.

The people of the southern mountains did contras, in lines and circles. At just what point these joined the repertory we do not know, (Cecil Sharp taught them some English contras as late as 1917). But the French quadrille influence in this area did not come in until fairly recent times.

Possibly the dances were never done to music, but certainly, before 1917, this dance must have weathered a period of fanatical Puritanism, during which the fiddle was *the devil's instrument*.

We can scarcely estimate our debt to this great dance, for, besides having given us most of our western figures, and a joyous attitude toward dancing, the running set and its offspring probably kept dancing alive during this sterile period. Surely the play parties, which we shall discuss later, were fathered by the running set, whoever their maternal ancestor may have been, and we could not have survived without the play parties The running set had a caller, too - a real caller, America's only unique contribution to the square dance. If he were calling from the set, his call was a „prompt", but if he called from outside the set, he put in improvised „patter" of his own, the forerunner of the wonderful patter call of twenty years ago.



Frontier Cowboy Couple - 1800's
© CHD

Frontier Cowboy Group - 1800's © CHD

Try something! Take a good old single visitor dance - say *Lady Round the Lady*. Dance it exactly as described above - „following up". Put on the best English square

dance music in your file - it will probably be *Glise a Sherbrook*. (If you don't have an old tune, try *Rubber Dolly*) It is unlikely that you have the stamina to dance it at the 128 steps per minute at which it is recorded, but, if you think you are as tough as your Great-Grand-Dad, turn it up to 140. Don't walk - run. Just barely, lightly!

After you have recovered from this, done in a square, put three or four sets in a big set and do *Shoot the Owl* or *Birdie in a Cage*. You may now go out and lie down flat on the lawn, and thank God for your ancestors!

The New England Dance

Text by Dorothy Shaw

Our dance must have started out with a big handicap in the first year of the settlement of the New England colonies. Those sturdy Puritan gentlemen who implemented the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter were a grim lot, believing, as they evidently did, that what was gay and light-hearted was also sinful. They had packed up many of their simple happinesses and hidden them away some time before, to please General Cromwell; and, when they came across the sea during the first half of the 17th century, they simply left the whole lot behind. They left the May-pole, that lovely totem of English dancing, and the dances that had encircled it. They left the great bonfires of Midsummer Eve, and the wild, weaving lines of shadowy figures that danced around them. They even left Christmas, with its carols and ist wonder. (It took us 300 years to get the carols back) Fortunately, the Puritan influence was soon diluted. Men who were tolerant as well as wise and courageous came from all walks of English life, not only into the New England colonies, but also into Virginia and the Carolinas and Maryland. An American aristocracy of the mind and spirit developed, and it brought its social graces into the ballroom as well as the convention hall. It is difficult to get anyone to say how much of the „New England dance" came from the now-declining English Country Dance, and how much from the ballrooms of London and Paris.

During Revolutionary times, evidence favours the ballroom. General Washington, dressed elegantly in fitted black, with a powdered pigtail and white silk stockings, danced a very acceptable minuet, you may be sure, and a courtly quadrille, and a dignified contra. But when did those simpler New England folk outside the ballroom get started on their wonderful succession of contras and quadrilles that are the very backbone of our current square dance? For the square dance began here as truly as it did in the mountains of Kentucky and the Carolinas, and perhaps a little earlier.

The names of some of the dances tell a story. *Green Mountain Volunteers* - remember them, and *Ethan Allen*? (Pre-Revolution, from Vermont). *Jefferson and Victory*, *Washington's Quick Step*, *the Beaux of Albany*, *Old Zip Coon*, *Boston Fancy*, *Pop Goes the Weasel* - how American they sound! *Hull's Victory* and *Sackett's Harbour* - two of the very great „triples", are named out of the War of 1812.

Commodore Hull was the commander of the frigate „Constitution“ and, as for „Sackett's Harbour“, which is on the east shore of Lake Ontario in upper New York State, the motions of the dance make a graphic picture of the see-saw battle that went on for months for control of the fortification there. And yet, many of these „American“ dances were really old patterns loved long before in England or Scotland, given American names; just as we set our American hymn to the tune of *God Save the King*, and our National Anthem to a German tavern song. When it came to dancing, we were adapters rather than creators, and some of our adaptations were marvels to behold.

The Singing Quadrille

One of our great adaptations was the „singing quadrille“, which seems to belong in this period. Quadrilles thrived for so long in America! And you could get such variation into the music. A five-part quadrille permitted you to use five different but related tunes; for instance, the famous „Caledonian Quadrille“ contained parts danced to five beloved Scottish tunes, including *The Campbells Are Coming* and *My Love is But a Lassie Yet*. The „Verdi Opera Quadrille“ used two arias from „Traviata“ and three from „Il Trovatore“. The „Columbian Quadrille“ used the following tunes: *Star Spangled Banner - Red, White and Blue - Adams and Liberty - Hail Columbia - Yankee Doodle*.

This sounds either very lively or very stuffy, and, after you have read the instructions for the figures, you decide that stuffy is the word. They were unimaginative, commonplace and all alike.

