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AMERICAN SQUARES

THE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO AMERICAN FOLK DANCING



10 cents



August, 1948

The Magazine

Rod LaFarge has gone our folk lore dancers one better. He has organized a group to do medieval dances. Dressed in doublet and hose (and gowns) they did a May Pole dance and made all the papers. He's having a wonderful time.

He has fun that way. I get my fun out of dancing, whether authentic or otherwise. Others get their fun from a mixture of both.

This is a plea for tolerance between groups. You purists, don't condemn me because I don't do the dance exactly as it was done a century ago. I like it better my way. I'm doing a modern dance. Just because it happens to be a square formation doesn't mean that I should do it exactly as done ages ago.

In return, I'll try not to lose my patience when you are teaching and demand that the students be exact and your dances authentic. There is room in square dancing for those who get their fun from studying folk lore and those who get theirs from the dancing no matter how it is done. Let's not be critical.

—Charley Thomas

AMERICAN SQUARES
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Folk Dance Federation of Minn.

By Ralph Piper

Considering the fact that there are over eighty organized folk and square dance groups in Minnesota, the formation of a state organization was a natural outcome.

Representatives of twenty groups met at the International Institute in St. Paul on November 16, 1947, and formed the Folk Dance Federation of Minnesota. A constitution was adopted (patterned after that of the Folk Dance Federation of California). Officers elected include: President, Morrey Gelman; Vice President, Peter Olsen; Recording Secretary, Lorena Phillips; Corresponding Secretary, Shirley Pierve; Treasurer, Ray Kurkowski; Historian, Helen Larkin; Director of Publicity and Extension, Ralph Piper.

The purpose of the Federation is to promote folk dancing in the state, to assist in the formation of local groups, to conduct research, and to hold monthly festivals.

Any member group may request the privilege of being host at a monthly festival. The first host group was the University of Minnesota Student Folk and Square Dance Club which sponsored a festival in the Main Ballroom of Coffman Memorial Union Building on the University campus on Sunday, December 21, 1947 from 2:00 to 6:00 P.M. In order to satisfy the interests of different people, a varied program was arranged as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. <i>Triple Schotische</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 2. <i>Troika (Progressive)</i> | <i>Russian</i> |
| 3. <i>Kalvelis (Progressive) Instruction</i> | <i>Lithuanian</i> |
| 4. <i>Squares</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 5. <i>Scandinavian Polka</i> | <i>Norwegian</i> |
| 6. <i>Neopolitian Tarantella Demonstration</i> | <i>Italian</i> |
| 7. <i>Blackhawk Waltz</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 8. <i>Squares</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 9. <i>Korobushka (Progressive) Instruction</i> | <i>Russian</i> |
| 10. <i>Little Man in a Fix</i> | <i>Danish</i> |
| 11. <i>Gypsy Wine</i> | <i>Hungarian</i> |
| 12. <i>Squares</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 13. <i>Cherkissia Instruction</i> | <i>Palestine</i> |
| 14. <i>Polka</i> | <i>International</i> |
| 15. <i>Italian Quadrille</i> | <i>Italian</i> |
| 16. <i>Squares</i> | <i>American</i> |
| 17. <i>Spanish Circle (Progressive)</i> | <i>Swedish</i> |
| 18. <i>Hambo</i> | <i>Swedish</i> |
| 19. <i>Hopak Demonstration</i> | <i>Ukrainian</i> |

20. <i>Squares</i>	<i>American</i>
21. <i>Eide Ratas (Progressive)</i>	<i>Estonian</i>
22. <i>Mexican Waltz</i>	<i>American</i>
23. <i>Butterfly</i>	<i>American</i>
24. <i>Waltz</i>	<i>International</i>

Other festivals have been sponsored by the Minneapolis Y. M. C. A. Folk Dance Group, the International Institute of St. Paul Folk and Square Dance Group, and the White Bear Square Dance Group. They were patterned largely after the first one with two demonstrations, instruction in one or two dances, and approximately thirty-five dances for general participation. Attendance of spectators and participants has ranged from 400 to 1500. An actual count revealed 57 squares dancing at one time during our last festival.

