

WELCOME TO GENDER-FREE DANCING!

A Historical Perspective

4th Revision 10-12-2011

Author: Chris Ricciotti ©2006, 2009, 2011

Music and dancing have been a part of our human existence for a long time. Who can sit idly by with a great tune playing and an addictive rhythm filling the room with energy?

The idea of dancing using non-gender or global terminology may be new to some people, but if you look back in history, there are lots of fascinating accounts of same gender coupling and bending the roles within social dance culture. Dancing and gender has a rich, diverse, and entertaining story to tell!

Until recently, this part of dance history has often been unheard, glossed over or dismissed as irrelevant. However, this history provides an opportunity to understand the social aspects that dancing fulfilled in society. It also fills in the gaps about the reality of our social culture and gives us a diverse and accurate account of the human condition from a social context of that time, rather than through the eyes of our cultural norms today.

Modern day interest in gender-free dancing came as a direct response from dancers in the gay community who challenged their leadership to come up with a solution to help make traditional dancing feel more accessible, inclusive and relevant in their social structure. From there this idea has spread in different ways to the mainstream of the dance community and has started to have an affect on their dancing, particularly with younger dancers. The philosophy of gender-free dancing, much like the stories of our past, show that living traditions only stay rich and alive by finding ways to adapt to the needs of our changing society.

Gender-free dancing is a lot of fun and has the potential to provide a great learning experience for new dancers, as well as create a new challenge for experienced dancers. This form of dancing increases the potential connections dancers can make on the floor, with all genders dancing together in mixed and same gender combinations. Dancers who swap roles or dance gender-free regularly tend to look at the structure of the dance from a global rather than individual perspective which provides a venue for improving dancing skills and understanding the importance of each role in making the dance satisfying for everyone. Unlike the conventional dance model, this is not about dancing with half the room. It is about being inclusive and creating a safe and satisfying dance experience for everyone who comes to the dance.

A case in point, I've had conversations with older folks where we discovered that we were both into contra dancing - the running theme being, "Oh, you contra dance too? Perhaps we met at a dance somewhere, oh, but you are a man (or woman – someone of the same gender) so we may never have met." I see gender-free dancing as having the potential to change this perspective on how we dance today.

A quote from the late Carl Wittman, founder and role model of the gender-free English and Scottish country-dance movement in Oregon during the 1970's sums this up beautifully:

"The country dance form can be thought of as an exquisite vessel, in itself beautiful in shape, yet highly abstract. We can choose to fill this vessel with whatever meaning we like. If we like, we can pursue a particular friendship; we can rejoice in a sense of community; we can see in the music and the dance the highest of spiritual values; we can see it as good fun. The dance is all of these and greater than all of them."

Historical examples of same gender dancing in different cultures

Early Ritual and Tribal Dances



There are accounts of mixed and same gender dancing all through history, even in early tribal cultures. There are many accounts of dance rituals that were segregated by gender. Men had their particular rituals as did women. Much of this had to do with celebrations and cultural events within a community, such as the rite of passage to adulthood, becoming engaged, married, having a baby, a death, etc. International folk dances from eastern Europe and the Balkans have dance traditions specific to gender, though in most folk dance communities in America, everyone dances them.

Early English and Celtic Traditions

Morris and sword dances from Celtic roots were traditionally danced by men only. It hasn't been until recently that there have been mixed or women only teams. In 2003 while on a ritual sword dance tour with the Gay Blades, in England, I was speaking to some of the men who are part of the official "Morris Ring". They reported that only the all male teams were still *officially* recognized.

Dancing masters in English court traditions often taught the dances to men and women in gender segregated settings. At that time there was much stigma attached to dancing with someone of the opposite gender with whom you had not been formally introduced, but very little stigma attached to two men or two women dancing together. Typically it was at the formal evening ball where men and women came together to dance. The strict rules of society and social etiquette made dancing one of the only socially acceptable places where one was allowed to touch, flirt or otherwise make your desires known and to become better acquainted with someone of the opposite gender.

Queen Elizabeth the 1st had her own tradition of women dancing together in the court, purely for their own pleasure, and for hers.

FRONTIER, COWBOY DANCES AND THE WILD WEST (1820'S – 1900)

As people moved west in the United States, so did their traditions of dance. Dancing was one of the few entertainments that could travel easily. Many men, usually single or otherwise out on their own, were the driving force of exploring the new frontier, staking land claims, or looking for gold. The lack of women at that time did not stop dancing from happening or men from dancing with each other.

While doing research on “men dancing together”, I ran into an interesting character, Ned Kelly who was an outlaw and gang leader in the Australian Bush country during the 1850's.

One article in particular mentions dancing as a part of trying to prove by circumstantial evidence whether or not Ned was gay:

“The speculation that Ned Kelly was gay has periodically arisen over many decades, but had never been proven. Researchers have found no evidence to indicate that Ned was homosexual, and this factor is reflected in the type of 'arguments' periodically used to support the idea. These arguments are unconvincing and *circumstantial* at best, particularly when put in an historical context. Arguments for this reasoning include:

- The gang members were said to enjoy wearing men's perfume or 'scent'.
- Gang members have been *reputed* to have worn woman's clothes to evade detection by police.
- *Gang members were said to dance with other men. For example: At Glenrowan before the siege Dan chose to dance with the hostage Thomas Curnow, and, oral history says that Ned danced with a policeman at a race-day picnic during the days of his outlawry.*
- These 'arguments', coupled with the fact that these men spent months at a time in the bush together with no female company, have given rise to the idea that one or all of the gang members were gay.



- *It was not uncommon for men to dance with each other in Colonial times, particularly when there was a shortage of women to dance with. No stigma was attached to men dancing together and nothing sexual was interpreted by it.*

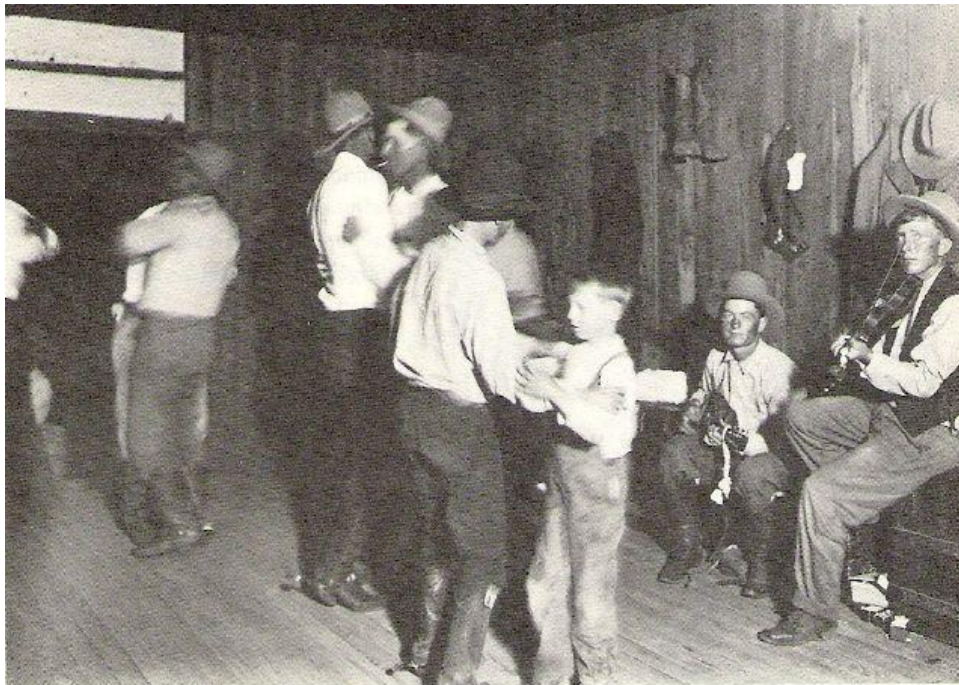
- Being in the bush in entirely male company was, again, not uncommon for the times and so can be easily dismissed as an indication of homosexuality. The lack of women in the bush was more of a matter of pragmatism than anything else. Women were under heavy social pressure and mores in Victorian times, and such free behavior as riding around unchaperoned in the bush with a group of men, even at the best of times would most likely have branded the women 'loose'. It was simply not viewed as 'respectable' behavior for women, and, no matter how 'innocent' the incident, would have had social repercussions and consequences for the woman involved. Therefore women in such situations would have been rare, and probably limited to relatives. “