It was a period of too many dances, which were consequently doomed. But out of it grew the simple, integrated, freely-moving and melodious singing squares set to American folk tunes, beloved of the people: *Captain Jinks, Darlin Nellie Gray, The Girl I Left Behind Me, The Flower Girl Waltz, Oh Susanna* - direct forerunners of such dances as *Trail of the Lonesome Pine, Red River Valley, Alabama Jubilee, Smoke on the Water* and *Kingston Town*. There are dozens and hundreds of these old singing quadrilles, as much fun to do as they always were. And there were „plain quadrilles“, danced to the same type of old Scottish or English or even Irish music that was used for the contras. These were square dances in the current sense with:

an opening chorus,
a figure, twice or four times repeated,
a closing chorus.

The commonest chorus was then, as now – „allemande left and grand right and left“. Ralph Page says that the contribution of the French Canadians who came seeping into New England during the past century, is not, as one might expect, French contra patterns, but a gaiety and joy in life that resulted in the „long swing“; so typical of New England square dancing. We once watched a dance in Bethlehem, Connecticut that was 60% swing. Taking a tight waist-hold, but holding their heads and shoulders far

out from each other, doing a lightning-fast buzz-step, the partners, when instructed to „swing“, swung for literally minutes, like so many tops, and then staggered to the open window, where they hung out, gasping, while the next couple took their turn.

No doubt about it - the wandering square dance had come out of the ballroom and back again to the people during the late 19th century. The polished quadrille got involved with the country dance of the backwoods area. The gay Quebec swing got all mixed up with the uproarious New Hampshire contry; a circle mixer from Maine made an alliance with a longways dance from New York State. A true „American hybrid“ was being developed.

The Modern Square Dance

Text by Dorothy Shaw

During the half century that bracketed the American Revolution and the War of 1812, this was a more dancing nation than it is today. Everybody danced, and continued to dance during the decades to follow. Everybody grew up dancing, for those were the days when the babies went in baskets, and the small fry formed a set in the corner and stomped away, until a dancing master got hold of them and polished up their steps. (Dancing masters were a dime a dozen.)

And an „ordination ball“ was held when the new minister was installed! Where did they dance? In taverns, in town halls, in barns, at husking bees, roof-raisings, sheep-shearings. Don't think, when you build a hall in your basement or your garage, or a „slab“ in your yard, that you are doing something new and unusual. They did that, too. They built dance halls right onto their houses. If they didn't have anything better, they danced in the kitchen, and Ralph Page describes the fiddler sitting in the kitchen sink in order to leave room for the dancers on the floor.

Nothing New

Don't think, when you get a „Knothead“ badge for travelling in a set-size group for a hundred miles or more to a square dance, that you are „modern“. More than a century ago they were doing that too. They went in a sleigh or a hayrack instead of a 1975 Buick, but the objective was the same. I have no doubt that there were „idiots“ who wakened their caller in the wee small hours, and demanded a dance.

There is really nothing essentially modern about the behaviour of the current caller, who works at a job all day and calls square dances half the night, burning his candle so hard at both ends that it is a bit hot in the middle. They did that, too! Many men, especially teachers and, occasionally, ministers, both of whom were underpaid then as now, augmented their salaries by teaching or prompting dancing - square dancing in its broad sense. Some even fiddled. They did it economically, by having a two-hour teaching session followed by a three-, or four-, or even fivehour dance.

They called to their dancers to line up for a grand march. The instrumentalist tuned up. The dancers marched, elegantly, joyously, delightedly onto the floor until finally the line of couples found itself in a circle around the hall.

„Hold your places for 'Sicilian Circle'“ The fiddler swung into *A Hundred Pipers* but he didn't stay with it long - he kept happily changing tunes. Round and round they went, in the patterns you do at every square dance. „Promenade off the floor“ And then, they formed sets for a plain quadrille: „First four, right and left through - and right and left back“ The great American square dance was in motion.

The Development of the Current Hybrid

Americans have always been a people on the move. From the first potential colonist set down in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1584, they have been reluctant to stay put, and have vanished into parts unknown, taking their customs with them. You have only to take the wanderings of one great pioneer to have a prototype for them all - take **Daniel Boone,** born in Pennsylvania of an immigrant English father, moved at 18 into the mountains of western North Carolina, went at 26 to explore the head waters of the Tennessee River, set out at 35 to explore the border regions of Kentucky, settled there and practically built Kentucky, lost his lands through defective titles and headed west at the age of 60, settling near what is now St.Louis! He was only one of thousands like him. And they 'danced'. They danced and they sang, and by their songs and dances we track them backward from the 20th century. Study the dances of any area, and you will find who brought them, and whence. It is not surprising therefore, that the Appalachian dance turned up in the American south-west, in the middle-west, in Oklahoma, and in Texas. It came with a singular purity into Texas and promptly took on something new - the charming little Texas two-step with its birdlike lift. Where did "that" come from? Over the border from Mexico, most likely.

The Play Parties

In the middle-west the dance encountered a puritan influence again and could not persist as a dance at all. So it became a „play-party". Dances were done as if they were children's games, to singing and to clapping of the hands. The tunes and words go back so far that they bring tingles to your scalp - back farther than Playford, back through Tennessee and Kentucky to goodness knows where. Play-party manners were simple, but deportment was important. There was no drinking, and young ladies and gentlemen were wonderfully controlled. No young man put his arm around a girl's waist.

