

**This is my Square Dancing Life**

By

Bob Brundage

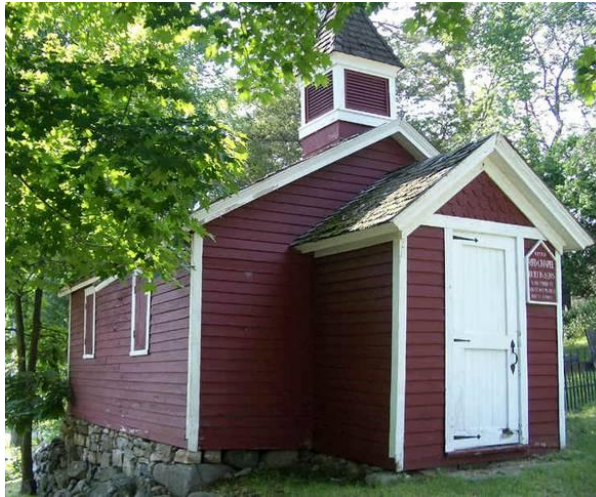
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Looking back to the days of my childhood in the late 1920's, I can see that the Little Red Chapel was sort of a focal point in our lives. I lived on a two-family farm near Danbury, Connecticut, with my brother, Al, my parents, Harold and Gene, and my grandparents, Ben and Fanny. We each had our own house but only the one farm.



Little Red Chapel, Danbury

The Little Red Chapel was the easternmost border of the King Street District. It was painted red with white trim and services were held there every Sunday when we were kids. It was a very small structure with only one room and would hold only 25 or 30 people. My Aunt Helen became interested in the history of the building so she went to City Hall and found the original charter. She was amazed to find that, "This house of worship welcomes members of any denomination to worship with us - including Baptists."

My future wife lived two houses down toward town. It was about mid point for my brother Al and his future wife to meet. And just behind it was the home of Mrs. Hawthorn where we witnessed our first square dancing. Mrs. Hawthorn had a large basement where she sold a few canned goods, candy and ice cream. It was a happy day when you could get fifteen cents together and buy a whole pint of that delicious Ryder's Ice Cream.

Al and I just happened across a dance going on one Saturday night at Mrs. Hawthorne's. There was old Jack Craddock playing the concertina and Andy Golder calling the figures. He didn't know very many different figures but that didn't matter as the dancing was only a means to an end. Dancing was used to just get together, socialize and relax for a few hours. I guess admission was about a quarter and the three of them split the money.

The figures were the old "visiting couple" type, where one couple "visits" with the couple to their right and performs some figures before moving on. And we did the good old Virginia Reel, a longways dance where a line of men face their partner in a line of women. Jack played for round dancing between tips. Round dancing then was the free style ballroom dances like the waltz, fox trot, etc., not the choreographed routines as done in square dancing (also called modern western square dancing or MWSD) today. I really enjoyed watching Bill and Mable Waterbury, neighbors of ours, dance. They were both short. He was thin, she was .... well, she was not thin. They looked like they were stuck together as they spun around the floor. Not so with Marian Scott, another neighbor. She was very animated, laughing all the way.

We soon started hearing about dances being held in other parts of town. Some Fridays or Saturdays there might be three or four going on at the same time within a twenty mile radius. Little did we know in the 1930's what lay ahead in this fascinating world of square dancing.

Life on our farm was tough in those days and folks needed a release from everyday labors. The patriarch of our family was A. Benjamin Brundage, my grandfather. He handled the market garden operation of the farm, raising all kinds of produce for the local grocery stores. Ben was a very devout man and a stern task master. He read the bible aloud at every meal and woe be to the person who missed sitting down with the family no matter what the excuse. Dad told us one of his happiest days of his young life was when Ben allowed the Sunday New York Times into the house. Before that, the schedule for Sunday was to get up at the regular time (no sleeping-in here), do your chores, go to church and read

the bible.

Now, don't get me wrong, Ben was also kind and generous. Two stories come to mind. One day an Italian gentleman named Tony arrived mid-afternoon wanting to buy some tomatoes. He said his wife wanted to make tomato sauce. All that was available was two peach baskets of number one grade. Tony said, "No, I just want some old dirty, cracked tomatoes good enough for sauce." Ben responded, "That's all I have, sorry." Tony continued to push, "It's late now. Ben, you'll never be able to sell them anywhere now. How much are they?" Ben calmly said, "Fifty cents a basket." Tony expostulated, "That's way too much but I can't go home without tomatoes." So, after careful thought he paid for them.

Then Ben invited him across the street to his personal garden where he liked to give special care to flowers and vegetables for home use. He proceeded to give Tony a big bunch of Gladiolas, some lettuce, some cabbage and some corn. He was just happy that he had received the dollar for the tomatoes. Another man came up one day and said. "Ben, I borrowed five dollars from you last month and I came by to pay you." Ben replied. "Sorry, you'll have to come back another day. I don't do business on Sunday."

Ben didn't learn to drive until he was in his seventies. What a disaster. He didn't really understand the shifting part. He usually started moving in second gear and I saw him reach the bottom of a mountain descent still in second gear. If he came to a red light and there was nobody coming the other way he would drive right through. Al or I used to drive for him delivering produce occasionally. We once stopped at a stop sign behind a car with two women inside. Both of them were smoking. Ben uttered his strongest oath, "Now don't that beat the darn. Look at them sitting there smoking. I'll bet if you looked in their purses they'll both have condoms in there."



Ben Brundage



Fanny Pierce Brundage

Ben married Fanny Pierce whose great grandfather founded the King Street Christian Church. Grandma was a delightful, though no-nonsense, lady who read Peter Rabbit from the New York Times to Al and me every Sunday afternoon. Remember now, dinner is the noon meal. The evening meal is supper. She performed all the necessary functions of a farm wife. She made the meals, cleaned the house, skimmed the butterfat off the milk from their two cows, churned the butter, did all the extensive canning and raised five children.

Fanny was also an elocutionist. She entertained at church and at home, reading poetry and prose. She taught Dad this art form and he was often asked to "speak a piece" at church and fraternal meetings. He was always a hit at numerous square dance weekend after-parties. The family favorite was "The Watermelon Story" a dialect story of the theft of a watermelon which turned out to be green of all things. I have it on reel-to-reel tape as told by my father.

Across the street was the home of my parents, Dad and Mom Brundage. Dad ran a poultry and hatchery operation. After getting established he built a three-story poultry house which housed three thousand birds. Since the final product was baby chicks, these hens were banded and trap-nested daily. Every nest

had a trap-door so that the hen, once on the nest, was trapped until the eggs were gathered. A record was kept of every hen's production. Eggs from the low producers were culled and never put in the incubators.

The most important cog in this family wheel was Mabel Gene Griswold Brundage, my mother. She and Dad met at Connecticut State College (now the University of Connecticut). They married following graduation and moved to Danbury. To Al and me she was "Mother." I recall at an early age I ran into the house and hollered "Hey Ma." I was told in no uncertain terms that she was not some hillbilly woman, that she was my MOTHER and that was the name to which she would respond. Later on she was affectionately known as Mom to the dancers and callers as well as to Al and me as adults. You have to realize that Mom was a very dignified and talented lady. She was a concert pianist who made her debut at Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford at age fourteen. Her father was an old time trap drummer. The two of them used to play for silent movies around the Waterbury area traveling by horse and buggy.



Al, Mary, Fran, Bob  
Gene, Hal Brundage

Al, and I often had to fend for ourselves because Mom and Dad were very busy people. They were both active in the Danbury Grange, an agricultural fraternal organization, and, because of Dad's super memory, they became an excellent installation team

to install the officers of the Grange each year. This ritual was lengthy and fairly complicated with over an hour of memorized lines. They also formed several new Granges in Florida when they moved there later in life. They were also active in the American Legion. They attended several National Conventions where the principal entertainment seemed to be throwing brown bags full of water out the hotel windows onto pedestrians below. Dad played bass drum in their Drum and Bugle Corps. He also sang in a popular quartet as a hobby while Mom taught piano from home.

Mother wanted her boys to be involved with music. Neither Al nor I seemed to take our piano lessons seriously so she took another tack. Her brother-in-law was A. J. Brundage (my Uncle Gus). He was the Connecticut State Director of 4-H Clubs. A 4-H Club always has a central project like poultry, dairy or forestry. She asked if she could sponsor a club which would have music as the principal project. An inquiry went to the national headquarters. The resulting confirmation made us the first music 4-H Club in the United States.

All the eligible boys nearby were invited to join and encouraged to start taking music lessons. Most chose the banjo as their instrument and after a while our first band consisted of three banjos (one was me), two guitar, piano (Mother) and trumpet (Al). We had already established a name, the King Street Pioneers 4-H Club. The lead instrument was the piano, of course. As many times as Mother played Golden Slippers, a popular square dance tune, she still had to have the sheet music in front of her to the day she retired.





The 1935 King Street Pioneers (left to right): Bob Brundage (banjo). Ralph Schroeder (banjo), Joe Tomaino (guitar), Gene Brundage (piano), Al Brundage (trumpet), Guido Ruggiero (banjo), and Luke Flannagan (guitar).

At first we started holding square dances in our one room schoolhouse where Al and I attended our first six grades. Oh yes, one room, one teacher and six grades going on at the same time. The twenty nine desks and twenty nine chairs were bolted to the floor and had to be removed in order to dance and had to be replaced after attending church on Sunday. There was a retired poultry farmer in the neighborhood, Papa Heck, who offered to let us use one of his chicken coops as a clubhouse. With the help of the men in the area we were able to clean out the debris and get rid of the resident vermin. Popular at the time was a flame thrower device like a big blowtorch. We literally burned the floor and walls to a livable condition and did a little painting. Predominant was a big four leaf clover, the national logo for 4-H clubs.

By now, about 1935, we were finally starting to get a handle on this square dance thing. Andy Golder probably got us started

calling, but Guido Ruggiero stepped in when Andy retired. Soon. Guido found out about girls and Al took over. Not to be outdone by big brother, I started calling soon thereafter. This was in 1935 and neither of us ever looked back. There was no amplification in those days, of course, and we learned that a megaphone was needed if you had more than four squares dancing. Shades of Rudy Vallee.

Also along about that time we were hearing more and more about other square dances and other callers. One of the most popular callers was Pop Benson, northwestern Connecticut, who also played the five string banjo. He was your typical home spun man and he enjoyed a big following. He and his five piece band held forth at the Elks Hall in Danbury twice a month for years. Much of the credit for their popularity had to go to their fiddler, Tude Tanguay. Tude was a hillbilly and proud of it. He not only dressed the part, he actually lived it as well. I don't believe I ever saw him dressed in anything but bib overalls with a red kerchief around his neck. He was tall and very rugged. He held the fiddle in the crook of his arm or out in midair while he stomped his foot in time with the music. He would often get up and just walk around while playing and never miss a beat. One side of his face was paralyzed and he sported a beard to try to cover it up. His twinkling eyes and crooked smile were infectious.

Dances were always nine PM to one AM in those days with a one-half hour intermission around 10:30 or so. Pop and Tude put on an amazing little show each night during the intermission. Pop sat in a strong chair and Tude sat between his legs as best he could. They always made a big production out of getting settled and getting their arms intertwined. Then Pop would finger the banjo and bow the fiddle while Tude fingered the fiddle and strummed the banjo. That brought the house down every time.



Back Row, left to right: Ken Lee, Art Caldwell, Marge Munson, Tude Tanguay, two unknown singers.  
Front Row: George Pratt, Eddie Munson, Pop Benson, Lou Rosato.

Next, Tude would invite a young lady out of the crowd to come sit in his lap. It got so the same girl would volunteer every time. He once plucked a ribbon from her hair and attached it to the scroll of his fiddle. He would hold the fiddle out in midair and turn it to the proper string as the girl simply sawed away with the bow. He always played “Yankee Doodle Dandy” and bounced the girl on his knee to keep time with the music. They wound up getting married and lived happily in their mountain cabin. His future bride became very adept at stroking the bow at the right tempo to make the sound perfect.

The grand finale was “Pop Goes the Weasel.” He would play the first chorus with the bow between his knees, running the fiddle up and down against the bow, and when the music said “POP” he would move the bow behind his back and fiddle to the next position. First it would be on his head, then under one leg while he hopped around on one foot. Then he would move it behind both knees. Next he would lie down on the floor and rock back and forth for one chorus, then under his knees again and finally he would arch his back resting on his feet and shoulders with the fiddle underneath. At last he would roll right up onto his

feet while finishing "Goes The Weasel." It provoked a standing ovation every time. How I wish I could have gotten that act on video.

Another popular caller was Swede Stoltz although he operated mostly north of our area. One who rarely called in our area until later on was Pop Smith from Falls Village, Connecticut, up near the Massachusetts state line. Mom and Dad were very good about taking us out of the area to find other callers, other dance styles and other dance figures. We found one area in New Jersey where the do sa do (a walking around, back-to-back, dance action beginning by passing right shoulders) was done with a left shoulder pass and another where an allemande left (a turn around with another dancer while holding left hands) was done by hooking left elbows and swinging around three or four times before taking the next call. We soon realized there was a lot more to be learned about this wonderful activity.

One of the first more widely known callers was Ed Durlacher from Long Island New York. Ed had a distinctive New York accent but became popular throughout the country in spite of it because of his recordings. He was also a great promoter. He struck a deal with the New York City Department of Recreation to provide free outdoor square dancing if they would provide the facility. The result was free dancing at three different locations every week throughout the summer months. This was Riverside Drive on Mondays, Central Park on Tuesdays and Jones Beach on Wednesdays. The city also provided the amplification, and the music was provided by his eight-piece union band called The Top Hands. Ed and the band were paid by the Pepsi Cola Company who were given permission to sell their products exclusively during the dances.

The easiest venue for us to attend was Riverside Drive. This area overlooked the Hudson River and the main automobile route into New York City from the north. The stage was set up at the top of a slope and there were various playing fields, tennis courts and grassy areas down below. Literally thousands of people turned out for these events and there were always lots of folks dancing while the rest were sitting and enjoying the evening.

As you would expect, the dances were very simple and each figure had a walk through before being danced. Ed's square dances always started out with him saying, "Honor your partner." It came out as "onah yur pahtnah" as the band struck a "C" chord. Then he said, "Honor your corner" (onah yur cornah) with a loud G7 chord from the band. Then he called. "All join hands and circle left" and the band would start playing the tune. After each completed routine he would ring a cowbell to signal the end of the dance.

In later years Ed started recording on the Capitol label. He put out a wonderful set of teaching records and proceeded to get the cooperation of a national teacher' association. He and his wife, Del, then traveled all over the country demonstrating and selling his records. They are probably still being used in some schools to this day. At one time Ed asked me to go on the circuit full time. I turned it down because I was having too much fun with my clubs and traveling.

Ed and Del used to enjoy coming to Danbury to visit our farm. They always went home with plenty of fresh produce and eggs but primarily they came to talk about square dancing. Ed was interested in the figures we were using, where we had been and what new figures we had learned. He was also interested in our use of different instruments. Who played in the band often depended on who was available that night. We often did not have a fiddler available so we would have a banjo or piano for the lead instrument. We tried to find musicians who could play two instruments like saxophone and banjo so we would have the sax on the rounds and banjo on the squares. As I recall, The Top Hands had two fiddles, trumpet, saxophone, guitar, piano, bass and drums.

