

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE TOURISM COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Barbara P. Allen at 1:30 p.m. on March 24, 1997 in Room 522-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Rep. Wilk  
Rep. E. Peterson  
Rep. Shriver

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
Tom Severn, Legislative Research Department  
Renaë Jefferies, Revisor of Statutes  
Nancy Kirkwood, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Edward Schwerdt, member of the German American Club of Topeka, proponent  
Don Norton, legislative liaison for the German American Club of Topeka, proponent  
Beverly Hoffsett, President and member of Shooting Stars Club, Chairman of folk dance committee of the Kansas Square Dance Association, proponent  
John Rothrock, Education Chairman of United Square Dancers of America, proponent

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Allen brought the committee's attention to the hearing of **SB168 -designating square dance as official dance and polka as a state ethnic dance.**

Edward Schwerdt, proponent to **SB168** was recognized by Chairperson Allen, (**Attachment 1**)

Chairperson Allen recognized Don Norton, proponent, (**Attachment 2**)

Chairperson Allen recognized proponent, Beverly Hoffsett (**Attachment 3**)

John Rothrock, proponent, was recognized by Chairperson Allen (**Attachment 4**)

Chairperson Allen closed the hearing on **SB168 - designating square dance as the official state folk dance and polka as a state ethnic dance.**

**Rep. Wempe moved, Rep. Toelkes seconded to pass SB168 favorably. The motion carried.**

The minutes of March 5,11,12,13 were passed out to committee. **Rep. Palmer moved to approve the minutes, Rep. Toelkes seconded. The motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.



Testimony of Edward Schwerdt, member of the German America  
Club of Topeka

SB 168 \_\_\_\_\_.

The polka originated in the Bohemia section of Czechoslovakia in about 1830. Its spread throughout Europe was unprecedented. By 1844, polkomania had spread to the dance halls and ballrooms of Paris, London, Berlin and virtually every other major city in Europe.

Today both the music and dance, with only slight variations in tempo and sound, are practiced and enjoyed in almost every country in Europe as well as in North and South America.

By the mid- to late 1800s, hundreds of immigrants had migrated into Kansas in search of freedom, land and their share of the American dream. Although the many diverse ethnic groups were friendly and hard-working, they stuck pretty close to those neighbors who spoke the same language and shared the same cultural experiences. Music and dance was the one commonality among all the diverse ethnic groups.

The polka played a large part in uniting the different ethnic groups and bringing down the cultural barriers which divided them, all with a common goal so they could enjoy life and pursue the happiness and freedom they sought -- their main goal in coming to America.

For well over a century, the polka has become one of the most beloved and recognizably unique music and dance forms in Kansas, as well as in America. It is as much Kansas as Dorothy, Matt Dillon, cowboys and hard, red, winter wheat.

Like the hardy immigrants who brought the polka to Kansas, this dance has enjoyed good times; survived bad times of economy and wars and weather, and is still as beloved and robust as ever. The distinctive sound and upbeat tempo of polka music leave no doubt about what kind of music it is or what kind of dance one does to it. Every month, thousands of Kansans get their physical and mental spirits renewed by the unique sounds of a polka band. It is estimated there are 6000 to 7000 polka dancers in Kansas some of whom can be found in virtually every town and hamlet in the state.

Yearly, thousands of Kansans migrate back and forth across our great state to attend Polkafests, Maifests, Oktoberfests and any other fests anyone can think of. These social events, some larger than others, attract auto- and busloads of polka enthusiasts from other cities and states across the country.

From an ethnic origin -- to a music and dance of the world -- the polka has indeed made a significant contribution to the positive reputation of our state and the economic well-being of our Kansas economy. It has stood the test of time and is deserving of the designation "ethnic folk dance of Kansas".



House Tourism  
03-24-97  
Attachment 1

Testimony of Don Norton, legislative liaison for the German American Club of Topeka

SB168 \_\_\_\_\_

I'll try not to be redundant -- Polka's history and its place in our own Kansas history is well documented.

