

Early Sierra Residents danced the night away

Mar 16 '81

2010.25.14

14

No. 14

Old Time Dance Mar 26-'81

1 Rip in -

4 enlarged out

Captions, Those dancing years

1. Les Norton calling a quadrille during one of the Old Time Dances.

L. A. Times Photo

2. Dancing in the Masonic Hall in the early 30's; Les and Vada Cline, Florence Taylor and Bill Reed, Bill Bigelow, Florence Smith, Bob and Carrie Monacott.

Phillips photo

3. Quadrille in Mesolation Canyon in Death Valley during the Centennial Celebration of the '49ers

L. A. Times photo

4. It was over the hill for us, everyone grumbling!

Phillips Photo

5. The "Fish clough wranglers", l. to r; Roy Boothe, Norm McAfee, Rose Boothe, Mildred Crow, Jim Crow, Iona Deiterich, Cam Cesprini.

Reith photo, bishop.

The Woodmen group accepted to play for a dance at June Lake one year. It was dancing all night and breakfast was enjoyed in a beautiful spot along Rock Creek on the way home. Roy Boothe hosted this, bringing his Dutch Oven. While it heated on the coals he mixed biscuits and soon everyone was eating delicious hot biscuits with ham and eggs. An annual Christmas Ball at the Legion Hall was put on every Christmas night by the Woodmen. Their decorations were beautiful, a different arrangement each year. For this dance they hired Craig's orchestra for ballroom dancing, tickets \$1.50 each, and it usually lasted to the small hours.

This could go on and on as amusement and relaxation was the order of the day in the small town of Bishop in those early times. Dancing, fishing and exciting ball games were all-important. It was yet a town where one could look down the end of any street and see the tall mountains stand against the blue sky, God's country!

SWING YOUR PARTNER

by

ADELE REED

WALTZ
SCHOTTISCHE
VARSOUVIANNA
QUADRILLE
THREE STEP
POLKA
RYE WALTZ
FOUR STEP
MINUET
TWO STEP
7/8 NEWPORT
MAZURKA
PAUL JONES



Old Time Dance Tunes

1. Waltz
2. Schottische
3. Paul Jones
4. Quadrille
5. Three Step
6. Two Step
7. Waltz
8. Schottische
9. Heel & Toe Polka
10. Waltz

Turn Page

11. Minuet
12. Newport
13. Waltz
14. Quadrille
15. Rye Waltz
16. Heel & Toe Polka
17. Waltz
18. Four Step

First recording, Dec. 21, 1960 by Bill Reed
Orchestra

Rose Boothe, piano

Mannie Olds, mandolin

Jim Marwin, guitar

Eddie Wolbach, drums

June (Kelly) Say -- Clark Gallop, piano ^{also military}
Schottische

The Old Time Dance

By Adele Reed

We arrived in Bishop in 1927, very happy to live in the beautiful Owens River Valley. Bishop was a small town of very neighborly people. It wasn't long until we were initiated into the dance club of the pioneers.

No one could say just where the fun dances originated. They probably were danced on turf along the route of the covered wagon people coming from many areas in the east in the 1860's and 1870's.

Before 1900 in Inyo it was the custom to gather at a schoolhouse or home for the dancing. Some of the people lived so far away they only attended once in a while. Horse and buggy or wagon or saddle horse made slow travel but it was the social event.

The love of the dances was handed down through the generations. By 1918 a group of young people formed what became known as the Old Time Dance Club. The dance was held monthly, winter or summer and of the dozen or more dances, one was the favorite by far. When the red light showed on the call-board there was a grand rush to the floor for the Quadrille and it went on and on.

The dance was something no one wanted to miss. People still came a long distance but of course by auto. The following names of out-of-town families proves how popular it was each month.

The Alfred Morgans came from Lone Pine and after moving, from Old Benton. Fish Lakers came over the mountain, we have no names. There were the Thoringtons of Bridgeport, the Summers of Mammoth, the Keoughs of McGee Creek, the Crosbys of Paradise Camp, the Blakes and the Bigelows of Big Pine, Bill called a graceful waltz quadrille. The Bodles of Independence and people of small dance groups south in Inyo to name a few.

Page 2, Dance

This area was once named Square Dance Country by an outside writer. Les Horton , long time caller of the dances, had this to say; "We dance these dances because we enjoy them and not because it happens to be a popular fad and we don't wear costumes. Cant remember when we didn't hold them regularly and some of our best quadrille couples have been with us each month for over forty years."

The inevitable breaking up of the Club came in 1960 due to a combination of smaller crowds, rising of hall and orchestra costs and the loss of old-timers, Les Horton was one.

Now a group of the younger dancers of 1950 and 1960 are hoping the Old Time Dance will be revived. We honor other historical affairs, this certainly meets all requirements.

BISHOP'S OLD TIME DANCE CLUB.

by Adele Reed.

Traveling back on memory's trail is sometimes good for the spirit and brings happy as well as nostalgic memories. In this instance it brings us the beginning and life of a social recreation that was very close to the hearts of the native Owens Valley people. Namely, their Old Time Dance!