Even in Texas, where dancing was dancing, there were barriers. Hence, the old call „Meet your honey, pat her on the head, if you can't get biscuit, give her corn bread". „Biscuit" was a waist-swing, „corn bread" was a decent two-hand swing, and if you „must" pat her, pat her on the head! Our square dance was developing - at once demure and vigorous.

The Dance Preserved

Where simple pioneering people (seeking isolation) went, you found, for the most part, the single-visitortype dance of the Appalachian mountains. Where more sophisticated groups (bent on establishing a farther frontier for American culture and

government and backed by organized financing) went, you were likely to find the New England quadrille type of dance. Where a dedicated group, (like the Mormons) went, you found a fusion at a very high level. No group did a better job of carrying the best of American culture across the continent than the Mormons; and they hung onto it long and well.

Where great financial opportunities presented them-selves, as in the successful gold-mining camps of the west, you had people from all walks of life -well-to-do promoters and hard rock miners; merchants and bankers and professional people. Here we had the truest synthesis of the American folk dance. Nothing mixed people up like the mining camps of the western United States. If you went to a dance in the pioneer farming country of Nebraska, you would find something like a country dance, but a program for an 1870 dance in Central City, Colorado, reads like a lay-out of the middle section of our chart:

quadrilles and lancers, contras and circles, waltz, polka and schottische.

Oddly enough, a program from a dance in the Town Hall of Kingston, N.H., reads much the same except that there were more contras. The dance remained remarkably stable for many decades - some things expanded here, some things squeezed out there.

Next - The Contra

What finally got crowded out was the contra, most important ancestor of them all. Perhaps it is well enough for it to live on in almost every move we make on the dance floor, but millions of people must have missed this exciting and beautiful of dances, as it dwindled down to three or four routines that people remembered, and finally expired in an emasculated „Virginia Reel“ that any good contra dancer would have looked upon with dismay.

The Henry Ford Era

Text by Dorothy Shaw & Kenny Reese

And then, in the first part of the 20th century, came a decadence in American dancing like nothing ever seen before. Quadrilles died, contras died, people two-stepped their waltz and forgot their polka. The schottische lived on at high-school hops as a rather rowdy thing called a „barn dance“. The true square dance, amalgamated variety, all but disappeared. In rural communities, in farming areas where there were active granges, square dances were still held; but the callers, who were remembering what their daddies had done, and remembering rather inaccurately, had a more and more limited repertory. They forgot how to prompt, also, and caught themselves calling with the action instead of ahead of it. The music became more and more forlorn, the caller less understandable. Style was lost - the lift and lightness of Kentucky; the prideful bounce of New Hampshire.

Henry Ford era - 1920‘s © CHD

Henry Ford era group - 1920‘s © CHD

In the couple dance field, people tried desperately to do something about the situation, with some alarming results; but scarcely anyone seemed interested in picking up the square dance out of the gutter where it was literally sinking into oblivion. And, alas-in some areas, it had acquired a reputation that it has never quite

lived down with nice people. Still - in some serene little corners, like New Hampshire and bits of Texas, the light burned on without too much flickering.

Mr. Henry Ford used to vacation at Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts. There he became interested in the dance program conducted by a dancing master named Benjamin Lovett, an outstanding research man. The program included the gavotte, mazurkas, the Schottische, the minuet, the Virginia Reel, and other squares and rounds. Mr. Ford tried to hire Mr. Lovett, who declined, pointing out that he had a firm contract with the Inn. This posed no problem for multi-millionaire Ford, who simply bought the Inn and Mr. Lovetts contract and took Mr. Lovett back to Detroit with him. In the Detroit area, Mr. Ford established a broad program for teaching squares and rounds, including radio broadcasts and programs for schools. Mr. and Mrs. Ford built a fine dance hall with a teakwood floor and crystal chandeliers in Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, and named it Lovett Hall. It is still in use.

In 1926 the Fords and Mr. Lovett published a book which provided inspiration and material for many people who had wanted such a reference. On the cover of this edition of their book, it says

> **GOOD MORNING**
> After a Sleep of Twenty-Five Years,
> Old Fashioned Dancing is being revived,
> by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford

Here was a public service of inestimable value. Read the Table of Contents of the third edition of „Good Morning“ (1931). Everything is here, beautifully described, and the music scored: 4 quadrilles and the Five-part Singing Quadrille, the Standard Lancers, 13 singing squares, 3 circle mixers, 6 contras, 11 rounds, including a minuet, a waltz-minuet and a gavotte. It is a superb collection, chosen with great attention to quality. The only thing that was missing was the great "western" square dance, with its single-visitor figures, its do-si-do chorus and its wonderful patter call.

This little book was an inspiration to many people who had desperately wanted this material. They pounced on it. One of the people who pounced was a young Colorado school superintendent named Lloyd Shaw.

The Lloyd Shaw Era

Text by Dorothy Shaw & Kenny Reese

Mr. Shaw had been working on the theory that the Greeks were right about dancing being an essential part of the education of the child. Having started with international folk dancing under the tutelage of Elizabeth Burchenal, he was more than ready for the American dance. But he recognized that the Henry Ford book supplied only half of this dance, and that the other half lay almost under his own nose in the little towns and farm communities of his own West.