Ed brought his band all the way up into Dutchess County, New York, to entertain at Sanita Hills. This was a summer vacation sort of retreat owned by the Department of Sanitation in New York City. They rented out cabins to their members and the area was complete with a dining hall and a very nice dance hall. When the cost of bringing a band from New York became

too much, Ed recommended our band and we played there several times each summer for a number of years.

Ed was invited to call with Al and me at a big festival in southern New Hampshire in the mid nineteen fifties. We were to call with our band, The Pioneer Trio. Ed's band members were all highly trained, union musicians while the Pioneers were three country boys who mostly played in the keys of C, G and F. When Ed got the band started on one of his calls in G, he turned to the band and said, "Drop it a half tone." Now F# is not in their repertoire so they changed the G chord to a G 7th and went six tones lower to the key of C. Ed never said a word but never asked to switch keys again.

Ed had a habit of wearing a bright red shirt with the head of a long horned steer embroidered on the front. He was invited to a big festival in Texas about the same time. During the dance he mentioned that Texas was not the only place that raised cattle and that they were raising cattle on Long Island long before they were in Texas. The newspaper account of the event the next morning stated "All the bull from Mr. Durlacher is not on the front of his shirt." He was never invited back.

One of the highlights of those 4-H days was attending the annual short course at Connecticut State College, now the University of Connecticut at Storrs. A. J. Brundage (Uncle Gus) was the State 4H Club Leader and he invited representatives of every club to Storrs during the summer. In a week long session they would learn more about their selected home project from the University staff like Dairy or Poultry and yes, even square dance calling with Al Brundage instructor. There was also a square dance most every night following a lecture on supplemental topics like business accounting.

Uncle Gus also organized and held a song and dance festival for several summers beginning in 1942. He contacted every singing group in Connecticut and invited them to sing together before the dancing. They all sat in the stands of the football stadium. All had rehearsed the same songs at home and were conducted by the University music director. It was a

fabulous sound that came from those three thousand voices. He also contacted every Grange, 4-H Club, Future Farmers and Farm Bureau in the state for the square dance. A brochure describing the dances to be done was circulated to all beforehand so that there need be no walkthrough. Dancers were only allowed to register as a square of four couples. Various callers from around the state were invited to call and each caller brought his own band. They had previously confirmed the figures they would call. The football field was marked off in squares and well over 100 squares attended.

Along about this time (early nineteen forties) we were invited to entertain at Peach Lake, New York. This was a summer home community just across the New York State line with a beautiful dance hall built out over the water. We played there every Wednesday night all summer for twenty seven years!

I believe our total compensation the first year for a five-piece band and caller was \$35.00. I remember seeing an account book of mine that read "Peach Lake, \$3.15." I was hired back there forty-odd years later and charged them \$125 using records instead of a live band. Ah, progress. This was truly a family gathering each week. We watched kids grow up, get married and bring their own kids to dance. I sure wish there were more functions like that today.

## Figures Danced at Peach Lake, 1961

Red River Valley  
 Two head gents cross over  
 Heads forward, sides swing  
 Marching Through Georgia  
 Just Because  
 Birdie in the Cage  
 Texas Star  
 Chicken Reel  
 Solomon Levi  
 Forward Six and Back  
 My Pretty Girl  
 Arkansas Traveler  
 Up Town, Down Town  
 Cindy Lou  
 Trail of the Lonesome Pine  
 Right Hands Across  
 Little Brown Jug  
 I Want a Girl  
 Swanee River  
 Sioux City Sue  
 Dance Your Troubles Away  
 Nellie Gray  
 Bunny Hop  
 Jessie Polka  
 Mexican Hat Dance  
 Virginia Reel  
 Barnacle Bill  
 Form a basket  
 Duck {for the} oyster

Dances at Peach Lake - 1961.  
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 Jessie Polka  
 Mexican Hat Dance  
 Virginia Reel  
 Barnacle Bill  
 Form Basket  
 Duck Oyster

I have to tell about one big adventure about 1938 that our family had. We woke up one morning to a snowstorm. That was not unusual except that it just kept snowing and snowing. We were booked for a dance that night at the Concordia Hall in Danbury. Telephone conversations went on all day. It turned out that the streets downtown and at the bottom of the mountain had been plowed and were passable. The club left the decision up to us so, of course old "the-show-must-go-on" Dad said we'd be there. Looking out our living room window we would normally see a high stonewall fence on one side of the



road and a steep embankment on the other. That day all you could see was snow. It had to be over five feet deep.

Mother took a small briefcase with the sheet music. Al took his trumpet in the case. I took the snare drum with sticks, brushes and foot pedal. Dad strapped the bass drum on his back and blazed a trail through the waist deep snow. We went out the back door, past the hen house, over the summer range (where the poultry ran free in the summer time), into the woods, over the top of the hill, down the other side, past the neighbors' apple cellar and onto the road. It took us an hour to get that far and there was still three quarters of a mile to go. At the bottom of the mountain we finally arrived at the home of my future wife where we managed to warm up. We borrowed their car and arrived at the hall just before nine. The fiddler had made it okay so we were in business. Four squares turned up to dance and, as they say, "A good time was had by all." They had expected a lot more people than came so we accepted the gate receipts in lieu of our regular fee which was probably about fifty dollars at the time.

We stayed overnight at my future in-laws home and trudged back through the drifts the next day as there were animals to be fed and eggs to be picked up. The road had to be shoveled by hand so the WPA (Works Progress Administration) assembled a half dozen men for the job. Everyone that lived along the road turned out to help and it took five days to clear a path for cars. A path was shoveled only wide enough for one car with a turnout every couple of hundred yards so cars could pass going in opposite directions. Neighbors provided coffee and sandwiches and it was several days before normal traffic was opened. Schools were closed for a week and milk from dairy farms spoiled and had to be thrown out. No one went hungry of course because everyone had a cow or two, some chickens for eggs and a pantry full of canned goods. The first order of business after the storm was to shovel a path to the barn, the chicken house and the backhouse, not necessarily in that order.

The King Street Pioneers 4-H Club got involved in other activities as well. With the money we made playing for square

dances (plus some personal donations) we were able to purchase an old Ford chassis. Fathers of our members built a flat bed on the back and we mounted a large water tank. All of a sudden we were a volunteer fire squad. We were also given backpack fire extinguishers, brooms and shovels from the Fairfield County Extension Service. This pointed up the dire need for a fire fighting company so it was not long before the community organized a real volunteer fire company and, with help from the City of Danbury, even established a fire house with two fire trucks. Dad Brundage became the first fire chief.

One Arbor Day there was a nationwide push by the National 4-H Office to plant evergreen trees. Our club distributed and planted some two thousand of them around the community. We planted about five hundred of them on our farm. I often wonder how big those trees are today.

As our members grew up and took on other interests the club disbanded and Al, Mother and I carried on with help from other musicians around the area. Our first steady dance job (about 1936 or 1937) was at the Hawleyville Fire House about fifteen miles from Danbury. We played there every Saturday night for a long time. They could squeeze just five squares in their hall arranged like a number five die. Admission was about a quarter. Soda and candy were a nickel. We probably called the same dances every week and "Birdie in the Cage" was always the last one before intermission. The active couple got to "Swing in the Center and Kiss Her If You Dare." At many dances, if the dancers were not ready to stop after four hours we would pass the hat. The amount collected determined the amount of additional time we would play. The standard program was made up of three squares and three rounds followed by a short break and then another similar group of dances.

When Al left to attend college at the University of Maine at Orono, things changed a bit. I took over the calling duties but we missed his trumpet for the round dancing. I undertook to put together a band of my high school classmates. I was fifteen years of age at the time. At one time or another I used Billy Stahl who later became a prominent doctor and surgeon. He played clarinet

and saxophone. Then there was Jack Hooper who went on to become vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank. He played trombone and piano. These two and other classmates always entertained at our class reunions and we also managed to get in at least one square dance. Very often I had to call and play drums at the same time. I learned later on that Don Armstrong did this as well. We often had players who could play saxophone for the rounds and banjo for the squares. It was not unusual to have them sit at the drums and beat the bass.

Most of our work was done at various grange halls and fire companies all around the state and even out-of-state. Mother had sheet music for each instrument. She had each tune numbered and would call out the numbers before each set of rounds. We usually started an evening with a set of three round dances and she would invariably call out numbers one, four and three. Some of our best experiences came from occasional jobs such as a wedding reception or parties at private estates. Many private functions became an annual event; which was doubly enjoyable. At many such occasions a youngster came up and asked me to play some rock and roll. My stock answer was. "I have a deal with Mick Jagger, he doesn't call any square dances and I don't play any rock and roll."

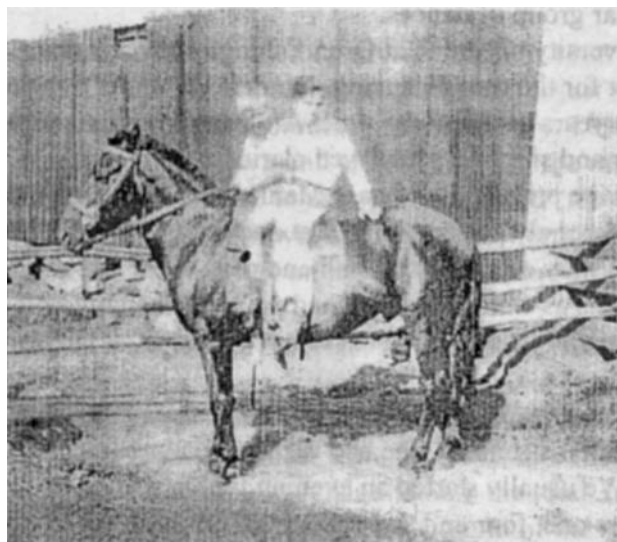
One year, about 1938, we were invited to perform at Eastern States Exposition, a New England wide fair, in West Springfield, Massachusetts. This was to be the laying of the corner stone of the Connecticut building. Each of the New England states had a building of their own to exhibit their history, customs and industries. This was to be an outdoor event and there was no piano readily available so we elected to bring our own. We loaded the old piano from our clubhouse onto the farm truck and prayed that it wouldn't rain. It really was quite an effort as the trip took three hours each way. We had a big crowd dancing and we received a personal "thank you" from the Governor of Connecticut.

Al and I were both pretty good dancers. Of course. We were brought up during the big band era and we loved the various dance rhythms, especially the "jitterbug." Earlier we had both attended formal ballroom training at the Ken Newman Dance School in

Danbury. We were taught how to properly ask a lady to dance and to escort her onto and off of the floor. The dance craze at the time (1932) was "The Lambeth Walk." Mr. Newman would have been shocked to hear the approach one of my classmates used. He would saunter over to a prospect and say, "Come on worm let's wiggle."

Then when I left for college in 1941, also at the University of Maine, Dad started to call dances at home. Everyone thought that Al and I learned to call from Dad but the opposite is actually true. Dad was not a musician in spite of his singing and Drum Corps experience but he had a knack for entertainment and he was very well accepted. We were all happy about his decision because it meant the band continued working and the boys were able to earn a little extra money when home for holidays and the summer.

I know the following has nothing to do with square dancing but I have to tell about my old pal, Midnight. Midnight was a Welsh pony, bigger than a Shetland but smaller than a horse. He was solid black and his mane was cropped like a butch cut before he came to me. In addition to all Dad's activities he also sold livestock feed. He didn't have a store but ordered in a carload of grain three or four times a month. Some local farmers would come to the rail yard to pick up their order and we delivered to the others. One farmer got way behind in his bill so Dad took Midnight in lieu of payment. I was about fourteen (1936).



Midnight, with my cousin, Peck Comstock in front, me in back, in front of my grandfather's barn.

Al had no interest in riding so Midnight and I became an inseparable pair. I did most of my early day courting on horseback. When I left anywhere for home at night I would just drop the reins and Midnight would take me home.

We had a couple of unusual experiences. Horse races were held occasionally over in Carmel, New York. They planned a special race for ponies one day and Dad thought I should enter. We didn't have a horse trailer so I elected to ride him all the way. I knew that Carmel was sixteen miles away so I got a real early start. I arrived in plenty of time to give Midnight a little rest. It turns out there was only one other pony entered in the race. My heart dropped when our opponent arrived in a horse trailer, with a groom, sporting a racing saddle and a kid with an attitude wearing racing silks. At post time I decided to ride bareback to cut down on some weight as my saddle was a rather heavy western one. I had been training him to get a fast start. I would tighten up on the reins and nudge him with my heels to get his attention. Then I would loosen the reins, kick him with my heels and shout simultaneously. He got pretty good at it so we took a quick lead at the start. There was only one turn to make as this was just a quarter mile race. I had drawn the outside position and the kid bumped us as we entered the turn. That was just enough to cause us to lose by a whisker. It was a sad day for me and an exhausting one for Midnight as I had to ride him all the way home again the same day. We were offered the chance to race again the next day but I was scheduled to leave for summer camp and I had to decide for myself. Summer camp won out.

The only other race we ever entered was way up in Hartford, Connecticut. Uncle Gus provided a flatbed trailer and we planned to stop at the lumber yard downtown to buy lumber for an improvised stall. At the curve beside the Little Red Chapel, Uncle Gus was riding the crown of the road when a car coming the other way made him swerve to the right. Midnight's shift of weight to that side caused the trailer to overturn spilling us onto the roadway. When the dust settled we found Midnight nonchalantly eating grass nearby. There were no injuries and we managed to make the lumberyard with no further problem. We went on to win and I'm still using the race horse trophy we won as a doorstop to this day,

One of the saddest days of my life came the day LeRoy Jackson bought Midnight and rode him off up the road. However, years later, after the war I was able to track him down through several owners. He was on a nice farm in Brookfield, Connecticut, just a few miles from Danbury. I had a special whistle I used to use to call him to the barn. I went to the gate and whistled. It took a little while but he finally appeared over the hill. He nuzzled me with as if to say "Where's my sugar cube" Oh yes, I had it with me. His whiskers were all white and I'm sure he was not long for this world. I felt truly blessed to have had such a friend as part of my life.

While square dance programs remained about the same the world was in turmoil because of Adolph Hitler and Hiro Hito. In college I was accepted into a Civilian Pilot Training Program at Old Town, Maine, Airport racking up 90 hours of flight and navigation experience. I volunteered for the Army Air Corps and I was assigned to the Southeast Training Command, moving among four different Army flying fields in the southeast (Marianna and Venice, Florida, and Albany and one other place in Georgia). One year and one day before D-Day, June 5, 1942, I married my childhood sweetheart, who came with my mother and her father from Danbury to Albany, Georgia. I breezed through the primary, basic and advanced training: which led me to a P-47 assignment. When I was selected to fly P-40s for ten hours I thought I might be on my way to the Flying Tigers but I wound up on the Queen Elizabeth (a luxury liner converted for a troop transport) heading for the European Theatre of Operations. That was a cozy 6-day cruise for 18,000 troops. I had a single stateroom - me and eight other guys with full gear.

