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The
Old-Time *Kentucky* Running
Set

by

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This dance is derived from the old English 'Sets Running' circle dances, with influences from quadrilles and square sets.

'Running' It is now sometimes called 'Big Circle Dance,' and the 'running' aspects of the name often neglected it being danced at square dance 'third set,' 'breakdown' pace, with the usual square dance step being used. The old running set was danced at very high speed, using short steps, with the ball of the foot carrying the dancer's weight in contradistinction to the usual heel-and-toe stride. At very high speeds, such as at 165 beats per minute, the dance is less strenuous than at such speeds as 125 beats/minute. At lower speeds dancers tend towards the normal stride, causing extra effort. The faster running set dancers seem to float, and glide along. It isn't quite a running step, which comes down heavily on the heels and uses a much longer stride, but it's speed is closer to running than to walking hence the name.

Formation The basic formation is based on one large circle of all available dancing couples. Any number of couples can dance. The dance starts with variations on the basic 'grand circle' formation. This phase ends when the couples link up in 'petty circles' comprised of two couples facing each other in 'circle four' formation, the double couples in 'grand circle' formation. A figure is danced then the couples 'pass on' to the next couple by the familiar 'half right and left' figure. They then join in a circle four with the new couple. Another figure is danced, then the couples 'pass on' again, to dance yet another figure. This keeps on till the caller uses up his repertory, or all couples have danced with the full set of couples available to them. It was not at all rare to do twelve four-person figures at a large dance. The third phase begins as the couples go back into the 'grand circle' formation. Several more grand circle figures are performed, then the dance ends.

The Caller's Location Unlike contra dances and square dances, the caller danced as he called, he and his partner acting as a 'first couple' and leading the figures, in the old time running sets. This calls for stamina, obviously; and a clear, loud voice. I have called sets with over a hundred dancers in my prime, with unaided voice. The advent of the portable FM microphone systems has been an immense aid in calling such huge sets. The microphone should be of the head-mounted type, rather than the hand-held variety used by rock and pop vocalists.

Sad to say, when the State Department information film 'To Hear Your Banjo Play,' starring Pete Seeger, featuring Woody Guthrie, Huddie Leadbetter, Texas Gladden, Brownie McGee and myself, was filmed in 1947 there were no FM mikes. If I called while dancing the recorded volume varied too widely. So the director, sound man, and cinematographer insisted on my standing still, on a chair, on the sidelines, while the skilled members of Margot Mayo's American Square Dance Group danced either with Margot leading the figures, or leaderless. Call timing was a very tough job, especially since I had to prerecord the entire sequence of calls in a recording studio, then had to 'lip sync' for the camera while the Group danced for the camera to the recorded calls. Call timing is a cinch if the caller is also dancing. (This film is still available through libraries.)

The Swing Position The usual 'buzz step' swing of square dances was not used for the swing, although it was used in certain other figures. Running set dancers used the 'Walking swing' instead. In this swing the couples stand in the usual position, with the man's right hip almost touching the woman's right hip, as they face in opposite directions. The man's upper left arm is held up and out parallel to the floor, at right angles to his chest, his left forearm parallel to his chest. The woman wraps her right hand around his upper arm at, a bit above his elbow, with the rest of her right arm straight. The man rotates his hand and forearm so his left palm lies against the underside of her upper right arm, as he supports her arm from below. She puts her left hand on his right shoulder; the man puts his right arm partially around her waist. They wind up leaning slightly away from each other as they swing. This position gives very good support to resist the centrifugal forces generated by the high speed of revolution of the couple, and provides a strong grip for the woman.

The Swing Motion When swinging, the right heel is placed just a little to the right and forward, ending up just a bit behind the partner's similarly-placed right heel. The weight comes down on the right heels only as the couple turns clockwise spinning on their right heels. The right foot is tilted up so the heel is touching the floor only at its back end. As they continue to turn clockwise the left foot is brought around in front of and past the right foot in a right-oblique walking step, which provides the main force to turn the couple. The left heel touches down first, unlike the running step, and the weight shifts to the toes smoothly. The toes of the left foot push away against the floor to turn the dancers. Then the right heels are planted in the proper places to provide more spinning around the heels. It's obvious that the closer the couples' right heels are to each other and the center point of the couple's clockwise turning the easier and more controlled the swing. This sequence of right heel-spin and intervening left foot cross-over walk step is done in time to the music, and is capable of high speed with less effort than the buzz-step swing.