However what is less known is the German American and Polka Clubs of Kansas impact on the Kansas economy. The fortunes of Polka has been cyclical like most everything in life. The financial figures shown below are for 1996, a below average year and include only five of the larger clubs in Kansas. Many smaller Polka and German American Clubs and smaller events would increase these results by an estimated 35% to 45%.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Dance Facilities                               | \$19,000         |
| Rooms (Attendance times two of three days)     | \$127,800        |
| *Food: 6,800 attendees times two of three days |                  |
| Breakfast \$5.00                               |                  |
| Lunch \$7.00                                   |                  |
| Dinner <u>\$15.00</u>                          |                  |
| Per person per day \$27.00                     | \$367,200        |
| Other clubs and events = 40% increase          | <u>\$179,900</u> |
| Total  | \$693,900        |

\*Estimated for costs Topeka Convention and Visitors Bureau

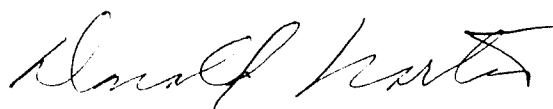
These figures do not include gasoline and diesel fuel for the many cars and buses that buy their fuel right here in Kansas. Neither do they reflect the money spent on alcoholic and soft beverages and taxes that inure to the benefit of the state or the many Kansas domiciled bands that are hired virtually every month of the year. These activities would boost the above total to well over \$1,000,000.

A considerable amount of money is donated to charity for those less fortunate. As an example, the Hays, Kansas Polkafest is held for the exclusive benefit of cancer patients and research.

Polka dancers react with the same excitement when the band leader steps to the microphone and says, "It's Polka time" as race drivers and fans do when the announcer says "Gentlemen start your engines".

Polka is truly a story about the little immigrant that made good. And it is now after 120 years we ask that this beloved part of our Kansas history be recognized as the official ethnic folk dance of Kansas.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attentiveness.



House Tourism  
03-24-97  
Attachment 2

Sources of financial information:

Barbara Wills  
President  
Germania Club of Kansas City  
Overland Park, Kansas

Ellie Keenan  
Event Organizer  
German American Citizens Association  
Kansas City

Eddie Basgall and Harold Dorzweiler  
Hays Polkafest  
Hays, Kansas

Ralph Richmond  
President  
Midwest Polka Club  
Marion, Kansas

Bob Kaiser  
President  
Polka Lovers of American (Kansas Chapter)  
Wichita, Kansas

Wayne Bennett  
Topeka Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Topeka, Kansas

Human Resource Data:

There are eleven Polka and German American Clubs in Kansas.

There are fifteen Polka bands all residing in Kansas.

March 24, 1997

Representative Allen  
Members of the Committee

Square Dancing was first recorded in this country in 1651 and can be described as choreographic melting pots, containing elements of the Morris and Maypole dances of England, as well as the French ballroom dances and church dances of Spain; as later immigrants arrived on our shores, square dancing evolved to include the folk dance traditions of nations such as Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Austria, Russia and Mexico.

Square dancing was brought to Kansas by our pioneer forebears, and quickly proved to be a popular diversion from the hardships faced by many settlers and brought together early-day Kansas neighbors, in weathered barns or under starry skies, to enjoy the toe-tapping rhythms of these dances, strengthening and affirming the bonds of community. You will still find a strong bond between square dancers everywhere.

Square dancing continues to be enjoyed by countless individuals of all ages and backgrounds and, although still known as square dancing, the term has expanded to include round, contra, clogging, line and heritage dancing within its scope. This dance is enjoyed all across the United States and in over 50 countries.

The element that makes the American Folk Dance different from the folk dances of other countries is - square dancers depend on a caller to tell dancers what to do, whether in squares, circles or lines. All calling is done in English. People in different countries may not be able to speak or understand English, but they can square dance to English speaking callers.

