



MY 75 YEAR JOURNEY CALLING SQUARE DANCES

Along this journey I had the privilege of learning and teaching many types of dancing including Big Circle Appalachian dances, squares, lines, contra, Quadrilles, Texas Two Step, folk, round dancing, clogging, buck dancing, of which I have taught over the years.

I started dancing as a kid around 1938 going to dances that my dad and two older brothers played for. Mostly these dances were the big circle kind and also 2 couple circles made from the big circles. I called at some of these dances but not a complete dance. My first public square dance was at the Recreation Hall of the Tallulah Falls High School, Tallulah Falls, Georgia on a Saturday night in July 1946. I have not missed one since. In June of 1950 the Korean War broke out and I was just graduating from high school and joined the Air Force. I was stationed in Wichita Falls, Tx, and was attending one of the churches in town when they announced they were having square dances in a church gym down town. Well I thought this was for me. I attended and was surprised I did not know the calls because it was Modern Western Style that we do today but I learned it quick and they let me do my stuff and taught me calls and let me call. So I am thankful to them for teaching me MWS. That one call they were doing was Just Because and it had not been out long. They were all learning it and that was the first singing call I ever learned and still calling it. Great for classes and beginners.

WHERE DID MY JOURNEY TAKE ME

If I can remember all the places. First I will list the states that I have called in but won't name the cities just the number of cities I have called in.

Alabama: 51; Colorado: 25; Florida: 15; Georgia: 30; Hawaii: 2; Illinois: 6; Iowa: 4; Kansas: 5; Kentucky: 4; Louisiana: 3; Mississippi: 2; Missouri: 2; Nevada: 1; North Carolina: 3; Ohio: 6; Oklahoma: 2; Pennsylvania: 2; South Carolina: 4; Tennessee: 3; Texas: 6; Utah: 1; Virginia: 2; Wyoming: 4;

OVERSEAS

Guam: 1; Bermuda: 1; Japan: 2; Korea: 5;

STATE CONVENTIONS

Alabama: ASARDA, all of them; ALABAMA JUBILEE: 15; DIXIE JAMBOREE: 18;
AZELLA TRAIN FESTIVAL: 11; DRUID HILLS FESTIVAL: 2; HUNTSVILLE ROCKET CITY
ROUND UP: 4; PEANUT FESTIVAL: 4; WIREGRASS FESTIVAL: 2;

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

NATIONAL SQUARE DANCE CONVENTIONS: 10; CALLERLAB CONVENTIONS:19;
ROUND DANCE CONVENTIONS: 4; CONTRA CONVENTIONS:2;

FESTIVALS WE WERE ON THE STAFF

CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY FESTIVAL, COLUMBUS, GA. 2 TIMES ON STAFF AS
ROUND DANCE LEADERS AND ALSO SHARED PROGRAM WITH CALLERS.
DRUID HILLS FESTIVAL, TUSCALOOSA, AL 2 TIMES ON STAFF AS ROUND DANCE
CUER AND CALLER. SHARED PROGRAM WITH CALLER
13 YEARS ON THE FESTIVAL IN GALINBURG, TN AS CALLER, LINE DANCE AND
ROUND DANCE CUER
3 YEARS AS ROUND DANCE CUER, CALLER AT THE EUFAULA, AL FESTIVAL WITH
CHRIS VEAR

CALLER TRAINING CLINICS

5 BY MYSELF IN ALABAMA, 1 WITH TIM MARRINER IN MONTGOMERY, AL AND 1
WITH WAYNE MORVENT IN MONTGOMERY, AL. 4 IN COLORADO WITH SHARING
WITH FANK LANE, VAUGHN PARRIS, DON FRANKLIN AND RALPH HAY.

SQUARE DANCE ASSOCIATIONS I HELPED FORM

MONTGOMERY AREA CALLERS ASSOCIATION, ALABAMA SQUARE DANCE CALLERS
ASSOCIATION. ALABAMA SQUARE DANCE ASSOCIATION (ASARDA).

SPECIAL DANCES

DON'T REMEMBER ALL THE SPECIAL DANCES I DID FOR AREA COLLEGES AND
SCHOOLS INCLUDING MANY FOR AUBURN IN AUBURN AND AUM. HUNTINGTON

COLLEGE IN MONTGOMERY, MANY DANCES FOR WEDDINGS. TROY IN TROY AND MONTGOMERY CAMPUS. YEARLY DANCES AT CAMP ASCA FOR ROYAL AMBASSADORS. JUDSON COLLEGE IN DEMOPOLIS. FOR MANY YEARS VISITED AREA NURSING HOMES AND RETIREMENT CENTERS TO CALL DANCES FOR THE RESIDENTS THERE AND ALSO PLAYED MY FIDDLE TO ENTERTAIN THEM BETWEEN TIPS. HAVE CALLED SPECIAL DANCES FOR HANDICAPLE AND MENTALLY IMPAIRED AROUND THIS AREA.

GENERAL

I am sure I have left out some. That is a long time to remember what and where you have called/taught. My wife Ruby has been my square dance partner since we go married in 1952. 69 years together teaching dancing. Both of us are 88 years old and still enjoy what we re doing even old age is slowly beginning to take its toll on what we can do. She is coming down with dementia but still tries to get in a square and on the floor for rounds and other dances. My legs and feet are dumb from neuropathy and I have come down with prostrate cancer. Has not slowed me down. It has not spread to any other part of my body. Surgery at my age is a no no so in agreement with doctors we are treating it with hormone shot and a pill bicalutamide 50 mg (bye ka LOO ta mide) Doctor took me off them today as they were causing bad headaches.

My journey for the past 75 years has been a great experience many people do not get to experience. One thing about square dancing is the many many friends I have made along the way from all over the world. I was fortunate to be able to share many dances with some of the greatest callers in the world. Square dance has been a great therapy for me and also offers to dancers the same thing. Some days at work were very frustrating and bad but when I entered the hall, put up my equipment all those troubles of the day disappeared by the first tip and it was a great evening. I can say every dance event I was ever in has been a pleasure and I would do it all over again but with a few changes. I have witnessed many changes in our activity concerning the dance out fits we wear. Smoking used to be allowed in the halls. One caller I was on the staff with at Fontana village NC would smoke a pack during the evening. Had a cigarette in his hand while calling patter, smoked another one during his singing call and two during the break. Glad that was changed. Too many good basics have been removed from our calling lists. I would definitely bring some of them back. I think we now have a good list

of basics to teach and with these basics you can call some of the greatest dances. I did not like the move we made in the 70's with the different programs and yes they were the cause of the decline of our activity in the 80's. I have always stuck with the mainstream program along every once in while doing some plus. We didn't have those programs back in the 50's and 60's and dance hall were full of people having fun.

CALLERLAB says I am the first of this organization to be awarded the THREE QUARTER CENTURY AWARD. I am honored. Hope to see you on the dance floor sometimes and "KEEP SMILING".