All festivals are free. Music is provided by records for the most part. Local callers donate their services so that expenses are small. Host groups have paid for the invitations, programs, and decorations. The colorful dances and costumes make these occasions interesting to spectators as well as dancers.

Council meetings are held monthly to discuss business, act on applications of other groups for membership, and to award future festival locations. There are now over thirty member groups, some of which plan to act as hosts for out-of-town festivals during the summer in the Twin Cities, Duluth, and other communities of the state.

Although California and Minnesota have the only statewide organizations at present, it is expected that other states will follow suit and we will soon have the Folk Dance Federation of New York, Michigan, Texas, etc. When and if enough states become organized, the next natural step would be the formation of a national federation with national festivals. (Editor's note: Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and Arizona have similar organizations at the present time.)

Folkraft has released the following records:

F 1015A *Marching thru Georgia*, 1015B *Devil's Dream*

F 1016A *Honolulu Baby*, 1016B *Git Along Cindy*

F1017A *Oh Susannah*, 1017B *Flopp Eared Mule (D & A)*

F1018A *Buffalo Gal*, 1018B *Old Joe Clark*. These are without calls.

They have also released another Al Brundage record with calls, F1014 *Pop Goes the Weasel* and *My Darling Nellie Gray*.

AMERICAN SQUARES has ordered these records and will probably have them in stock at \$.89 each by the time this is in print.

ANNOUNCING another contest open to subscribers to AMERICAN SQUARES. Folkraft Records is offering a \$10 prize for the best dance designed to fit one of their records. Watch the next issue of AMERICAN SQUARES for details.

The Round Table

This is written in hopes it will help our good friend and fellow square dancer, Wayne S. Rich, Concord, N. H., in straightening out the western do-si-do's. (Letter to the Editors, May 1948 issue)

In mentioning the Texas Editor's article on the do-si-do, Mr. Rich was no doubt referring to Calvin Moore, Fort Worth, Texas, Editor's explanation in AMERICAN SQUARES several issues back. There is a slight difference in the type of square dancing between El Paso and Fort Worth, the cities being over 600 miles apart. This difference no doubt is mostly due to some of the Colorado type of square dancing being brought into the Fort Worth section during the last few years. It is natural that some of the calls and figures in the places where they have taken root retain some of their home flavor. After all, these changes break the monotony and are what has made square dancing what it is today. There is a place for it all, singing calls included, the same which I do not care for, for the reason that I cannot sing (I sound like a desert canary, burro to those who do not know what a desert canary is.) All of this gives variety. Use it all, but don't over-do the outside type in your section. After all each section of the country has a flavor all its own. It's the heritage of your own section; keep it as such and use the other sections' stuff for variety. That laid away for awhile becomes new again. If I remember correctly, there is an old saying that anything laid away for seven years becomes of use again.

I will try and explain all of the various do-si-do breaks, and the position from which broken into from the Western or El Paso section, that I can think of at this time. At any rate they are the common ones used.

First, all of the following mean a hand contact, and the contact is always partners' left hand to left hand, and corners or left hand ladies are handled right hand to right hand: Do-si-do, Do-ce-do, Do-cey-doe, Do-si, Do-cee, Do-Ladies do-si-do. All are pronounced and sound the same, and are the same movement when once broken into. The Dopaso is not called in this section. The word being coined, as stated, by Dr. Shaw to distinguish between the moves used here which will accommodate any number of couples, odds or even numbers, and the Colorado do-si-do in which only two couples can be used. However, we do the Colorado moves in this section and cover the two couple do-si-do without changing the sound or figure by prefixing a phrase, same will be explained later in this article. The dos-A-dos call is not used as it sounds too much the same, sashay or sash-shay being substituted for the back to back or all around move, thus eliminating all possibility of confusion in sound to the dancer.