*Square dance clubs are non-profit and not supported by any public funding. Many clubs hold benefit dances for various organizations. In Topeka, we have dances for TARC, Cappers, Chargers Special Olympics and Jerry's kids, just to mention some of them. Other areas do many benefit dances too.*

There are approximately 100 clubs belonging to the **KANSAS SQUARE DANCE ASSOCIATION (KSDA)**, and 40 clubs belonging to **HEART OF AMERICA FEDERATION** in the Kansas City, KS area, and 25 clubs belonging to the **LEAGUE OF SQUARE DANCE AND ROUND DANCE CLUB** in the South Central Kansas District, plus there is a singles organization called **HEART OF AMERICA SINGLES SQUARE DANCE ASSOCIATION (HASSDA)**. About 6,000 dancers belong to these clubs.

**KSDA** has an annual convention in Salina drawing about 2,000 dancers - the **Federation** has an annual convention in Kansas City drawing about 1,000 dancers - the **League** has several well attended festivals - **HASSDA** has an annual convention drawing about 600 dancers.

The majority of Kansas clubs dance 2 times a month on a regular schedule. **KSDA**, the **Federation** and the **League** all publish magazines listing all the clubs belonging to their organizations and the nights they dance, including their dance locations. Square dancers do not just dance with their own club, they visit other clubs all over the state and dance with them.

Square dancing is a wholesome form of family recreation. Where else can you go to dance and take your children with you and even dance with them. People of all ages, races, backgrounds and professions can and do participate, including handicapped persons. *There is no alcohol or smoking at our dances - Doctors even support square dance as a very good form of aerobics and it is equivalent to 5 miles of walking during a 3 hour dance.*

We cannot think of a better way to recognize and be proud of our heritage, than to name the square dance as the official Folk Dance of Kansas.

BEVERLY HOFFSETT  
TOM YOUNG  
Square Dancers, Topeka, KS

House Tourism  
03-24-97  
Attachment 3

The definition of FOLK DANCE is inherent in its very name. It is, then the traditional dance of a specific folk, native to them and envolved by them instinctively and spontaneously.

The repertory of folk dance is inexhaustible. In America we have folk dances which range from Kentucky Running set to Hull's Victory, Paw Paw Patch, and the Square Dance forms were developed in America.

The taproots of our modern square dance go back to our English and French ancestors, thereare traces of Scottish, Spanish, Scandinavian, and Polish, plus other nationalities.

The French adopted and modified the English country dance and called it the "Contredanse Anglais". They also produced the form of dance known as the Quadrille. It is the Quadrill that most people point to as the grand-daddy of our modern square dance.

The vital link to this past was the "Dancing Masters" that came to this country with our forefathers and brought with them the dances of their homeland. One of the earliest records of these dances is contained in the works of John Playford, a musician and dance master. His book, "The English Dancing Master- Rules for Dancing of Country Dances, with Tunes to each Dance", was published in SEVENTEEN editions between 1650 and 1728 and contained 918 dances.

As the pioneers moved westward, the dances went with them. Many of the dances were lost or forgotten, but many were perserved, particularly in the southern Appalachians. There the "running set" established itself as one of the deep taproots of our western square dance. The running set even had a caller. While pioneers crossed this great state via the Orgeon and Santa-Fe Trails from 1821-1872 in the evenings around their campfires would gather to square dance as a way to relax and forget their problems.

Square dancing is a great American tradition and ther are many historical and other reasons that square dancing deserves permanent recognition. As a traditional wholesome form of family recreation in which people of all ages can take part, square dancing is an activity that symbolizes one of the country's basic strengths; the unity of the family. Square dancing pays no attention to arbitrary social or other distinctions, people from all walks of life equally enjoy square dancing. It is an activity in which the elderly, as well as the physically and mentally handicapped, can fully participate thereby greatly enriching their lives.