While in flight training I had a rather harrowing experience. As part of our advanced training we were sent off to gunnery school at Pensacola, Florida. We were flying AT6 Advanced Trainers outfitted with 50-caliber machine guns. All this air-to-air practice took place over the Gulf of Mexico. A huge canvas target was towed through the air by a long wire cable attached to a slow-flying aircraft. A heavy pipe with a large lead ball at the bottom kept the target upright through the air.

Typically we flew in flights of four aircraft. All bullets had been color coded so it could be determined whose shots actually hit their

mark. A flight would approach from far above and in the opposite direction, peel off and dive in a sweeping 180-degree turn toward the imaginary enemy. The trick was to fire right up to the target then dunk the stick to dive under it. I happened to be last in line and just as I dunked the stick the target stopped right in front of me. A bullet had severed the tow cable. This huge sheet completely covered my plane for a few moments, then blew off and fell into the Gulf.

My initial sense of relief quickly changed with a strong smell of gasoline in the cockpit. I opened the canopy for fresh air and my first impulse was to jump. Looking down into the water some five thousand feet below, I said to myself. "Well, I'm still flying so I may as well wait until I get back over land." When I got back over land I said. "I can see the airport so I may as well take it back in."

Then I noticed that when I moved the stick backward or forward that it would remain in that position and not come back to neutral, as it should. Remembering those old World War I movies where the cable gradually frayed with each move caused me to think twice about continuing to fly but I stayed the course. I tried so hard to be careful that I missed the landing strip and had to go around again. The second attempt got me down with no further problem.

No one had heard my "Mayday" call because the target had wiped out the radio antenna. Where the antenna attached to the fuselage there must have been a gas line to the fuel indicator. It was that rupture that caused the gas odor. The big bar at the front of the target had struck, the leading edge of the horizontal tail fin, peeling it back against the moveable elevator. That was the cause of the stick problem. Any spark could have blown us up and I was reprimanded because the loss of a pilot was more important than the loss of an aircraft. Now don't you think they should have thanked me for saving a perfectly good AT6? I obviously never did get my score on that target.

Like all other veterans I want to tell you my war stories. As soon as a beachhead was established following D-Day an order came down from Wing Headquarters for volunteers to ferry planes

across the channel. It happened that I was the only pilot with airtime in a Piper Cub, which I flew back in Maine. There were four planes to be ferried, my L-4(Piper Cub), an L-5, a C-10 and a P-47. We tried to plan our takeoffs so that we would all arrive at the Cherbourg peninsula at the same time. That never even came close to happening. As my Piper Cub was the slowest of the four I had to leave first. In my hurry to get going I neglected to check the gas supply. Later, after the L-5 and C-10 had blown by me I realized that I could not be sure of the accuracy of a different gas gauge. I was used to a gauge on the control panel inside the cockpit which would read the usual "empty. ..., full" and so on. This gauge was a float with a stick poking up through the fuselage just in front of the windscreen which, by its height, showed how full the tank was. Never having seen one, how was I to know how full the tank was by looking at that stick. Also, I had always flown from the back seat. When I tried to sit on my seat pack parachute in the back, my head hit the ceiling so I had put the parachute on the front seat and I sat in the back. Now that I found myself alone over the Channel I thought I would feel better if I were sitting on the parachute. I couldn't see how to move it to the back seat under me so I decided to change seats. I figured I could just swing my fanny up over the back of the front seat. I set the trim tab and the throttle for even flight. I grabbed the two spars overhead and made the big lunge. Unfortunately my elbow hit the throttle which threw everything out of trim. I dove for the back seat again and caught the control stick in the crotch of my baggy flight suit. This pulled the plane right up in a stall and caused us to fall off into a spin.

The nice thing about a Piper Club is that if you let go of everything it will correct itself. When I finally got the stick disengaged from my suit the plane started to level off. By now we were down to about five hundred feet. Because of the invasion there was a directive which stated that any plane flying outside the assigned corridor or below a thousand feet was to be shot down no questions asked. I was looking directly at a Navy Destroyer and I could hear those sailors saying. "What kind of a nut is out here in the middle of the English Channel practicing spins five days after D-day?" Perhaps some day an old Navy veteran will read this and say. "Hey! I'm the guy that should have shot him down."



I did eventually meet the P-47 before we reached landfall and he escorted me to a safe landing at our temporary landing strip. I have been able to brag that I invaded France five days after D-day in a Piper Cub. Hitler was safe for another day.

Going back in time a bit, when we first landed in Scotland we boarded a train for southern England. At Blackpool we had to layover for about four hours so a group of us wandered downtown. We ran across what looked like a coffee shop so, of course we went inside. After bad coffee and some sweet rolls we asked for the check. We had just been issued English money that morning so when we reached for change for a tip we all selected a coin that looked something like a quarter. As we were walking along the street later one man who had been to England before said, "I hate to tell you this but we left about three dollars more for a tip than the total bill came to." Our experience with English money was limited to poker or black jack card games in which a pound note was used like a dollar bill. The pound was worth about \$4 then.

In 1945, when the war was finally over, Dad convinced me to go back to college. I was a little late getting there but we "old" veterans were welcomed because enrollment had been down for a while. I suddenly realized that I was three years older than most of the student body. Of course I had my wife with me and the University was providing reasonable housing for married students. Anxious to get back into square dancing I enlisted the help of a fraternity brother, Bob Pretty, who was a whiz on the piano. Bob went on to become a very prominent lawyer in Portland, Maine, where he joined his father's firm. We managed to find a few jobs around the area and I was back in business. What a team: caller and pianist. We charged five dollars a night, two for him and three for me because I owned the amplifier. It was an 8-watt beauty with one speaker output and one microphone input. An open back speaker and a huge microphone completed the unit. I managed to keep busy with band, chorus and orchestra and upped my grade point average to the dean's list with a 3.0 .

While at the University of Maine after the war I had a unique experience at a dance advertised as a square dance. Fran and I, along with some friends, arrived at the dance and found a large

group of folks dancing a contra called Lady of the Lake. After the contra ended the band played a set of waltzes and there was a short break. The caller then shouted, "Form your sets for Lady of the Lake". When everyone was in place the caller said, "Balance and swing with the one below." and the band started a reel. Then the caller, who was also the fiddler, sat down and played and that was the end of his calling. The contra lasted a good twenty minutes and was followed by a set of fox trots and here we go again - "Form your sets for Lady of the Lake" - "Balance and swing the one below" and we were off to the races again. We only stayed about two hours because that was the whole program. There was no rhyme or reason to the dancing. No two contra lines were ever at the same place at the same time. Unless it happened before we arrived or after we left they never did perform a square dance.

Upon graduation in 1948 (M.S. in Economics) I was fortunate enough to find a job with the Experiment Station at the University of Massachusetts. This was a bit fortuitous as well because I soon met Lawrence T. Loy who was very involved in square dancing. In addition to his duties as Director of Recreation and Youth Services for the state he also called for local square dances. He was the first caller to record on a major label, recording on MGM, RCA Victor and Capitol. Larry, like Ed Durlacher, was used to ringing a cowbell to signal the end of a dance. At one of his recording sessions a man approached him and told him he could not do that. Astonished, Larry asked why not and was told that he did not belong to the musicians union and therefore could not "play" the cowbell.

Starting in 1949 or '50 Larry and I worked together to put on some really big festivals during the summer on the university football field. We featured all the prominent New England callers and an occasional national caller as well. Ed Gilmore (a well-respected caller from Yucaipa, California) honored us with his presence more than once. We entertained literally thousands of dancers during the ten-year series. One story deserves the telling.

One of the Massachusetts callers who appeared often was Jack Mansfield. He was a traditional caller who organized a contra exhibition group that performed at Storowton Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. His favorite call was "Darling Nellie Gray." He was

calling that dance with a thousand dancers on the field when the lights went out. A car had hit a utility pole near the campus cutting off power in the area. When the amplifier for the music and the call failed we suddenly realized that the dancers were still dancing. In fact, they were all singing the calls for "Nellie Gray." It was a clear moonlit night so seeing was no problem. The dancers actually put the middle break in the right place as the singing continued without a hitch. When Jack realized that the dancers could go on without him he turned to the band and told them to pack up. He received a roaring ovation even as they got in their cars and drove away.

One year the football field was not available for some reason so we danced on a grassy area beside a lake. We knew there was a slight slope downward but did not realize how it would affect the dancing. It was good for a laugh when, after every figure the dancers would trudge back up the slope to start over again back where they started.

While on staff at UMass I became involved with the New England Folk Festival Association. Their annual weekend festival took place in the Boston area until they moved to Natick, Massachusetts, where they hold forth to this day. The square dance portion of their program was strictly the traditional variety. It was there that I met and admired callers like Ralph Page and Ted Sannella. There were beautiful demonstrations of dances from many countries as well as musical instrument jam sessions and group singing. I became a member of the Board Of Directors and served until moving back to Connecticut in the mid nineteen-fifties. I truly admired the timing, rhythm, enthusiasm and dedication of the folk dancers and leaders. I sincerely wish square dancing could get back to it's traditional roots. I firmly believe that traditional callers and dancers will survive in this topsy-turvy world but I'm afraid that square dancing as we know it today will gradually disappear.

I had one demoralizing experience around this time in Worcester, Massachusetts. I was invited to call for the Worcester County Dairymen's Association. Following their dinner the floor was cleared of tables and we got on with the dance. After the first

tip I saw a large dairy farmer coming full steam ahead across the floor. He climbed the stairs and came across the back of the stage, grabbed my hand and furiously pumped it explaining, "You're the best darn caller I ever heard in my life." Well now, my chest expanded a few sizes and I struck up a conversation with him. I asked him where he lived, about his dairy farm, number of head of cows, etc. I finally asked him where he square danced and he replied, "I've never been to a square dance before in my life." My ego deflated right there on the stage in front of everybody.

A friend in Pittsfield, Massachusetts asked Lawrence if he could arrange to be in town on his expense account and call a benefit dance. This was to be for the Pittsfield Quadrille Club, one of the oldest organized square dance clubs in the country. There was a big turnout and the club was very happy. During a break Lawrence asked his friend what the benefit was for. He replied, "We're hoping to raise enough money to hire a good caller." Of course this was a slip of the tongue and he was referring to hiring a national touring caller but Lawrence enjoyed his embarrassment.

In 1950 Lawrence arranged a weekend workshop with Herb Greggerson from Ruidoso, New Mexico, which was held in Brockton, Massachusetts. Herb had written a book on square dancing called "Blue Bonnet Squares" and had his own dance hall back in New Mexico. He not only taught new (to us) figures like Do Paso and Allemande Thar but also some beautiful round dances like Laces and Graces, the Varsouviana and the Boston Two Step. We learned that Herb had presented thirty such workshops over a thirty-two day span along the way at \$100 per night. This turned out to be New England's introduction to western style dancing and led to the turn from traditional style to modern western square dancing.

In attendance, besides Al and me were such future stars as Charlie Baldwin, Howard Hogue, Dick Doyle and Ted Perkins plus a host of others from all around the northeast. It was shortly thereafter that we New Englanders started thinking seriously about starting classes and forming clubs. I started the first such club in Western Massachusetts in the little town of Warren in 1950 followed soon after by Wilbraham just outside of Springfield. My

first class there had eleven squares dancing and, of course no experienced volunteer dancers or “angels.” At the same time Al was forming the Hartford Club, the Connecticut Club and the Stamford Club down in Connecticut. There were square dance clubs popping up all over New England. Many people were getting into the calling business and everyone was having a great time.

Al had built the Country Barn in Stepney, Connecticut, in 1948. The average attendance over the seven years of its existence was over three hundred per night. His weekly Saturday night dances continued the same as usual with live music by The Pioneer Trio.



The Pioneer Trio in 1947: Jimmie Gilpin, fiddle, Eddie Munson, guitar, and Lou Rosato, accordion.

No collection of stories about my calling career would be complete without talking about the Pioneer Trio, Lou Rosato, accordion, Jimmy Gilpin, fiddle, and Eddie Munson, guitar. They started playing individually with various callers like Pop Benson and Swede Stolt and all wound up together first at Meddlicott's Barn in New Milford, Connecticut, around 1940. In addition to their seven year stint at the Country Barn, Al and I used them for one night stands every chance we got. They recorded with Al on the

Folkraft and Alamar labels cutting dance figures popular at the time. When the first Atlantic Square Dance Festival in Boston, Massachusetts, was organized it was the Pioneer Trio that played in the main hall as square dance recordings were few and far between.

It was at one of these early festivals that Lou Rosato, Fran and I pulled a little prank on Jimmy and Eddie. Fran and I ran into Lou in the lobby of our hotel late at night. We were just coming in from visiting other callers' hotels and Lou was after a fresh pack of cigarettes. We invited Lou to our room for a nightcap where Lou's plan took shape. He called their room and told them he had run into a beautiful young lady who was looking for a party and that he was in her room at the time. He suggested his buddies might get into the action if they were to get dressed and come on down. There was a short hallway from the door to the bedroom and we had Fran in the bed with a portion of one bare leg showing from the doorway while I hid in the bathroom. The boys came fully dressed in jackets and ties, giggling and smirking at the prospect of forbidden action. There was a lot of "You go first," and "No, I'm not going in there," until we couldn't keep from breaking up and disclosing our charade. Jim and Ed were good sports and forgave us even though we reminded them of their indiscretion more than once in years ahead.

The night before I left for Albuquerque I called for the last time with them. The Woodbury Town and Country Squares wanted to hold a club level square dance with live music. We had a packed hall and a friend, Paul Trowbridge, came and videotaped the affair. I shared the program with Culver Griffin from Roxbury, Connecticut. The Pioneers had been performing together for sixty years and were still playing for Culver occasionally until Jimmy passed away unexpectedly in 2000. They were always fun and easy to work with. They knew what tune and what key I wanted as soon as I announced the next figure.

There was one hilarious inside joke which came about rather unexpectedly at a dance somewhere. One of my favorite dances at a one night stand was "Barnacle Bill The Sailor." This tune used two different tempos. The first part is a waltz rhythm and the second

part is a snappy jig. The call starts out, "Oh the two head ladies cross and the side two ladies too", the ladies simply drift across to the opposite imitating a ballerina or some such. Then, "You bow to the one you left and the one beside you." I believe the first flat note came accidentally from Lou on the accordion on the word, "too." Jimmy, Ed and I all glared at Lou but none of the dancers noticed. On the next verse Lou hit the note flat intentionally and a couple of people looked up. As the dance went on he would occasionally hit the note flat and amplify it as well and you could see that the dancers were not quite sure just what was going on except they knew something was wrong. This became a regular game ever after.

Now Al was free to run workshops and caller training sessions in square dancing at his barn during the week or on Sundays. It was about this time that the Connecticut Square Dance Callers, Teachers and Leaders Association was formed at the Country Barn. Al became the first president and I followed the next year. Earl Johnston was a young upstart caller who attended. He intimated that he didn't need all this new stuff because he was calling for more than four hundred teenagers every week up Vernon. Al said to him, "Earl, what are you doing the other nights of the week?" Of course, Earl went on to receive the Hall of Fame Award an award given by the American Square Dance Society (of Los Angeles) for outstanding contributions and leadership in the field of square dancing.

