

American Squares

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THE PAPER

Well, here we are, still shoe-stringing along. So far we have enough subscriptions to pay for this issue, but we haven't taken in enough so that we worry about the income tax.

We are very ashamed of our format and hope to do something about it. We want to go in for printing and will, just as soon as we have the necessary backlog of subscriptions to sustain us. In the meantime, we shall continue to slave over the mimeograph machine and you will continue to strain your eyes over a shortage of ink. However, the sky is brightening with the prospects of better things to come.

We have several letters asking if there is anything the writers can do, we respond, "Certainly." When you send in your subscription (or at any other time) send:

1. Suggestions for improvement (In response to suggestions, we now have music for our dances and we are working up a directory of square dance groups.)
2. A blurb on your favorite dance together with calls and directions, an entry in the original dance contest, or a note on any dance;
3. When and where your group meets so we may include it in the directory, or a note on recent square dance activities; or, at least,
4. The names and addresses of some of your friends who would like a complementary copy of American Squares, which we shall thereafter send them.

This is your magazine and will be as good as you can help us make it.

Otto Rayburn has sent us a copy of his OZARK GUIDE which he publishes at Lonsdale, Arkansas. It comes out four times a year at \$1 per annum. I haven't had time yet to thoroly peruse its hundred pages but it is a fund of Ozark folklore and information. I particularly liked his page HEARD IN THE OZARKS.

"An old farm couple, having endured the rigors of country life for more than a half century, decided to spend their remaining years basking in the comforts of the city. They sold the farm,

bought a modern house at the county seat, and moved in.

"The old gent, a frugal but practical soul, could see no earthly use for the two covers on the toilet bowl so, thinking they could be put to a better use, removed them.

"The top cover he gave to his wife to use in the kitchen as a bread board, but what to do with the bottom cover, the one with the hole in it, perplexed him no end.

"Finally he removed the enamel, replaced it with shellac, and found a place for it in the parlor--a perfect frame for grandpa's picture.

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EDITORIAL

Ye Editor had prepared another nice fire-breathing editorial for this issue, but after the reaction to his last one, he is afraid to print it. Many people have confused the editor's opinions with the policy of the magazine. As there was no policy expressed in the first issue, they had plenty of reason to do so. However, here it is:

1. To bring American dance material to folk dancers with emphasis on squares and contras.
2. This is your magazine. The editor's opinions are his own. The columns of American Squares are always open to contrary opinions (provided they are reasonably well written). Everyone is entitled to believe and dance as he likes, and if you differ from the editor please don't let that prevent you from doing the dances he likes (provided you like them too) or sharing the dances you like with others thru the medium of American Squares.

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There have been several requests for articles on longways dances. These have a definite place in American Squares, but I feel unfitted to write on that subject never yet having called or taught such dances. Will somebody please oblige us by sending us an article or a call on dances of this type?

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Balance corners, shave 'em down
Swing your partner twice around
- - * * * - -
Swing everybody, swing 'em again
Swing 'em around with might & main
It's allemand left, and gals
double chain.

Has anyone ever asked you either of these questions: "Which do you like better, square or folk dancing?" or "Which do you like best, New York or the United States?" One question is as sensible as the other for in each case the former is part of the latter.

Michael Herman realized this when, in the April issue of the Folk Dancer he urged American groups to try out the dances of other countries. Many jitterbugs who say they don't like square dancing just don't know the dances well enough to enjoy them. . . any square dancer will agree to that. . . yet most of us fail to realize that the square dancer who doesn't like other folk dances is probably in the same boat. Now I don't mean to take you away from square dancing; there are few more thrilling sights than a New England grange hall filled with fiddle music and dancers doing Portland Fancy, or than squares of cowboys doing the "dooey-doo". It's just that, as a square dancer, I've found that the other folk dances are fun, too; and I want to let you in on the secret.