To see this article, go to the URL address: <http://www.bailup.com/historyMarriage4.htm>

This article emphasizes the lack of stigma attached to same gender dancing or contact in Australia, which was also representative of our views in America at that time. All of this began to change rapidly after the civil war. By the late 1880's research on human behavior by Freud and others in his field shifted what had been considered innocent or irrelevant same gender social connections to viewing these interactions as suspect to unnatural acts between two men or in some cases, two women.

The Mormon (1840's thru 1870's)

During the mid 1800's the Mormon church held dances for teens segregated by gender as a way to keep the sinful thoughts of lust from entering recreational activities. Same gendered dancing was a necessity because it fulfilled a need. Being gay was a completely foreign idea to most people in this era. It simply did not exist. Those who would dare to talk about this possibility did so behind closed doors or in hushed voices. Men dancing together for pleasure and for women to do the same was not uncommon.



Men Dancing together in the Mining Camps of the West (mid 1800's and later)

There are accounts of men dancing together in the mining camps that sprung up in the exploration of the west. This drawing is a case in point:



A "bull-dance" in California, about 1849. *The Miners' Pioneer* . . . , Kurz and Allison Art Studio, Chicago, 1887. Courtesy Library of Congress. 🍷

The man dancing the woman's role is wearing a woman's hat and a frame that was used on a hoop skirt.

John Burrows adds to this reference:

From: Leila J. Rupp, A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999

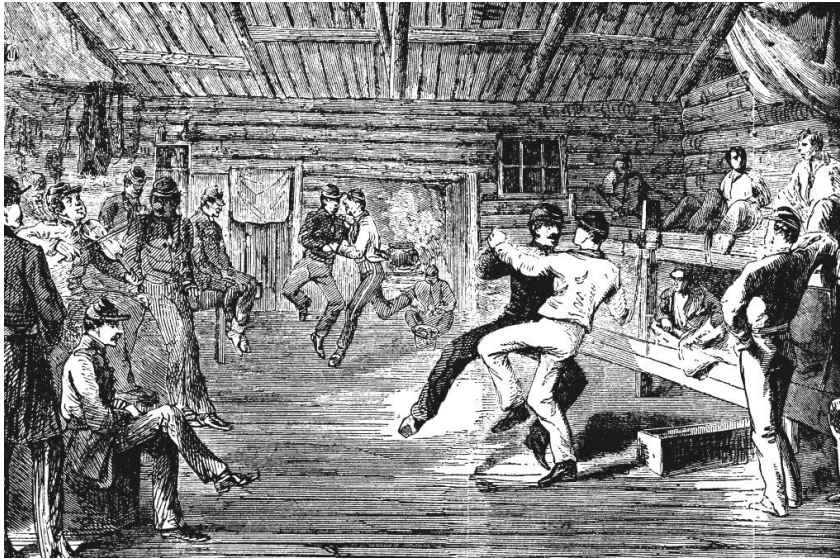
A 1922 western novel described a raucous all-male dance in a mining camp: "A roar of laughter came from the celebrating miners and all eyes turned their way. Sinful and Hank were dancing to the music of a Jew's harp and the time set by stamping, hob-nailed boots. They parted, bowed, joined again, parted, curtsied and went on, hand in hand, turning and ducking, backing and filing, the dust flying and the perspiration streaming down."*

(from Chapter 3: Worlds of Men, Worlds of Women)

**Clarence Ulford, Tex (New York: Burt, 1922)*

The Civil War – (men dancing together) (1860's)

In our research, we found a number of pictures, drawings and stories of Civil War soldiers dancing together. John Burrows reports that in some of his research that he viewed one such photograph of a group of General Custer's soldier's (enlisted men) dancing in a room together, while the officer's wives look on. It would have been improper for the officer's wife to dance with enlisted men. John also stated reading accounts of men who drew straws as to who would lead and who would dance in the woman's role.



The Grand Army of the Potomac in their barracks

The Cowboy and Saloon Dances of the late 1800's and early 1900's

There are diaries and pictures on the topic of Cowboy dances (Square and Couple dances) of the American Frontier, that were done by men in saloons. Early on as the pioneers went west there were places where few women could be found —and the few that there were would not frequent such an establishment! Though most of these men would have preferred dancing with women, the lack of women did not stop them from enjoying this recreation. There are also accounts of men who did not fit in with the urban rules and lifestyle that decided to go west so as not to marry, or to enjoy the company of other men. These all male dances were nick named “Stag Dances”.



“Cow Boy Dance. Stag” - circa 1900

URBAN LIFE AND THE BALLROOM

The Formal Ballroom (1860's)

John Burrows points out that in a ballroom etiquette handbook of that time, it was stated: "Men shall not dance together when there are women in the room who are waiting for partners..." which leads us to believe that it was not so uncommon for men to occasionally dance together, otherwise, why would anyone have need to comment on this at all? It's interesting too they don't say men *can't* dance together, only that it is improper to do so if there are women without partners.

John also states that none of this was mentioned in the later manuals, particularly by the 1890's. This likely had to do with the changing social views on same gender contact influenced by Freud's research as well as the beginning of more an overt and more intentional homosexual movement afoot in some circles, as we shall now see.