Key-When in a circle or ring, and a do-si-do is called regardless of the number of couples; and unless otherwise designated, break left hand to left hand with partner. The ladies pass in front and around partner and right hands are extended to corner, around the corner gent and back to partner with the left hand. The changes being made back and forth between the two until caller directs otherwise; i. e. one more change and on you go or one more change and home you go. With us here the move is used more or less as a co-ordination move. Some may make one or two changes, others three changes before the caller moves them on; thus they all move off together. Remember in all cases the gents only come in contact with their partner on their right and the lady on the left or corner, ladies with their partners and their corners or the gents on the lady's right.

CALL: *Circle four and around you go, two little ladies do-si-do Hurry up sister don't be slow, one more change and on you go.*

There is *no designation* in the above call, therefore it is started left hand to partner left hand.

CALL: *Circle four and around you go, do-si- your corner with the right*

Swing 'em high, Swing 'em low, grab your honey and on you go.

Designated call, the circle is broken with the right hand to corner and back to partner with the left hand.

Both the above hold good for two, three, four, five, or any number of couples in the circle, either even or odd number of couples.

Do-si-do Break from a right hand cross or star: In a right hand cross the direction of movement is clockwise. The gent's partner is behind him, and his corner is in front. To break into the do-si-do it is up to the Caller to designate the break, i. e., "Over your shoulder with your left arm, a do-si-do will do no harm." All of the gents in the cross place their left hands and arms over the right shoulders; the ladies reach forward taking gents' left hand in their left hand (partner's hand), hold right hands in the cross until the word do-si-do at which time break the cross, gents step back and out, opening to a larger space, passes the lady, (his partner) around in front and around him to the gent behind. The gents then reach forward and take corner lady with the right and back to partner with the left, and listen to the call for direction.

Do-si-do from a left hand cross: Exactly opposite of the right hand cross. Direction is counter clockwise, gents' partners are in front and corners behind. The Call, "Over your shoulder with your right arm, a do-si-do will do no harm." Right arm of the gent goes over his left shoulder, the lady behind reaches forward, and the break is made with the corner instead of with partners; then back to

(Continued on Page 9)

Alabama Rules on Square Dancing

The Alabama State Beverage Control Board held hearings to determine whether to return juke boxes to night clubs and juke joints where beer and whiskey were sold. Various people appeared before the board to testify and during the hearings the question arose of square dancing. After hearing Mrs. Waites' testimony which is printed below, the board required that all businesses combining music and alcoholic beverages should have their places available for square dancing one night each week throughout Alabama.

HEARING BEFORE THE ABC BOARD

February 11, 1948, Montgomery, Alabama

MR. TUCKER: Mrs. Waites said that she would like to speak.

MRS. JOHN I. WAITES (Montgomery, Alabama): Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, Ladies and Gentlemen: In the paper last week I saw that the Board had advocated in the policy that square dancing be allowed at the night clubs of the State on Tuesday nights. Now, I was interested in that because recently a group of friends of mine got interested or became interested in square dancing, and we couldn't find a place in which to square dance. I think that it would be a good thing for our night clubs and for our places of amusement to open their doors for square dancing on Tuesday nights; because some of us have lost our interest in round dancing and we would like to see a place where we can go and square dance on Tuesday nights. I believe that in the other communities they have found that square dancing produces certain good results. They have found that all groups like to participate in square dancing. Doctors, lawyers, school teachers, farmers — all enjoy square dancing more than any other kind of dancing. Everybody in the community can join in and have a good time. It builds community spirit in those communities that have square dancing; and then, square dancing is wholesome and entertaining. You will find in those communities at these square dances that you don't have as much drinking, because people can't drink and square dance at the same time. Therefore, I approve of this part of the Board's policy, and I do hope that the night clubs and the other places of amusement here in the State will open at least one night of the week for square dancing as long as it is feasible.