Lloyd Shaw era Couple - 1940's © CHD

It was not easy to dig out. Callers could only remember their calls when they stood up in front of the dancers with the music behind them. Dancers worked almost like puppets satisfied with a thin repertory. Tempos were deadly slow and everyone was a little suspicious of a city slicker who came to the dance with a notebook in his hand. Nevertheless, people did help - leads opened up - and pilgrims on the same quest opened their files and their hearts to each other. In 1939 Lloyd Shaw published „Cowboy Dances", a big book that filled in Henry Ford's gaps, containing a thorough discussion of the square dance as it was done from the Missouri River Valley to the Sierras, and from North Dakota to the Golf. Others came in quickly with their contributions, one of the most notable of whom was Herb Greggerson of El Paso, Texas, who took a fanatic's delight in dancing and putting down on paper the wonderful Texas dances, so trueto their Country sources.

For years, Lloyd Shaw conducted summer classes, where he taught teachers how to present the „whole" American folk dance. He also trained teams of dancers in his Cheyenne Mountain School and took them around the country exhibiting and teaching. Other such institutes sprang up all over the country. The square dance began to pull into focus, as it never had before. Once more, and all over the country, thousands, and then millions, of people were dancing.

Of course, in those days, one did not ask if there would be rounds. It was taken for granted that one would do the Varsouvienne, a Schottische, the Black Hawk Waltz, and perhaps, Blue Pacific Waltz. There might be a cue word here and there for the new people, but no cuer. Dancers knew the dances, just as they knew the figures of

many of the square dance calls such as *Birdie In The Cage, Lady Round The Lady* and *Dive For the Oyster*.

Sitting in the balcony and watching the vast floor full of dancers at the Chicago International Festival in 1951 - watching the unfolding of stars and circles, grills and boxes – the great sweeping joy of a dance like *Arkansas Traveler*, I heard a learned man who had never seen a large square dance before suddenly explode: „This is the most beautiful thing I ever saw! The most beautiful and the most significant“. And it was. The great „American square dance“, with all ist ancestors looking over its shoulder, was having a party.

Choreography Transition, Electronics & Recordings

Text by Kenny Reese

Square dancing began its transition from the traditional, visiting couple type of dancing into all-four-couple-working kind of dancing in the late 1940's and early 1950's. One of the first to use this type of dance pattern was **Ed Gilmore** who travelled widely and conducted some of the earliest training programs for callers. Callers discovered they could move everyone at the same time and create more interest.

Meanwhile, the development of the electronic amplifier aided the transition, since it permitted the caller to manage large crowds. It was no longer necessary to shout, use a megaphone, or have a caller in each square. The improved public address equipment allowed the caller to be heard well enough so that the dance routine could be invented as it was called. No longer was the dancer expected to know the dance pattern that went with a particular tune as was common in traditional dancing. Square dance records, particularly, the small, easy to manage 45 RPM discs, eliminated the need for live music, with all its attendant problems and allowed much greater musical variety and flexibility. The modern square dance activity owes much to the record companies who put out first, the 10" and 12" records that ran a 78 RPM and then an abundant supply of good music for square dancing on the much more easily handled 45 RPM 7" records. Some of the pioneering labels have been around since the 1950's. These include **Sets In Order**, **MacGregor** and **Blue Star**. Dozens of other labels have been added since then and without all of them modern square dancing could not have spread throughout the world as it has.

New Calls

Text by Kenny Reese, table by Robert French

In the late 1950's what had been a slow trickle of new call ideas and names began to turn in flood. „Square Thru" (which had been danced without a name in contras for a couple of centuries) was given a name and introduced in 1957. Other new movements were created and named in quick succession and the nature of square dancing was changed. Soon we were teaching 16 calls in classes, then 20, and then 32, and then -- you know the rest of the story.

In the early 1960s another caller who travelled widely, Les Gotcher, began to use a programming technique that became very widespread. With a seemingly endless flood of new calls being created, callers found that by teaching new calls in several tips during an evening dance, the effect of experience differences between dancers could be limited. Since the calls were new to everyone the less experienced dancers had nearly equal chance to dance them successfully.

Eventually dancers became frustrated because they could never stop trying to learn the new calls. Attempts were made to develop a standard list. The national magazine **Sets In Order**, with the help of a Gold Ribbon Committee, developed a list of 50 calls that everyone should know. Soon it became clear that some new calls, not in the 50 Basic list, were gaining wide acceptance and a supplemental list of 25 more calls was developed. The creators of these lists had hoped to provide a stable, unchanging body of calls that could serve as an entry point for new dancers, but the square dance activity would not stand still. Newer calls kept winning favour from dancers and callers and could not be left off of any standard list.

The following table shall provide a view on the development of the actual Mainstream program (in teaching order suggested by CALLERLAB).