Many years ago when the valley was young, the people, pioneers of this isolated valley, were almost entirely dependent on each other for social life, fun and relaxation. The roads in and out were un-improved, little more than a trail.

It became the custom for groups of friends to gather in homes or in a school house and dance to a fiddle's tunes or a piano. Where or when these earliest dances originated seems shrouded in mystery. These affairs were eagerly awaited as the gatherings afforded a means of communication and happy visiting as well. Usually preceded by a bounteous meal, something from the kitchen of each housewife. This was in the era when the only transportation was by wagon, buggy or horseback.

Gradually a few local clubs and lodges were organized and the meetings always ended with that popular attraction, dancing. The Fraternal Brotherhood was one of these early clubs, then World War One came along and thinned the ranks of active members. Soon after the end of the war, the Club disbanded. During or soon after 1918 a group of Bishop young people decided to form a dance group or club, to carry on the happy activity. So their Old Time Dance Club quickly became a very popular monthly event, attracting dancers from many miles around.

It was held in the hall above the Dell Lutz store in the Maroney building at the northeast corner of Main street, now Brock's Sporting Goods. A small room at one end of the hall served as a kitchen where large pots of coffee were brewed for the potluck supper before the dance or for midnight or morning snacks. Sometimes these dances ended at daybreak just in time to drive home to do the 'chores'.

Best 'bib and tucker' for this happy time, an aroma of fresh shoe blacking and hair lotions, fresh white kerchiefs for the gents perspiring hands and face, bright admission ribbons, plenty of cornmeal or wax on the floor, musicians tuning up a fiddle or guitar, what more was needed!

Ethel Summers at the piano. George Wenham with his fiddle and occasionally Walter Ryker, guitar, made the hours fly by to the tunes then popular. The waltz, minuet, heel and toe polka, schottische, quadrille and many others. Les Horton, a native of Owens Valley, was manager and caller of this dance for nearly 40 years, assisted by his wife, Florence Ed. Matlick, another native son, was in charge of the club's finances.

In 1926 the Masonic Hall was constructed just out east line street, and from then on the Old Time Dances were held there, monthly. It was the custom to pick a six couple committee from the attending dancers each month. The list of names was announced by Les during the supper hour. It was the duty of these people to take charge of everything for the next dance.

Smaller clubs were popular up and down the valley and many of the dancers would drive to Bishop to join in the fun. The opening of the winter season was heralded with a pot luck supper late in October. The women of the committee usually worked most of the afternoon preparing huge pots of mashed potatoes, bowls of salads, and spreading many loaves of bread. The men would set up and arrange all the tables and chairs the hall would hold, and act as errand boys.

With the brewing of coffee well along, the dancers would arrive with various hot meat dishes, olives, pickles, and many delicious cakes. ~~Bottles of cream were always furnished by the Owens Valley housewives~~ ¹⁸⁸¹ ~~always~~ noted for their fine foods and only the choice recipes counted at this event!

For the midnight supper, delicious chicken sandwiches, cake and coffee were served, usually buffet style, and dancing continued into the early morning hours. An old fashioned call board was hung on the wall above the piano, a white background light for all except the Quadrille which was red. Guest callers at times were Woodsen Rathjen, Alec Reeves and Bill Bigelow, who came from Big Pine. One of his specialties was a beautiful waltz quadrille.

Orchestras playing for the dances held in the Masonic Hall were as follows, in order;

Babe Bandhaur, piano; Les Bandhaur, violin; Clyde Greenwood, drums; and Manny Olds, mandolin.

Mildred Crow, piano; Jim Crow, guitar; Clyde Greenwood, drums; and Manny Olds, mandolin, when he was available.

During the last twelve years live music was enjoyed, Rose Boothe, piano, and sometimes she took up her fiddle for a lively tune. Jim Goodwin, drums; Jim Marwin, guitar or banjo. The first two pianists used sheet music but Rose Boothe played the tunes ~~entirely~~ by ear.

The beautiful waltz, "Down in the old cherry orchard" signalled the beginning of dancing. Late comers have been heard to remark, "Oh, well, we are not so late after all, I hear the first dance being played!" It was followed by a schottische, then a minuet or varsoviana. Next, a big crash and roll of drums preceded a call by Les, "Get your partners!" The red light flashed on for Quadrille, the men shed their coats, and there was a grand rush to find partners and a place on the large floor which usually had standing room only for this popular one. Many changes were called by Les standing on a chair beside the piano. Calling until he was hoarse and the dancers exhausted!

Sometimes, during the winter, a real old fashioned ball was held which meant getting out those seldom used floor length frilly gowns and black suits. The gingham dress and overall dance marked the coming of spring and it was an especial favorite with the men. (For many years the highlight event of the year was the annual trek to Sweetwater, Nevada. It was early in October and the club members and friends were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams for an overnight party in the historic hostelry on the Sweetwater Ranch. *Kras*

For a long time the
This 28 room building was an early stage stop and way station on the main route to the busy mining towns of Bodie and Aurora, as well as to the Owens Valley areas. It was built by Frank Yparraquirre, early sheepman. From Reno papers he sold in 1924, he and wife reside in Reno and he celebrated his 102nd birthday in 1966. one of those rugged ones!