The Promenade Couples hold right hand in right, left in left; the arms in front of their bodies, as in the Skaters' Waltz position. They move around the grand (or petty) circle in a counterclockwise direction, in the gliding 'running' step. They don't hold each other's shoulders or waists.

A Typical set of Calls The calls will appear in bold type, their explanations in ordinary type. They are many of my favorite calls, the sequence which follows is not fixed; only the larger basic structure of a series of petty circle calls sandwiched between two sequences of grand circle figures is fixed. For dramatic reasons, and to inspire dancers and musicians who are feeling the drawdown of energy from what could easily be an unbroken fifteen to twenty minutes at high speed., I like to place the fanciest, most elaborate and spectacular grand circle figures near the end. Some of which allow the dancers to rest for a few moments; the musicians must 'soldier on.' It's not unknown for musicians to take turns and thus steal a moment's rest, or to stop picking and fiddling altogether and to sing a few verses and choruses instead. In some mountain communities lacking in musicians the spectators and the dancers, when their hands are free provide rhythm by 'rattling;' that is, by rapid clapping at least two claps per beat. The Lumbee tribe of North Carolina provide rhythm by synchronized clogging in the rhythm of

One, Two, one-two-three, a practice older than that of the modern synchronized performing clog dance groups.

Up the River, Round the Bend, Grab Your Partners, We're gone again! The dancers grab partners, and form the grand circle, facing in, men to the left, women on the right of their male partners. All join hands. The caller would instantly call a figure such as:

Circle to the left! or, simply **Circle!** The entire formation moves clockwise, bodies turned to face ahead, all hands still clasped .

Ree-verse back, you're going wrong! (I been a-tryin' to tell you all night long!) The dancers pivot in place and circle back the other way, all hands still clasped.

Pint o' Whiskey, Quart o' Gin; With a Whoop and a Holler, Balance in! All face in again, still clasping hands, and move towards the center of the circle, raising clasped hands high and whooping like Rebel soldiers charging; whomever wants to can clog. The leader/caller decides when it's crowded and/or loud enough and starts the retreat by moving backwards to the original circle.

I Cain't hear You folks, Try that Again! Dancers repeat, usually much louder.

Promenade! All drop corner's hands, hold both partner's hands in the 'Skater's Waltz' position and move counterclockwise around the grand circle, as couples.

Right hands High; Wring out the Dishrag till it's Dry! Couples hold clasped right hands up high, clasped left hands stay low. The man stands still while his partner walks in front of him and then to his left, circling him counterclockwise once. At the point wherein they find they are about to get arms tangled they lower right hands and raise left hands, forcing the woman to twirl. As the woman orbits her man she keeps facing him as much as possible. The raising and lowering of hands should be smooth and steady, with straight arms like a seesaw, or walking beam on an old-time river steamboat.

The first time around inexperienced people get to turning wrong, getting tangled, letting go hands, etc. with much hilarity and noise. I will usually give them a second chance by calling:

Hold her hands, Spin her 'Round, till the Sole of her Foot wears a Hole in the Ground! After this call the dancers resume the promenade., hands back down.

Head Couple turn Back, go down in the Coal Mine, Down, Down, Down! The leader/caller and his partner drop hands, spin around in place to face back along the line of promenading couples, who raise their joined nearest hands up shoulder high to form the roof of the tunnel in the coal mine. The lead couple joins inside hands and bows down to pass under the line of clasped inside hands. The next couple follows suit immediately they can. This keeps up till all have gone down in the coal mine. As soon as the lead couple get to the end of the tunnel they

stand and spin back, then clasp inside hands to form part of the tunnel roof, followed by successive couples in turn. When the lead couple pass the last couple ducking down they resume the normal promenade. Following couples do the same until all couples are promenading. There are two variations:

Head Couple turn Back, make that Open Tunnel! This time the head couple and their followers clasp inside hands and force the oncoming couples to duck under. The tunnel turns itself inside out in the same manner as the previous variation, except for making tunnel roofs first.