Explanation for column **Year**:

T	- traditional, author unknown and older than 30 years
1957	- year in which the call was created, author known
?	- year unknown, not traditional

Year	No.	Call
T	01	Dancer Naming Partner/Corner; Heads/Sides; Couples #1, #2, #3, #4; Boys/Girls; Centers/Ends
T	02	Circle Family a. Left b. Right
T	03	Forward & Back
T	04	Dosado
T	05	Swing
T	06	Promenade Family a. Couples (full, 1/2, 3/4) b. Single file
T	07	Allemande Left
T	08	Arm Turns a. Left arm turn b. Right arm turn

Year	No.	Call
T	09	Right & Left Grand Family a. Right and left grand b. Weave the ring c. Wrong way grand
T	10	Star Family a. Left b. Right
T	11	Star Promenade
T	12	Pass Thru
T	13	Split the Outside Couple
T 1950	14	Half Sashay Family a. Half Sashay b. Rollaway c. Ladies in, men sashay
? 1954	15	Turn Back Family a. U turn back b. Gents or Ladies Backtrack
T	16	Separate
1952	17	Courtesy Turn
T	18	Ladies Chain Family a. Two Ladies (reg. & 3/4) b. Four Ladies (reg. & 3/4) c. Chain Down the Line
?	19	Do Paso
T	20	Lead Right
T	21	Right and Left Thru
T	22	Grand Square
1960	23	Star Thru
T	24	Circle to a Line
1957	25	Bend the Line
T	26	All Around the Left Hand Lady
?	27	See Saw
1957	28	Square Thru Family (1-5 hands) a. Square thru b. Left square thru
1953	29	California Twirl
T	30	Dive Thru
1958	31	Wheel Around
1938	32	Thar Family a. Allemande thar b. Wrong way thar
?	33	Shoot the Star (Reg Full Around)
?	34	Slip the Clutch
T	35	Box the Gnat
?	36	Ocean Wave Family a. Step to a Wave b. Wave Balance
1949	37	Alamo Ring Formation a. Allemand Left in the Alamo style b. Wave Balance
1965	38	Pass the Ocean
?	39	Extend (1/4 tag only)

Year	No.	Call
1962	40	Swing Thru Family a. Swing thru b. Alamo swing thru c. Left swing thru
1963	41	Run Family a. Boys, b. Girls, c. Ends, d. Centers, e. Cross
1965	42	Trade Family a. Boys, b. Girls, c. Ends, d. Center, e. Couples, f. Partner
1960	43	Wheel & Deal Family a. From lines of four b. From two-faced lines
1956	44	Double Pass Thru
?	45	First Couple go Left/Right, next Couple go Left/Right
1972	46	Zoom
1970	47	Flutterwheel Family a. Flutterwheel b. Reverseflutterwheel
1971	48	Sweep a Quarter
1961	49	Veer Family a. Left b. Right
1969	50	Trade By
1976	51	Touch 1/4
1963	52	Circulate Family a. Boys, b. Girls, c. All eight, d. Ends, e. Centers, f. Couples, g. Box, h. Single File (column), i. Split
1974	53	Ferris Wheel
1963	54	Cloverleaf
1964	55	Turn Thru
1957	56	Eight Chain Thru (1-8 hands)
1966	57	Pass to the Center
1964	58	Spin the Top
?	59	Centers In
1959	60	Cast Off 3/4
1967	61	Walk & Dodge
1965	62	Slide Thru
1963	63	Fold Family a. Boys, b. Girls, c. Ends d. Centers, e. Cross
1957	64	Dixie Style to an Ocean Wave
1967	65	Spin Chain Thru
1969	66	Tag the Line (In/Out/Left/Right)
1969	67	Half Tag
1969	68	Scoot Back
1966	69	Fan the Top
? 1970	70	Hinge Family a. Couple, b. Single
1974	71	Recycle (waves only)

Callerlab

Text by Lee Helsel, Arnie Kronenberger, Bob Osgood und Bob VanAntwerp

The Start the Development of Caller Leadership

In tracing the „why“ and „how“ of the beginnings of an international caller-leadership organization, we need to go back to the start of the period of contemporary western square dancing. Square dance history includes the names of prewar pioneers. All of them were performing callers. Few, if any, would have been considered „leaders“. There is, however, one exception -- one name that stands out. He was a leader.

That man was Dr. Lloyd Shaw. He researched the western square dance and introduced it to his high school students and others in his community in the 1930's. His first wide-spread recognition came in the mid '30's with the publication of his book „Cowboy Dances“ and with the start of cross-country tours with his Cheyenne Mountain Dancers. All this, just a few years before America's entry into WWII, lit the fire that would eventually propel square dancing (as a household term) into neighbourhoods across the country. Shaws methods and philosophy would make square dancing accessible to all.

Prior to this, in rural communities across America, people enjoyed this form of dancing as an occasional activity. While there were a few itinerant callers who could handle a whole evening's program, much of the calling was done by individuals who might know only one or two calls. There were a limited number of books with calls available but fewer than a handful explained how the calling was to be done. The dances themselves were uncomplicated when compared to today's square dancing and, without sound amplification, the calls also were simple.

During the war, service personnel and defence workers moved from one area to another and, if a square dance was available, anyone who knew how to call, would likely share in the program. It was during this period that many of the post-war dancers and callers had their first taste of square dancing, but the role of developing leadership would fall to Lloyd Shaw.