A news item from Reno states that recently passed - he was one of those rugged early pioneers

Considerably more than 100 miles from Bishop, never-the-less, this was a well attended and popular event. Guests brought their own food, bedding, and musician. Walter Ryker was a one man orchestra, contriving to play drum, guitar and harmonica.

The hosts furnished a case of eggs and sides of bacon from their spacious, well-stocked cellar. The many upstairs bedrooms, opening on both sides of a long hall were assigned to the guests. Elegantly furnished in true Victorian style, this visit was a 'special' privilege.

marble topped furn. hall

Junior Those who arrived in the afternoon had a delicious dinner ready for all. Dancing was then enjoyed in the upstairs ballroom. Those who did not wish to dance played cards in front of a cheery fire in the large fireplace in the downstairs living room. A new committee served supper at 11 o'clock, sociability and singing of songs followed, then dancing resumed until 4 o'clock in the morning. Breakfast beginning at 6 A.M. didn't give much time for rest, and it was a merry affair, lasting until mid-morning to take care of stragglers. Scattering for home was then in order, after a big vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

The following is *quoted* from the Inyo Register, October, 1934. *under titled Soc. Party*

"This is one party at which cocktails are not in evidence and the cigarette-smoking lady is missing, such a party as used to happen in the long ago. A list of those who attended this year, 1934 in all, reads like Old Home week. They were,

W.H.Callaway, Mr. and Mrs. James Cashbaugh, Mr. and Mrs. Jess Chance, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Houston, Mr. and Mrs. U.G.Smith, Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Cory, Mr. and Mrs. Will L.Smith, Mr. and Mrs. John G.Henderson, Mr. and Mrs. J.P.Coats, Mrs. Jessie C.Miller, Peter Atchinson, Mrs. Della Woodruff, Mrs. Ida Hichins, Mr. and Mrs. L.J.Horton, Mr. and Mrs. Ade Shipley, Mr. and Mrs. I.E.Squires, Mr. and Mrs. Jess Summers, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Summers, James Watterson, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Chamberlain, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde May, Mr. and Mrs. A.H.Peterson, Mrs. Myrtle Hough, Otto Bradshaw, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. W.A.Roberts, Mrs. Evelyn Neill, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams Sr, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams Jr, Mrs. Maggie Ward, Edith Eddy, Arline Smith, W.H.Roach, Kenneth Roach, Nels Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Waite, Mrs. Jennie Hutchinson, Mr. and Mrs. T.G.Watterson, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Tinder, Junior Tinder, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stuetig, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Scheld, Karl Noldeke,

Mrs. Elsie Smith, Mr. and Mrs. C.F.Matlick, Charles Samuel Matlick, Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Mackey, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Boothe, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Humphrey, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Crow, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Matlic Stanley Matlick, Mr. and Mrs. A.J.Patterson, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Keough, Clinton Schively, J.B.Lane, Mr. and Mrs. Len L.Leidy, Roger Schively, Walter Riker, Mrs. Agnes L. Johnson, Mrs. F. G. Leibley, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Evans, Mrs. Belle Mcroskey, Mrs. Iva Taylor, A.D.Schively, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bodle, Mrs. Mabel Rowan Christine McMartric.

During most of the 1940's the dances were as popular as ever. However, gray heads were appearing among the group and quite a few names had to be dropped from the roster. Descendants of old-time families as well as new comers to the area were encouraged to learn the steps. A class for beginners was held in the High school auditorium regularly for several years and help was given at the monthly dances.

Then in 1949 a big event, the California Centennial Celebration in Death Valley was planned and our Club was invited to send a group of square dancers. The dancing to portray the "happy celebration" of the Gold Seekers trek across Death Valley. Sets from Bishop and Big Pine were selected as follows; Mr. and Mrs. Les Horton, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Calloway, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Wonacott, and Mr. and Mrs. Bill Reed will make one set. Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wonacott, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Smith of Laws, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Taylor, and Mr. and Mrs. Owen Clark will comprise the second set. *in 1849*

The third set included Mr. and Mrs. McKinley Powers, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Nickolaus, and Mr. and Mrs. Monte Little. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Partridge, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Saulque, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Morris, and Mrs. Bill Bigelow and Howard Smith make up the fourth set. Other couples were chosen as alternates. Several sets were also named from the lower part of Owens Valley. Bill Bigelow of Big Pine was asked to do the calling.