Waves of the Ocean, Waves of the Sea, Wave them Pretty Gals Back to me! This time the tunnel undulates like the Northern square dance figure: 'Duck and Dive.' This particular call is used in an unrelated square dance in Georgia to a different figure. Here it calls for the leading couple to alternatively duck under, then go over oncoming couples in a pretty wavelike undulating manner if the dancers keep in time and are synchronized. When it nears the end I like to call: (From the Georgia square dance)

Waves of the Ocean, Waves of the Shore, Wave them Pretty Gals, Wave no more! This calls for no action, being merely caller's 'patter.'

Gents, Right hands high, Left let go, Sweep the Floor, Round she goes! Starting from the Promenade, couples drop left hands while raising clasped right hands high. The man leaps up using both feet. In air he puts his right leg behind him, and bends his left knee thus placing the left calf vertically. He lands on the floor with a loud thump, taking the impact chiefly on his left sole, helped by the contact of his right toe on the floor. In a continuous motion he sinks down smoothly, until his right calf is roughly parallel to the floor, with his left calf vertical his weight being shared between his left sole, and his right knee and toe, body upright, right hand still held high. His partner dances counterclockwise around him, skipping over his extended right leg. When she is back to her starting place, he stands up, putting his feet together, they then promenade. This figure causes much hilarity, so I often repeat it, but not usually right away.

Pull out the Cat's Cradle, Corner to Corner! Starts from the grande circle, all facing in, all holding hands if needed first call 'Circle'. Lead couple backs up into a corner of the hall, The couple directly opposite them does the same. In a large circle the opposite couple often turns out to be two or three confused couples. No problem, for it soon becomes obvious as they near the corner as the circle flattens. (Often there is yipping and clogging going on.) In a perfect world this puts the circle into two straight lines of dancers facing each other, up close and intimate with the leading and opposite couples just touching their corners of the hall behind them. (On occasion, kisses have been exchanged when the lines meet.)

Tother Corner! Those couples who perceive themselves to be positioned right so they can haul the lines into the unused corners (the couples at the center of the lines, in the case where the hall is square, not rectangular.) Usually there will be competitive ventures, but again, it sorts itself out as the lines separate and then come together in two straight, close lines from one new corner to the opposite new corner. At this point the caller will call for a circle left or right, or a

promenade, and so on. The dancers open the lines into the grand circle in the same manner. With experience the dancers learn to judge the opening and closing speeds and the figure becomes precise, smooth, and intriguing to watch.

Single File! Injun style! Lady in the lead, and gents run Wild! All dancers drop hands and form a single line facing around the grand circle counterclockwise. Please, no hands flapping over mouths in unreal, child's play war whoops. Except among citybillies, I've never seen that nonsense. A note about 'Injun Style' The Indians indeed walked the old trails in single file, but the warriors led the way, in case of attack. The mountain folk adopted the custom and I have seen it in operation many times over. I once received a stern lecture from an older gentleman proceeding ahead of his slat-bonneted lady in Floyd County, Kentucky, when we encountered them on a back country trail. Instead of the usual long greeting ceremony men to men, women to women I got 'Don't ye keer none fer yore wimmin folk? That's b'ars an catamounts an' no-count men a-roamin' these yere hills!' Freyda Simon had walked ahead of Margot and I, city style. We instantly mended our careless ways. The lady leading in the dances' single file is an artifact from her being on the gent's right and turning to move 'antigodlinwise' around the grand circle.

This figure is usually only a precedent for several variations. Here's one:

Turn and Swing! Unless otherwise specific by gender, all calls are understood to be addressed to the men. No one should take umbrage at this; we cannot go back and change the past.