PHOTOS FROM COLLEGE YEARS 1890's – 1920



Man in a Ball Gown – Brown University 1908



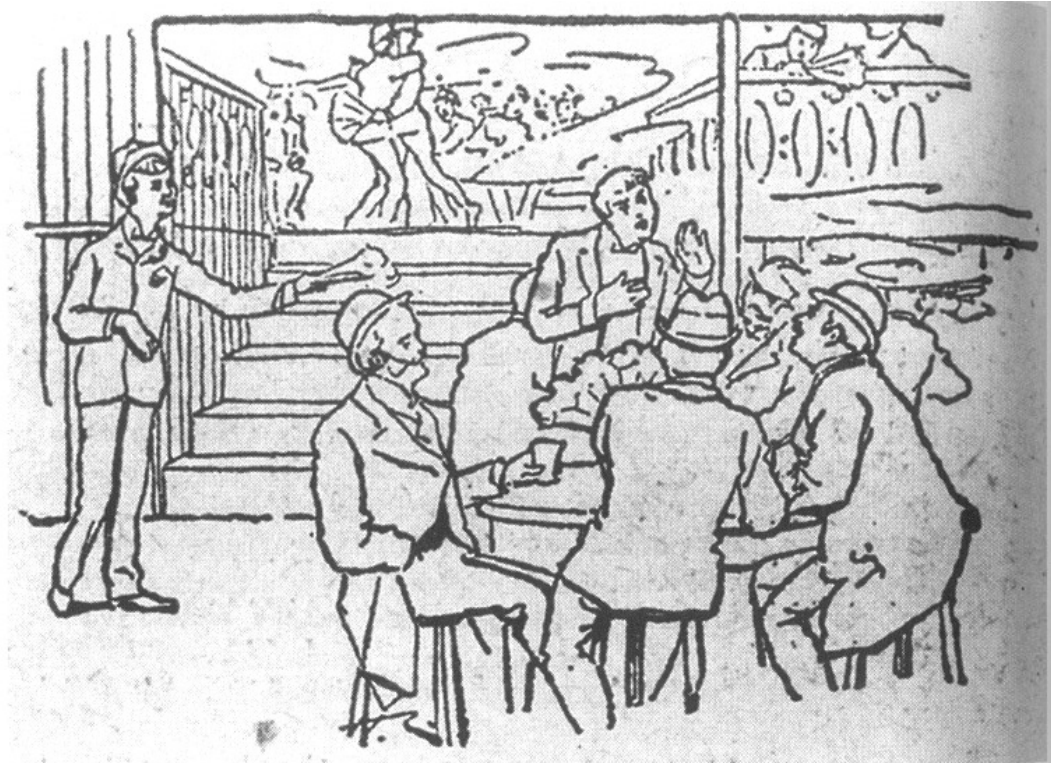
Above:
The "Dancing Girls" from
the Hasty Pudding Club's
Spring 1901 production,
"The Dynamiters"

The New York City Drag Balls of the 1890 - 1930

Gay Waltz Ball c.1890, NYC

George Chauncey, *Gay New York: The Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, Flamingo: Hammersmith, London, 1995

Charles Nesbitt, a medical student from North Carolina who visited the city around 1890, took the slummer's tour with a friend. As he later recalled, he visited several beer gardens on the Bowery where "male perverts, dressed in elaborate feminine evening costumes, 'sat for company' and received a commission on all the drinks served by the house to them and their customers."



At midnight in the Slide. *New York Herald*, January 5, 1892. 

Such men dressed in male attire at the Slide, he discovered, but still sat for company as their transvestite counterparts did elsewhere. Intrigued, Nesbitt asked one of the men, known as "Princess Toto," to join his table; to his surprise, he found the fellow "unusually intelligent" and sophisticated. Princess Toto, he quickly decided, was "the social queen of this group" and "had pretty clear cut ideas about his own mental state and that of his fellows." Nature had made him this way, Toto assured the young medical student, and there were many men such as he. He indicated his pride in the openness of "my kind" at places like the Slide, calling them "superior" to the "perverts in artistic, professional and other circles who practice perversion surreptitiously." "Believe me," the student remembered him commenting, "there are plenty of them and they are good customers of ours."

Sensing the medical student's interest, Toto invited him to attend a ball at Walhalla Hall, one of the most prominent of the many Lower East Side halls that neighborhood social clubs rented to hold their affairs. Nesbitt went and discovered some five hundred same-sex male and female couples in attendance, "waltzing sedately to the music of a good band."

Along with the male couples there were “quite a few... masculine looking women in male evening dress” dancing with other women, many of whom seem to have impressed the student as being of “good” background. “One could quite easily imagine oneself,” he recalled with amused incredulity, “in a formal evening ball room among respectable people.” *

21 and 22. These drawings from a New Orleans newspaper in the 1890s suggest a heightened awareness of the erotic possibilities in same-sex relationships. (Courtesy of the Tulane University Library.)



As the medical student discovered, the Bowery resorts were only the most famous element of an extensive, organized, and highly visible gay world.

(from Chapter 1, *The Bowery as Haven and Spectacle*)

* Nesbitt memoir(1938), 106-7. On the use of Walhalla Hall for balls by other clubs, see Moss, *American Metropolis*, 171-73; Harlow, *Old Bowery Days*, 370, 426, 436; Asbury, *Gangs of New York*, 270.

The Double Life, Camp Culture, and the Making of a Collective Identity
George Chauncey, *Gay New York: The Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*,
Flamingo: Hammersmith, London, 1995

Tenement Dance Parties in NYC [1920s]

Parties, whether held in palatial penthouses or tiny tenement flats, constituted safe spaces in which a distinctive gay culture was forged.... The empowerment some lesbians and gay men felt in such an environment was indicated by the behavior of people attending a ‘women’s party’ (as it was called) in a Harlem tenement on West 137th Street in 1928 – and by the response an investigator got to his interrogation of a lesbian (or “bull-dagger”) there.



*Gladys Bentley, the “Bull Dagger”
who sang the Blues! Circa 1920’s*

http://www.queerjitterbugs.com/jazz_def.htm

Fifteen lesbians and five gay men were in attendance, all African-American. “The men were dancing with one another,” the investigator reported, “and the women were dancing with one another and going through the motions of copulation...and a number of the women had their dresses pulled up to their thighs.” Asked by the investigator to explain the character of the party, the hostess, a thirty-five-year-old woman who sold drinks to the partygoers, explained matter-of-factly that it was a “freakish party, everybody in here is supposed to be a bull dagger or a c__.” Exclaiming that he was “neither” and that “I like mine in a normal way,” the investigator approached one woman, demanding “Are you one of these so-called things here or are you a normal, regular girl?” The woman, he reported with some amazement, defiantly pointed out: “Everybody here is either a bull dagger or faggot and I am here,” to which the investigator could only reply, “Some logic.” One of the men then tried to pick him up.

(from Chapter 10, The Double Life, Camp Culture, and the Making of a Collective Identity)

* * * * *

Other quotes of Drag Balls in NYC [1920s]

“Attended by celebrities and thousands of onlookers, drag balls were held throughout the year. The biggest were held at Harlem’s Manhattan Casino, later renamed the Rockland Palace. Invitations made it clear that a ball would be gay by making suggestive references to ‘Tom Boys and Girls’ and the like.”