Camping under the stars was the order of the day, near the Furnace Creek Ranch, and an enjoyable time it was for the group. As we all gathered at the designated spot in Desolation Canyon, very early on, Dec. 3, 1949, we were given 'cast' buttons to wear and ~~our~~ orders. We felt like privileged characters until we learned we would have to do the disappearing act immediately after our number, and stay out of sight and sound! *pass tickets*

Our cue was 'Oh, Susanna' played by the Hollywood Bowl orchestra from their perch, (bandstand) built out from the face of a hill above. It was quite a sight as their background were the picturesque Funeral Mountains showing fantasy patterns of Chocolate, tan and cream colors. On the west side were the audience, people and people spilling up and over all the hillsides, the grandstands very inadequate.

wherever they could find a place,
We entered on cue, after a few musical and other numbers. Ladies were dressed in old-fashioned long dressed, sunbonnets and boots. The men wore levis, blue shirts, felt hats and boots. It was new and a little strange to us to dance on the hard packed sand floor of the little valley to 49er tunes played by the fine orchestra. All seemingly went well, although one of the ladies forgot her sunbonnet! Yours truly! We did the 'ladies lead up to the right', 'do-se-do', 'gents you know' and many other changes.

mutter,
Then, as we quickly and quietly climbed up and over a low hill, per orders, one of the men was heard to say, "Doggone, it doesn't seem fair we can't go and watch, think I'll do it anyway!". However, the whole group sat on the sand, talked in whispers, and whiled away an hour or so, hidden behind the hill! Oh, well, it was a big event and we have a good laugh when we look at our 'cast' buttons!

come across
now we have a good laugh when we happen across our 'cast' buttons!
of always a lot of
with much
humor

Page 5, O.T.Dance.

Early in the 1950's the inevitable breaking up of the club began. Small crowds, hall and orchestra costs raising, the loss of our leader and venerable caller, Les Horton, and others, began to tell the end.

Bill Partridge, assisted by his wife, Shirley, were asked to take charge and Bill did the calling for several years. By 1960 it had become impossible to secure (live) music. Rose Boothe had been forced to retire from piano playing and no others knew the original tunes as she, ~~dist~~

In A special meeting was called and it was decided to buy a tape recorder. Then a call went out to all dancers for a last get-to-gether, a potluck supper, (live) music to be recorded. Rose Boothe consented to play one more time, and Eddie Wolbach, drums; Jim Marwin, banjo; Manny Olds, mandolin; plus guest musicians, June (Shelly) ~~Mayer~~, saxophone; and Clark Talbot, piano. A complete recording was made of all the original tunes. *Date*

Then For a year or so dances were held regularly, using the taped music. Youngsters joined in to learn the dances, much as in the early days of these dances. It became noticeably harder to call a group together and so it was decided to call it Finis!

The taped music has been preserved as well as the ~~historical~~ *Antique* call board and it is probable will be turned over to the Bishop Museum.

His story May this ~~little story~~ bring only happy memories of a joyous, invigorating custom that prevailed for many years in a friendly little town. The town where one can look down the end of any street and see the tall mountains stand against the sky, God's country!

Those Dancing Years

1.

Adele Reed

Traveling back on Memory's trail brings the beginning and life of a social recreation that was most important. The pioneers who came to the Owens River Valley when the Valley was young were almost entirely dependent on one another for amusement and relaxation.

Groups of friends would gather in homes or in a school house and dancing to a fiddlers tunes or a piano was eagerly awaited. It also brought communication and happy visiting. Thus, their Old Time Dance as they named it, was the earliest dance in what was then an isolated area.

The people gathered by wagon, buggy or horseback, the roads were not improved, little more than a dusty, rough trail. When or where the dance steps originated no one could say. They probably were danced on turf or sand along the trails of pioneers traveling to their "promised land."

Gradually a few local clubs or lodges were organized in Bishop and their meetings always ended with dancing. The Fraternal Brotherhood was one of the early clubs, then W. W. One came along and thinned the ranks of active members. During or very soon after 1918 a group of young people formed their own dance group. The Old Time Dance Club became a most popular monthly event, attracting dancers from miles around.

It was then held in the upstairs hall above the Dell Lutz store at the northeast corner of Main and Line streets. A small room provided a kitchen for coffee^{and} potluck supper, or midnight or morning snacks. Usually the dances ended at daybreak, just in time to drive home and do the "chores" and begin the days work. Hard playing and hard working people, those early residents.

2.

It always was best "bib and tucker" for this happy time, accompanied by an aroma of fresh shoe blacking and hair lotions. With plenty of cornmealoor wax on the floor, musicians tuning up, what more was needed! Ethel Summers presided at the piano. George Wenham with his fiddle and sometimes Walter Riker, guitar, made the hours fly by to the tunes then popular. The waltz, varsoviana, four step, heel and toe polka, Schottische, quadrille and others. Les Horton, born on a ranch south of Bishop, where the modern golf course is seen, was manager and caller for over forty years. He was assisted by his wife, Florence (Kinney) Horton. Another native son, Ed Matlick, was in charge of the club's finances for about the same length of time. In 1926 the Masonic Hall was built just out east line street and from then on the Old Time Dance was held there, monthly

An old fashioned call board was hung on the wall above the piano. It was connected to an outlet so that a white background light was used for all dances but the quadrille which was lighted in red. The beautiful waltz, "down in the old cherry orchard" signalled the beginning of dancing. It was usually followed by a schottische, a minuet and then came the crash of drums and Les calling "one more couple"! The red light flashed on and the quadrille, called by Les, lasted until he was hoarse and the dancers exhausted. It was the favorite! Other callers were Woodsen Rathjen, Alec Reeves and Bill Bigelow from Big Pine. He called a most graceful waltz quadrille.