Shaw's early cross-country tours and his book created great interest among school teachers and others. It wasn't long before he began receiving requests to set up a master class and teach callers. Summer classes started in Colorado Springs a year or two before the war, but had to be suspended during the emergency. In 1946 they began again and the following year Shaw also revived his tours and the big boom of square dancing was under way. Requests to attend the week-long callers' sessions were overwhelming. The available dancing space in the small cafetorium of the Cheyenne Mountain School would only permit 96 registrants and, taking great care to

insure that a wide variety of geographic areas were represented, each class filled rapidly.

Curiosity along with a desire to collect written dance material may have been the initial reason many enrolled, but what Shaw taught went far beyond calling. Among other things, callers learned how to work with people, how to be leaders and how to insure that the wholesome qualities of the activity would be preserved and protected. The opportunity to call for evaluation and the learning of more dances was just part of the curriculum. The „caller's tripod“, based on the essentials of clarity, rhythm and command, was a launching pad. The importance of „dance“ to an individual with movement-to-music and comfortable dance styling showed the participants that Lloyd Shaw aimed to develop leaders who could carry the torch into the second half of the 20th century.

When each class ended, these „students“ returned to their home areas, started classes, became leaders themselves and soon began teaching others to call. To the best of their ability they passed along what they had learned.

Shaw continued to hold twice-yearly summer master classes into the mid-1950's, and from each class came new leaders who went out and taught dancer classes, formed callers schools, and helped create callers associations in an effort to carry on leadership training. At first, essentially those who had trained directly under Shaw trained others. Eventually those who were training new callers were several generations removed from Shaw. The cloak of leadership had been passed from a single individual to many.

With the steady growth of the square dance activity, individual areas came up with their own guidelines and some created their own codes of ethics. For a time, there was little coordination other than that collected and published by Sets In Order. This magazine, originally inspired by Lloyd Shaw, broadcast much of the Shaw philosophy, carried articles by the leaders of the day, took the lists of basics from square dance centres around the country, combined them, interpreted their styling to come up with a coordinated list and, in general, became a representative „voice of caller leadership“.

On this framework individual callers and the various areas went their own way, but there was an ever-growing urgency for callers to work more closely together for the advancement of the activity. A need for some sort of consolidated leadership became more and more apparent through the 1950's and in August, 1960, a group of caller-leaders from several different areas met in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to search for solutions to the escalating need of unifying terminology and styling, to create a universal moral code for callers and to offer needed leadership for the activity. Ed Gilmore, Bruce Johnson, Jim Brooks, Don Armstrong, Frank Lane, Bob Osgood, and their wives attended the several days of meetings.

In July 1964, SQUARE DANCING Magazine (Formerly Sets in Order) working with Southern California callers, Ed Gilmore, Lee Helsel, Bruce Johnson, Arnie

Kronenberger, Bob Osgood, Bob Page, Bob Ruff and Bob VanAntwerp, and in conjunction with the extension division of The University of California -- Los Angeles, presented a two-day on-campus caller-leadership conference utilizing a combined university and caller faculty which attracted callers from across North America. The success of this conference prompted a second session the following year.

As a result of leadership guidance in these ventures and because of the continuing growth of caller-interest, it became increasingly apparent that a close association of callers was long overdue. It was further felt that experienced, proven individuals working together could form and realize such a type of leadership.

During this time SQUARE DANCING Magazine continued to reach out to more and more caller-leaders. Articles by top leaders disseminated on-going square dance leadership information. How-to-do articles were shared and callers around the world had an increasing influence on each other. Codes of ethics were published and adopted by various associations as were consolidated lists of the basics along with styling notes. Even though it reflected a true composite, all of this was done in an independent, somewhat detached manner. There still was a need for the existing leadership to work closely together.

The Start of CALLERLAB

In 1961 Sets in Order inaugurated the Square Dance Hall of Fame as a means of honouring leaders who had left their mark on the world of square dancing. Over the following decade a number of outstanding individuals were added to the list. Anyone looking at these names would recognize them as representing the ultimate composite of square dance leadership of the time. Any single one of these men might not alone be able to capture the respect of all callers, but, with all Hall of Famers working together, they presented a „body of knowledge“ that a great percentage of callers could respect and follow. Their backgrounds and accomplishments formed an impressive foundation for square dance caller-leadership.

„Body of Knowledge“ is the keystone of any profession. It must be unique to the field and is the basis (or bible) on which a profession is formed. The „Unique Body of Knowledge“ is that which distinguishes one profession from another and therefore one activity from another.

Plans for a meeting of the members of the Hall of Fame were begun in 1970 with a founding committee made up of Lee Helsel, Arnie Kronenberger, Bob Osgood and Bob VanAntwerp. Summaries from the past ventures were studied and, following a lengthy preparation period, eight major discussion topics regarding the nature and needs of the activity were prepared as a partial charter framework for the potential new organization. These were the topics:

- Let's put the dance back into square dancing.

- An accepted form of standardization is vital to the growth and continuation of this activity.
- Caller-teacher leadership training is the responsibility of the callers and teachers.
- Professional standards for callers and teachers need to be established and maintained.
- Today's square dancing is due for a reappraisal.
- The combination of the various parts of the square dance activity (squares, rounds, circle mixers, quadrilles, contras and related forms) should be encouraged.
- The selfish exploitation of square dancing should be vigorously discouraged.
- The over-organization of dancer-leader groups can pose a problem to the future progress of the activity.