I believe it was through Herb Greggerson that we learned of Lloyd, "Pappy," Shaw from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Dr. Shaw was the superintendent of the Cheyenne Mountain School District in Colorado Springs. In the Fall of 1934, he saw some square dancing at the Colorado Seed Show in Colorado Springs. For years he had used dancing as a tool to educate his school children but he was limited to international folk dancing. He became intrigued with traditional western square dancing because this was an American dance form. He scoured the west for information and ultimately authored the book, "Cowboy Dances," followed ten years later by "The Round Dance Book." He incorporated square dancing into his physical education program and trained his high school students and formed an exhibition team called "The Cheyenne Mountain Dancers." The group toured the country during the summer months

and attracted considerable interest among callers and teachers. Many asked where they could learn these dances so Dr. Shaw started week long summer caller training sessions at the school in 1940.

My wife, Fran, and I drove across the country to attend in 1954. It was the turning point of my career in that it gave a new perspective to an already enjoyable activity. Pappy's daily lectures at nine A.M. were highly inspirational and his no-nonsense teaching method was readily accepted by all. I was pleasantly surprised when Dr. Shaw told me how happy he was that I was there. He said he hoped I would be willing to share my knowledge of contras. All of a sudden I was being introduced as an expert to all these national leaders. I remember Ed Gilmore's putdown for experts. He said, "Ex is something passé and a spurt is a short drip." Some of the regulars that were there were Bob Osgood, editor of *Sets In Order* magazine, Manning and Nita Smith, nationally known round dance teachers from College Station, Texas, Elwin and Dena Fresh, round dance choreographers and teachers from Wichita, Kansas, Kirby Todd, a college-level dance teacher from the University of Illinois, Dale Wagner, a well-known caller from Milwaukee. After the lecture each day we danced, morning, afternoon and evening. In addition to teaching new figures Pappy was trying to instill good posture, proper decorum, proper timing, rhythm and voice control. Attendees all took turns and introduced ideas from their own experience. Of great interest to Fran and me was the emphasis put on round dancing. Back home, any dancing taking place between square dance tips would have been folk dancing.

When Fran and I arrived at the Cheyenne Mountain School all the dormitory rooms had already been assigned. Along with two other couples we were offered the use of a private home for sleeping quarters. Of course we accepted. This home had a vast column-free basement. One night, after the evening dance at the school we invited a small group to our lodging for more dancing. We danced a few squares but most of the night we enjoyed round dancing with Manning and Nita Smith. At some point someone indicated that we should probably get some sleep, as we did not dare miss Pappy's nine o'clock lecture. When we moved up out of this windowless basement we discovered it was broad daylight outside. We had been



having so much fun we had completely lost track of time. We tramped off to a coffee shop for breakfast paying no heed to the stares of the other customers at our floor length dresses, fancy shirts and boots. That was the night Nita Smith tried to teach me how to pivot twice without falling over. Sorry to say she never succeeded, through no fault of her own, of course. I guess it was just meant to be.



The Lloyd Shaw Summer School, 1954

Al had been to Shaw's school in 1949 and became part of what was known as a Round Robin. This was a circulating letter among a few [very well-known] callers in which one would tell about activities in his area, new ideas and/or new figures and then pass it along to the next and to then next, etc.

I believe the whole group included Lloyd Shaw (Colorado), Herb Greggerson (New Mexico), Dr. Ralph Piper (Minnesota), Bascom Lemar Lunsford (South Carolina), Charlie Thomas (New Jersey) and Al Brundage. How I wish we had copies of the letters and ideas from those early pioneers. They would have been an

invaluable addition to the history and memorabilia of our wonderful activity.

Two magazines came into being around the same time, *Sets In Order* and *The New England Caller*. Both had a tremendous impact on square dancing in the northeast. *Sets In Order* was edited and published by Bob Osgood in Los Angeles, beginning in 1948, later under the auspices of the American Square Dance Society. Since each issue introduced a new figure complete with pictures we could not wait for the mailman every month. Then, in 1950, our own New England Caller magazine appeared under the editorship of Charlie Baldwin from Norwell, Massachusetts. Al very happily invested in this project and advertised on the back cover for many years. "The Caller" primarily dealt with New England clubs and callers while "SIO" became international in scope.

Before moving back to Connecticut, Fran and I drove to Danbury many weekends from our home in Massachusetts, often after an evening dance. The interstate highway system was unheard of at that time. We used the old Route 6 and had to circle around Hartford to avoid traffic. During one period we had to be in Danbury early Saturday morning because there was an important series of workshops going on in New York City. We would pick up Al and his wife, Mary, proceed down through Armonk, New York, to pick up Dick Forscher and his wife, Tia. Then we went on to Carl Fishers' Publishing House in New York City where Al and Frank Kaltman were teaching the very basic steps of square dancing. The students were teachers and callers and I believe included Dick Kraus, well-known physical education professor and author of several books on square dancing, and Olga Kulbitsky, another physical education professor and assistant editor of American Square Dance Magazine. Frank, who owned the Folkraft Record Company had made the arrangements to meet there and we were all thrilled to take part in this momentous new adventure. Dick Forscher eventually retired from the square dancing madhouse and returned to one-night stands and traditional dancing.

In 1950, Al conducted his first callers' school at the Country Barn. I attended as a student that time but the following year I joined his staff for the session at Springfield College in

Massachusetts. An interesting thing happened quite unexpectedly there. I had been calling a figure called "Uptown Downtown" for years. With inexperienced dancers a walkthrough took perhaps a minute or two. I heard music and calling going on down another hallway from our dance space so I went to investigate. I found an elderly gentleman who, by his demeanor and attitude, should have retired a few years before, showing his college class how to dance and call this figure. I watched for about twenty minutes while he instructed, "You must hook elbows when you go up the center." "You must cross your arms across your chest when you do sa do." "No, no, you must not turn when you separate." I couldn't stand it anymore and left disgusted. You can imagine the impression of square dancing his students passed on to their classes when they started teaching their grade schools. I know the same thing happened at the State Teachers College in Danbury. A fine young man by the name of Ted Hines came to critique my classes for the Madhatter Square Dance Club in Danbury. He was teaching square dance calling at the Teachers College and I know his efforts left a lot to be desired. Undoubtedly, bad impressions were being spread everywhere around the country because of poor teaching, but with a few exceptions I'm sure.

Also in the early fifties I was invited to be on the staff at the Maine Folk Dance Camp at Papoose Pond, Maine. Mary Ann and Michael Herman from Long Island, New York, conducted this long running venture. The Hermans also owned the Folk Dancer Record Company as well as Folk Dance House on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in the area known as "the Village" in New York City. I was to present a trimmed-down version of square dancing much to the chagrin of their permanent traditional staff caller, Ralph Page. In spite of our different approaches to square dancing we got along just fine, one reason being that we had worked together many times at the New England Folk Festival. One year we were pleased and honored to have Jane Farwell, an authority in American play party games from Wisconsin join the staff.

I was very pleased to call a series of dances at Folk Dance House around that same time. The Hermans were anxious to keep up with the times but the series of square dances never really took hold. Their regular dancers were happy to continue with their

traditional style for what little square dancing they did. Another venue in New York City was the famous Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan. I called there just once to a very large group of fine dancers on a beautiful wood floor.

Maine Folk Dance Camp was a typical weeklong workshop activity. Accommodations were a bit rustic but the spirit of camaraderie and singleness of purpose overcame the inconvenience. A few of my dedicated followers came along and they seemed quite fascinated with the programs of Mary Ann, Michael and Ralph. At one afternoon workshop Michael was teaching a newly recorded folk dance. No one noticed that Ralph had turned the record over on the turntable. When Michael placed the needle down on this completely different music there was a moment of confusion. You could see that Michael was not happy as he turned the record back to the proper side. For some reason, Ralph was nowhere to be seen in the hall. That evening while Ralph was walking the dancers through an intricate contra, Michael switched records on the turntable putting on something, of all things, like a Kolo, an Eastern European dance type with particularly difficult rhythms. When Ralph put the needle on the record he never batted an eye. He just began calling the dance as if he always used that tune, much to the wonderment and pleasure of the dancers.

Later on, I was on staff at the New England Recreation Leaders Laboratory organized by Lawrence Loy at Kezar Lake, Maine, and Camp Pinnacle in Lyme, New Hampshire. Those weeks were directed primarily to teachers and recreation department leaders. They featured organizational discussions, play party games and musical instrument instruction. The evenings were given over entirely to square dancing and I held separate fun dances during the day for my dancers who had come along for the ride. One year we had the pleasure of dancing to Rod Linnell from Peru, Maine. Rod came as a student but when we discovered his beautiful voice we put him right to work calling. Rod had written several figures all of which were of the New England quadrille variety. I was fascinated by one figure which he had not named. Soon afterward I recorded it on the Folkraft label. I named it "Rod's Right and Left" and I used it as a challenge call everywhere

I traveled. Rod had started writing a book of his compositions but never finished it before he passed away. Louise Winston from Boston brought it all together and published it under the name, "Notes From A Callers Clipboard,"

One ongoing downtime diversion during these camps was called Lummy Sticks, It involved sitting on the ground facing a partner holding short wooden sticks in each hand. Each person would tap the ground, click the sticks together and toss them back and forth with their partner. This was all done in rhythm with increasingly difficult patterns, the speed of which depended on the dexterity and concentration of the players. The advanced version of the game had two other persons sitting at a 90 degree angle to the original two who tossed their sticks on a different beat from yours. Skinned knuckles and knees were a badge of honor.

Later on I joined the big staff of the Country Dance and Song Society weeks at Pinewoods in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This workshop featured English, Irish and Scottish dancing. All the dancing was with live music and classes were held simultaneously. There were non-dancing classes for learning and practicing the recorder and dulcimer. Party dances at night were truly an international experience. Their attendees had no interest in Square dancing so my dancers did not attend and I reverted to my background of quadrilles and contras. You have to admire the grace and stamina of the dancers as well as the rhythm and beauty of the music of these dance forms.

Getting back to everyday activities, I organized the Milford, Connecticut, Square Dance Club in 1953. Many years later they elected to have only guest callers and they survived until about the year 2000 when finally no one was willing to hold office anymore or even bring refreshments to the dances. Herein lies a major factor in the demise of so many once-active clubs around the country today. Although, I understand that this is not unique to the square dance world but is showing up in fraternal organizations, social clubs and non-professional sports groups.

During these times every square dance club caller was a round dance cuer as well. There were not that many round dance routines to learn and the teaching of rounds was part of square dance classes. Nearly all dancers performed the rounds at the regular square dance club nights. I taught "Left Footers One-Step" to every square dancer who ever took one of my classes, much to the frustration of my faithful partner, Fran. Even though it was such a wonderful rhythm training routine she simply got sick and tired of it. I organized and taught the first round dance class in Connecticut in Milford in 1955. In my opinion these folks became the most well rounded dancers I have ever taught. I know of a few who are still dancing nearly fifty years later. The cueing of rounds more closely resembles the prompting of quadrilles and contras and is taken up and used by very few square dance callers today.

In 1956 Fran and I attended the 5<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention in San Diego, California, I had been invited to serve as clinic director of contras and it was a wonderful experience, I recall that I was encouraged to call a contra in the main hall on Saturday night and I believe it was the first time a contra was introduced to the entire convention. I chose "Fairfield Fancy," a dance I had recently recorded on the Folkraft label. There is a rather easy transition from squares into contra lines on the floor and the figure was readily accepted because of its simplicity. The dance involves a unique means of progression with a move popular in squares at the time called "Ends Turn In." I had been sitting with Bob Osgood and Ed Gilmore and when I returned from calling. They enthusiastically congratulated me on a job well done. I was understandably proud to have received kudos from two giants in this wonderful world of square dancing. Another thrill of that weekend was dancing on the deck of an aircraft carrier docked in San Diego harbor.

It was probably partially due to this performance and my exposure at Lloyd Shaw's school that I was invited to call for the contra portion of the pageant at the National Convention in Denver, Colorado, in 1959 under the direction of Dorothy Shaw, then widow of "Pappy" Shaw. Chuck Jones was to be the narrator for this pageant. The dancers had never danced to my calling but Mrs. Shaw had prepared them well and no one missed a beat. The

exhibition included “British Sorrow” to the tune “Hills of Habersham,” “Petronella” and my own “Fairfield Fancy.”

Notes and instructions prepared by Dorothy Shaw:

### **Contra Dance Program**

8th National Convention Festival-Pageant

#### **TO ALL PARTICIPANTS**

With Bob Brundage`s help and approval we have arranged the following medley covering all types of commonly danced contras: duple minors and triple minors, and crossed-over and not crossed-over.

Each dance will be done only three times. Bob will pause between for you to rearrange your lines and for him to explain what will be done next.

Here are the patterns:

- I. CANADIAN BREAKDOWN – a typical 20<sup>th</sup> century contra 1, 3, 5, etc., active and crossed over

#### **Counts**

- 8 Forward and balance your partner
- 8 Dos-a-dos with your partner
- 8 Allemande left with the one below and balance four in line.  
(“Alamo style” - ladies facing up the set, gents facing down.)
- 8 Swing your partner in the center
- 8 Down the center with your Partner
- 8 Turn by yourself and come back home, and cast off
- 8 Right-hand star with the couple above
- 8 Left-hand star back to place.

Bob Brundage has recorded Canadian Breakdown. It will be danced as he calls it to the tune of “Crooked Stovepipe.” The record is Folkraft #F-1264, If you want one to practice to, let us know.

## II. PETRONELLA -\_a very old contra with Scottish roots.

1, 3, 5, etc., active. Do not cross over.

- 8 Active couples advance to the center, turn round to the right, and balance.  
(Face your partner, turn 1/4 to the right. Since you are not crossed over, the men will be facing up the set, the ladies down.)
- 8 Turn round to the right and balance again  
(You are on the opposite side of the line from where you started.)
- 8 Turn round to the right and balance again
- 8 Turn round to the right and balance in place (You are back where you started)
- 16 Down the center with your partner, come back, and cast off
- 16 Right and left through with the couple above, and right and left back.

There is nothing to this dance except the footwork in the balances. It was the great New England “show piece” and we really should try to use it. Each time you face your partner to balance, try a different balance step. You can do a forward and back; step-swing; pas de basque; a little sidewise two-step; a pigeon wing. You must both do the same thing of course,) Practice this. In only three times through the sequence you should be able to be quite polished. Practice just the balances that you do best. And time it.

We shall dance this to the original tune, but any good solid contra music will do to practice to.

## III. FAIRFIELD FANCY -\_a new contra with a square dance feeling

1, 3, 5, etc., active and crossed over.

### Counts

- 8 Dos-a-dos with the couple below
- 8 Now with your partner dos-a-dos
- 8 Same four circle to the left
- 8 Circle to the right and back to place  
(Inactive couple separate to form a line of four with the



- active couple in the middle.)
- 8 Down the center, go four in line
  - 8 Ends turn in, come back in time  
(Active couples raise their joined hands to form an arch, “pop” the outside two through the arch, and all move up the set in double file, inactives walking forward to their new places, active couples backward. This cute gimmick accomplishes the cast-off)
  - 16 Ladies chain with the couple you're facing and chain right back.  
(The active couple has been walking backwards and is still facing down the line. The action is with the new couple they are facing)

We have chosen Fairfield Fancy with an audience of square dancers in mind. Bob says he always teaches it in his workshops, which is another good reason for using it.