Orchestras playing for these dances were; *Babe Bandhaur, pianist,* Les Bandhaur, violin, Clyde Greenwood, drums, Mannie Olds, mandolin. Another group was; Mildred Crow, pianist, Jim Crow, guitar, Clyde Greenwood, drums and Mannie Olds, mandolin. During the last twelve years that live music was enjoyed, Rose Boothe, pianist and at times she took her fiddle for a lively tune. Jim Goodwin, drums, Jim Marwin, guitar or banjo. The

First two pianists used sheet music that later disappeared, Rose Booth played by ear.

Their annual trek to Sweetwater, Nevada was the highlight of each year of this dance club for a long time. Members and friends were guests of the Tom Williams in the historic hostelry on the Sweetwater Ranch. They brought their own orchestra, Walter Nyker, who contrived to play drum, harmonica and guitar.

Another gala event was the Old Timers Surprise Party, dinner and dance in honor of Borranee and Karle Keough, held at McGee Lodge, Oct. 31, 1934. Forty three guests signed in and Walter Nyker, musician.

In 1949 a big event was planned, the Death Valley Centennial Celebration in honor of the California pioneers ~~xxxxxxxx~~. The Old Time Dance Club was invited to send square dancers. Four sets were named from Bishop and several from lower Inyo. Bill Bigelow was asked to do the calling. Camping under the stars was the order of the day, near Furnace Creek Ranch or where ever there was room, it was an enjoyable time. We danced on the sand in Desolation Canyon to the tune of "Oh Susana" played by the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, a bandstand was built out from the hillside. We did our "right and left six", "ladies to the right" do-se-do" "gents you know" and other changes, what fun! Then we were asked to disappear up and over a low hill, while the parade of 20 mule team, other old time travel went on, and we did oblige, with some grumbling.

In late 1940's and 50's the breaking up of the Dance Club was seen. Rising costs, smaller crowds and the loss of our venerable caller, Les Horton began to tell the end. Bill Partridge was named manager and caller, his wife Shirley assisting. It became impossible to secure live music, Rose Booth had retired. In Nov. 1960 it was decided to buy a tape recorder. Rose Booth consented to play once more with

Eddie Wolbach, drums, Jim Marwin, banjo, Mennie Olds, mandolin, plus guest musicians, Clark Talbot, piano and June (Shelly) Mayer, saxophon a complete recording of the original tunes was made by Bill Reed, Dec. 1, 1960.

Dances were held regularly using the taped music until about 1963 when it seemed time to call it rinis. However, in Feb 24 '79 a group of young people, many from pioneer families, wanted the historical, pioneer dances to be continued, and not forgotten. Their invitation today, to one and all people interested....come and join us for a fun dance, we hope we can continue!

OTHER DANCES OF THE EARLY YEARS

There were many fine musicians in the Bishop area in the 1930's and '40's. Three big dance halls were available. The Legion Hall on Main street, now used as a bank, was the place, having a wonderful dance floor. The Masonic Hall on east Line and a large two story building, Hall's Hall, in Big Pine were very much in use, having fine dance floors.

In summer there were at least two places for outdoor dancing. Keough's Hot Springs had an open dance floor and at Crosby's Paradise Camp a smaller floor was used. In hot weather both were kept busy.

Craig's orchestra played nine piece and six piece, usually at the Legion Hall. Babe Bandhauer, piano; Dave Kelso, sax; Finney Kelligan, drums; "Fat" Ray, banjo; Clyde Greenwood, clarinet or violin; and Al Mahurin, banjo or mandolin. The players varied, sometimes Manny Olds and Jim Marwin or others.

Les Bandhauer Orchestra was a fine one and small groups were busy. The Fox Trot, Waltz and Two Step were some of the dances.

The Woodmen of the World, camp 570, of Bishop had a large number of members. They put their heads together and formed an orchestra in 1931. The "Fish Slough Wranglers", as named, were soon playing up and down the valley, dressed in cowboy style with bright colors. Members were; Roy Boothe, guitar; Rose Boothe, fiddle; Mildred Crow, piano; and harmonica; Al Mahurin, banjo; Jim Crow Guitar; Cam Sesprini, fiddle; Tom Deiterich, mandolin. Norm McCaffee was manager and Adele Reed, secretary.

The Wranglers played for dancing at Hall's Hall when Roy and Rose Boothe celebrated their 25th anniversary in 1934. The dinner and gift by the Forest Service staff and friends was held upstairs, then to the dance downstairs.