Gay men thus drew on a long tradition when they began organizing their own masquerades – or drags, as they usually called them – in the late nineteenth century. Like most gay institutions, gay drag balls did not emerge *sui generis* in the gay world, but were sub cultural adaptations of the institutions and social practices of the dominant culture. Like most of the establishments frequented by gay men, originally they were neither organized by them nor exclusively homosexual in patronage, but rather were places that for some reason tolerated their presence



Minnesota College Woman's Dance, circa 1910

In 1896 a doctor reported being told that “ ‘the Fairies’ of New York,” a group he thought must be a secret society, organized balls like those in Europe where “men adopt the ladies’ evening dress.” In the 1910s and 1920s, one group of gay men sponsored an annual drag at the Little Beethoven assembly room in the rear of a saloon on East Fifth Street near the Bowery, and another held an annual affair at a hall near Columbus Circle. By the mid-1920s, the Village’s Webster Hall was the site of an annual [gay and lesbian] drag ball as well as numerous other masquerades attended by homosexuals. Small drags were sponsored in the late twenties and early thirties by the proprietors of out-of-the-way dives, such as Frank’s Place in Brooklyn, where gay civilians in drag danced with sailors from the nearby Navy Yard at dances held every two weeks.

The popularity and social cachet of the drags grew tremendously during the 1920s, when the general cultural ethos engendered by Prohibition and the laissez-fairs attitude of the police under the administration of mayor Jinny Walker tended to sanction such flouting of convention. By the late 1920s, six of seven enormous affairs were staged every year in some of the city’s largest and most reputable halls, including Madison Square Garden and the Astor Hotel in midtown, the Manhattan Casino (later renamed the Rockland Palace), the Alhambra, and the Savoy Ballroom in Negro Harlem, and the New Star Casino in Italian Harlem. As we have seen, the Hamilton Lodge ball held every February in Harlem drew thousands of dancers and spectators and was the largest and best-known such event in the city. By the beginning of the thirties some observers remarked that New York’s drag balls had surpassed those of Chicago and New Orleans in size and opulence, and that the city rivaled Berlin in its tolerance of such affairs.

One observer described the scene at a 1933 ball:

On the floor of the hall, in every conceivable sort of fancy dress, men quaver and palpitate in each other's embrace. Many of the "effeminate" are elaborately coiffured, in the powdered head dresses of the period of Madame Pompadour. They wear the billowy, ballooning skirt of that picturesque pre-guillotine era... [O]thers wear the long, tight-fitting gowns which were a recent vogue... [while] still others wear the long, trailing skirts and the constricting corsets of the 1880's – yards of elaborately furbelowed material, frou-frouing behind them, when space permits.

As the growth of same-sex dancing suggests, many men found attending the balls to be an intoxicating experience, their "one-night-a-year freedom." Some were emboldened by the thrill of gathering with hundreds of other openly gay men at an event celebrating their style and grace, and they left the balls unwilling, at least for a moment, to accept the usual constraints on their behavior. Rather than hide on their way home from the balls, some refused to bundle into cabs but marched daringly through the streets. In 1929 two twenty-five-year-old hotel telephone operators leaving a ball sauntered up Broadway to a restaurant near their apartment on Seventy-second Street. Attired in a "Spanish shawl and a beautiful red flaming dress" and other women's clothes, according to *Variety*, they attracted a crowd, which turned hostile and followed them into the restaurant, "almost causing a small riot." They had to "rescued" by a patrolman who took them to a police station, where they almost caused another riot by asking a newspaper reporter for a powder puff.

The number and size of New York's drag balls in the 1920s and 1930s indicates the cohesion and scale of the gay world in those years. The very fact that hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of gay people attended them provides singular evidence of the vigor and extent of the social ties that bound gay men, since such large-scale events simply could not have been organized without the existence of the elaborate social networks that constituted the gay subculture. The fact that participants traveled hundreds of miles to attend the balls, and that others could compare New York's balls to those of Chicago, New Orleans, and Berlin shows that New York's gay world was part of a larger gay subculture.

While the balls reflected the existence of an extensive gay subculture, they also extended the reach of that subculture. Although many of the gay friendship circles in which individuals were involved were overlapping, others were wholly separate, and none were large enough to bring more than a fraction of the city's gay men into contact with one another. The innumerable gay social networks based in restaurants and private party circuits constituted gay society, but they linked men to a collective gay world in only an abstract way. The balls made the existence and scope of that world manifest. In a culture hostile to gay men, the balls confirmed their numbers by bringing thousands together. In a world that disparaged their culture, it was at the drag balls, more than any place else, that the gay world saw itself, celebrated itself, and affirmed itself.

(from Chapter 10, *The Double Life, Camp Culture, and the Making of a Collective Identity*)

The Argentine Tango (1900 – 1930's)

Recently, as a part of a renewed interest in the Tango, there have been a number of articles written on the topic of the all male tango dances of the early 1900's in Argentina. Here is a bit of information I found on this topic:

Tango is fundamentally a dance of equals – there is much less of the traditional lead and follow found in most partner dancing. Tango is a conversation between two people. Much of this can be traced back to the origins of the dance.

Back in the 1920's and 1930's, men outnumbered the women 4 to 1, which not only meant that men frequently danced together in the brothels, but it also meant that women could be picky about who they chose to dance with. In order to improve, or learn, your only choice as a man was to dance lady to a gent who was considered 'better'. In this way you understood the ladies role and became a better 'lead' and a better dancer. Because you had two men dancing together frequently, there was a shift in the balance of power. Men had to dance as equals, both getting chance to 'shine' and neither being dominated by the other. When the men then danced with women, who were so unique and 'special', this allowance remained – treating the woman as an equal control in the shape of the dance. This first true equality still exists today, with the man suggesting moves, the lady responding – but also having her own allowance for decoration, embellishment and variations which the 'gent' has to respect and allow for.

There is also some writing that there was an early gay undercurrent to what was taking place:

The secret gay history of the Argentina extends into the tango - a dance born of the immigrant slums, where homosexuality seemed tolerated as one more expression of difference. It was always there, just below the surface, waiting like a ghost, casting its spell, unseen. My father tells me that when he was very young, in the '20s and '30s, there was much talk of this in Argentina.

To understand tango, the lifeblood of Buenos Aires, one must visit two neighborhoods, old underbellies of the city before she fought to compete with the best of Europe and North America. The old port of La Boca lies along the bay like Rio de la Plata. La Boca is Spanish for mouth, and like the real orifice, it was how Argentina communicated with the world, swallowing millions of immigrants into itself, and then speaking back of her riches product and soul. Buenos Aires residents call themselves Portefios, forever associating themselves with this area.

One must think back to the turn of the last century, imagining the noise of carts and horses, the smell of Italian cooking drifting with the sounds of Caruso through the windows. In the midst of all this, representing the odd coexistence of saints and sinners as can only be in a Catholic nation, there were dozens of brothels. Men, sweaty and frustrated from the factories, paid in hot anticipation with pesos as dirty as the pleasures in the rooms above them.

To while away their time, they held one another, pressed against each other's stubby olive flesh, sensually, violently stroking each other. This was the tango, a dance so obscene that a woman, even in a brothel, could never dance it. That early mix of violence, sensuality, and a hidden gay sensibility was not solely associated with tango.