MR. BEECH: Mrs. Waites, what is your experience in this regard? You said, I take it, that married couples are more interested in square dancing. Are there any public places in this County now that have a beer license that people who want to go to square dance would feel free to do so there?

(Continued on Page 10)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Today I ran across a sample copy of *AMERICAN SQUARES*, March, 1947, which I reread with considerable interest.

Being just a "kid", whose 79th birthday will not come around until next December, and having been an old "fiddler" (also a flute player for 20 years) since 1888, and being a native New Englander, who danced and played the old square dances, when I was not through the "Deestrick Skule", I naturally am interested in the present day revival of these old dances, in spite of the changes, I note.

Most of the quadrilles of the "gay ninties", were composed of five numbers, very tuneful, and the calls were not sung, as they are now. I like the singing calls very much, but they do not fit the old quadrilles.

Speed now has replaced the grace and tempo of my younger days. Modern dances seem rough to me. But if the boys and gals like it why it is o.k. by me.

The standard four piece orchestra sixty years ago was violina, cornet, claret or flute, and bass. No mutes were used in the cornet, and the bass was bowed, not twanged. Old time melody and harmony was better in those days. Banjos, guitars, saxophones were never used these. However, this fact would probably enter into the evaluation of other factors.

For three years I played a flute in a Vermont orchestra, 1895-97 before movies, talkies, radio and juke boxes were even dreamed of.

With the advent of modern instruments, and the singing prompter, many books of the old reels, jigs and hornpipes have changed the key, so that the devil himself could not play these on a fiddle or make them sound right.

An accordion or piano can play in any key for the notes are definitely fixed. With a fiddle it is different. I am a fiddler, not a violinist, as I never took lessons, but learned through experience.

I am glad these old dances, especially the quadrilles and contra dances have returned to popular favor.

Since 1940, I have taken part in six National Folk Festivals, four New England Festivals, put on two in Fitchburg and played for two in New Hampshire. I have also played at New York University, Massachusetts State College at Amherst, Middleburg and Bennington Colleges in Vermont.

I am doing my bit to keep alive the rich heritage left us by our own over seas ancestors. I hope you will find something of interest in what I have written.

Will E. Ayer,
Fitchburg, Mass.

ROUND TABLE (Continued)

partners with the left hand. Keep changing back and forth and listen for the call.

Other calls that can be used for the right or left hand cross or star breaks. Left hand cross: "Do-si your corner with your left," "Break with your right and how-do-you-do, partner left and how-are-you." Reverse the call for a right hand cross. "Do-si your partner partner left, corner right." "Break with the left, and how-do-you-do, corner right and how-are-you." It is up to the Caller to call 'em properly.

Any number of couples, two, three, or four can be used in the above right or left hand breaks. More couples can be used if they can get their hands into the cross or star. When in a left hand cross the break is made with right hand to corners. Right hand cross the break is made with left hand to partners.

Breaks for the Colorado two couples only do-si-do. "Circle four and around you go, pass 'em through and do-si-do like you always do." Ladies pass through the circle, left shoulder to left shoulder, turn to the left and give partner left hand, around her partner and over to the other gent with the right hand. The PREFIX, "Pass 'em through." Another one, "Ladies pass through and do-si-do like you always do." Another one, "Ring up four and spread out wide, now pass 'em through side by side, flip 'em around like an old cow hide."

Another ladies pass through call and into a do-si-do. "A left hand twirl and do-si your own little girl." Two couples in the circle, gents release partners hand, but retain hold of left hand lady's right in their left, give her a flip with the left hand in front of him and toward her partner, and turns her loose. The ladies spin once around and extend left hands to partners who immediately pick them up into a do-si-do. The ladies have passed through and the do-si-do is continued as in any other.