Bob has recorded this one too, and you can practice to his calling. The record is Folkraft #F-1259. The music is stunning - “Paddy on the Turnpike.” But it will practice beautifully to whatever you have.

#### IV BRITISH SORROW - a great old triple minor.

1, 4, 7, 11 active. Do not cross over.

- 8 Actives down the outside, go below two couples
- 8 Up the center and cast off
- 8 Right hand star with the two below
- 8 Left hand star with the two above
- 16 Circle six, go once around.  
(The three ladies will be together in the circle and the three men together. The 16 measures give you plenty of time to circle comfortably and get back to where you started.)
- 8 Right and left with the couple above
- 8 Right and left back to place.

This very simple triple minor dance is stunning to watch and to do. We shall dance it to “The Duke of Perth,” which has the extra 8 measures that this sequence calls for. You can

practice it to any good contra music, but it will overlap the music 8 measures each time. Don't let it worry you.

Remember about the progression - in an uncrossed triple you just keep moving up the line and a new head couple becomes active as soon as there are two unoccupied couples below them. However, you won't need to worry about this because we'll only do it three times and the new head couple doesn't become active until the fourth time through. Just keep dancing.

The music is magnificent and very military. As soon as you've gone through three times, turn toward the head of the set, take your lady on your right arm, and march off the floor while the music plays a few more measures.

After the San Diego National Square Dance Convention I met Mike Michele who owned Western Jubilee Records. He invited us to stop in Phoenix, Arizona, for the annual Valley of the Sun Festival the next weekend. It was not that far out of the way so we accepted and even enjoyed his hospitality at his guest house. At the festival Mike, who was master of ceremonies invited me to call and, of course I accepted. I called a patter call and received a great ovation. Mike asked me to continue with a singing call and I said, "I guess I know another one" which was the wrong thing to say. Mike later told me that every other caller on the program that night only knew one call and that that was normal for local festivals in the area. Each caller that called one call got into the dance free. The next morning we had breakfast at the home of George and Marian Waudby. They had a little dance hall attached to the back of their home and there were a lot of people there. How they ever cooked bacon and eggs for such a crowd in a kitchen hardly bigger than a closet I'll never know.

The contacts I made at the nationals and at Lloyd Shaw's school led to several calling tours every spring. At on time or another we hit nearly all 48 states with the exception of the far northwest. Many of our trips produced some really long drives. Perhaps the longest was one that started in Montreal, Canada. We drove that day to Toronto, Canada, where we had dinner with Marg Hough. After calling for her club that night we changed clothes and drove all the way to Duluth, Minnesota, well over

nine hundred miles. Another time we left Akron. Ohio, after a dance and drove overnight to St. Louis, Missouri. Of course Fran and I did take turns driving and sleeping but this was right at the beginning of the interstate construction and there were a lot of detours. Standard fees for a traveling caller in those days was one hundred dollars a night and we estimated the average cost to be about fifty dollars a day to stay on the road. We were gone from Danbury six to eight weeks each year.

### **Bob Brundage's 1963 Square Dance Tour**

<b>April</b>	<b>Place</b>		<b>Contact</b>
5, Fri	Bangor, Maine	YMCA	Arlene La Fountain, 88 Norfolk St., Bangor
6, Sat	Brewer, Maine	Auditorium	Arlene La Fountain, 88 Norfolk St., Bangor
10, Wed	Toronto, Canada	St. Clair Jr. Hi	Thelma Ferguson, 237 Torrens Ave., Toronto
13, Sat	Brandon, Manitoba		Mrs. Doris Mitchell, 1718 Lorne Ave., Brandon
16, Tue	Missoula, Montana	Annual Festival	Walt Rowland, 733 Marshall, Missoula
19, Fri	Denver, Colorado	The Outpost	George Smith, % Outpost, 10101 E. Colorado, Denver
20, Sat	Alliance, Nebraska	Chamber of Comm.	Lee Mason, 1423 Emerson, Alliance Neb.
24, Wed	Grant, Iowa		Junior Bryson, Cumberland, Iowa
26, Fri	Michigan City, Ind.	Duneland Assn.	Hank Wilson, 115 Sherman, Porter, Indiana
27, Sat	Hamilton, Ohio	YMCA	Stan Burdick, 1130 Highland Ave., Hamilton
29, Mon	Ann Arbor, Mich.	Jr. High Sch.	Shorty Hoffmeyer, 1508 Linwood, Ann Arbor
30, Tue	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Goeglin Barn	Carl Geels, 5927 Lake Ave. Ext., Fort Wayne

<b>May</b>			
4, Sat	Plainfield, Ill.	Wheatland S/D Ctr.	John & Frances Schmidt, % Wheatland, Plainfield
5, Sun	Indianapolis, Ind.	Trowel Trades Bldg.	Jim Spall, 2304 Highland Ave., Anderson, Ind.
8, Wed	Terre haute, Ind.	Dragon's Barn	Amiel & Irene Dragon, RD 2, Terre Haute, Ind.
11, Sat	Detroit, Mich.	Chain Gang Club	Dave Taylor, 458 Shelburne, Gross Pointe Farms, Mich.

### **Bob Brundage's 1964 Square Dance Tour**

April	Place		Contact
3, Fri.	Meadville, Pa	Eagles Ballroom	Edward Hall, PO Box 121, Meadville, Pa
4, Sat.	Akron, Ohio		Ann Hartley, 84 25 <sup>th</sup> St. NW, Barberton, Ohio
5, Sun.	Collinsville, Ill.	Collinsville Park	Sparkie Sparks, 109 Waverly Dr., Collinsville, Ill.
8, Wed.	Saginaw, Mich.		Bill Morris, 44 Rosemary Ct, Midland, Mich.
12, Sun	Columbus, Neb.	Mid-state Festival	Harold Bausch, Leigh, Neb.
17, Fri	Alliance, Neb.	Twirlaway Club	Jack Brennan, Ellsworth, Neb.
18, Sat	Elliot, Iowa		Junior Bryson, Cumberland, Ia.
19, Sun	Schererville, Ind.	Sherwood Club	Bill Christenson, PO Box 416, Schererville, Ind.
21, Mon	Ann Arbor, Mich		Shorty Hoffmeyer, 1508 Linwood, Ann Arbor
24m Thu.	Pittsburg, Pa.		Lloyd Lockerman, 192 Goldsmith Rd. Ext, Pittsburgh, PA

### Bob Brundage's 1965 Square Dance Tour

April	Place		Contact
11, Sat.	Mason, Mich	Pink panther	Wayne Pelmeur, G36 E. Shaw Hall, East Lansing, Mich.
12-14 Sun-Tue			Elmer Mater
15-19 Wed-Sun	Grosse Pointe Wds, Mich.	Monteith Sch.	Dave Taylor, 458 Shelburne Rd, Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.
20, Mon.	Benton Harbor, Mich.	Seely-McCord Sch.	Warren Noe, 560 Empire Ave, Benton Harbor, Mich.
21, Tue	N. Barberton, Ohio	Portage Jr. High	Ann Hartley, 84 25 <sup>th</sup> St. NW, Barberton, Ohio
24, Fri	Dodge City, Ks	Sunnyside Sch.	Dean Hamilton, Rt 1, Dodge City, Ks
29, Wed	Surprise, Neb.	Joe's Hall	Harold Bausch, Box 65, Leigh, Neb.
30, Thu	Albion, Neb.	City Auditorium	Harold Bausch, Box 65, Leigh, Neb.
May			
1, Fri	Valentine, Neb.	City Park Pavilion	Mrs. Lloyd Hartman, Box 183, Valentine, Neb.
2, Sat	Sioux City, Iowa	Shore Acres Blrm	Virgil Dittman, RR 1, Box 309, Sioux City, Ia
4, Mon	Ann Arbor, Mich	Elem School	Shorty Hoffmeyer, 1508 Linwood, Ann Arbor, Mich
5, Tue	Grand Rapids, Mich	Garfield Park Lodge	Hugh Brown 1921 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids, Mich.
8, Fri.	Pittsburgh, PA	YWCA	Lloyd Lockerman, 192 Goldsmith Rd. Ext, Pittsburgh, Pa.

One unique experience occurred on one of these tours. Fran and I stopped overnight in Fort Scott, Kansas. At dinner we asked the waitress if there were any square dances going on around town. She indicated that the only one she knew about was held about twenty miles outside of town in a schoolhouse. The directions were easy enough so we decided to check it out. We found what looked like an abandoned school with no windows, the front door open and one man standing in the steps. We had arrived just before nine PM so about twenty minutes after nine I got out of the car and asked the man if there was a square dance going on that night. His reply was terse. "Yep". Then I asked the man what time the dance started and he said, "nine o'clock," and finally volunteered that "Sometimes folks are a little late getting here." About thirty five minutes past nine an elderly lady and a young girl showed up. The lady opened the old upright piano and the girl opened a fiddle case. A few people had also arrived so before long they had assembled a square and a middle aged man got the evening going.

He first hollered, "Right and left." Everybody did an allemande left, a grand right and left all the way around, a swing and a promenade. Then he called what sounded like, "Hese go fore, size divie, swig attahed, swig attahed." I finally interpreted that to be, "Heads go forward, sides divide, swing at the heads and swing at the sides." When everyone had finished swinging he repeated the same call one time. Then he turned to an older man sitting in a window opening and said, "George, are they back with their partners yet or do I have to call that two more times?" George said, "No, you've got to call it twice more." After the repeat he again called "Right and left," and the dancers repeated their whole routine and everyone sat down. The caller turned to no one and said, "I'd of liked to have forgotten how to call that one," as the band started a waltz. Not being able to stand all that hilarity we left. Looking back now I know we should have stayed to get a broader picture of mid-west Americana.

A friend of mine was manager of the local AAA, American Automobile Association, office in Danbury and I guess I drove him crazy with our demands for "Trip Tiks." He once said to me, "Bob, how in the world do you find a dance in Red Oak, Iowa. I couldn't find it on the state map and had to send away for a county map."

I was almost never late for a dance but I just barely made it one night in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We were driving east and I forgot that we changed time zones. Our hosts, Shorty and Dorothy Hoffmeyer were worried until we walked in at ten minutes before the dance having had no dinner and having changed clothes in the car. One Halloween we ran over trash bags laid across the road filled with leaves. The bags got wrapped around the drive shaft and made us a half hour late.

I always looked forward to getting back to Ann Arbor. I don't intend to demean the dancing further west but the Hoffmeyer's club danced in a manner more comfortable for me. The accented tempos were slower and the styling was more reserved and quiet. Over the years there have been many little gimmicks that have crept into our dancing. One was commonly called a "float out" allemande left. On the command, "allemande left," the dancers would join left hands and exchange places in four counts. On the fourth count everyone (who was so inclined) kicked as high as they could before progressing toward their partner for the next call. Further west, this action sometimes became dangerous in that one person might accidentally kick another person. I saw many near misses. Most of the dances further east were influenced more by New England than by the west.

One trip turned out to be a disaster. Howie Davidson from Maine had called for my Wilbraham Square Dance Club. He told me if I would ever like to call in Maine that he would book me a few dates. We drove north of Boston to visit a fraternity brother. My wife was not feeling well so I drove over alone. It turns out that Howie had only been able to get me two dances. The first was at his own hall called "The Merry Barn" in Bucksport, Maine. He had a dance out of town and had taken half his dancers with him, so I wound up with about three squares. I had foolishly agreed to split the admission income that netted me around six dollars. The evening went along fine until a young lady had an epileptic seizure. Everyone there knew of her condition. They treated her with no problem and the dance continued.

The following night my dance turned out to be a true "New England Kitchen junket." It was at a private home. We had one

square dancing in the kitchen, one in the living room and one outside on the porch. One speaker sat on a windowsill to provide sound for the kitchen and porch and the other speaker was placed in the living room. They agreed to give me all the receipts but had charged only fifty cents a couple so I made another six dollars. The sad part of this trip was revealed when I returned to my fraternity brothers home. My wife had suffered the first of her three miscarriages.

From 1956 to 1967 I conducted my annual "Square Dancers Holiday" weekend at Grand Lake Lodge in Lebanon, Connecticut. The first two years of this camp featured Don Heath from Plymouth, Massachusetts, along with Mike and Nancy Hanhurst from Schenectady, New York on Rounds. I recall that of the seventy-five couples in attendance, fifteen were either calling already or became callers shortly thereafter. Then John Hendron from Framingham, Massachusetts, became my permanent staff. Our after-parties were always great fun. Dad would honor us with a recitation or two and we sometimes got the dancers to participate.

One stunt stands out as a winner. When we arrived on Friday morning we discovered a life sized inflatable female doll at the back of the stage. It happens that that was just about the time the media was talking about previously unheard-of topless waitresses in San Francisco. Friday night and all day Saturday John and I talked about presenting the very latest in square dance dresses at the after-party Saturday night. I'm sure we were able to leave the proper "topless" impression in the minds of the dancers. We had fixed our model up with a skirt, petticoat, ballet shoes and a nice blonde wig from Elsie Stanavage who ran the square dance shop each year. We had the doll sitting in John's lap on stage while I built up the suspense. The lights were low on stage and when we opened the curtain there was a moment of complete silence for a second. Then one hundred people all gasped in shock at the same time it was that realistic. John walked down the steps off the stage and plopped the doll in the lap of a little old man in the front row. You'd have thought John had dropped a bucket of snakes in his lap to see his antics trying to escape.



I had a most unique experience in Holyoke, Massachusetts one time. I had been invited to call for a traditional French-Canadian group, sharing the program with their regular caller. There were about twenty squares dancing and when it was his turn to call he did so from the center of the floor and he called first in English, then in French, "allemande left/allemande gauche." Most of the dancers used their free foot while swinging like a tap dance step so the floor sounded like – "Boom biddy boom biddy boom" in perfect rhythm. Also, some of the dancers swung in a counter-clockwise direction. Fran and I were truly amazed to enjoy this little private group.

In spite of all this traveling and special occasions we were still carrying on an active home club program. The big festivals at UMass were still going on but, unfortunately Lawrence Loy passed away at age forty six. I returned to Massachusetts to conduct the tenth annual festival in 1957. A huge turnout bestowed a fitting tribute to a gentleman who did so much for square dancing in New England. Shortly thereafter we formed a Memorial Scholarship Committee to disperse proceeds left over from the festivals. For several years we furnished scholarships to Berea College in Kentucky and other worthwhile endeavors. When the committee began to age and retire from their work we disbanded after dividing the final balance between the New England Folk Festival Association and the Square Dance Foundation of New England.

From 1954 to 1959 and again in the nineteen-sixties my clubs took on sponsorship of the Silver Spurs of Spokane, Washington. Like the Cheyenne Mountain Dancers this was an exhibition group of high school youngsters that toured during the summer. Their leader "Red" Henderson held a very comprehensive program of dancing in the Spokane school system starting in the early grades. The ultimate goal of students in his program was to be voted membership in the Silver Spurs. Their mothers made their various costumes and the kids really put on a great show. They also toured on the west coast one summer and the east coast the next. Students who joined the tour as a junior and a senior got to see a lot of the country.