In "Hombre de la Esquina Rosada," or the "Man on the Pink Corner," Borges mentions dapper gangsters known as compadritos who kill at the slightest provocation but who adorn themselves with feminine touches like boutonnieres, high-heeled boots, and polished style. Under this anything-goes mentality, Marcelo Suntheim, Cigliutti's lover and the CHA secretary, told me that "in this context, it is possible" that a gay subculture existed in Buenos Aires.

<http://www.globalgayz.com/argentina-news.html>

<http://www.dancethenightaway.org.uk/reading/articles/040216tango2.shtm>

It was also noted that any man who dared to dance with (or worse 'steal') the male tango partner of another man in the brothel risked being killed.

THE WAR YEARS (1930's & 1940's)



Two girls dancing together, circa 1938



*Young women dancing together at a
WYCA rural summer camp, 1944*

Queer Jazz Dance History – (late 1920's – 1950)

http://www.queerjitterbugs.com/jazz_def.htm

There is a delightful site on line called: “Swing our way! – Queer Jitterbug”. On this website is the following description of an active subculture of homosexuals dancing together in the Charlestown, Big Band and Swing era in Harlem and at the Savoy Ballroom in New York City. Here are some excerpts from that site:



By the 1920's Harlem's nightlife, for African Americans and even whites had emerged as a center of Black American music, literature and art; known culturally as the Harlem Renaissance. The Jazz Age offered Harlem a license that combined with both art and sexual ambiguity to members of their own sex. In Harlem the Jazz Age brought a period of political and intellectual ferment. Many of the leading figures were primarily inclined towards members of their own sex. They were "In The Life" as they called it in Harlem (from an essay by Margaret Graham 1998).

Advertised largely by word of mouth to those "in the life," Queer nightlife thrived in Harlem. Greenwich Village and Harlem were the city's main areas that countenanced homosexual gatherings. Richard Bruce Nugent, himself gay, recalled that the two bore many similarities... You just did what you wanted to do. Nobody was in the closet. There wasn't any closets."



*2 enlisted men, one from the army, the other the navy,
dance the Fox-Trot together (early 1940's)*

The most spectacular homosexual events were the costume balls held at the cavernous Rockland Palace on 155th Street. "Of course, a costume ball can be a very tame thing," reported the gossipy Black weekly *The Interstate Tattler*, "but when all the exquisitely gowned women on the floor are men and a number of the smartest men are women, ah then, we have something over which to thrill and grow round-eyed."

These drag balls were reported in the Black press and surrealistically dramatized in America's first unashamedly Homosexual novel, Charles Henri Ford and Parker Tyler's *"The Young and Evil"* (1933).

'Not all the guests were homosexual; many came to gawk. These onlookers ascended a gold-banistered staircase to the box seats that ringed the huge ballroom and looked down on the Grand March of ersatz divas promenading beneath a colossal crystal chandelier and a sky-blue ceiling. The women mostly dressed in drably colored loose-fitting men's suits (rarely a tuxedo) while the men outdid themselves as extravagant Señoritas in black lace and red fans; as soubrettes in backless dresses and huge spangles; as debutantes in chiffon and rhinestones; and as a creature called "La Flame" who wore only a white satin stovepipe hat, a red beaded breast plate, and a white sash.'

The Savoy Ballroom also hosted gala drag balls, where the sartorial achievements were given prizes. (Artist "Sheriff" Bob Chanler, hostess Muriel Draper, and Carl Van Vechten comprised one panel of judges, and they awarded first prize to a man who wore only a cache-sex, silver sandals, and apple-green paint).

The full length story on this site is really fascinating, and can be found at the URL address at: http://www.queerjitterbugs.com/jazz_def.htm

Information on this site gathered was gathered from several sources. The following are a few of such resources:

<http://members.tripod.com/%7Elaurencefrommer/celebrity/celebrity2bentley.html>

<http://frontpage.erie.net/tex/jazz.htm>

<http://www.darmstadt.de/kultur/musik/jazz/>

<http://www.101pop.com/ch2.html>

<http://www.thewildparty.net/wp.s.party2.html>

Gay Black Jazz Action: <http://www.soulforce.org/nolainvite2.html>

Urban Sophisticates: Devoted to the Jazz Ages cultivation of an elegant Homosexual esthetic!

HOMOSEXUAL AND LESBIAN NIGHTLIFE from article on The Harlem Renaissance.

Steve Voce: Scratching the Surface. Vanity Thy Name Is Hajdu, in: Jazz Journal, 52/6

(Jun.1999), p. 14-15

There is a feature article: Homosexual relationship between Ellington and Strayhorn.

From Zora Hurston bio Lesbian in the life 1925 -27: Josephine Baker, Gladys Bentley, Bessie Smith, Zora Hurston, and Ma Rainey.

Scottish Regiment during the war – Reel of the 51st Division

During World War II, the 51st Division of the Scottish regiment was captured and sent to a German prison camp. It was there that those men in the regiment got together, danced and brought to life one of the most famous and loved of the Scottish country dances: “The Reel of the 51st Division”:

“The short, active service life of Lieutenant J.E.M. ‘Jimmy’ Atkinson of the 7th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders came to an abrupt end at 3pm on June 5, 1940.

Surrounded by enemy soldiers near the French town of Saigneville on the River Somme with a life expectancy measured in minutes, the 26-year-old scrambled to his feet, hands in the air and surrendered to five years of captivity as a prisoner of war in Germany. Had the German marksman been fractionally more accurate, the world would have been deprived of one of the most popular Scottish country dances ever devised.

For Mr Atkinson, of Alloa, Clackmannanshire, and his contemporaries in pre-war Scotland, country dancing was part of everyday life. Later, as he and thousands of his fellow Highlanders were being marched 1,000 miles through Holland and into Germany in June 1940, his thoughts often strayed back to the dances he had attended. The tramp of the marching feet took on the rhythms of the Strathspeys, reels and jigs to which he had whirled his fiancée around the floor.

Years later he was to remember: ‘I started thinking about dance tunes to keep my mind clear of grizzly thoughts, and I began to get this idea for a dance.’ At the core of the dance was the cross of St Andrew and the flash, or badge, of the Highland division to which his regiment belonged.

At Oflag V11C, Laufen castle near Salzburg, he joined a reel club formed by Lieutenant APJ ‘Peter’ Oliver of the 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. The two men discussed the dance forming in Mr Atkinson’s mind, and, with the help of Lt Col Tom Harris Hunter, of the Royal

Army Service Corps, a former chairman of the Perth branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society, worked out the dance that is essentially the same reel today.

On Hallowe'en 1941, in Oflag V11B at Warburg, Westphalia, Major General (later Sir) Victor Fortune, officer commanding the 51st, approved the name The 51st Country Dance (Laufen Reel).

The dance became an immediate success in wartime Britain. The then Queen, now Queen Mother, persuaded the Scottish (later Royal) Country Dance Society to include it in its book of dances, even though it did not conform to its standards.”

The tradition, to this day, is that this dance is traditionally only in a set of men only, as it was in the prison camp by the men of the 51st division

Information from this article came from:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/music/wardance.htm>

Jewish Dancing Culture

Jewish dance culture has long had a tradition of men dancing together and women dancing together in segregated groups. This is particularly true in Orthodox Jewish dance culture, particularly during weddings and other celebrations, as it was considered far more acceptable to keep the sexes apart, which is also prevalent in Middle Eastern culture today.