AMERICAN SQUARES, in a September Editorial, doesn't quite agree. The author of the editorial likes American dances, schottisches, polkas and hambos, but not European folk dances. To be sure, he does not mention that the schottische and hambo are Swedish and the polka central European, or that the American Square Dance is, paradoxically enough, French. The ladies' chain (chaîne des dames), right and left (chaîne anglaise), grand right and left (grande chaîne) and do-si-do (dos à dos) all came from France; and the "Texas Star" ("My Favorite Dance" of the last issue) was being done in the ballrooms of France when the Lone Star State was wearing short pants and red skins. And if the Sicilian Tarantella is silly, I should like to know in what way the elbow swing, do-si-do, and left and right hand star are silly in this Italian dance if they are any less so when done in American square dances.

When I noticed that the author would draw the line on Carkowvienne (Whiew! I'd draw several lines through that myself), I wondered if he meant Krakowiak (Polish) or Varsoviene (Swedish). From his vague description of one of the many steps of Krakowiak, I gathered that that was the one he meant. Prejudice, as Michael Herman says, is "preconceived judgment or opinion made without just grounds or without sufficient knowledge". When a person condemns a dance whose name he doesn't even know, can we call this anything else?

I'm a square dance caller (of sorts). At least, that was the idea when I was asked to write this column. Most of the dances that I know come from around New England or New York or from books. The sound of the fiddle and guitar will automatically pull my leg muscles into the steps of Hull's Victory, Darling Nellie Gray, or anything else American. European folk dances didn't come quite so easily; but I tried a few of them, for a few more times than once, and those few that I now know, from the Ukrainian Kolomeyka down south to the Neapolitan Tarantella; are all "out of this world".

I can't close without taking my hat off to Jane Farwell of Wheeling. Her recent folk camp at Oglebay Park was a sight to behold! A couple of hambos before breakfast, singing games in the morning, Karapyet, Kohanochka, Landler, and other dances all afternoon, nationality meals from round the world, and American squares at night. Dear God, please pass me a few more like Jane.

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I am writing in opposition to your point of view. You see, although at my Newark Y.W.C.A. group we will do American squares, there will be a generous repertoire of the dances of all nations. While no one can be expected to deny his personal dislikes, a magazine whose expressed editorial point of view declares certain dances to be "silly" and which gleefully misspells the names of European dances is fostering just the kind of prejudice against European culture that it decries when directed against our American culture. I have always felt that the more we know about other peoples, the greater our respect and understanding of them. What better way to learn to appreciate others than to do the dances

of Italy and Poland and Roumania, etc.? And how greatly do we thereby enrich our own culture! Every time we do a square dance we should remember the debt we owe our European ancestors. We Americans have a way of absorbing things foreign, of altering them to suit ourselves, and then of claiming that they are 100% American. This is all very well and is a sign that our American culture is still growing. But why shut the door on further growth? American Squares would be more truly American if it fostered mutual respect rather than prejudice.

Florence Blume

Anticipate agreeing with or taking exception to what you say; but I shan't be passive about it.

Don Chambers

The trouble was all started by Michael Herman's editorial in which he denounced as prejudiced groups who wanted to do American dances just because they were American and didn't want to do foreign ones. He taught such a group foreign dances without telling them that they were foreign and they liked them.

My reaction was, by what right does Mr. Herman tell people what dances they should dance. If they don't want to do foreign dances, why make them? And as for tricking them into doing foreign dances, that struck me as crude and unsportsman-like. In fact the whole procedure annoyed me, mostly because I prefer squares and regard time spent on other dances as wasted. (My own opinion.)

I proceeded to set forth that I liked some foreign dances, citing the schottische and hambo. I set forth that I also didn't like some foreign dances and thought they were silly. (I think some squares are silly too.)

Allright, I like some foreign dances, but prefer American ones. My next step was to say that if Mr. Herman, or anyone else, wanted foreign dances, let them do them. I have no objection. You do what you like; I do what I like.

That was the whole point of my editorial. "Mr. Herman, you do your foreign dances and let me do my squares and please don't tell me I ought to do foreign dances for my own good or to prove that I'm not prejudiced."