In May, 1956, I was honored to be presented as “Caller of the Month” in *Sets in Order*. Affectionately known as SIO and published by The American Square Dance Society. Editor, Bob Osgood, was setting the {publishing} standard of excellence for our beloved pastime. Photographic images of new figures, conversations and interviews with successful callers, leaders and clubs around the country and valuable information of all kinds were bringing us together. Above their offices on North Robertson Boulevard in Los Angeles, California, was a small but delightful dance hall. That is where I first met Arnie Kronenberger, the regular caller for “The Rip’n Snorts” square dance club and their perpetual president, Chuck Jones, creator of Bugs Bunny and Pepe LePew at Warner Brothers Studio in Hollywood. Chuck was an avid square dancer at one time and contributed many illustrated, humorous and insightful articles to SIO.

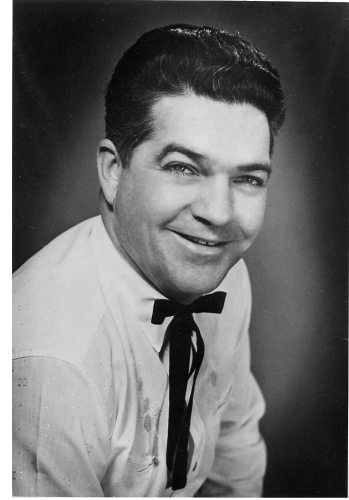
Two of Chuck’s stories stand out in my mind. He professed to know the origin of some of our calls. For example, the U turn. He claimed that was what the ram said when he ran off the cliff – “I didn’t see the ewe turn.” He told how in the olden days folks would freshen their sheets with bags of pine needles or various herbs. When someone (Probably named Murphy) invented the Murphy bed and the rollaway bed they found they only needed a half of a bag. And that became the basis of the call ROLLAWAY WITH A HALF SASHAY. He even traced the origin of *Sets In Order* all the way back to the French Court - settes hors d'oeuvres (sets in order) when the king sat in the hors d'oeuvres tray.

**From *Sets In Order Magazine*, May. 1955, p 21.**

Bob Brundage, Danbury,  
Connecticut.

Bob Brundage bears a name synonymous with the best in square dancing and bears it well, being a topnotch caller in his own right. He is the brother of Al and the son of Gene and Dad Brundage, all of whom have served the activity graciously.

Bob was born and raised on a farm near Danbury, Connecticut, and his square dance interest started with a community 4-H Club which selected music for a project and tied square dancing in with it, Bob was only 10 when he did his first calling, and at 16 called his first regular dance. During his college days he earned extra money with calling dates.



Since that time Bob has been eyebrow-deep in the activity. He was co-chairman with Lawrence Loy of the Annual Country Dance Festival for 4 years; he was on the staffs of Al Brundage's Summer School, New England Recreation Leaders' Lab, 4-H Club Congress, 4-H Short Course at the University of Connecticut, the Maine Folk Dance Camp. He M.C.-ed the Country Dance Festival and the New England Folk Festival. He attended Lloyd Shaw's School at Colorado Springs in 1954 and was Director and M.C. of the Lawrence Loy Memorial festival at the University of Massachusetts in 1955.

And Bob is still whirling on. Currently he is serving as President of the Conn. Square Dance Callers' & Teachers' Assn.; a member of the Board of the Directors, New England Folk Festival Assn.; a member of the Advisory Committee for the Atlantic Convention; a regular caller and teacher for Wilbraham, Mass., and Milford, Conn., square dance clubs. One of his latest assignments is to call contras at the National Convention in San Diego.

He is ably aided and abetted in this activity by his pert wife, Fran, who shares his enthusiasm. His "day work" is growing, along with his father, some of those beautiful ornamental gourds and ears of corn which grace holiday tables.

In 1955 and 1957 I started recording with Folkraft Record Company in Newark, New Jersey. The owner, Frank Kaltman, was an opinionated record reviewer for American Square Dance magazine at the time. When a new record was not up to par he would not only say it was bad he would also say why. I started by cutting some children's records on which my name did not even

appear. After a few square dancing figures we put out a series called "Progressive Grand Circle" dances. These were nothing more than big circle contras that we hoped might appeal to round dancers. Unfortunately this did not happen but so it goes in this unpredictable business. The music had an entirely different sound, almost classical and was produced in Belgium by Ricky Holden.

One good story needs telling. Frank and my older brother, Al, attended a big festival in Texas together. At the time there was a popular figure called Sally Goodin' and it was called more than once. Now Frank is of the Jewish faith. On the way back home in Frank's Cadillac, Frank asked Al, "Who is this Solly Goodman?"

In the late nineteen-fifties I worked on the staff of workshop weekends at Vacation Valley and Pocono Pines in the Pocono mountains in Pennsylvania. About the same time I was hired to be the regular caller for Pioneer Valley square dance club in Westfield, Massachusetts. This required a three-hour one way trip from home every Wednesday for class and every other Tuesday for a club dance.

I had called for a lot of big dances but none compared to the one in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1958. I was met at the airport by a committee that treated me like a superstar. I shared the Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Saturday night program with Arnie Kronenberger from Los Angeles, California. First on the agenda was a rehearsal with the seven-piece band that would play for us. At eight pm on the button the curtain opened to the biggest thrill of my square dance life. There were three hundred, count 'em, three hundred squares standing in grid formation on the floor. What a sight! Ten squares across and thirty squares down. When I called "Heads Go Right and Circle to a Line" I saw twenty perfectly straight lines up and down the floor. On Friday night I was the Master of Ceremonies while Arnie called the entire evening. On Saturday night our roles were reversed.

The hall was known as "Aksarben Coliseum" which name I thought was probably a Shriners reference but it turns out it is Nebraska spelled backward. When I was introduced Saturday

night my first comment was, "Thank you for inviting me here all the way from 'tucitcennoc'." OK, you figure it out. Both evenings went off with no problem working with a strange band. That became the highest number of squares dancing I had ever been paid to call for but the largest number at a festival was estimated at seven hundred squares at the national Square Dance Convention at Cobo Hall in Detroit, Michigan, in 1961. That also had to be the biggest square dance hall I had ever seen when they opened two sliding doors to make one hall out of three, each big enough to hold an entire convention three at once.

At the Saturday afternoon work shop I taught a contra that contained the call cast off three-quarters. Years later Arnie told me he took the call back to the Southern California Callers Association and presented it as a workshop figure that appeared all over the country in their workshop notes. He felt this was the first time cast off was used in square dancing terminology. That afternoon Arnie work shopped the brand new call, square through. At dinner that evening I said to Arnie, "You know, that was a very interesting new figure you introduced this afternoon" -- (are you ready for this) --- "but it will never last." So much for my being a prophet.

The next big thrill came in 1960. There was an unusual situation that lead up to that performance. I had called a dance at Bay Path Barn in East Boyleston, Massachusetts, on Friday night and I was scheduled to call in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Saturday. I drove to Boston airport for my flight that had one stop in New York. While waiting for the exchange of passengers I heard an announcement over the planes speakers, "Bob Brundage, please report to the loading gate." I thought there was some mix-up with my ticket but I was told to call my wife immediately. Of course, I thought there had been an accident, someone had died, the dance was cancelled or I don't know what all. My dear wife, Fran very calmly tells me, "We're going to be on the Arthur Godfrey Show next week. I already have four couples of dancers ready and we have to be in New York at eight a.m. on Monday."

Now Arthur Godfrey was an entertainment phenomenon at the time. He had become popular on radio and switched to

television. He had *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* every Monday night plus, *Arthur Godfrey and Friends* variety show every Wednesday night. He had a beautiful, relaxed singing voice, played the ukulele, had a horse farm where he loved to ride, flew his own airplane, loved to swim in spite of a bad back and everybody loved him. His talent scouts program had show-cased such future stars as Tony Bennet and Patsy Cline.

How this all came about so fast was certainly in a roundabout way. One of my faithful dancers, Jack Gibson, commuted to New York from his home in Milford, Connecticut, for his job with Eastern Airlines. One of Jack's lunchtime buddies was Arthur Godfrey's chauffeur and "gofer" who mentioned that Arthur was planning a fall season theme and was looking for some square dancers. So, one thing led to another and we found ourselves in New York. We were asked to wait in a large utility room. Of course everyone was nervous so I started them dancing right there with no music, just the cadence of my voice. When a couple of guys with clipboards entered we paid no attention. When we stopped, one of them said, "OK, you've passed the audition. Be ready to go in ten minutes on stage." We were relaxed and ready.

This was during the very early days of color television and we were impressed to see a stunning blonde girl wearing a bright red dress just sitting on a stool at the edge of the stage. It turned out that she was the "Color Girl" and the cameras had to occasionally point to her to adjust their focus. They also learned that the fancy square dance dresses with their metallic rickrack produced bright flashes on the screen and could not be used. Their clothes designer went to the cast of "Guys and Dolls" and borrowed dresses which were much more subdued for our four ladies.

Since this was before the days of videotape, the whole show was live. The directors started at the very beginning, including the advertisements and rehearsed each segment in turn. The first time through took over three hours. We are rightly fascinated watching these professionals but, as our segment was near the end it was finally our turn. The live music for our dance was a Blue Grass band - not my favorite for square dancing but it worked out OK. We had just gotten nicely started on our routine

when Arthur came out of the sound booth and stopped everything. My first thought was that we were out but no, Arthur wanted us to have two segments as well as dancing during the opening and closing credits. The director contended that the show was already five minutes too long but, Mr. Godfrey insisted and we became an important part of the show.

I had decided that we would not try to stick to a choreographed routine but just perform a series of simple basics featuring circles, lines and stars. As the on-air hour neared the end, the staff discovered that there were actually a couple minutes left to go and Arthur came to me to ad lib some time so I introduced each dancer by name. The set was adorned with hay bales and various farm animals. A potential catastrophe was averted when a skunk got loose and wandered into the audience. No one panicked and the show went on like nothing happened.

A year or so later I received a call from his staff asking if I could find a man who could "blow the jug." They were planning a hillbilly spoof and I immediately called Tude Tanguay, Tude said, "Sure, all you do is cut a hole in the bottom and cup it with one hand to change the tones." Unfortunately, before I could get him there they changed their plans and had a quartet mimic the action. I really felt bad that I had not had the opportunity to introduce Tude to the television audience.

Later on I also regretted that I never thought to ask Arthur to call a singing call. I know he would have done a commendable job using a teleprompter with his smooth delivery. If he had gotten the "bug" as he did with swimming, horseback riding and flying I'm sure he would have given a tremendous boost to square dancing. A little compensation came however, when I was introduced by Ed Gilmore at the next New England Council of Callers Associations meeting as, "The most well-known square dance caller in the world." Isn't television wonderful?

Along about that same time Earl Johnston called at a big festival in Canada. I understand the hall had a very high ceiling and Earl was amazed to see a tall, narrow speaker tilting slightly

forward and providing excellent sound coverage. When he got back home he went to work on developing a smaller version; called the Yak Stack, which turned out to work just great. He told about it at the next Connecticut Callers meeting. One member asked, "Earl, dynamically speaking, how did you figure out the proper height, depth and width?" Earl's reply was, "That was the easy part, I measured the trunk of my car." Works for me.

Al had television exposure as well. He had appeared on a show called, *To Tell The Truth* which was a popular quiz panel type show. There were three contestants, one of which had to tell the truth. The other two could make up anything they felt like. Al was presented as a square dance caller and was chosen to tell the truth. The judges, including Dorothy Kilgallen and Arlene Francis were supposed to pick out the one telling the truth. Al was able to fool them all until one judge asked him to whistle "Turkey In The Straw." That would probably have unmasked him but time ran out and he won.

Al also toured with a promotion troupe for a few weeks. The film *Roseanna McCoy* had a square dance sequence as part of the plot so a square dance routine was a natural to promote the film. A few young professional dancers learned a short routine that was presented live on stage before the opening of the film. Their travels took them to several large cities around the country. The dancers performed the same routine every time so the calling was just part of the illusion. Fran and I were able to catch the performance a few times in Boston. It happened that the Warner Brothers cartoon *The Roadrunner* was shown just prior to their appearance each time that reminded us again of Chuck Jones.

In 1962 and 1963 I recorded with MacGregor Record Company from California. They sent me the music that was recorded there and I took it to the RKO studios in New York City where I added the calls. The two I remember are "Cabaret" and "A Good Man Nowadays Is Hard To Find." In fact, RKO still owes me money. Mr. C.P. MacGregor had paid them their fifty dollar per hour fee and I paid them as well. I guess I won't hold my breath until I get it back.



Things had gotten pretty busy in those days and I counted a total of 275 dances that I called in one year. I felt that that was a full schedule until I talked further with John Hendron of Framingham, Massachusetts. He told me had called every night in the year except New Years Eve – at which time he took his wife square dancing. Before the end of the century I heard many stories of callers working morning, afternoon and night primarily in large RV Parks and retirement communities. Jerry Helt from Cincinnati, Ohio, told me once that he was averaging around eleven or twelve dances a week.

In 1961, I was hired as the permanent caller for the Town and Country square dance club in Woodbury, Connecticut, when their own caller moved south. Town and Country was a real down home type of club. They met twice a month on Friday night in the old town hall complete with a balcony and a jail cell in the basement. The floor held nine squares and it was full every club night in those days.

At their New Years Eve party they held the semblance of an annual meeting. One year the president asked for a treasurer's report. That treasurer was busy counting money from door admissions at the front door. Obviously disturbed by this sudden intrusion he walked to the front, turned around and said, "We've got about as much money as we had last year." Everybody clapped and he went back to his desk. We danced until 11 p.m., played some silly games for an hour and rung in the new year in an interlocking circle. A huge pot luck meal followed and we were all on our way home by 1 a.m. At their twenty fifth Anniversary dance seventeen past presidents attended and many of them were still dancing regularly.

Many years later a first year dancer became president. He didn't think my program was challenging enough so he convinced the members to change to all guest callers. A year later this couple stopped dancing and the club folded a couple of years after that. The sad part is that very few of the old members ever joined another club. So much for square dance politics.

Sometime before 1960, I had had the pleasure of meeting Bernice Scott at one of the recreation leaders conferences in

Maine. Scotty held the same sort of position in New York state that Lawrence Loy did in Massachusetts. She was a very aggressive leader with a predominant interest in youth programs. Through Future Farmers of America, 4-H Clubs and granges she organized a statewide square dance competition. There were county and regional competitions that all led up to the state finals at the New York State Fair every fall from 1961 to 1966.

Actually the first one was held at Cornell University in the huge ROTC Armory where I was pleased to lead the biggest grand march I had ever conducted. This culminated in coming up the floor in lines of thirty two dancers. Every eight broke off into squares and we did one set just to get everyone used to the sound and to my voice. The bandleader was Phil Green from Springfield, Massachusetts, and we got along just fine. There were four divisions arranged according to average age. When all the competitors were squared up Scotty said, "Just pick out the best square." I looked at her in amazement and asked. "You mean you want me to call and judge at the same time?" "sure" she replied, "Piece of cake." Somehow I kept delegating pluses and minuses in my head and finally declared winners. In the following years a panel of three judges took over that responsibility.