Metrosexuality

This was a brief fad in our culture around 2000. In the “Urban Dictionary”:

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Metro%20Sexual&defid=1268055>

One definition further defines this as: a “Modern enlightened, sort of renaissance man. Secure and confident, capable and cool, typically well educated and stylish. Heterosexual with a twist, not gay by any means, but he probably has a few gay friends, and can easily be mistaken for gay by rednecks and jock types. The only straight guy in a fabric store or antique shop who is not being dragged there by a woman.”

It was mentioned in some of these articles that in this culture, it's OK for straight men to dance together.

WHERE OUR MODERN DAY TRADITION OF GENDER-FREE COMES FROM

There are a number of people who have helped contribute to this. Most notably are Carl Wittman with his global terminology and leadership of English and Scottish Country dancing in Oregon and North Carolina, Chris Ricciotti with Contra and Square dancing in New England, along with others including Alan Troxler with English Country Dancing in North Carolina, Cindy Green who used methods of teaching dance without reference to gender for occasional Girl Scout and gay country dances during the 1970's and 80's – including at the Boston Gay Folk Dance Club (1981), Carol Ormand with the Les be Gay and Dance community in Minnesota, and Michael Cicone with English country dancing.

Carl Wittman – the development of Gender-Free English and Scottish Country Dancing

Carl Wittman, a certified RSCDS (Royal Scottish Country Dance Society) instructor, started teaching Scottish country dancing in the San Francisco area about 1970. Carl was very involved in the gay political movements of that era. Carl loved Scottish country dancing and brought his male partner and danced with him at some of these events, much to the dismay and disapproval of that community. Carl eventually left San Francisco in the early 1970s and traveled up the coast to the artist's community of Wolf Creek, Oregon where he settled in Golden, Oregon with his partner, Alan Troxler. Carl became involved in the newly emerging intentional communities of gay men and lesbians in that area. He started a local community dance in his barn in Golden, Oregon, pulling in people from that community, as well as families from around the area. His dance ended up being a mixture of families, gay men, lesbians and friends.

At first Carl taught English and Scottish country dancing in the tradition he had learned, identifying dancers by their gender role and using gender language. He allowed anyone to dance with whomever they wished and in any role they chose, but he used the conventional gender language to identify these roles. Sometime thereafter, Alan challenged Carl to change this convention, and come up with something that was more appropriate for their community. Carl changed his role identification system to "Reds" and "Greens" (the traditional men's role wearing a red ribbon and the traditional women's role wearing a blue one). Eventually he further changed this to "left file" (men's role) and "right file" (woman's role) dancers.

Carl travelled around Oregon, starting other dance communities using this newly developed style of global terminology for leading English and Scottish country dancing. Carl also developed a new way to approach lining up for each dance. He advocated for dancers to come individually to the set and fill in the next available space. This method ensures that everyone will have someone to dance with and addressed the sometimes-awkward practice of asking someone to dance, particularly with folks new to the dance. Carl was also the masterful dance leader and principle choreographer for the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon in 1980.

The Durham, NC Gender-Free English Country Dance Community

Carl's partner, Alan Troxler, moved to Durham, NC in the early 1980's and shortly thereafter, Carl followed, leaving behind communities of dancers who eventually came together to organize themselves into the "Heather and the Rose". While in Durham, NC, Carl started new groups of English and Scottish Country dances, some of whom still teach in Carl's style.

Sadly, Carl died in 1986 of AIDS leaving behind his active role in political activism and a legacy of dance communities who embrace his philosophy of dancing and community to this day.

More about Carl's work.

What was most interesting about Carl's work, particularly with the Heather and the Rose community, is that he was using this style of gender-free terminology long before there were any other established dance communities of this kind in that area. These dancers had no other point of reference to work from and Carl's philosophy and leadership style became the established tradition of that region.

Other dance leaders eventually settled in Oregon and organized their own English and Scottish Country dances using conventional gender terminology. Dancers from these new groups would occasionally run into one of Carl's communities.

I first visited and danced with the Heather and the Rose in the Autumn of 1992. While there, I became a witness to some of the challenges the Heather and the Rose occasionally faced from dancers visiting from other communities. During one afternoon class, one of these dancers asked Dorothy Jackson (Atteneve), who was leading, to change to using conventional gender identification, stating that it would be a lot easier and less confusing. A couple of folks from the Heather and the Rose called out "Don't do it Dorothy." The response was gentle and direct, "This is the tradition that we dance here."

What these visiting dancers hadn't initially understood was that the dancers from Carl's community were just as comfortable dancing their tradition as the visiting dancers have been dancing with gender identification. There was no confusion for them. It was what they knew.

Dancers from the Heather and the Rose communities have danced in communities where conventional gender terminology is used. Some reported to me that they felt the rules, standing on one side of the set or the other based on gender, as well as coming to the set with a partner, to be confining compared to what they were used to their own community. They said that in these communities, the expectation was that you come to the dance with someone of the opposite sex. If you attempted to dance with someone of the same gender or a friend, but were standing on the "wrong" side, you ran the risk of being pushed into the *correct* spot thinking a mistake had been made. If you brought someone of the same gender, the leadership or the dancers often would find another partner for them, thinking they were confused.

These rules and limits proved unsatisfactory to a number of dancers who were raised on Carl's tradition. Some people dance in both communities; many feel more committed to one style or another.

Boston Gay and Lesbian Folk Dancers (1977-1985)

Dee Michel and others at Harvard University got together and organized an international folk dance group specifically for gays and lesbians on the campus of Harvard University. More information will be forthcoming on this section. There is some wonderful footage of this dance group that has recently been posted on YouTube which can be viewed:

<http://hk.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz3OWQ8u3vg>

<http://hk.youtube.com/watch?v=n7xfCMaz3n8>

A number of the dancers from this group went on 8 or so years later to dance with the Jamaica Plain and LCFD Gender-Free Dance community, and many of them are still dancing with us today.

Les be Gay and Dance – (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota) using no reference to gender (1981 – 1998)

Les be Gay and Dance was likely the 1st organized ongoing Gay and Lesbian contra dance series in the United States. Starting in 1981, they developed a style of dance terminology where no reference was made to gender, not even by role identification. This style came out of the group founder whose philosophy was being completely free of any of the restrictions that our society places on gender – as a political statement.

At first, they used contra dances that were completely symmetrical and didn't contain movements that were specific by role. Eventually as more callers came to lead their dancing, they developed creative ideas on how to introduce more complex dances within this structure. Carol Ormand was one of the callers who took on this challenge and who had success at bridging this gap. Despite this, the limitations of this convention continued to be frustrating, particularly to dancers who had some experience and were dancing in other communities.

The group leaders were so adamant about having no reference to gender that even when improper contra dances were called, there was no mention of crossing over at the ends, nor where or how to end in a swing, (unless it was with your neighbor where they used the term "swing and change"). If a dancer ended up on the "wrong" side of the swing their response was, "it doesn't matter, just dance it from whatever position you end up in." For the 'ladies' chain, they called it a "right hand chain".