Leave Her behind You! The lady and her gent immediately stop swinging, and the lady steps behind the gent as they resume the single file. This swinging and falling back is usually repeated several turns. Then:

Gents, find your ladies and Promenade! The ladies step a little way into the circle to allow the gents to speed by; the ladies taking smaller steps. When original partners are found they promenade. Another variation:

Ladies inside, Gents outside, Ladies Run Away! This causes the gents to fall as far behind as the caller wishes. He then restores lost loves by a series of calls:

Catch that Gal, Give Her a Swing! This applies to the lady in front of the gent. She turns back, swings with him. Then she falls back behind him as the caller yells:

Leave her Boys, leave Her! (The last sea shanty sung dockside at the end of a voyage was called 'Leave her, Johnny, leave her!') This figure repeats until original partners hook up.

Ladies, hold (Shoulders) by the Left! The ladies step further into the circle and rest their left hands on the left shoulder of the lady ahead of them, still moving ahead which ends the single file formation.

Ladies circle small, Gent circle up tother way!

The ladies slow down, tighten their counterclockwise circle while shifting it away towards one end of the hall, allowing room for the gents Bled by the leader to peel away and make their own clockwise circle.

Reverse back to make a Wagon Wheel, Gents you walk the King's Highway! The ladies stop, spin around and resume moving with right hands on right shoulders of the ladies ahead of them. Led by the lead man or caller, the gents leave their own circle and move around to the center of the hall, then walk the walls, counterclockwise. If the hall is crowded they weave left and right, like a snake. They are no longer in a full circle, but are usually merely a longish line of men following their leader. When the leader approaches the woman's circle he dances in place until his partner comes round to him. His partner may also speed up, or slow down the women's circle in a perfect world they would meet without having to stall or speed up.

Gents, Hook on to the Wagon Wheel! The caller/leader meets his lady, and turning to dance backwards, takes his lady's left hand in his right. He is followed in turn by the other men. Sometime after the circle is completed the caller yells:

Ladies swing out and Gents swing in, Turn that Wagon Wheel back again! The ladies move out of the circle passing in front of the men, as the gents move into it, as partners continue holding hands. As the men come into place they pivot clockwise halfway round and place their free left hands on the left shoulders of the man ahead of them. Now the couples are moving counterclockwise, with the ladies backing up, their bodies turned to face backwards. (Sometimes it's a water wheel and it's buckets that get hooked on.)

Gents step Out and give Her a swing! The couple trades places, as before, but go right into the walking swing.

Ladies in, join your pretty little hands! Gents you bow, you all know how! Gents join hands so tan, All go left in the California Fruit Basket! Starting from a 'circle right' or 'circle left' figure, the ladies move inwards and join hands, still facing in and moving right or left as the case may be. Men duck under the ladies' arms, then stand erect, while joining hands with adjoining men behind the ladies' backs. (This should make a single snug circle with men and women alternating, arms joined behind neighbors' backs at their waists.) All put right feet forward, into the circle, left feet back, and move left or right with the buzz step. (Here, when circling left, the forward foot slides left, pulled by the rearward foot. The forward foot is slid a few inches to the left, pushed by the rear foot. The feet actually cross the body's forward axis in opposite directions. The forward foot takes hold and pulls left as the rearward foot takes its new position. If circling right this motion is more like that in the buzz step swing, wherein the forward foot is slid right, pushed by the other foot. Then the forward foot is fixed in place as the rear foot is moved to its new position. In the swing, the rear foot provides most of the motive power, the forward right foot being slid around a small circle clockwise.)

This can be followed up by one or two variations: Reverse back. Everybody balance in with a whoop and holler. In this case it gets quite snug, funny, and hilarious.

This is a good figure to end the first grand circle groups of calls and start the petty circle figures.

Stand! (Or Stop in Place!) Count off! The dancers stand still or clog in place and count, starting with the lead couple and the men loudly calling out the successive numbers in a counterclockwise direction, or merely alternating with 'One,' 'Two,' 'One,' 'Two' ad nifinitum until every couple knows whether it is an even or odd numbered couple. (Sometimes the call is 'Odd,' 'Even.')