SWING YOUR PARTNER — Pictured here is a group of Owens Valley old timers enjoying a dance in the early '20s at the Masonic Hall in Bishop. They were members of the Old Time Dance Club. A dance this coming Saturday night will renew memories of days gone by. Old timers may recognize Les and Vada Cline, Florence Taylor, Bill Reed, Bill Bigelow, Florence Smith, Carrie and Bob Wonacott. The picture is from Adele Reed's book "Swing Your Partner." (LA Times Photo)

Museum group plans dinner, dance Feb. 24

Final plans were announced this week by the Bishop Museum and Historical Society for their old time dance and potluck dinner to be held at the Masonic Hall in Bishop this coming Saturday night, Feb. 24.

Dinner will start at 6:30 with dancing to follow at 8 or 8:30 p.m. Those planning to attend are asked to bring a hot dish or salad to serve 10.

Members of the Old Time dance committee are interested in locating live music for future dances. The dance Saturday night would be a good opportunity for any musicians in learning the old time dances to come and enjoy the evening.

Thumb tacks, rubber bands,

Dance club provided social hub for early Pioneers

by Adele Reed

We arrived in Bishop in 1927, very happy to live in the beautiful Owens River Valley. Bishop was a small town of very neighborly people. It wasn't long until we were initiated into the dance club of the pioneers.

No one could say just where the fun dances originated. They probably were danced on turf along the route of the covered wagon people coming from many areas in the east in the 1860's and 1870's.

Before 1900 in Inyo it was the custom to gather at a schoolhouse or home for the dancing. Some of the people lived so far away they only attended once in a while. Horse and buggy or wagon or saddle horse made slow travel but it was the social event.

The love of the dances was handed down through the generations. By 1918 a group of young people formed what became known as the Old Time Dance Club. The dance was held monthly, winter or summer and of the dozen or more dances, one was the favorite by far. When the red light showed on the call-board there was a grand rush to the floor for the Quadrille and it went on and on.

The dance was something no one wanted to miss. People still came a long distance but of course by auto. The following names of out-of-town families proves how popular it was each month.

The Alfred Morgans came from Lone Pine and after moving, from Old Benton. Fish Lakers came over the mountain, we have no names. There were the Thoringtons of Bridgeport, the Summers of Mammoth, the Keoughs of McGee Creek, the Crosbys of Paradise Camp, the Blakes and the Bigelows of Big Pine, Bill called a graceful waltz quadrille. The Bodles of Independence and people of small dance groups south in Inyo to name a few.

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Now a group of the younger dancers of 1950 and 1960 are hoping the Old Time Dance will be revived. We honor other historical affairs, this certainly meets all requirements.

Pioneer Days

Early Eastern Sierra residents danced the night away

by Adele Reed

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Gradually a few local clubs or lodges were organized in Bishop and their meetings always ended with dancing. The Fraternal Brotherhood was one of the early clubs, then World War I came along and thinned the ranks of active members. During or very soon after 1918 a group of young people formed their own dance group. The Old Time Dance Club became a most popular monthly event, attracting dancers from miles around.

It was then held in the upstairs hall above the Dell Lutz store at the northeast corner of Main and Line Streets. A small room provided a kitchen for coffee and potluck supper, or midnight or morning snacks. Usually the dances ended at daybreak, just in time to drive home and do the "chores" and begin the day's work. Hard playing and hard working people, those early residents.

It was always was best "bib and tucker" for this happy time, accompanied by an aroma of fresh shoe blacking and hair lotions. With plenty of cornmeal or wax on the floor, musicians tuning up, what more was needed! Ethel Summers presided at the piano. George Wenham with his fiddle sometimes Walter Riker, guitar, made the hours fly by to the tunes then popular. The waltz, varsoviana, four step, heel and toe polka, Schottische and quadrille were a few of the steps.

Les Horton, born on a ranch south of Bishop, where the modern golf course is seen, was manager and caller for over 40 years. He was assisted by his wife, Florence (Kinney) Horton. Another native son, Ed Matlick, was in charge of the club's finances for about the same length of time. In 1926 the Masonic Hall was built just out East Line Street and from then on the Old Time Dance was held there monthly.

An old fashioned call board was hung on the wall above the piano. It was connected to an outlet so that a white background light was used for all dances but the quadrille, which was lighted in red. The beautiful waltz, "Down in the Old Cherry Orchard" signalled the beginning of dancing. It was usually followed by a Schottische, a minuet and then came the crash of drums and Les calling "one more couple." The red light flashed on and the quadrille, called by Les, lasted until he was hoarse and the dancers exhausted. It was the favorite! Other callers were Woodsen Rathjen, Alec Reeves and Bill Bigelow from Big Pine. He called a most graceful waltz quadrille.

Orchestras playing for these dances were: Babe Bandhaur, pianist; Les Bandhaur, violin;; Clyde Greenwood, drums; Mannie Olds, mandolin. Another group was Mildred Crow, pianist; Jim Crow, guitar; Clyde Greenwood, drums and Mannie Olds, mandolin. During the last 12 years that live music was enjoyed, Rose Boothe was pianist and at times she took her fiddle out for a lively tune. Jim Goodwin, played drums, Jim Marwin, guitar or banjo. The first two pianists used sheet music that later disappeared; Rose Boothe played by ear.