Though this dance was very popular in the gay community from a social and political standpoint, eventually the limitations and frustrations from this style took its toll. Dancers who grew in this community and then danced at other local dances, or who originally came from other conventional dance communities, felt the level of dancing was not as satisfying as in the other communities. Many of the experienced level dancers eventually left the group. New folks kept coming in, but without the support of the more experienced dancers, sadly, this group folded around 1998. There had been some discussion among the more experienced dancers of that community to start another gay/gender-free dance without these restrictions. In 2011, Mike La Fleur, a long time dancer from the Jamaica Plain, MA gender-free contra dance community, moved to St. Paul and started a new gender-free contra dance series. I understand that they do use some form of identification for each role in this new series.

Chris Ricciotti – the Development of Gender-Free Contra and Square Dancing in New England

I fell in love with dance at the age of 6 when traditional square dancing was introduced to him in Phys Ed. There was a strong element of square dancing in Phys Ed all through the Coventry, RI school system. In 1978 I found out about the 4-H square dances from friends in high school, and started dancing there. Eventually I was asked to try my hand at calling traditional singing squares for competition with 4-H 1979. Soon I found myself enjoying calling as much as I loved to dance. After leaving 4-H, I started a number of his own square dance groups including a Friday night and Saturday night square dance series at the Summit Baptist Church hall in 1982 and 1983. In 1983, I discovered Modern Western Square dancing under the leadership of Dick Ledger. In 1984, through an ad that Isabel Barton had posted in the Providence Journal, I discovered New England Style Contra dancing at the Congregational Church hall in Kingston, RI. Isabel and her husband at the time, Dave Mussey were a part of the band "Four on the Floor." Together, they helped foster my passion and involvement in my newly discovered love of this form of music and dance. In August of 1985, I attended a callers school for new modern western square dance callers, again under the leadership of Dick Ledger and modern western contra dancing under the leadership of Roger Whynot.

The event that got me into thinking about teaching traditional dancing to the gay community came about one evening in 1986 while at the Providence Men's Chorus. During a break one evening, another chorus member, Bill Wilson, was discussing a trip he had recently taken to Denver, CO where he went to a gay rodeo. I was intrigued and never thought about gay men at a rodeo. Then he mentioned that after the rodeo they attended a square dance. Immediately I asked, "You mean a gay square dance?" Bill said, "Yes! They've been doing them out there for years!" Hearing this, I realized that it was possible to bring together two completely separate worlds in my life, that being my passion for traditional dancing and music, and being a gay man. This led me to start my first gay & lesbian contra dance in March of 1987.

My development of gender-free teaching and calling terminology developed very much along the same lines as Carl, without ever having known of him or his work until years later. Much like Carl, I started using by conventional gender language for teaching, calling and role identification and didn't know of any other way to call or teach. My philosophy was, anyone could dance with anyone they liked, but if you stood on one side of the line, I would identify you as a gent, and on the other side, as a lady. This went on until 1989 when an event took place that would change all that.

The Jamaica Plain, MA Gay & Lesbian Contra Dance Series – (1988) My development of Gender-Free Language and Philosophy

The Providence, RI group was pretty small for the first couple of years. Most of the people who attended this dance were either from Hartford, or Boston. It was a couple of the women from Boston who suggested that I try starting a dance series in Jamaica Plain, stating that it would likely be very popular there. I secured an arrangement for this with the 1st Church of Jamaica Plain in June of 1988, and in September, called our first contra dance there. Our first evening had 12 people. Two weeks later, those 12 brought 12 more. Two weeks later those 24 brought another 20, and by January of 1989, we had the hall packed to capacity with close to 90 dancers.

It was in January of 1989 that something happened at the Jamaica Plain, MA dance that changed how I would call or look at dances. One dancer in particular, Janet Dillon, supported by others, challenged me one evening by stating that they loved the dancing and the music, but the references to gender had to change because they didn't fit this community. Their argument, "I'm not a 'lady' or a 'gent'", and I don't want to be identified that way. They asked if it were possible for me to change this convention of calling and teaching dance.

I recalled the research I did while I was planning my first dance in Providence and remembered hearing about one group who used the convention of a tie or an armband to identify roles. I decided to try using this convention at the Jamaica Plain dance, ripping up an old bed sheet to make armbands and asking dancers who were dancing in the traditional gent's role to tie on one of these ribbons, and identifying them as "armbands" and those dancing the traditional ladies role, not wearing the armbands as the "barearms". This method ended up being an instance hit, and I started using this method of identification for all the gay community dances I went on to organize at that time. Since then some callers who have called at our community dances have shortened this identification "Bands" and "Bares" (Bears).

Eventually at one of the Hartford, CT gay & lesbian contra dances, I ran out of bed sheets. My friends, David Darnell and Gary Cote', a biologist and a botanist, suggesting using some of their rolls of environmental flagging. To this day, we still use this for armbands.

Gender-Free dancing and NEFFA

In 1990 I asked NEFFA (the New England Folk Festival) about the idea of leading a session on this style of dancing during their weekend. I had no idea that this request caused the controversy that it did. When Larry Jennings, one of the long time founders of NEFFA was asked if a session like this would be appropriate for NEFFA, he stated "It would be inappropriate NOT to consider it as a session for NEFFA." Eventually I was contacted and told this session was approved.

I had no idea how to title session. Ideas I solicited from our community included: Sex-Free Dancing, No Role Dancing, Gay & Straight dancing together, Gender-Neutral Dancing, No Sex Contras, Non Gendered Contra Dancing, Role Free Contras. NEFFA dubbed it as "Gender-Free Contra Dancing", a term we still use today.

This session was the beginning of building bridges and allies between gay and gender-free dance and the mainstream traditional folk dance communities in the Boston area. Initially there were a number of negative comments received by the NEFFA committee about gender-free contra dancing, particularly from the old guard who commented, "This is not the appropriate place to have this kind of a dance", "This kind of dancing is not a part of our tradition"; "This type of dancing is not appropriate in a family setting", etc. Despite the controversy, these sessions were well attended and wildly popular by many of the folks who came to participate, and still are today.

The novelty and excitement of that moment when we first danced at NEFFA was that this was something new, different and innovative to this dance tradition, that no one had ever done this before. It allowed men to try dancing the ladies role. It allowed women to dance the gent's role. It allowed same gender couples to dance together. It allowed kids and adults to dance with their friends or favorite dance partners, who may have just happened to be of the same gender.

And it gave a whole new challenging spin on contra dancing, and opened a lot of discussion on its potential uses outside of this venue, and perhaps giving this dance a whole new perspective from which to view it, and more importantly, dance it.

Over the years, the gender-free dance community has encouraged callers and musicians from the Boston and New England conventional dance communities to call and play music for us at our local dances as well as our twice a year dance camps. They have learned a lot from us as we have also learned a lot from their perspective on dancing from their community. Together, we have built ties that have benefited both communities, broadening ideas on how to look at dancing as well as adding more people to the overall community that makes up traditional dancing in New England.