Jitterbugging is an American folk dance, probably the only one. If I prefer squares that come from France, am I prejudiced against the United States. Leave race prejudice out of it.

Jack says I shouldn't say I don't like the Krakowiak until I have learned to do it. I haven't learned the hambo either, which I like. I have seen both dances. You don't have to eat an egg to find out it is rotten, it is sufficient to smell it. (Please, I didn't say that the Krakowiak was rotten. To them as likes it, OK, but why try to make me like it by calling me prejudiced if I don't?)

I'm sorry about the name and spelling. I particularly asked a member of the International group what it was, I was misinformed. I never pretended to be able to spell it and I have no way at home with a deadline to meet, of finding out.

Please don't make me learn the Krakowiak.

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Doug Durant spent his vacation at Long Lake, N. Y., and came home with this among others:

THE WABASH CANNON BALL

All hands around . . . etc.

- 32 ♪ The first couple lead to the right and four hands once around
- 32 ♪ The lady swing the lady, the gent swing the gent,
- 32 ♪ Now the gent swing the lady, the lady swing the gent.
- 32 ♪ Go right on home and swing your own, for the Wabash Cannon Ball.

- 32 ♪ On to the next and four hands around and four hands all around
- 32 ♪ The lady swing the lady, the gent swing the gent.
- 32 ♪ Now the gent swing the lady and the lady swing the gent
- 32 ♪ Go right back home and swing your own, for the Wabash Cannon Ball

- 32 On to the last and four hands 'round, four hands all around. . . . etc.

On to your place and allemande left, right hand to your own,
Grand right and left you go all around the hall
Now meet your girl and give her a whirl and promenade her home
And listen to the jingle of the Wabash Cannon Ball.

Other couples in turn.

Your editor hasn't heard the tune for some time and has mislaid the record on which he had it. In working it out he had it for a time confused with The Wearing of the Green, but if this isn't it, it will do.



✓ 32
✓ 32
✓ 32
✓ 32
✓ 32
Comptown
✓

MARCHING THRU GEORGIA

I have had more requests for the call for this dance than for any other. It is the beginners' favorite--easy to do and lots of fun. But when you call it as often as Loretta and I have, you're ready to scream at the very mention of it. Three times a night is too much for any dance, but that's what Loretta called this at the country club and they wanted it again. Even the southerners like it.

This is a sung call. The tune is, of course, Marching thru Georgia

Introduction: All join hands and circle to the left around the ring
All the way around the place you do the same old thing
When you get to your back yard you stop and take a swing
Swing like we used to in Georgia
Join hands and raise them to the center high¹
Now back again and throw them to the sky¹
Now allemand your corners all and swing your partners nigh
Swing like we used to in Georgia

First lady promenade the inside of the ring² The Dance

When you get to your own man you stop and take a swing

Everybody raise left hands and march around the ring³

Like we were marching thru Georgia

Hip, hip, hurray⁴ * * * * * * * * * *⁵

Hip, hip, hurray⁴ * * * * * * * * * *⁵

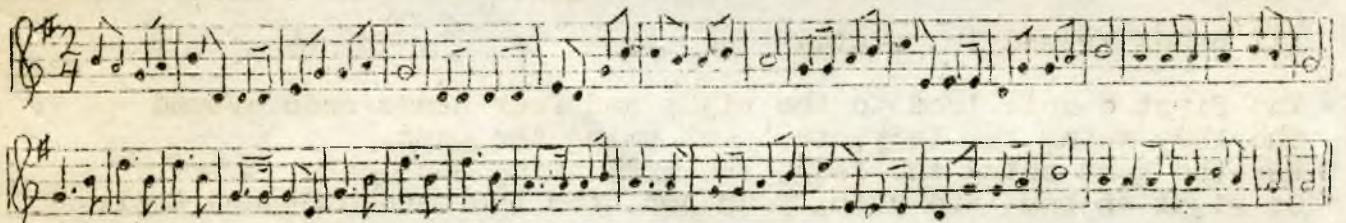
And when you get to your back yard you stop and take a swing

Swing like we used to in Georgia.