Invitations were mailed to fifteen members of the Square Dance Hall of Fame to attend a meeting in February 1971, as guests of The Sets in Order American Square Dance Society, to take part in an „Honours Banquet" and to discuss the „State of the Square Dance Nation".

Eleven of the invitees were able to attend: Marshall Flippo, Ed Gilmore, Lee Helsel, Bruce Johnson, Arnie Kronenberger, Frank Lane, Joe Lewis, Bob Osgood, Bob Page, Dave Taylor and Bob VanAntwerp. When the meeting, held at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in California concluded, the group enthusiastically and unanimously signed the eight point charter and began planning for the future.

It was decided that initial growth of the organization would be on a gradual basis and that each person selected for membership would be personally invited to attend one of the meetings and, having attended, would be included as a member.

This was the start of CALLERLAB.

A second meeting was held in July of that same year. Don Armstrong and Earl Johnston were included as new members at that session. The total membership had now reached thirteen.

Meeting number three was held in February, 1972, with Jerry Haag, Jerry Helt and Jim Mayo present as new members. The fourth of the Asilomar meetings was held in July, 1972, when Al Brundage and Manning Smith became members. By this time the total membership had reached eighteen. At this meeting it was decided to enlarge the group while still retaining the personal invitation method of increasing the size of membership. The February, 1973, meeting included seven new members: Stan Burdick, Cal Golden, C.O. Guest, Jack Lasry, Johnny LeClair, Melton Luttrell and Bill Peters. This session concentrated on plans for the 1974 CALLERLAB Convention.

By this time the total „founding“ and „charter“ membership had reached twenty-five and this body was designated the CALLERLAB Board of Governors. Jim Mayo was elected the Association's first Chairman of the Board.

In those formative years the group named itself „CALLERLAB -- the International Association of Square Dance Callers“ and started DIRECTION, as its official publication. Arnie Kronenberger served the early sessions as chairman pro tem; Bob Osgood served as executive secretary. It was decided that during these early stages CALLERLAB would conduct business under the „wing“ of The Sets in Order American Square Dance Society, and that CALLERLAB's home office and staff would be provided by SIOASDS, without cost to CALLERLAB.

A description of the formation of CALLERLAB would be incomplete if it didn't recognize the contribution and pivotal role played by Bob Osgood. His unique position as editor of Sets in Order (SQUARE DANCING) Magazine and his broad contacts with the callers, teachers, and leaders in the square dance field, linked with his strong, enthusiastic leadership allowed him to truly become the moving force behind the birth of CALLERLAB. Bob was an innovator and a superior leader, and without his tireless drive and skill to organize the effort, there would not be a CALLERLAB today.

In the time period, 1971, '72, '73 the members organized the structure of CALLERLAB (e.g.:)

- the concept of a Board of Governors
- need for members to attend yearly meetings a regular intervals
- need for communications between the Board and the members
- the concept of an Executive Secretary
- the concept of professional standards and the adherence thereto
- the concept of incorporation to protect liability and for tax purposes
- the concept of disciplining members (later modified)
- organization followed generally that of the American Medical Association (concept suggested by organizing member, Lee Helsel, who had been working in the health field).

Committees were started from the first meeting and within a year, a Code of Ethical Behaviour had been created. The Sets In Order Basics and Extended lists of basics were endorsed by CALLERLAB as being representative of the movements currently danced in the activity. These made up the first CALLERLAB basic movement lists.

With the help of a professional artist, the CALLERLAB logo, DIRECTION newsletter heading and other artwork was created, approved by the members and put into use. The legal firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky and Walker prepared by-laws and papers of incorporation for CALLERLAB.

The gradual growth, the in-depth planning of goals and the strength of its leadership propelled CALLERLAB securely into its next big step, its convention in 1974. The groundwork would be tested; its membership would be quadrupled and the „baby“ would be ready to stamp its mark on the future of caller-leadership.

With intensity of purpose, CALLERLAB extended ist horizons and set out to provide a framework that would result in callers working closely together. By so doing, they would accomplish goals that none of them could accomplish by working alone.

Square Dance Clothing

Reprint from USDA News, Oct./Dec. 1993
Research and text by Cathy Burdick and Becky Osgood

How did we get where we are today?

Old square dance dresses of today can trace their history back to the elegant ballrooms of France and the grand manors of England. In those countries, the minuet, polka, waltz and quadrille were danced. As people emigrated to America they brought their customs, dress and dances with them. Gowns were made from damask, taffeta, silk or fine muslin. The fullness in the skirt was obtained by wearing a hoop skirt underneath. Coiffures were often high and possible powdered. It was an era of stately music, stately dances and stately dress.