Square dancing is an aerobic exercise. An evening of square dancing provides approximately 5 miles of walking in 2 to 3 hour period. Because square dancing is considered to be "FRIENDSHIP SET TO MUSIC" it is much more fun than the impersonal atmosphere of a gym.

Mr. Henry Ford while vacationing in Sudbury Massachusetts became interested in the dance program conducted by a Dancing Master named Benjamin Lovett. The program included the Gavotte, Mazurkas, Schottische, Minuet, Virginia Reel and other Squares and Rounds. Mr. Ford tried to hire Mr. Lovett, who declined, pointing out that he had a firm contract with Wayside Inn. Mr. Ford being the multi-millionaire simply purchased the Inn and Mr. Lovett's contract and took Mr. Lovett back to Detroit with him. Mr Ford established in the Detroit area a broad program for teaching Square and Round Dancing, including the building of a beautiful dance hall in Greenfield Village and named it 'Lovett Hall', which is still in use today. In 1926 Ford and Lovett published a book which provided inspiration and material for many people who wanted such a reference. The book was titled "GOOD MORNING". A young school superintendent in Colorado Springs, Colorado by the name of Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw realized that the book only supplied part of the information on the American Dance, and that the rest of it was under his own nose in the small towns and the farming, mining and military communities.

Shaw went to work painstakingly interviewing old-timers, collecting and researching their dances and music. In 1939 he published the first really definitive work on western square dancing- "COWBOY DANCES". Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw trained teams of dancers in his Cheyenne Mountain School and took them around the country exhibiting and teaching. In the summer he conducted classes for new leaders. WESTERN SQUARE DANCING began to grow like wildfire and became to true American folk dance.

The SQUARE DANCE is a true folk dance by definition that evolved by specific folk, those pioneers moving west and danced by early settlers of Kansas and is deserving of being declared the official state FOLK dance of the state of Kansas.

Submitted by:

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# UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA

## TOPIC #10 - HANDOUT #1

### THE HISTORY OF SQUARE DANCING

The American Folk Dance has two great ancestors, one is English and the other is French. From the English we receive the Morris Dance, Scotch reels, The English Country Dance, and the Longways dance among others. The French gave us the Court Ballet, The Minuet, and Quadrilles.



The Longways Dance and the Court Ballet became the Contredanse which split and became the Appalachian Mountain Dance and the New England Country Dance. The Appalachian Mountain Dance became the Play Party, Circle Mixers, Running Set, Big Set, Contra and Western Square Dance. The New England Country Dance became Play Party, Circle Mixers, Quadrille, Contra and Eastern Square Dance. The Western and Eastern Square Dance became today's Square Dance.

Square Dancing in the late 1800's and early 1900's received a very bad name because it was danced in places where drinks were served and the dance usually became roudy and uncontrollable. People could not dance the figures except with their own group. This was a time before microphones therefore a caller was used in each square, calling the figures or someone would call a series of figures, such as figure '8 and the dancers would do a number of dips, circles or what ever. The music was a fiddle, or a guitar, or maybe a band.

Henry Ford, who put the world on wheels is given the chief credit for introducing square dancing into Michigan. He built a hall and all of his employees were able to participate in square dancing. He also wrote the book "Good Morning" a book of dances.

Dr. Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw came on the scene and brought Square Dancing out of its dark age. He traveled to dances all over America and wrote down the figures and dances. He formed the "Cheyenne Mountain Dancers", who traveled all over performing and thereby people became interested in learning to square dance. In 1939 he published a book "Cowboy Dances" and the "Round Dance".

The formation of Callerlab, "Roundalab", "United Square Dancers Of America" and many other organizations helped to unite the callers and dancers. Now, dancers can dance in any country in the world.

Microphones and the turntable changed the Square Dance the most. This led to the Square Dance of today, where there is records and only one caller.