The Jamaica Plain, MA. English Country dance community.

Michael Cicone and Rob Dobson originally danced and performed under the leadership of Carl Wittman in the summer of 1980 in Ashland, Oregon while Carl was the principal choreographer at the Shakespeare Festival. Sometime after we started dancing in Jamaica Plain, Rob and Michael attended some of our local dances and dance camps. Michael and Rob had a strong interest in starting an English country-dance group using Carl's tradition.

Soon after gender-free contra dancing got a yearly slot at NEFFA, Michael proposed a session of gender-free English Country Dancing in 1992, which got accepted and has also been an event at NEFFA over the years. Michael called gender-free English country dances at our LCFD dance camps and a couple of times a year, the Jamaica Plain gender-free contra dance group held a mixed program of English Country Dancing and Contra dancing. Alan Troxler came up to visit with us, first attending LCFD (the Lavender Country and Folk Dancers) dance camp in the winter of 1992. Alan returned to camp from time to time and in the summer of 1994 visited our dance community in Jamaica Plain for a period of time. During that time, he organized and let some English country dances for us. Alan returned in 1995 to spend the summer in Boston, MA. Alan, along with Michael and Rob, spearheaded the start of the Jamaica Plain (gender-free) English Country dance series that summer. Originally this series drew a lot of its initial interest from the Jamaica Plain contra dance series. Over time, it developed a lot of its own unique character, separate from the gender-free contra dance community, but with a fair amount of cross over between the two dances. They also draw dancers in from the greater Boston area English country dance community.

The Jamaica Plain English dance community continues to dance on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month with 5th Tuesdays being an experienced English dance program. They use Carl's terminology of Left and Right file (better known there as the "Clock" side of the hall and the "Window" side of the hall), along with his philosophy of lining up individually without a partner, but add that if you would like to take a particular partner with you to dance, please wait until all the holes above you have been filled before entering the bottom of the set.

LCFD and Dance Camp

As communities of gender-free dancing started to spread around Southern New England, I saw the need for networking these groups together. By late 1988, I posted flyers with a schedule of all the Gay & Lesbian dances in the Southern New England area not only at my

dances but to other local area conventional contra dances, and dubbing this series as “S.E.G.A.L.” (The South East are Gay And Lesbian Country Dancers).

The following summer in June of 1989, I organized a special gay pride dance event in Rhode Island at the Moosup Valley Grange Hall in Foster, R.I. (the same location where I first called dances in 4-H), inviting everyone from the southern New England gay & lesbian dance community to come out and join in this day long event. It was during that event that a meeting was held, and a new umbrella organization was created incorporating the new and expanding communities gay and lesbian country dancing around New England, and this group adopted the name N.E.G.A.L. (the North East Gay and Lesbian) Country Dancers.

I signed up for his first Pinewoods Dance camp in January of 1989. This idea of this camp made such an impression on me that I decided to take a poll of my own community to see if there would be enough interest to try this for ourselves. In August of 1989 soon after having attended Pinewoods, I started the first of what has become a twice a year gender-free dance camp. The first few years of camp were held in Greenfield, NH at the Otter Lake Conservation School. We had 29 folks at our first camp. The attendees loved camp so much that it was decided we should have another in the Winter of 1990. We continued with Summer and Winter dance camps in Greenfield, NH till the winter of 1991 when the Otter Lake Conservation School, closed. With the help of Cindy Green, we moved NEGAL Dance camp to Goshen, MA for our summer camp in 1991. During that camp, I, along with a few attendees from dance camp, scouted around that area of western Massachusetts and checked out 3 potential new locations for our dance weekend. The last, and most impressive visit on this trip was to the Becket/Chimney Corners YMCA Camp in Becket, MA. We immediately decided that this would be our new home. In February of 1992, we moved dance camp to this new location. By this time, we had 50-60 folks at each camp.

It was also about that time that our community started a conversation around a letter we had received from Bobbi Keppel, a bi-sexual political activist, who challenged us to change our title to be more inclusive of the diversity of our community, which now consisted of not only gays and lesbians, but also bisexuals, people from the trans-gendered community as well as straight folks. We had toyed with a number of ideas, including the “Lavender Gypsies”, until Doug Victor, who has Rom ancestry suggested that this might not be appropriate. We eventually voted that our name would be changed to the Lavender Country and Folk Dancers (LCFD).

Our dance camps grew rapidly at our new location in Becket, MA eventually reaching a peak of over 165 attendees in 1997. We danced our Winter and Summer Camps in Becket, MA until the Summer of 2003, then we were asked to leave Becket Camp so they could give more focus to YMCA specific activities. We moved our Autumn Camp to Circle Lodge in Hopewell Junction, NY for a while, and found a YMCA camp in Woodstock, CT to host our spring camps. We reconnected with the Becket/Chimney Corners YMCA camp in late 2006 and found out that this facility was again open to outside groups and we returned to Becket in October of 2007 with a special reunion camp weekend.

Currently we typically get between 100-125 dancers in Becket. Our dance camps draw attendees from all over the USA. The LCFD camp board are the organizers of this biyearly event. LCFD’s mission continues to be to financially support and offer organizational assistance to new communities of gender-free local dance events and camps all over the United States.

San Francisco, CA is the newest group to join LCFD. They started their local contra

dance series in April of 2004, and in April of 2007, LCFD helped them start what is now becoming their own once a year dance camp in the redwood forest of Monte Toyon, CA (not far from Santa Cruz). Their first camp hosted 75 attendees.

Our dancing includes New England contra & square dancing, English Country dancing, International folk dances, couple dances of many folk traditions as well as occasionally some Scottish country dancing.

Other gender-free dance communities include: Montague Center, MA; New York City; Long Island, NY; Atlanta, Georgia; St. Paul, Minnesota; San Francisco, CA & Seattle, WA (more to come!)

“Gay Gordons” dance community in the United Kingdom.

In London, England, there is a relatively new dance community who is drawing a lot of attention in the traditional Scottish country dancing community. It is the Gay Gordons, a primarily gay and lesbian Scottish country dance community. This warm and delightful group welcomes anyone who would like to dance with them. They have classes and dances most Thursdays throughout the year. More information will be forthcoming about this group. You can find them on the web at:

<http://thegaygordons.org/index.htm>

<http://www.outeverywhere.com/tags/dancing.html>

I would like to acknowledge a special thanks to Andrew Carnie, Michael Cicone, John Burrows, Brooke Friendly, Chris Sackett, Laura Johannes, Bob Peterson, Robert Coren and the late Cindy Green for their editorial ideas and assistance in helping me pull this material together.

Your comments and ideas are also most welcome, and I would appreciate extending an open dialogue on this topic from readers and dance enthusiasts.

If you have comments, suggestions, or want more information about any of this material, please feel free to contact me as follows:

**Chris Ricciotti
393 Union Street
Rockland, MA 02370-1729**

Home: (781) 982-8042

Cell: (617) 852-4042

Email: Ricciotti@aol.com

You can also find this and other documents as well as a list of all gender-free dance communities around the world on the LCFD (Lavender Country & Folk Dancers) web site at:

<http://www.lcfid.org>