The event was then moved to the horse arena at the New York state fairgrounds and held on Tuesday evening during the fair. The tanbark floor was not the best for dancing but we made do. Each year I made a tape recording of the figures to be used that year which was forwarded to each participating group around the state. They would be required to dance one set routine and one free style tip using only those basics. We also had live music provided by a local four-piece band.

Over the years there had been a lot of controversy about competition in square dancing. Many prominent leaders felt there was no way to keep score and that it went against the principals of our beloved activity. I was firmly convinced that this program was very beneficial to those who took part. First of all there was no final New York state champion as such. Everyone competing received a ribbon. There might have been three or four red (excellent) ribbons or more than one blue (good) ribbon and all the

rest received white ribbons in each division. In other words there were no losers, they were thrilled to have a free day at the fair and they enjoyed the mildly competitive spirit.

The first year at the fair we found Xavier Cougat, Abbey Lane and orchestra playing a free concert in the arena in the afternoon. The seats were perhaps one-third full. When we opened for square dancing it was standing room only. I have always said that square dancing and I once outdrew the famous Xavier Cougat and Abbey Lane. When other commitments kept me from participating further I turned the teaching and calling duties over to Dick Leger from Rhode Island. The program continued until Scotty left her position at Cornell University

Around this same time I was invited to call at a private boy's school in northwestern Connecticut. Fran and I had dinner with a member of the faculty and somehow the subject of absent-minded professors came up. Our hosts told us they had the worst one right there on their staff. The campus was built on a side hill with the entrance at the top of the hill. It seems there was a professor who routinely picked up a day student walking along every morning. One morning the professor drove past the student, down the hill and into his usual parking spot. As he got out of his car he noticed the boy at the top of the hill. He got back in his car, backed out of the parking area and backed all the way up to where the student stood. He rolled down his car window and said, "I'm running late this morning so I can't pick you up," and drove off down the hill.

In the late nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties things were really heating up as far as new material was concerned. Choreographers were springing up everywhere and we had developed a system of "levels." Dancers, and callers too for that matter, were divided into three general categories namely, beginner, intermediate and advanced or, more specifically low level, intermediate and high level. The beginners were still learning, the intermediates were happy to just dance and the high level dancers wanted more challenging material. Callers were very hard pressed to present a program that would appeal to all. My longtime good friend, Chip Hendrickson from Newtown, Connecticut, proposed a simple solution. He felt that the high

level dancers would be able to dance ninety five percent of the figures, the intermediates perhaps sixty percent and the beginners something less. Therefore you charge the advanced dancers three dollars per couple, the intermediates two and the rest one dollar. Then all of a sudden you would find a floor of predominately low level dancers and the caller could call anything he wished.

One incident occurred about that time indicative of the problem. Four couples of dancers from Pioneer Valley Square Dance Club decided to attend an advanced workshop one Sunday. Everything was progressing smoothly for a while. Due to the need for concentration there were no smiles or chuckles. The dancers were paying good money to learn this new material and it was very serious business. All of a sudden one of them made a wrong turn and bumped face to face into another dancer and started to giggle. Before you know it the whole square is laughing so hard they had to stop. The caller stopped the music, looked right at them and said, "Look, we're not here to have FUN you know." Therein lies the crux of the problem that has prevailed ever since. We allowed choreographic puzzle solving to overshadow the true pleasure of square dancing. That true pleasure was, and still is, family, fun, friends, and fellowship.

Looking back I can recall only two incidents that made me break up with laughter and stop calling at a dance. Over the years I had had people suck on lemons in front of me as I called. I had been covered from head to toe with toilet paper more than once. I had dancers perform silly things in front of me, even blow in my ear and not flinch. But I did break up on two different occasions. At a Grand Lake Lodge weekend we had a lady who happened to be quite well endowed, if you get my drift. My dear friend and golfing buddy, Lou Rousseau from Rutland, Vermont cut a piece from a milk carton which read "Half Pint" and pinned it on his chest like a name tag. I could not figure out the significance of that right away. This was a "clothing optional" Sunday morning and the aforementioned lady appeared in a rather tight sweater. I really lost it when I saw her tag in a prominent spot that read, "Full Quart."

The other incident occurred at a regular club dance. I gave the call, "Around your corner with a do sa do, run back home for a do paso." Here, right in front of me was a cute little gal who was literally running back to her partner. It somehow just struck a nerve and I lost it again. Another time I really broke up but it doesn't count because I was not calling at the time. At Grand Lake Lodge weekends we were always getting folks to join "The Turtle Club." You had to answer three questions and take a solemn oath. When asked a question anytime thereafter one had to give an unladylike answer or forfeit a token gift. I asked on charming young lady if she was a turtle. She pulled up her skirt enough to display a garter holding a tiny cap pistol. She pulled out the pistol, shot me and said, "I wish I wasn't a turtle."

During the early nineteen-sixties I was not traveling as much outside my area as I had been. However, I did manage to attend National Conventions in Detroit, Miami, St. Paul and Dallas. I decided it was time to develop more of a home program. With the help of the Department of Parks and Recreation in my hometown of Danbury, Connecticut, I organized the Madhatter Square Dance Club in 1964. At one time Danbury was known as "The Hat City of the World" being the home of the Mallory Hats and the Lee Hat Company.

The "Madhatter" logo from Alice in Wonderland was a popular symbol in Danbury. Many stores displayed a sign in their window that read, "If you're selling something do not enter without a hat." The Madhatters will celebrate their fortieth anniversary in 2004 and are still enjoying the use of the Danbury Public Schools facilities for their bimonthly dances.

One of the reasons Danbury Parks and Recreation was so cooperative was because I had been teaching a series of classes for fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders on Saturday mornings starting in 1957. Al had previously been conducting this session until he moved to Florida. I carried it on until 1969 when the Director who initiated the program, Ed "Copper" Crotty passed away. The Recreation Department staff and two or three teachers assisted with floor management and we were actually able to get the boys to ask the girls to dance before the series ended. That six week series each spring ended with a big reception with music

provided by the Pioneer Trio. I had to chuckle one Saturday morning when a cute little fifth grader came up at the end of the session and told me that her mother had taken those classes when she was a little girl. My oh my how time flies when you're having fun.

In 1967 I went across the state line to organize a club in Pawling, New York, called the PDQ square dance club. The P stood for Pawling, the D for Dutchess County and the Q for Quakers. At one time there was a large Quaker population living in the area. Pawling was once the home of noted newscasters, Edward R. Murrow and Lowell Thomas. Mr. Thomas' estate boasted a golf course with the longest and the shortest golf fairway anywhere. The longest was over six hundred fifty yards and they played it as a par five and a half. The shortest was forty five yards over water.

I mentioned Sanita Hills outside of Pawling earlier. There were several similar campgrounds in the area and I managed to call for different groups in many of them. One was owned by a Hasidic Jewish organization in New York City. I was not familiar with their religion but soon found out for one thing that they are not allowed to perform labor of any kind on Saturday. This was apparent when they mentioned on the phone that I might have to turn on the lights and move the chairs when I arrived for the dance. When everyone was ready to begin I was pleased to see a large group of eager upper teens and early 20 year olds. I dropped the needle and said, "OK, everyone get a partner and form one big circle," just as I always started such an evening. I turned my back for a moment and when I turned around I found two circles, one with all the girls and the other with all the boys. I found out later that they are allowed no physical contact with the opposite sex until they are married. Now, of course you can't refer to them as girls and boys for dancing so we spent the night calling belles and beaux. It turned out to be a wonderful, rewarding experience.

In the early years round dancing was an important part of my calling career. Since 1955 I had been teaching separate round dance classes in Milford, Connecticut. When clubs were first being formed the time between square dance tips was in the form

of folk dancing. Gradually round dances were becoming popular but there were no cuers as we know them now in square dancing. The callers who had the ability cued the rounds. Fran and I had always enjoyed ballroom dancing through high school, college and beyond. Of course, we were brought up in the "Big Band" era (love that jitterbug) so teaching rounds was a natural for us. Eventually, trying to keep up with advances in both rounds and squares simply became too much so I gave up cueing at regular dances. Some clubs were forced to take on the added expense of hiring both caller and cuer while some clubs just gave up round dancing altogether. A logical solution soon took place when we found husband and wife teams working together where one would do the calling and the other the cueing. Now there was an almost two-for-the-price-of-one situation because they drove one car and used the same equipment.



Bob and Fran Brundage at the PDQ Square Dance Club

Sad to say it was around 1974 when Fran was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in her mouth. Following a horrendous

operation with its associated chemotherapy and radiation she suffered through five years of decaying teeth. A dozen or so years later she underwent a lumpectomy. Then a mastectomy.

Through all this she continued to dance and help me teach with a smile for everybody. In 1992, following an aborted colonoscopy she succumbed to a quadruple by-pass operation. We were a month short of our forty ninth wedding anniversary

In 1975 I joined Callerlab and attended my first convention in Chicago, Illinois. I was honored to be asked by Chairman, Dick Leger to join the Timing Committee. This was a work-in-progress effort as we literally walked through every basic figure up to and including the Plus Program. We established the proper number of beats of music required for comfortable dancing from all the various positions like Static Square, Lines, Box 1-4 (Head couples in the middle facing their corners), etc. Unfortunately a larger percentage of square dance callers thought this was a complete waste of time and started packing 72 or more beats of dance figures into 64 beats of music in their singing calls. The result is a complete disregard of the timing and phrasing necessary for comfortable dancing.

The next Callerlab convention I attended was in Miami, Florida, where I was asked to Co-Chair the One Night Stand Committee. My Co-Chairman demonstrated the *Sets In Order* system using the magazine's great brochures. Of course any program that gets people dancing quickly is fine and dandy and I'm sure no two callers go about it the same way. My own program of a easy mixer and visiting couple figures worked for me many years. I used the KISS method – Keep It Simple Stupid – offering only figures that could be taught in a couple of minutes.

Al moved to Florida around 1976 and I inherited the daily square dance demonstrations at the Danbury Fair. That was a very popular attraction and drew a big crowd every day. The stage was elevated enough so that folks standing on the ground got an unobstructed view. There was also a set of bleachers for spectators. Behind the bleachers in a semi-circle was a booth owned by Princess Goldenrod and her Penobscot Indians from Old Town, Maine. Everyday a big Indian chief stood with arms



crossed and admired the colorful petticipants of the dancers on stage. One day a very large man reached across the counter and stole the Chief's cash box under his counter. He never knew it happened but the Princess made sure he attended to business after that.

During the nineteen-eighties my calling was confined to local square dance clubs, guest appearances throughout the Northeast and one-night stands. I became more and more reluctant to spend four or more hours preparing for a two and a half hour club dance. It seemed as though the entire square dance activity was being swept up in the tide of choreography. New figures were being created almost daily and every caller's note service was touting their own version.

I recall much earlier a new call came out called teacup chain. Al, and his wife Mary, Fran and I were sitting on the floor of our home in Danbury trying to decipher this complicated figure. It was near Halloween and we were using red and black jellybeans laid out on the rug. We would stop for discussion every once in a while and upon getting back to the jellybeans we found one missing. We just replaced it and moved on. When it happened again we discovered that our little Sheltie, Bunky, was grabbing one at a time and retreating behind the couch. It was even tougher when we only had 7 "dancers" to move around.

After my wife passed away in 1992 I almost became a dropout. Then, big brother Al came along and convinced me to start dancing again. I became an avid dancer overnight. I had completely forgotten how much fun square dancing is. I became one of those nerds who danced thirteen nights in a row and twice on Sunday.

Then, in 1994, I moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and started a whole new adventure. The first thing I discovered was the Albuquerque Square Dance Center. This beautiful dance hall is owned by the local square dancers and is busy every night of the week. The floating, wood dance floor is divided into two dance halls by a folding partition and each side has complete kitchen facilities and closets for storage. I joined the Central District Callers Association and soon was elected Treasurer. It was a

rather disconcerting revelation to find that nobody had ever heard of Bob Brundage and, in fact the few who knew of Hall of Famer, Al Brundage, only knew him as a prolific recording artist. But that's OK. Our tenure had passed and new heroes were in the making.

Shortly thereafter I found the Lloyd Shaw Dance Center and Archives only three blocks from my apartment. Bill Litchman, a long-time devotee of Dr. Lloyd Shaw had assembled this tremendous reference library. Bill was still working as a teacher and, therefore had only part time to devote to cataloging and filing of this wealth of information. The Lloyd Shaw Dance Archive is the only one recognized by the Library of Congress as the national center for square dance archives [a repository of square and folk dance material]. It was plain to see that the library needed help so I volunteered my part time service. Little did I know what I was getting into.

The building at 5506 Coal, SE. in Albuquerque not only housed a huge collection of recordings, books, tapes, videos and publications but also the American Square Dance Society/Sets in Order Hall of Fame portraits. The beautiful wood dance floor is used every night of the week and two other large rooms contain the archive material.

I was truly amazed to see the condition of these rooms. It seemed that every flat surface was piled high with publications in no sense of order and one corner contained what looked like hundreds of record cases and cardboard boxes full of recordings. All we had to do was separate the publications by title, then by date or volume number, put them into library boxes and shelve them. Piece of cake. Next we had to empty every record box, get them in order by label, then by record number, get them boxed and shelved. Nothing to it. It only took five years. This, of course was an on-going project as donations of records continued and the archive received about fifty publications each month which had to be sorted, cataloged and shelved.

In 2002 a conservative estimate of items in the collection would be:

- 2500 books on dance
- 35,000 disc recordings of all kinds from nearly 600 different recording companies
- 35,000 publications involving 500 titles
- Hundreds of reel-to-reel, cassette and video tapes
- Costumes, name badges, trophies and other artifacts

So the job began around 1995. I started on the publications so as to clear space for much needed operating room. I kept running across articles and pictures of old friends and places that I would just have to share with Bill Litchman. As the pestering grew more frequent Bill said to me, "You know Bob, you have had so many interesting experiences and knew so many national callers and leaders I think we should capture your reflections on tape." So, in 1996, after preparing copious notes, Bill interviewed me in three separate sessions. As we reviewed these stories we both could not help but wish we had interviews on tape with Pappy Shaw , Ralph Page, Ed Gilmore and so many others. It then followed that we had better try to get to other leaders who were still with us at which point I said, "I can do that." And so began an intensive oral history project.

My primary objective was to interview all the living *Sets in Order* Hall of Fame, Milestone and Silver Halo Award recipients. I realized that there was a multitude of callers, cuers and leaders around the country who had a tremendous impact on the activity but had not received national recognition per se. I decided I would talk to as many of them as possible if and when my travels took me near their area. Many interviews were collected at National Conventions in San Antonio, Texas, Orlando, Florida, and Los Angeles, California. Some I caught while they were in Albuquerque calling a dance. I handled a couple by telephone and the rest were visited in their own homes. All in all I probably drove about twenty five thousand miles and enjoyed every minute of it.