There were 12 events that have helped to shape the future of Square Dancing: The heritage of Lloyd Shaw, from the late 1930's into the 1950's, with his Cheyenne Mountain Dancer, spread the word about Square Dancing. Microphones and Records to make the dancing easier. Bob Osgood's "Sets In Order" magazines, started in 1948, brought the dancers closer. The Diamond Jubilee, Santa Monica, California, July 13, 1950, was the first truly gigantic dance, attracting 15,200 dancers and more than 35,000 spectators. The first National Square Dance Convention, Riverside, California, 1952. The Americans Square Danced at the USA Pavilion at the Brussel World's Fair, July, 1958. The future Queen Elizabeth Square Danced at Ottawa, Canada. The formation of Callerlab, February 1971, so that the callers could communicate with each other. America's 200th Birthday Party featured American Square Dancing, July 4, 1976. The world's largest Square Dance, was held in Seattle Washington, June 27, 1981. This was featured on television. A stamp depicting Square Dancing was honored at a special First-day-of-issue

*continued*

## TOPIC #10 - HANDOUT #1

### THE HISTORY OF SQUARE DANCING

ceremony in Lincoln Center, New York. Finally Square dancing was recognized officially as the Folk Dance of America, in Washington D.C. on June 1, 1982, on a trial basis until December 31, 1983. President Carter and his wife Rosline square danced and had square dances in the whitehouse. The Square Dancers of America are still trying to have Square Dancing recognized as the Folk Dance of America on a permanent basis, at present 16 states have made Square Dancing their Folk Dance, and many other states have started the process.

The National Convention is held the third week in June each year with an attendance of around 20,000 to 30,000 dancers. It is held in different cities each year. A city bids on the National 4 years in advance. The National Executive committee (NEC) is made up of all past National General Chairmen, votes on which city receives the bid for the National, by the best presentation presented. Dancers come from all over the world to dance, visit, attend Educational Panel and sight see.

A Square Dancer can travel all over the world and dance. The calls are in English, but they maybe heavily accented in the language of the country. The service men taught square dancing in many countries and because the calls do not translate, the calls were taught in English.

There are many movies that have square dancing in them. Some of them are "Giant", "Roseanna McCoys", "Copper Canyon", "Lets Dance", "East Side, West Side", "Oklahoma", "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" and "Duel in the Sun". Jerry Lewis learned to call in the movie "Partners".

Many people say square dancers are the friendliest people on earth because they hold hands in a square and they are always greeting each other with a hug - "Yellow Rock". A dancer may travel many miles to a dance, he is always greeted with the same "Yellow Rock" as he receives in his own club. Many clubs visit each other and mileage doesn't matter, they will travel to the ends of the earth for the fun of square dancing. Square Dancing today is called "Friendship Set to Music".

#### **SQUARE DANCE ATTIRE:**

The Square Dance costume has changed with the times. In the beginning a lady spent many hours ironing her dress and starching her slips. In the "Olden Days" a lady would wear, a Camisoles and Pantalets, White Ballerina Slippers, Grey figured cotton print dress, bonnet, neck-ribbon with a silver pin, pouch bag, chintz pinafore, several petticoats, fan, parasol, and a wool shawl. Today she wears pettipants, slippers, petticoat and a non iron dress. The dresses of "yester years" were full and long, today's dresses are full and short. The wardrobe of Mr. Square Dancer of "By-gone years" consisted of a belge felt western hat, striped "Gambler" pants, hand-tooled leather belt and sterling silver buckle overlaid with gold, boot-hooks, boot-puller, western boots, western tie with leather tie-slide, embroidered gabardine shirt, and fringed chamols jacket. Today's Mr. square dancer wears a western shirt that may or may not match his partner's dress, slacks or jeans, boots, sometimes a tie but no hat. Badges are worn to all square dance activities by both Mr. and Mrs. dancer, to identify themselves and what club or organization they belong to. Instrumental in making square dancing what it is today. "Friendship Set to Music", A square dancer can dance in any city, state or foreign country in the world.