Their annual trek to Sweetwater, Nev. was the highlight event each year of this dance club for a long time. Members and friends were guests of the Tom Williams in the historic hostelry on the Sweetwater Ranch. They brought their own orchestra, Walter Ryker, who contrived to play drum, harmonica and guitar.

Another gala event was the Old Timers Surprise Party, dinner and dance in honor of Dorrance and Karl Keough, held at McGee Lodge Oct. 31, 1934. Forty-three guests signed in.

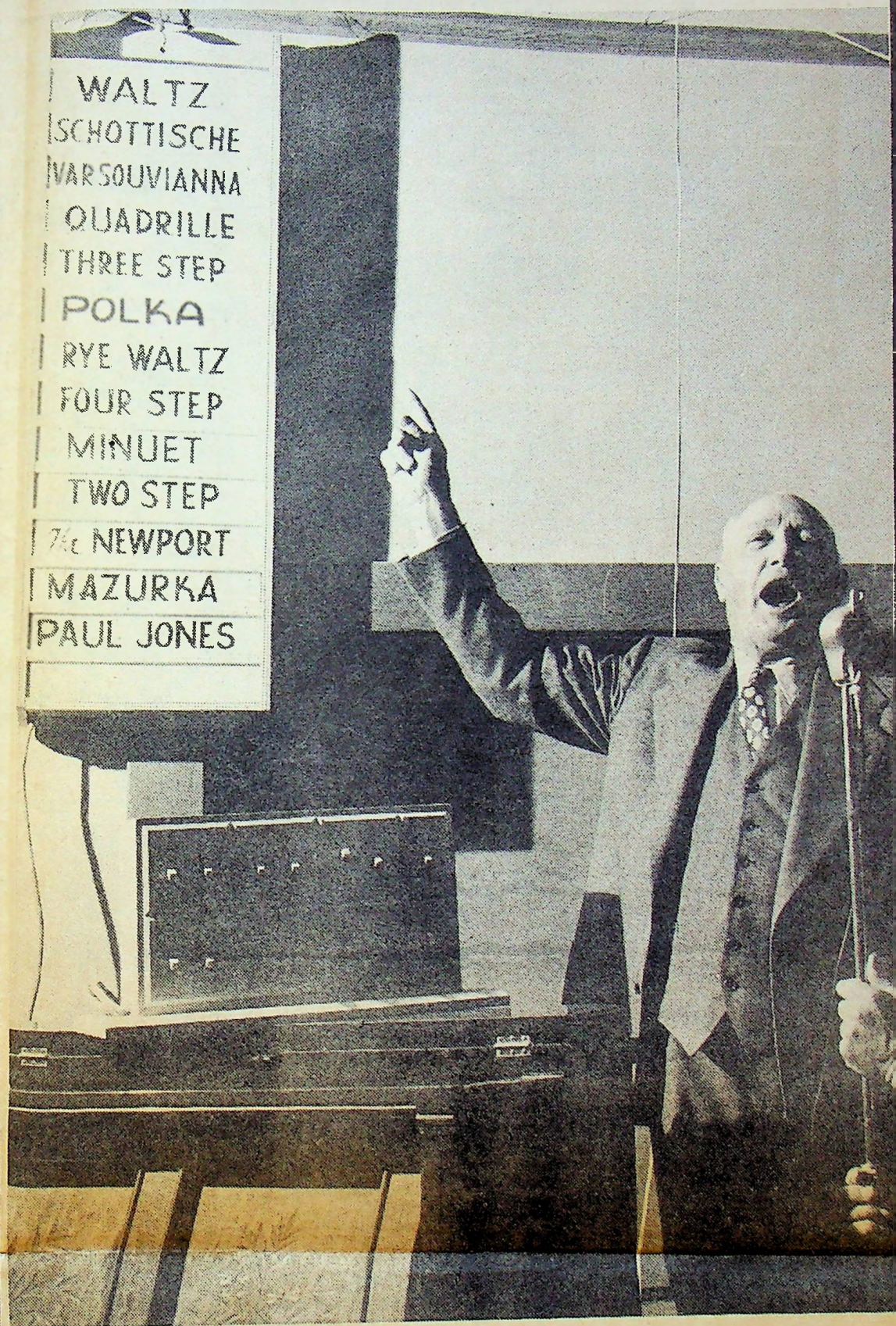
In 1949 a big event was planned: the Death Valley Centennial Celebration in honor of the California Pioneers. The Old Time Dance Club was invited to send square dancers. Four sets were named from Bishop and several from lower Inyo. Bill Bigelow was asked to do the calling. Camping under the stars was the order of the day, near Furnace Creek Ranch or wherever there was room. It was an enjoyable time. We danced on the sand in Desolation Canyon to the tune of "Oh Susana" played by the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, a bandstand was built out from the hillside. We did our "Right and left six, ladies to the right, do-se-do, gents you know" and other changes; what fun! Then we were asked to disappear up and over a low hill, while the parade of 20-mule team and other old time travel went on. We did oblige, but with some grumbling.