Despite such a simple procedure to follow, newcomers often need help from the leader sometimes from being caught off guard, forgetting the last number called, jumping in ahead of turn, etc. In 1992 I called a running set for about two hundred faculty and students at Tianjin's Nankai University. I had to go along the line of couples, first pointing grandly at myself and yelling, 'Yi!' I pointed at the next couple with a sweeping arm motion, calling, 'Er!' (Almost arrh') then went through the whole big set pointing and crying out alternatively 'Yi!, 'Er!' 'Yi!' 'Er' ad nauseum. At that, one couple forgot, and their neighbors straightened them out with heavy sarcasm. From my ancient store of early childhood 'earth talk' not-quite-Mandarin dialect of Chinese, and their varied store of English, we managed to do an entire running set. Sometimes I had an assistant caller/translator or two. A time or two I had to explain in English what I'd just said in my far Northwest China dialect, which my helpers rendered into pure potunghua (Mandarin). We all had fun anyway.

Odd couples Out to the Right! Circle up Four! All odd couples turn as a couple, the lady forming the pivot, to come face-to-face with the even couple which was on their right, and who have turned left. This re-forms the grand circle into a grand circle made up entirely of petty circles. It should be pointed out (especially to new dancers) that this is the 'home' position, from which all petty circle figures start and where they should end. That is, odd couples face forward along the grand circle in a counterclockwise direction, while all even couples face them in the clockwise direction. Experienced country folk usually didn't need this elaborate, time-wasting choosing of sides. They'd keep their eyes on the dancers to the left and watched the couples' pairing-up as it rippled along the line. The caller was always odd a job qualification requirement to all humorists, if asked. When the next couple saw the caller and his lady approach they knew they were even, so moved to meet their visitors. The third couple saw the second couple turn their backs to them, knew they were odd, and so went out to the couple on their right. Such skilled communities never used the terms, 'Count off,' 'odd,' and 'even:' but used such terms as 'Active couple' to denote the odd couples. (I suspect that Margot Mayo may have come up with counting off to help the New York City kids who made up most of her American Square Dance Group.)

What if there is a couple left over? More odds than evens, or vice-versa. They too face in the proper direction to wait for visitors who'll show up during at the start of the next figure. (The lead couple will then be bereft for that next figure.) Sometimes such 'orphaned' couples amuse themselves by clogging, swinging, dancing with a phantom couple, and the like. It's poor etiquette to go take a swig from a fruit jar or a jug the lady is momentarily abandoned, the

other dancers become envious, and the band gets distracted. Therefore such containers were strictly kept outside the hall, in the custody of rowdies who give the dances a bad name and furnish a good topic for the next day's thunderous sermon.

The dancers immediately join hands with their visiting couples and circle left once around. I have included the call to circle left above. But it is generally understood to be an automatic welcoming action to be performed when meeting a new couple. With newcomers, I find it helpful to call it for the first three figures, with teasing remarks stressing its automatic nature, such as: I didn't call 'circle left' that time, so you did it automatically, right?

Now that's straightened out, here's a good figure to start out with:

Balance to! Couples drop hands, advance towards other couple four small steps, then retreat four steps backwards.

Balance Through, Shake your Shoe! Couples advance again, with four normal steps, passing through the other couple, gents passing opposite lady on the left, outside, ladies passing opposite lady to the right, opposite gent to her right (in square dance and contradance parlance: half right and left.) Then, when safely past opposite lady gents clog, or dance 'soft shoe,' 'flatfoot' dance.

Turn and Swing that Honey, do! Gents turn round and swing opposite lady.

Put her on Your Right and Circle! Each lady and gent has a new (temporary) partner, and the complete figure is called and danced again so all get back to original partners.

Pass On! The couples repeat the half-right-and-left figure, dancing through the visiting couple, then on to meet a new couple. They automatically join hands and circle four to the left once around only. This call not only ends the figure, but advances active couples counterclockwise one place, to meet a new couple moving clockwise. Another petty circle is called next.

Birdie in the Cage with a Three-rail Pen! The active lady moves into the circle, the other three dances join hands and circle three, to the left. The lady may do a ladylike, restrained clog, or flatfoot dance step. I have seen old ladies up on their toes, dancing left, right, left, pause, right, left, right, pause springing lightly to the side indicated on the first step after the pause, the next two steps being done in place. This is quite reminiscent of Scottish dancing. In another petty circle figure it is specifically called for see: 'Ladies Dos a Ballinette.'