One of my early trips took me to the home of Bob Osgood in Beverly Hills, California. It was Bob who organized the Diamond Jubilee Dance in Santa Monica in 1950. That was by far the biggest square dance event ever held boasting fifteen thousand dancers and twenty thousand spectators. At this event Bob, was passing out the first copies of *Sets In Order* magazine which he edited and published. Bob, with a committee of friends also promoted the First National Square Dance Convention in Riverside, California, in 1952 and was instrumental in bringing together members of the Hall of Fame to organize Callerlab, the International Association of Square Dance Callers. That interview with Bob took three days and six tapes in order to get the complete story.

All in all, the project completed ninety four interviews using over one hundred twenty five tapes. With the help of many folks around the world some have been transcribed into print. Many of these were done by Sherri Karl from Florida.

Following is an alphabetical list of the interviewees and their resident state at the time of our conversation. A few listed winter summer homes.

### ***SETS IN ORDER HALL OF FAME***

Varene Anderson (CA) - Don Armstrong (MO) - Al Brundage (FL)  
Marshall Flippo (AZ) – Cal Golden (AR) – Lee Helsel (CA) – Jerry Helt (OH)  
Fenton “Jonesy” Jones (CA) – Bruce Johnson (CA) – Earl Johnston (FL)  
Arnie Kronenberger (CA) – Frank Lane (CO) – Johnny LeClaire (WY/AZ)  
Dick Leger (RI) – Melton Lutrell (TX) – Jim mayo (NH) - Bob Osgood (CA)  
Nita Smith (TX) – Dave Taylor (FL) – Bob VanAntwerp(NV)

### **CALLERLAB MILESTONE**

Stan and Cathy Burdick (NY) – Bill Davis (CA) – Decko Deck (MD)  
Herb Egender (AZ) – Jerry Haag (WY/TX) – Jim Hilton (CA)  
Bob Howell (OH) – Jon Jones (TX) – John Kaltenthaler (PA)  
Lee Kopman (NY) – Martin Mallard (CAN) – Osa Matthews (CA)

John Murtha (CA) – Tony Oxendine (SC) – Vaughn Parrish (CO)

Bill Peters (CA) – Ralph Piper (MN) – Gloria Rios Roth (CAN)

Mike Seastrom (CA) – Art Shepherd (NZ)

### **ROUNDALAB SILVER HALO**

Irv and Betty Easterday (MD) – Eddie and Audre Palmquist (CA)

Nita Smith (TX) – Norma Wiley (AZ)

The following folks have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their own state or region and have contributed significantly to the activity[but have not been formally recognized with awards]. Most have been long time friends and all have my greatest respect.

Pancho and Marie Baird (NM) – Red Bates (MA/FL) – Ed Butenhof (NC)

Ken Bower (CA) – John Bradford (CO) – Cliff Brodeur (MA)

Tex Brownlee (TN) – Allan Brozek (CT) – Cal Campbell (CO)

Joe and Phyllis Casey (NH) – Bernie Chalk (ENG) – Curly Custer

Mil Dixon (MA) – Bob Fisk (AZ) – Max Forsyth (AZ) – Dot Foster (IL)

Elwyn and Dena Fresh (KS) – Gib Gilbert (CO) – Terry Golden (CO)

Roy and Betsy Gotta (NJ) – Culver Griffin (CT) – Dave Hass (CT)

Chip Hendrickson (CT) – John Hendron (MA) – Bell Johnston (PA)

Ken Kernan (NM) – Ernie Kinney (CA) – Frank and Phyl Lenhert (OH)

Bill Litchman (NM) – Grant Logan (CAN) – Glen Nickerson (WA)

Nita Page (CA) – Tony Parkes (MA) – Dick Pasvolsky (NJ)

Charlie and Bettye Procter – Ed Ruddy (CT) – Stew Schacklette (KY)

Gary Shoemake (TN) – Ruth Stillion (OR) – Ralph Sweet (CT)

Doc and Peg Tirrell (VT) – Kirby Todd (IL) – Charlie Tuffield (CO)

Dale Wagner (WI) – Don Ward (CA) – Red Warrick (TX)

Also

Ginger Brown (CA) – Enid Cocke (KS) – Anna Dixon (President) with the original Board of Directors of the square Dance Foundation of New England

Al Brundage remembering all the Hall of Fame honorees

As this biography winds down – like the author – I would like to recount just a few more stories of some of the people who have had an impact on our wonderful activity. I have probably written enough about big brother Al and I wouldn't mention those little secret things anyway.

One of my favorite friends was Dick Leger from Rhode Island. He was known as “The Man With The Guitar” as he accompanied himself part of every evening with the guitar. That left him with considerable flexibility. He could choose the key he wanted and it gave him the ability to vamp (i.e. just keep repeating the same chord) so that a square or two could catch up then continue on with the call. He was a past master of timing and phrasing. Callerlab made the right choice when they asked him to head the Timing committee and I was honored to be a part of that.

Dick sort of backed into square dancing. His future wife, Sue played for dances with her fiddler/caller mother and Dick got to drive them around. Sue was the musician in the family originally playing French horn in high school and piano for the dances. Dick picked up the guitar to have something to do during the dances and later taught himself the piano. He played piano every evening at home with his parrot sitting on his shoulder.

Dick stayed over at our house in Danbury, Connecticut, many times, even two or three days in a row if he was between dances. We got to play golf together quite often. Playing at my home course in Danbury, Richter Park, Dick scored an eagle (two strokes on a par four) on the course's hardest hole.

Charlie Baldwin from Massachusetts was a true square dancing pioneer. He had attended the Lloyd Shaw summer school as well as the Herb Greggerson workshop weekend and shortly thereafter started publishing the New England Caller

magazine. At first the "Caller" was a pocket sized affair but soon grew not only in size but in content as well. After many, many years the magazine changed hands and became the Northeast Dancer. It was Charlie who spearheaded the formation of The Square Dance Foundation of New England. One example of Charlie's humor has to be told. He was the featured speaker at one of the early meetings of NECCA, the Northeast Council of Callers Associations. Following his address he wondered if there were any questions. A gentleman rose and asked. "Charlie. how do you know when a record is worn out?" Without a moments hesitation Charlie said, "When you hear the music coming through from the other side."

Ed Gilmore from California had a tremendous impact on square dancing throughout the country but especially in New England. His professional performances at clubs, weekends and institutes brought out the very best in the dancers and was a great influence on other callers. It was very unfortunate that coffee and cigarettes put him in his grave at a very early age.



Bob Brundage about 1955

## APPENDIX

### I

The following pages are a compilation of various awards that have been presented in square dancing over the past several years. All of these lists are available from each organization but I believe this is the first time they are all presented in one place.

The American Square Dance Society's *Sets In Order* magazine was the start of an international assembly of callers, cuers and leaders. It was also the first to recognize individuals for their dedicated service and accomplishments. As new organizations were established each developed their own accolades. .

### ***SETS IN ORDER*** **HALL OF FAME**

1960- Lee Helsel

1971 - Frank and Carolyn Hamilton  
Manning and Nita Smith  
Dave Taylor  
Ed Gilmore

1961 - Jimmy Clausin  
Herb Greggerson  
Joe Lewis  
Dorothy Stott Shaw  
Dr. Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw  
Ray Smith

1972 - Bob Osgood  
Fenton "Jonesy" Jones

1977- Melton Luttrell

1978 - Cal Golden  
Dick Leger  
Jim Mayo

1970- Don Armstrong  
Al Brundage  
Marshall Flippo  
Bruce Johnson  
Earl Johnston  
Arnie Kronenberger  
Frank Lane  
Johnny LeClaire  
Bob Page  
Ralph Page  
Bob VanAntwerp

1979- Les Gotcher  
Jerry Helt

1981 - Carl and Varene Anderson  
Charlie Baldwin  
Ralph and Eve Maxheimer  
Bob Ruff

1983 - Bill Castner



## **CALLERLAB AWARD**

### **Milestone**

1975 - Al Brundage - Les Gotcher - Joe Lewis - Loyd Litman  
1976 - Jimmy Clausin - Herb Greggerson - Fenton "Jonesy" Jones  
1977 - No Award  
1978 - Bob Osgood - Manning Smith  
1979 - Doc Alumbaugh - Ed Gilmore - Lee Helsel - Bob VanAntwerp  
1980 - Don Armstrong - Charlie Baldwin - Jack Lasry - Benjamin Lovett -  
Ralph Page  
1981 - Marshall Flippo - Cal Golden - Frank Lane  
1982 - Jim Hilton - Johnny LeClair - Art Shepherd  
1983 - Arnie Kronenberger - Dr. Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw - Ray Smith  
1984 - Jim Mayo - Jim York  
1985 - Jon Jones - Dick Leger  
1986 - Melton Luttrell - Bill Peters - Dave Taylor  
1987 - No Award  
1988 - Bruce Johnson  
1989 - Bill Davis - Decko Deck  
1990 - No Award  
1991 - Herb Egender  
1992 - Jerry Haag - Jerry Helt - Stan and Kathy Burdick - Lee Kopman  
1993 - Earl Johnson  
1994 - Martin Mallard - Bob Ruff  
1995 - No Award  
1996 - Osa Matthews  
1997 - Ralph Piper  
1998 - Bob Howell - John Kaltenthaler  
1999 - Gloria Rios Roth  
2000 - Tony Oxendine  
2001 - Jack Murtha - Mike Seastrom  
2002 - Al Stevens - Vaughn Parrish - Bill Heyman

### **Award of Excellence**

2000 - Bob Brundage

## **ROUNDALAB AWARDS**

### **Silver Halo**

1987 - Manning and Nita Smith  
1988 - Frank and Carolyn Hamilton  
1991 - Wayne and Norma Riley  
1993 - Irv and Betty Easterday

1996 – Eddie and Audrey Palmquist  
1999 – Brent and Mickey Moore

### **Silver Circle**

1991 – Harmon and Betty Jurritsma  
Charlie and Edith Capon  
1992 – Betty and Clancy Mueller  
Doc and Peg Tirrell  
1998 – Barbara and Wayne Blackford  
2000 – Ralph and Joan Collipi

### **Distinguished Service**

1991 – George and Johnnie Eddins  
Hugh Macey  
1992 – Wayne and Barbara Blackford  
Bill and Carol Goss  
Irv and Betty Easterday  
Casey and Sharon Parker  
1993 – Ken Kroft and Elena de Zorbo  
1994 – Joe and Es Turner  
Phil and Jane Robertson  
Dave and Wendy Roberts  
1996 – Bob and Barbara Herbst  
1998 – Carol and Frank Valenta  
2000 – Pat and Leroy Hardin  
2001 – Dick Buehman  
Doug and Janet Seavy

## **UNITED ROUND DANCE COUNCIL**

### **Golden Torch Award**

1978 – Gordon and Betty Moss  
1979 – Frank and Iris Gilbert  
1980 – Eddie and Audrey Palmquist  
1981 – Charlie and Nina Ward  
1982 – Manning and Nita Smith  
1983 – Charlie and Bettye Procter  
1984 – Bud and Lil Knowland  
1985 – Ben Highburger  
1986 – Irv and Betty Easterday  
1987 – No Award  
1988 – No Award  
1989 – Phil and Norma Roberts

1990 – Koit and Helen Tullus  
1991 – Peter and Beryl Barton  
1992 – Bob and Sue Riley  
1993 – No Award  
1994 – No Award  
1995 – Bill and Carol Goss  
1996 – Brent and Mickey Moore  
1997 – No Award  
1998 – Bill and Elsy Johnson  
1999 – Bob and Mary Ann Rother  
2000 – Kenji and Nobuko Shebata  
2001 – No Award  
2002 – No Award

## **AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE SOCIETY**

### **Silver Spur Award**

1956 – Lawrence Loy – Dr. Lloyd “Pappy” Shaw – Howard Thorton  
1957 – Harold and Thelma Dean  
1958 – John Mooney  
1967 – Ed Gilmore  
1972 – Varene and Carl Anderson – Dorothy Stott Shaw  
1974 – Steve and Fran Stevens  
1976 – Charlie Baldwin  
1977 – Corky and Paulette Pell  
1979 – John Kaltenthaler – Stan and Kathy Burdick  
1981 – Dale Wagner – Jay Metcalf – Tec and Gladys Sparshatt  
1982 – Gwen Manning  
1983 – Dick and Jan Brown  
1984 – George and Ann Holser – Mac and Mary McClure  
1985 – Herb and Erna Egender  
1988 – Nita Page  
1990 – Howard and Mary Walsh – Jerry and Becky Cope  
1995 – Doc and Peg Tirrell  
2002 – Bill Litchman

## **SQUARE DANCE FOUNDATION OF NEW ENGLAND**

### **Hal of Fame**

1992 – Charlie and Bertha Baldwin – Howard and Cynthia Metcalf  
Jim and JoAnn Mayo – Conrad and Pauline Cote  
  
1993 – Al and Bea Brundage – Ernie and Ellie Chase  
Dick and Evelyn Doyle – John and Isabel Kobrock

1994 – Dick and Sue Leger – Howard and Marian Hogue  
Joe and Phyllis Casey – Bill and Angie Sutherland

1995 – Earl and Marian Johnston – Dick and Judy Severance

1996 – Jack and Rose Bright – Veronica McClure and Stephen Zisk  
Ray and Carol Aubut – Art and Marge Dumas

1997 – Hillie and Elizabeth Bailey – Pete and Betty Rawstron  
Ed and Judy Ross Smith – Andy and Louise D'Amore

1998 – Tom and Barbara Potts – Joe and Jean Hartka  
Ed and Pat Juaire – Len and Connie Houle

1999 – Ted and Jean Sannella – Ron and Goldie Clifford  
Ginger and Lou Brown – Carol Paris

2000 – Dave and Barbara Hass – Ed and Joy Rutty – Vera and Dick Smith  
Mary Flynn and Bill Jenkins – George and Karen Kay

## **NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL OF CALLERS ASSOCIATIONS**

### **Yankee Clipper Award**

1979 – Tom and Gretchen Noonan  
Pair's 'N Squares SD Club  
Ralph Page

1980 – Dick and Evelyn Doyle  
Ed and Judy Ross Smith  
Jim and JoAnn Mayo

1981 – Ernie and Dora Ardillo  
Joe and Phyllis Casey

1982 – Charlie Baldwin

1983 – Ed and Cora Butler  
Dick and Carol Steel

1984 – Jim and Mary Harris

1985 – Ed and Peg Fenton

1986 – Tom and Barbara Potts

1988 – John and Helen Page

1987 – Ernie and Ellie Chase

1989 – Dick and Judy Severance

1990 – Ray and Carol Aubut

1991 – Walter and Priscilla  
Niederlit

1992 – Joe and Jean Hartka  
Tom and Joyce Riding

1993 – Conrad and Pauline Cole

1994 – Fred and Betty Smith

1995 – Bill and Jill Calderone  
Robert and Martha Carpenter

1997 – Art and Marge Dumas

1999 – Mil and Anna Dixon  
Al and Anita Monty

2001 – Vera and Dick Smith

1996 – Dick and Sue Leger

1998 – Hillie Bailey  
Hal and Doris Holmes

2000 – Art and Pat Anthony  
Ron and Goldie Clifford

2002 – Bob Brundage  
Ralph and Joan Collipi