Each lady in turn and then each gent in turn promenades and then wind up with an allemand left and grand right and left if desired.

1. Forward and back
2. Now the first lady gets a chance to strut her stuff in the middle of the square while the other dancers make the usual comments heard when a beautiful lady goes by.
3. Everybody raise left hand, face right, place left hand on the left shoulder of the dancer ahead and march!
4. The dancers help out with this shout.
5. Here the caller yells one of the following four commands: "Keep going the same way," "Turn back the other way," "You're going the right way," or "You're going the wrong way." It's part of the fun to see whether he can trick the dancers into turning around when they're not supposed to and vice versa.

Marching Thru Georgia was the first sheet music that I ever owned. However, I have tried to call this dance only to be informed that the musicians didn't know the tune. So here it is:



OUR FAVORITE DANCE

by Bobby Robinson
and Carl Schmitz

Our favorite American Square Dance. An interesting pattern of footwork, executed to a most pleasant tune. One that Americans have been singing down the years. It has a zip and lilt unto itself and has always been received enthusiastically and has added real joy to every square Dance Party which we have directed. The recording in Album C-34 "SWING YOUR PARTNER" is just right. So come on and Swing Your Darling with us.

All join hands and circle left

First couple out to the couple on the right.
Circle to the left and circle to the right ($\frac{1}{2}$ way round).
It's right hand thru and back with the left
Swing Your Darling Nellie Gray.

On to the next (2nd couple) repeat.

On to the next (3rd couple) repeat.

CHORUS O Allemande left with Lady on your left
Right hand to your partner and it's
Grand right and left, When you meet your
Partner you listen to the call and Swing
Your Darling Nellie Gray

After CHORUS the 2nd couple start the circuit followed by 3rd couple and then the 4th couple.

Joe and Marian had such a wonderful time at Lenope Park on the Lenope Picnic that when the Lafferty Sisters said there would be a square dance there Labor Day, I made it #1 on my priority list.

Ben Kelly of Coatesville, Pa., called and they ran squares in between couple dances and Paul Jones. And what music! To call it fast would be an understatement. It's the first time I ever polkaed to "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl". It didn't bother the natives, tho. They did a slow shuffling walk, one step to every three beats or something. But they kindly left a large space in the middle for me to show off in so they could have crawled for all of me.

When you go to Lenope in summer, you'll find real folk dancing. They never got the steps they did out of a book. It was rather inconvenient for a book-dancer like me.

For the swing they did a regular fox trot with their usual shuffle step half as fast as the music. This meant that they could not stay in one place and on a "Swing Partners" the squares disappeared. Holding down one-quarter of the square I'd look over the floor and wonder if they were doing a quadrille or not. To give them credit, however, they always managed to get back to their positions in the end.

"Corner Swing" was used as a chorus instead of an allemand and right hand grande. On that command, give right hand to your corner, walk around her, left hand to partner and walk around her. As a matter of fact, it was usually done by clasping elbows. It was fun after I got used to it.

For the do-si-do, they placed their hands in front of them, fingers up, palm against the opposite, as the playing "Pattycake". In that position they walked around each other clockwise to place.

Ben called a very interesting dance to "The Bear Went Over the

Mountain". We hands around, swing and first couple lead right till the music arrived at "To see what he could see". Ben and the mike yelled "Courtsey", the orchestra cut its time in half and partners joined right hands which meant that the hands went in front of the lady. She then stepped left in front of her partner raising their arms over her head. She then curtseyed and the gent bowed. On the repetition of the strain, she stepped back to her position, again passing under their arms and curtseyed again. Following this Ben gave "Four hands around" "Lady in the center" "Dosido your opposite" "Swing your opposite" or whatever came into his head. Then on to the next for a curtsey while the bear was seeing what he could see again. The curtsey figure is graceful and interesting. We tried it at the U of P to "Sashay by Your Partner" and it works to that too.