In the late 1940s and 50s the breaking up of the dance club was seen. Rising costs, smaller crowds and the loss of our venerable caller, Les Horton, began to tell the end. Bill Partridge was named manager and caller, his wife Shirley assisting. It became impossible to secure live music; Rose Boothe had retired. In November, 1960 it was decided to buy a tape recorder. Rose Boothe consented to play once more with Eddie Wolbach, drums; Jim Marwin, banjo; Mannie Olds, mandolin; plus guest musicians Clark Talbot, piano and June (Shelly) Mayer, saxophone. A complete recording of the original tunes was made by Bill Reed on Dec. 1, 1960.

Dances were held regularly using the taped music until about 1963 when it seemed time to call it finis. However, in February, 1947, a group of young people, many from pioneer families, wanted the historical pioneer dances to be continued and not forgotten. Their invitation today, to one and all people interested... come and join us for a fun dance, we hope we can continue!



The "Fish Slough Wranglers". l. to r; Roy Boothe, Norm McAfee, Rose Boothe, Mildred Crow, Jim Crow, Tom Deiterich, Cam Cesprini. Reith photo, Bishop



Les Horton calling a quadrille during one of the Old Time Dances.

L.A. Times Photo

Other dances of

Bandhaur, pianist; Les Bandhaur, violin; Clyde Greenwood, drums; Mannie Olds, mandolin. Another group was Mildred Crow, pianist; Jim Crow, guitar; Clyde Greenwood, drums and Mannie Olds, mandolin. During the last 12 years that live music was enjoyed, Rose Boothe was pianist and at times she took her fiddle out for a lively tune. Jim Goodwin, played drums, Jim Marwin, guitar or banjo. The first two pianists used sheet music that later disappeared: Rose Boothe played by ear.

The "Fish Slough Wranglers". l. to r. Roy Boothe, Norm McAfee, Rose Boothe, Mildred Crow, Jim Crow, Tom Deiterich, Cam Cesprini. Reith photo, Bishop



Les Horton calling a quadrille during one of the Old Time Dances.

L.A. Times Photo

Other dances of the early years

There were many fine musicians in the Bishop area in the 1930s and 40s. Three big dance halls were available. The Legion Hall on Main Street, now used as a bank, was the place, having a wonderful dance floor. The Masonic Hall on East Line and a large two-story building, Hall's Hall, in Big Pine were very much in use, also having fine dance floors.

In summer there were at least two places for outdoor dancing. Keough's Hot Springs had an open dance floor and at Crosby's Paradise Camp a smaller floor was used. In hot weather both were kept busy. Orchestras playing were Craig's four and six-piece, usually at the Legion Hall. Babe Bandhauer, piano; Dave Kelso, sax; Finney Nelligan, drums; "Fat" Day, banjo; Clyde Greenwood, clarinet or violin; and Al Mahurin, banjo or mandolin. The players varied, sometimes with Mannie Olds and Jim Marwin or others.

Les Bandhauer Orchestra was a fine one and small groups were busy. The fox trot, waltz and two step were some of the dances. The Woodmen of the World, camp 570, of Bishop had a large number of members. They put their heads together and formed an orchestra in 1931. The "Fish Slough Wranglers," as named, were soon playing up and down the valley, dressed in cowboy style with bright colors. Members were Roy Boothe, guitar; Rose Boothe, fiddle; Mildred Crow, piano and harmonica; Al Muhurin, banjo; Jim Crow, guitar; Cam Cesprini, fiddle; Tom Deiterich, mandolin. Norm McAfee was manager and Adele Reed, secretary.

The Wranglers played for dancing at Hall's Hall when Roy and Rose Boothe celebrated their 25th anniversary in 1934. The dinner by the Forest Service staff and friends was held upstairs and the dance downstairs.

The Woodmen group agreed to play for a dance at June Lake one year. It was dancing all night and breakfast was enjoyed in a beautiful spot along Rock Creek on the way home. Roy Boothe hosted this, bringing his Dutch Oven. While it heated on the coals he mixed biscuits and soon everyone was eating delicious hot biscuits with ham and eggs. An annual Christmas ball at the Legion Hall was put on every Christmas night by the Woodmen. Their decorations were beautiful, a different arrangement each year. For this dance they hired Craig's orchestra for ballroom dancing, tickets \$1.50 each, and it usually lasted to the small hours.

This could go on and on as amusement and relaxation was the order of the day in the small town of Bishop in those early times. Dancing, fishing and exciting ball games were all-important. It was yet a town where one could look down the end of any street and see the tall mountains stand against the blue sky. God's country!

Dancing in the Masonic Hall in the early 30's: Les and Vada Cline, Florence Taylor and Bill Reed, Bill Bigelow, Florence Smith, Bob and Carrie Wonacott.

L.A. Times photo