Fly Away Birdie, Buzzard flies In! The lady leaves the center of the three-hand ring (actually six hands) regains her place in the ring and the active gent takes over in the center, clogging boisterously. Sometimes he is a crow, others he's a buzzard.

Buzzard hop out, Give Birdie a Swing! Active gents swing their birdies, others watch. Sometimes this is called so all dancers swing their partners: 'Buzzard hop out, and all swing!'

Other times, at other locations, Crow puts his Birdie on his left, and the whole sequence is repeated, giving the 'inactive' couples a chance at a spell in the pen. Then:

Pass On!

Ladies, Join your lily-white hands! All stop, face inwards and ladies join their hands, facing each other and getting a strong grip. (Sometimes clasping each other's wrists.)

Gents, You Join your hands so tan! Men follow suit, making sure to join hands above the ladies' arms.

Ladies Bow, Gents know how! The gents raise joined hands over the ladies' heads (ladies may need to dip gracefully) and the gents move their clasped hands down the ladies' backs all the way to the ladies' waists for safety as they duck under the ladies' hands which are likewise moved down to the mens' waists.

It seems a miniature California Fruit Basket has been formed, comprising only four people.

Swing like Thunder! As in the fruit basket, right feet go forward into the formation; left feet go backward and the buzz step is employed to produce a high acceleration. Dancers lean backwards against the centrifugal forces. If the mens' hands were not below the ladies' centers of gravity the ladies would find themselves airborne, knocking down neighbors with their flying feet. This danger should be strongly impressed on all dancers. It is very dangerous if improperly done! It's a thing of beauty when done properly, especially when the ladies wear long, flaring skirts which fly like flags.

A Hug and a Kiss, now ain't that a shame? To Break that ring with a Corner Swing! This gives each gent a temporary new partner. The entire figure is repeated to regain original partners. Then all pass on at the call.

Pass On!

Ladies Join Right hands in a Texas Star! Not quite a star, having only two couples, unlike the four couples in the square dance of the same name.

Gents, Hook on by the right! We've been there before, in the Wagon Wheel figure gents go around backwards holding the ladies' left hands in their right hands.

Ladies step out, Gents step in, form your Texas star again! As with the Wagon Wheel, ladies and gents change places, still holding hands, women now to the outside, moving backwards. They now move counterclockwise.

Pull her in, give Her a Swing! Partners swing, then quickly form the petty circle at the start of the next call usually to pass on. However this dance can be repeated with new partners by calling for a corner swing.

Pass On!

Chase that rabbit, Chase that squirrel, Chase that pretty Gal round the World! (Also found as a square dance.) Active lady goes through other couple, between them. Active gent follows her as she moves completely around the opposite lady, then darts between the other couple again. She then leads her gent around the opposite gent, winding up in the center as the caller yells:

Catch Her, Boys, Give her a Swing! This can end the figure, or prolong it for a repeat by calling for a corner swing.

Do-si-do! Not the usual square dancers' do-si-do! The men take corner ladies' left hands with their own left hands, reaching across the ladies' bodies. They pull the ladies in front of them, turning them towards their right, so the women wind up in the center, back to back. (In some places the ladies merely step into place, standing back to back.) They all drop hands and the men begin moving clockwise around the ladies, reaching out with their right hands for their own partners' left hands. (Their own partners are behind the corner lady!) They take hold of partners' hands, and the gent pulls his lady out of the center, pulling her around himself clockwise. For good style, as he does this he is moving in towards the center, cooperatively with his lady who's moving out from the center. Thus they share the travel distance. As the lady gets behind the gent he reaches behind himself and swaps his left hand for his right, so the lady's left hand is now held by his left hand. Now the lady is moving inwards as the gent moves out; as she completes her tour around the gent she is back in the center, back to back with the other lady. They all drop hands (not all communities do) and the gents move left to catch hold of their corner ladies, beginning the figure over again, this time with a new partner. This entire figure is often gone through two or four times, being ended with a swing, etc.