Another pass through move is made by prefixing a right and left through. "Circle four halfway around, right and left through and do-si-do like you used to do." The circle halfway around is made so that the do-si-do will start and end with the leading or active couple in the center of the set. Do a regular right and left through. Take partners left hand in left hand. *Gent passes the lady around in front, but does not turn as in a right and left through. Gent, after passing his partner around, turns back to his right and takes the other lady with his right hand* and the do-si-do is continued as in any other.

A do-si-do ends where it starts. Thus in the right and left through move the do-si-do actually starts after the right and left through is made. Therefore move around until the leading couple is on the outside, then right and left and do-si-do and you end up

inside the set and are ready to move on in the shortest time and distance.

When in a circle and doing a two couple figure, the leading gent breaks the ring when his back is nearest to the couple he goes to next, or if going home his back is toward his home position. This eliminates having to fight your way around the other couple to get to the designated place. Same applies when picking up six or eight, the leading gent sets the place, the others watch his hand when his back is to the couple to be picked up, he drops his corner's hand and leads the break. When breaking from a circle of eight, circle around to your home position and then break. If the call is home you go, you are there. If promenade you get one turn around the floor. Try it.

When in the position of "First two couples lead to the right," or "One and three lead to the right," and two circles of four are formed, the break is made at the three-quarter turn point, which puts all four gents with their backs nearest to home position.. The above hold true unless figure executed is to follow with a half promenade, in which case the break would be made in the absolute opposite position. Sounds complicated, doesn't it? Get it once and you will never forget it. That's that. I hope it helps, and some can figure it out. I can show you how to do all of them in far less time than it takes to write it.

Jimmy Clossin, El Paso, Texas

(Editor's Note:) This is printed exactly as written by Associate Editor Clossin, with the hope that the do-si-do may be clarified.)

The Connecticut Song and Dance Festival will be held August 11 on the Athletic field of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, at 8:30 p.m. Over 1000 dancers and 5000 spectators are expected for the event which will draw the top callers and dancers of the New England area.

The August Minnesota State Festival will be held at the Lief Erickson Park in Duluth on August 15.

ALABAMA RULES (Continued)

MRS. WAITES: Not a single place that I know of. In fact, the group in which I am interested has looked for a place in Montgomery to square dance. We have tried to get the pavillion at Oak Park and other places. We had our first square dance in a private home, and we have recently hired a place in Montgomery where you can square dance; but until recently we didn't know of any place in the city, and I don't think that you will find many places in the State where you can have such a form of amusement and recreation.



Record Reviews

By Charley Thomas

Apex 26286 *The Dawn Waltz*. Don Messer and his Islanders. Don seems to have added a wind instrument. Metronome 57. *White River Stomp*. Just goes to prove that a good square dance orchestra can play jitterbug if they want to.

Apex 26273 *Levantine Barrel*. Don Messer and his Islanders. It's square dance rhythm and a good recording except for jumps here and there in the music, not the recording. Metronome 126. *Little Burnt Potato*. This is used as the first change for most of the Canadian quadrilles.

Apex 26272 *Flanigans Polka*. Don Messer and his Islanders. Perhaps it's a polka to him but it's also good square dance rhythm, though there is one section that tends to polka tempo. Metronome 126. *Mockilmogles Reel*. More high class square dance music. There is a phase in the second half of the music that I think monotonous. Metronome 130. We stock this record at \$.89.

Apex 26220 *Souris Lighthouse and Mouth of the Tobique*. Don Messer and his Islanders. All square dance music. Metronome 130. *Favorite Polka* and *By the Fireside*. This boy Messer knows how to play good square dance music and the Apex people know how to record it. Metronome 132. We stock this record at \$.89.

Starr 16211 *Turkey in the Straw*. Tommy Duchesne et ses Chevalies du Folklore. If they are French, it's still Turkey in the Straw, but there's a beat that sounds like a slap running through it. The fiddle plucks as well as bows and a mouth organ takes the lead for awhile. The record gives the impression of speeding up although counting gives a reading of 122 per minute at the beginning and at the end. *Valse des Pompiene*. The instruments stand out and do not blend. Metronome 56.