We move forward a hundred years and hope to open the West in on. Days are long and hard with both men and women settling the land, working in the fields, and tending the livestock. Women grow their own flax to make linen, use wool from their sheep to spin yarn, weave their own material and dye it with dyes made from roots and berries. There is not much time for gaiety so every occasion is used for socializing. Barn-raisings, weddings and holidays were prime examples when gatherings were held. Often people came from miles around to see their neighbours, catch up on the news and dance the night away. These dances were held in kitchens, barns, out-of-doors, even in the saloons. Women's dresses were long, starched petticoats and floor length pantaloons were worn underneath. The costuming allowed free and exuberant movements in the square, circles and couple dances.

We move forward to the 20th century, the 1920's in particular and we find Henry Ford endorsing and sponsoring early American Square Dancing in Lovett Hall, in Detroit, Michigan. Lovett Hall was complete with teakwood floor, crystal chandeliers and formal straight chairs on either side of the ballroom. A live orchestra and a dancing master were on hand to teach and prompt the evening's dances, which consisted of waltzes, two-steps, early squares and contras. In the beginning formal attire was mandatory with the ladies in long gowns and white gloves.

Following World War II, there was a resurgence in square dancing. In choosing their costumes, ladies remembered the long dresses of the early years. At first, these dresses were straight and worn without a petticoat. It wasn't long before the length came up to just above the ankles and starched petticoats and pantalettes were added. Cotton was the fabric used which ment hours of ironing, not only for the dress but the petticoat as well.

By the early 1950's, squaw dresses were „discovered". Some of the newer cottons could be washed, crushed together while wet, and pulled through something tubular, like a stocking, or tied at intervals. When dry, a three or four tiered skirt would present

a pleated look, much like the skirt worn by Indian women. Miles and miles of ric-rac were used as trim, which made these dresses weight eight or nine pounds. Imagine dancing all night in a dress weighing eight or nine pounds. Talk about your aerobic exercise! Many a lady remembers repleating one of these skirts, either by hand or with clothespins, or even with a contraption where the material was woven in and out of metal ribs. Square dance hemlines had gone up to ankle or calf length, and pantalettes to below-the-knee bloomers. By the late 1950's some of the embossed cottons could be washed carefully and be presentable without ironing.

In the 1960's came the nylon, nylon net, dracon, polyester and novelty blends that did not have to be ironed. The „drip-dry" era was in full swing. So were the petticoats. Layers of nylon net were used for the petticoats which held the dresses out beautifully. The hemlines were rising and now we had fancipants with row after row of lace trickling down the leg. How far the fancipants extended up the thigh was a personal choice.

Along with the 1970's came the border prints. These prints can be used not only with the print providing the decoration around the bottom of the skirt, but working the design into the bodice and sleeves. Skirt length got shorter and it became a matter of personal choice as to the length. Petticoats also got fuller and with the hemline creeping up the thigh, the look began to be more like that of a tu-tu skirted ballerina. Many young girls and exhibition groups have kept the tu-tu look.

The 1980's gave us a return to a fancier dress. Most of the patterns feature rows of ruffles, lace and ribbons with very full skirts and petticoats. The colours are bright and eye catching. Border prints are still going strong. Many women now wear colour coordinated dresses, petticoats and pettipants. The length of the dress and the pettipant is left to your good taste. They can range from knee-length to the „sissy britches" style. Thanks to continuing modern technology in materials, most are still permanent press or „drip dry", and require little, if any touch-up with the iron.

Modern square dance clothes are no longer „Authentic Covered Wagon" type. Men wear well-fitting western shirts, western pants or jeans, and boots or comfortable shoes. Women may be as individual as they like in their dress, letting their imagination run free. Sleeves, necklines, skirts, trims, colours, combinations, there was no limit! Some of the choices that we have today include denim western dresses, prairie skirts, belts, accessories to change and mix and match outfits. Dance shoes are available in many styles, heel heights and colours.

The choice is yours. Good taste in underpinnings, in skirt lengths and necklines should always be considered. What looks well on the wearer and to the beholder is the criteria.

We have a wonderful heritage to look back on in square dance dresses, who can tell what the future will bring.

Summary

Text by Dorothy Shaw & Kenny Reese

There have been great changes since 1951, not all reassuring. The fantastic prestige of „name callers“; a willingness to dance to calling that disregards the 8-count phrase; monotonous repetition of grill-type figures; the vast size of the whole activity - these could be dangerous. Most alarming is the tendency to conformity. We have become as uniform as soup cans on a super-market shelf. Do not be disturbed. Last week we saw a „do-ci-do“! Contras are coming back. Every day another maverick sneaks out of the corral, sniffs the air, senses a good rain, and settles down to graze on the old pasture. The dance goes on, down the worn path taken by the first ancestor. We shall never lock it up in any man's stable. It has wings, and it is ever so much bigger than we are.

Square Dancing had been around for centuries. It began in England and France and came to America early in the history of the new world. As the population spread westward so also did square dancing taking different forms as it went. The uniquely American contribution to this development was the caller, sometimes called the prompter because he prompted the dancers memory of patterns they had learned. Modern square dancing began with the advent of public address equipment good enough to allow changing dance patterns and the use of recorded music. In the next 20 years hundreds of new calls were created. By the mid-1970s the organization CALLERLAB was able to bring order to the new-call confusion by establishing standard dancing programs - Basic, Mainstream, Plus, etc... CALLERLAB also provided standard call definitions, timing and styling.