This is an easy figure to get lost in, but is fun to watch, when done properly. The ebb and flow, the passing of ladies around the men, all make for a fascinating display. The dos-si-do (from the French, 'Dos-a-dos' meaning back-to-back) gets plenty of such action here, more than in the other figure of the same name. I find it necessary, when teaching beginners, to walk them through the figure at least three times. It's so easy to have hand problems.

Ladies, Dos-a-balinette, Gents you contradance! (I'm not certain of the spelling, only the pronunciation.) And 'contradance'? It seems totally unlike the New England longways 'contradance' sets. Actually, herein 'contra' is used in its meaning of 'against.' Couples stand still after completing the automatic circle four and drop hands. Ladies then perform a small, graceful leap to the left toes following that by treading gently right, left, pause, on the toes. (See description above, in Bidie in a Cage figure.) Meantime the men leap straight up a modest distance, landing loudly on both feet. Then they swing their right leg diagonally across in front

of the left leg, usually scuffing or heel-tapping the floor as it goes across. As the leg swings back, returning almost into place, the men jump again, then swing the left leg across to the right, tapping or brushing the floor as it goes. Meantime, the women have leaped right, and danced with three weight shifts (left, right, left) in place. The men's heavy leaping and stamping are nicely accompanied by, and contrasted to, the ladies' restrained and silent toe stepping and leaping.

This goes for four stomps, and can be ended there, or repeated by changing partners in a corner swing.

There are any number of figures from square dances (like the 'Birdie in the cage' example above), and even from contradances. Figures such as the 'Grapevine Twist,' 'Uptown, Downtown,' 'Through that couple and around that couple,' 'Around that couple and take a peek' for a few examples. Figures from the grand circle are often adapted to petty circles, for example: 'Gents, Sweep the floor,' 'Wring out the dishrag,' 'Balance in' and the like. Promenades are used, circle right, also, to end or begin a figure. The possibilities are almost endless. Instead of adding an immense weight of words, I have limited myself to the few most novel figures described above.

To end the petty circles:

All join hands and circle to the South, Get a little moonshine in your Mouth! South ' left. Couples split away from each other and hinge back into places in the grand circle.

Gents in and out and round about, Turn partners with the right elbow swing! This figure starts with the head gent only; when there is enough room the next gent follows in his track, then the next in succession around the circle till all gents have taken a turn. When the caller/leader runs through all the people in the set, he takes his lady back into the grand circle as does the next couple and the next after in succession, and so on.

The caller turns his partner with a right elbow swing. (They clasp each other's right elbows, with forearms parallel and touching, clasping each other's arms above the elbow, arms bent very much as the way the lady holds on to her gent in the swing.. They revolve around each other at high speed as though in a regular swing, bodies leaning away from each other for balance, elbows kept bent.)In this figure they do not swing in place, but travel as they swing until they're both about at least a yard inside the grand circle. He turns his lady until she is facing back to the place from whence she came. Without pausing she moves back outward to approach the next gent in line and left elbow swings with him as commanded in the next call (below, next paragraph.) The caller smoothly curves a bit farther into the circle and curves back in a smooth looping path so he arrives next his lady just as she finishes turning next gent by the left as in the next call. During this entire figure the active lady and gent do not stop moving, looping in and out in smooth ebb and flow patterns.

Lady, turn next gent out! Their elbow swing goes a full turn around, sending the second gent inward on his own looping path. To viewers it appears as though she is hurling the next gent into the circle, because of the speed of the elbow swing. Note: The dancers never spin around in place during this figure, all changes in direction are as circular as they can manage, within the constraints of time and space. The aim is to follow curved paths, as large as the dancers can manage. The ladies ebb and flow in short paths, while the gents follow larger paths in and out.

Ladies, Turn your partners with a right elbow swing! Turn t'other fellers by the left! This call is not for immediate action, merely a reminder. By now the third gent has joined the action, cast into the fray by the second lady's left elbow swing. And so it continues growing. The gents should model their movements on the caller's moves, and get into synchronism with him, and each other for maximum viewing pleasure.