"Pop Goes the Weasel" "Birdy in the Cage" and "Lady Around Lady" seem to be the same everywhere. However, what they called the "Double Elbow Swing" was not a chorus but a sort of western doseycdoe. The visiting couple lead right and hooked right elbows with opposites and once around; left elbows with partners and once around; repeat. The dancers had the figure down so well that the visiting couple would pass around from one couple to the next without a pause in their reel. It was interesting to watch and challenging to do.

Ben had about sixteen squares on the floor--said there were more for the fiddlers' convention. And there was one custom I liked, altho it is a bit confusing to a newcomer. The gents went alone to form the squares and when the confusion was over and the caller had filled up the last square, then the ladies joined their partners and the dance began--a bit of courtesy to the ladies that might well be imitated elsewhere.

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ORIGINAL DANCE CONTEST

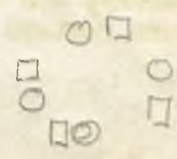
Entries for this contest should be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 white paper. Your name and address should not be on that paper but on a separate sheet. Each month's winner receives a year's subscription free. The editors reserve the right to enter their own dances and thus save the magazine money. As a matter of fact this month's winner is your editor's. It was voted best: Denim & Calico 23 to 9, a square dance picnic 6 to 3 and N. Y. U. Faculty club 5 to 6.

BALANCE EIGHT AROUND

Tune: Yankee Doodle, sung call

Introduction:

- Dance:
- 1) Ladies to the center and back to the bar
Gents to the center for a right hand star
when you get home, give left to your own
And right hand to your corner. -
 - 2) Balance in and balance out
Turn with the right hand half about 4+3
Balance in and balance out
Turn with the left hand half about
 - 3) Balance in and balance out 3+2
Turn with the right hand half about



4 { Balance in and balance out 241
Turn with the left hand half about
All eight swing your pretty little maid
Swing her had and promenade
Promenade around the town
With the right foot up and the left foot down.
Allemand left and a grand right and left

Now gents go to the center and back, ladies form a left hand star, give right hand to partner and left to corner, and in the balance turn with the left hand first.

Note that in the first figure the gents are facing out when they come out of the star and after the first turn they are facing in and all join hands again.

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SQUARE DANCES--THE FOSTER WAY, by C. D. Foster. 35 cards. Copyright 1942. These can be obtained from AMERICAN SQUARES at the price of \$1. Just mail in the buck and we'll pay the postage.

Persons acquainted with the so-called Western Style of square dancing will find much familiar material in this collection of cards. How much of the material was originated by Mr. Foster and how much was collected by him this reviewer is not in a position to say as he has been privileged to dance in the West but once. Whichever is the case, anyone possessing the information found in this collection should have no trouble in dancing with a group in the West. Hence, those dancers wishing to learn the Western technique, or rather calls, will find this collection a valuable primer. It is, however, more than an introduction as it includes the more usual western dances, i.e., more usual to this reviewer as he grew his corns to Foster's patter as interpreted by one of the West's sons.

Although ample explanations are given for each figure, the collection seems designed primarily for Callers. Its form is good for this purpose. Each dance is printed on a 3 by 5 inch card. This makes it convenient for an inexperienced caller to have the information before him for easy reference should he become confused or forget.

It appears that the author has had wide experience in calling--forty odd years worth to be exact--and seems quite qualified to offer prospective and wood-be callers some pointers. Two of these pointers stand out and seem well-worth quoting.

"Be 'leery' of that simple-minded, rather loud-mouthed individual, who keeps asking to be allowed to call one. He is not anxious to help YOU, he enjoys his own noise and wants to be IT. YOU are responsible to the crowd so don't let somebody spoil the dance.

"Make up your own patter, but unless you can use it properly, it will 'fall flat' and remember that what will go at one dance with a certain crowd may not go at the next dance with a different crowd."

Paul Wornom

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Charles Thomas, Editor
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