Starr 15992 *Reel de la Riviere au Renard*. Isidore Soucy. Fiddle, piano and slapstick. The instruments don't blend and the fiddle hums. The melody isn't strong; it's just notes to me. Metronome 122. *Set Canadien*. A little more tune than before but the fiddle plays so much harmony that you can't hear the tune. Metronome 124.

Apex 26297 *Roll Away Hornpipe*. Don Messer and his Islanders. This doesn't have as much beat as some of the records but the tune is catchy. Metronome 126. *Rippling Water Jig*. I don't particularly care for jigs but this is as good as I've heard with the piano pounding out the distinctive jig beat. Metronome 132.

Apex 26296 *Silver and Gold Two Step*. Don Messer and his Islanders. As it should in this type of rhythm, the piano comes out pretty loud. I like it at metronome 130. *Highland Hornpipe*. Don Messer has done so many good jobs that I have run out of

superlatives. Metronome 130. We stock this record at \$.89.

Apex 26292 *Hill Lilly*. Don Messer and his Islanders. This is up to the uniform high standard of Messer's works. Metronome 128. *Little Rubber Dolly*. It was interesting to hear this familiar folk song by Messer — but it isn't square dance.

Apex 26288, Apex 26289 *Atlantic Polka*, Changes 1, 2, 3, and 4. Don Messer and his Islanders. This is timed for a dance which Messer says is used locally for it. Don't try straight calling to these. For directions see DANCES CONTRIBUTED.

Starr 16403 *Le Qaudrille de Charlevoix*. Tommy Duchesne. Some day I'll learn what that slapping is. It doesn't seem to be on the beat all of the time either. This is a lively tune but the combination of accordion and that slapping doesn't make good square dance music. Metronome 130. *Le Breakdown de Portneuf*. The accordion sounds more natural but I still wouldn't recommend it. Metronome 144.

Starr 16485 *Valse Lancier de Mont Laurier*. Henri Houde et son Ensemble. This is the same mixture of 2/4 and 3/4 time as Tuckers Waltz — and it's almost the same tunes. *Set Americain*. You name it. With the accordion doing sixteenth notes at 148 beats per minute it's just a jumble of notes.

Dances Contributed

GLORY, GLORY, HALLELUJA!

*The head lady promenades, the inside of the ring,
When you get back home again, you give em a great
big swing,*

*The heads face out, the others fall in,
Around the ring you go,*

*The lady goes right, the gent goes left,
The ladies go right, the gents go left.*

The first couple dosido, you dosido your own,

The next couple dosido, you dosido your own,

The next couple dosido, you dosido your own,

The last couple dosido, you dosido your own,

Everybody forward and back,

And I'll tell you the reason why,

You cross right over and turn about,

And then look her in the eye.

Everybody swing your own,

You swing 'em round and round,

Allemand left on the corners,

And a grand right and left,

(Singing) *Glory, glory halleluja!*
Glory, glory, halleluja!
Glory, glory, halleluja,
We're right back home again.

The second lady then promenades as above, and the dance is repeated three more times.

This dance was brought from California by Morry Gelman, president of the Minnesota Federation, and submitted by John Wald of St. Paul.

ATLANTIC POLKA

Directions by Don Messer

FIRST CHANGE

*First four balance and turn; forward and back,
Half right and left, balance and turn.
Forward and back, half right and left to place;
First polka; sides polka; all polka, sides same.*

SECOND CHANGE

*First couple polka inside; grand right and left half
round;
Polka to place, others same.*

THIRD CHANGE

*First two forward and back, give right hands and swing
to places;
First four polka; sides polka, others same.*

FOURTH CHANGE

*All take hands forward and back, ladies pass to right;
All polka four times.*

FIFTH CHANGE

*First four polka; sides polka; all turn corners with right
hands,
Partners with left; all polka round the hall.*

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