

I Remember Square Dancing

By David McWhirter

It might have been 1951 when square dancing classes were offered with Ernie Stoess doing the calling. It seems as if there were always 3 to 5 squares on the floor so crowds would be in the 24 to over 40 count. Of course, there were “pecking orders” derived from age grouping and levels of proficiency, which was acceptable by all. In looking back, I’d say the fun was mastering the various calls and steps to such Polkas — Schottisches — and Circle Dances as were introduced. As a kid it was fun to “dive for an oyster and take the whole can” among my peers. It was also an experience to “Dos-si-do” with someone’s mother during an “Oh, Johnny” circle dance. After a while it was novel to be included in an adult square and so a “Texas Star” with arms barely long enough to hold the object of my consternation properly. It was a great bit of small town upbringing as the young and older were able to mingle outside parental structures. Incidentally, it was after one of these functions that I backed my Dad’s panel wagon into a telephone pole. The dent was very permanent but blissfully unseen if one was the perpetrator and squinted mightily.

Some other memories of mine were the “Reviews” at the school composed of local talent. Among my best choices of All-Timers were Howard Wigen singing “Jerusalem”, the skit “The Night Cooney Fox Got Married” and the “Potato or Talking Heads.”

I also remember the Ground Observer Corps during World War II at the airport or the scale house, and particularly Bud Malby being on duty when a whole gaggle of B-36s flew over.

~ From *Writ in Remembrance: 100 Years of LaCrosse Area History* by Don Dorman, Ruth Dorman, and Dorothy Smith ~