When the caller finds no waiting ladies he turns his partner into place in the grand circle with a right elbow swing, setting her into place beside him. (Need I say at his right side?) They are then visited by the second couple who then subsequently fall into place. The third couple follow, and so on in succession until all find themselves back 'home.' This ends the figure.

It can be followed by a swing and promenade, a circle left and/or right followed by a whooping balance in, or another figure.

Snake in the Fence! Shortly before this call the caller/leader has let go his corner's hand and started moving into the center, hauling the others after him. Sometimes he clogs as he leads the way. Then, yelling the call, he turns and heads for the line, a few places further along. He ducks under one couple's uplifted arms, then goes a few places, then goes farther down the line and ducks back in under another couple's arms. He keeps this up, all following and holding hands with adjacent people, till he comes to the end. He usually doubles back, or goes straight across the hall, until he can lead them all into a grand circle left (clockwise). A caller with mischief in his heart will have left a large portion of the line un-snaked, and so will double back and 'snake' in the opposite direction. Dancers who wind up with crossed arms have merely to turn the other way to untangle. (Hands may be permitted to slip in the other person's grips, if needed by the terminally confused but no one should ever let go.)

During this long figure the caller may be silent, or may fill in with mere patter, such as: 'Big pig, little pig; Root hog, or die!' 'Love somebody, yes I do! Makes my gun shoot straight and true!'

Thread the Needle! Starts the same way, but caller leads his followers in ducking through the line, again and again, round and round always clockwise, never reversing. His path gets successively larger. Some callers/leaders combine the two without warning.

Wind up that ball of yarn! As with the previous figures, the caller has started pulling his line into the circle, before calling. He only goes inwards a short distance, but has been moving leftwards all the time. He keeps up this clockwise spiralling, often clogging, (joined by any others who want to clog) and soon calls,

Wind her tight! Which he continues to do. When the spiral gets quite tight I have often called to beginners:

Oh Lord, I got her too tight! What in the world am I gonna do? I ignore the 'witty' answers and then turn left in place, stick out my left arm and part the tightly-adjacent coiled layers of dancers with it, calling:

'Comin' through! Hang on tight! And we'll get to sleep at home tonight! The tighter the ball has been wound, the bigger the surprise exit, and the more body contact goes on. It gets hilarious out. I'll end by going in to a large circle right, a swing, a promenade and the farewell call:

Take your lady outside, give her some air, you know where but I don't care! Take her to a rockin' char!

NOTES:

The caller should find a key for the music which enables him/her to project well, without causing undue strain. The caller often finds that he is chanting the calls in the key played by the band. I am a 'shingle-roof' high tenor, the key of A suits me very well. I usually ask the band to start with 'Fire on the Mountain; Run, Boys, Run!' It lends itself to chanting, and can be played at high speed for a long time, by good fiddlers. Bands like to change into such A tunes as 'Sally Goodin,' 'Ida Red,' and 'Old Joe Clark.' The usual tempo is 'flat out' and really tests the band's stamina. Fancy licks and decorations will soon give way to straight bowing and simple picking. Fiddlers can rest a bit while the 'burden' of the tune is carried by guitars and banjos. They, of course, will take their turn resting. I have seen a bass player take over completely!

As mentioned above, the above is not a strict 'recipe,' the sequence is not fixed and not all the figures need be called in one set. The caller should feel free to move any or all of the first grand circle figures to the final grand circle, and vice versa. Any figure may be repeated if the caller wishes. Unlike the fixed order of events in a contradance, the caller is in complete charge, interacting with, and challenging the dancers.

I'd like to credit Margot Mayo, her fine collection, her American Square Dance Group, and its early running set mentor, Ralph 'Teffy' Tieferteller, for my basic education in this fine dance. I must also thank the many callers I heard in Appalachia for other information. I take blame for all errors herein, and ascribe all the proper information to their credit. Lastly, calling over the years has led me to alter some calls, following in the tradition of callers. However, if memory serves, all the figures are authentic and traditional the way I learned them six decades ago.

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