

Lonesome Homesteader



Old-time Fiddling in Wyoming

Dedicated to Wyoming's Old-time Fiddlers.

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For additional information about the archive of old-time fiddle tunes established by this project, contact the Wyoming Arts Foundation.

PREFACE

Wyoming's cultural heritage, its pioneer history and ethnic mix, is well reflected in its fiddle music. **Lonesome Homesteader** defines and documents traditional old-time fiddling in Wyoming. While listening to the tapes, we hope you will tap your toes or even be inspired to dance to the tunes.

When first envisioned, the purpose of the project was to preserve a part of our cultural heritage that was in danger of being lost because of the advanced age of many of the Senior fiddlers. In the process of recording the fiddlers (over 60 fiddlers and 900 tunes or more than 40 hours of field recordings were made), it became clear that old-time fiddling was not an almost extinct form but one that was alive and well and in the midst of a revival.

As the number of fiddlers and recordings increased, the project expanded beyond its original aim of producing one 45 minute tape with a 16 page booklet to the current album with two 60 minute tapes and a 24 page booklet. Side A presents **DANCE MUSIC**; Side B includes **FIDDLING IN THE DISTRICTS**; Side C tells **PERSONAL STORIES**, and Side D introduces **THE NEXT GENERATION**. A complete listing of tunes, fiddlers and back-up musicians can be found inside the back cover.

Fiddling is not only entertaining but an integral part of the social fabric of many areas of the State. One mark of its health is the variety of forms fiddling takes. From parlor playing to formal and informal jam sessions to the intense competition of public fiddle contests, fiddle music seems to thrive just about everywhere in Wyoming.

We hope you will enjoy the tunes and notes about Wyoming's many old-time fiddlers.

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FIDDLERS:

Olivia Anderson
Veda Bafford
Andrew Bannan
Bessie Barney
Billie Boycott
Wanita Bradish
Jack Brewer
Peggy Buntin
Leo Carey
Shelley Ann Clark
Warren Cromwell
Bobbie Currie
Karen Dietrich
Amy Dietrich
Joselyn Dietrich
Ervin Dovenspike
Farron Eisemann
Clinton Fay
Erica Ann Flom
Leonard Foxworthy
Pete Germann
Bob Good
Barbara Goodrick
Amber Gunsaulus
Dana Haas
Charles H. Hale
Sara Havens
Leroy Haygood

Henry Hlavacheck
H.O. Hodge
Jennifer Holman
Candy Hufford
Chanda Hufford
Harry Jerup
Dessa Johnson
Janelle Jones
Jennifer Jones
Tanya Jones
John Kafka
David Lawson
Bobby Lefevre
Loren Lefevre
Phyllis Lefevre
Gerald Loghry
Tobi Lyons
Ty Mack
Bob Mathews
Marvin Mathews
Clara McIntyre
Floyd McLean
Dave Munsick
Joe Harper Larsen
Kelly Jo Murdock
Rachel Nelson
Duke Parrish
Sharon Poulson

Kent Reindahl
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Cody Robinson
Becky Russler
Janette Skjonhaug
Scott Steidley
Clifford Thex
Amanda Tinker
Christina Tinker
Marshall Turnell
Paul Tyler
Elmer Umbenhower
Joe Walker
John Wallace
Carl Wenderott
Justin Williamson
Mary Wise
Emil Stip Wolff
Douglas Woody

OTHER MUSICIANS:

Rick Bafford
Ruth Brewer
David Brose
John Carey
Sammy Costales
Howard Cristler
Wilbert Dillman
Walter Fay
Irene Foxworthy
Mary Germann
Maxine Hackleman
Evalyn Hoover
Rusty Hufford
Earl Jones
Bernice Land
Tom Lyons
Judith Maier
Dollie McCoy
Pearl Parrish
Gladys Robirds
Sam Sallee
Lyle Sheets
Jean Slichter
Eric Stewart
John Tartar
Gladys Watson
Leo Wilson
Leonard Zierlein

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INDIVIDUALS: Sharon Poulson, Robert Seabeck, Frank Imhoff, Julia Combs, Judy Meyerdielks, Dave Lawson and Dennis Coelho. And special thanks to Mrs. Carl Wenderott and Mrs. Henry Hlavacheck for permission to use recordings of Carl and Hank.

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LONESOME HOMESTEADER

Old-time Fiddling in Wyoming

I'd been up on the mountain. Friend of mine had a ranch up there. We'd get together once in a while, and when we ever did, why he played violin and I played a banjo, and we'd sit there and play all night long. And this neighbor had been over there, and he stayed with us that night and heard it. And the next morning I got up and sawed out this tune here, and man, it just set him on fire. He couldn't hold still. He just got right up and just started dancing all around. He was real active. He was an old man, but he was real active. And he just hit every note, there wasn't a missed beat on his run, and he's grinning from ear to ear. His eyes was big, and man, he was just happy as a lark. And he told me that he had danced that in Finland when he was a young fellow, before he came over to the United States. And he came over when he was 18 years old...And he was close to 90 years old. And that's 25 years ago. I never have run across anyone that knew the name of the tune.

Duke Parrish of Douglas, Wyoming comments on the unnamed schottische found on Side A, tune 10.

Introductory Essay and Album Notes by Paul L. Tyler.

It would be interesting to know who brought the first fiddle into the Wyoming Territory, but most historians have not supplied us with such details, especially ones that pertain to the cultural life of the common people. Ever since John Utie, a professional "fidler" arrived in Virginia in 1620 as part of the first wave of British immigrants, the fiddle has found a home wherever Europeans settled. So we may assume that fiddles were among the possessions of the earliest travelers and settlers of European descent to enter Wyoming in the mid-1800's.

Perhaps an explorer or trapper brought along his fiddle when traveling through the state in the early 1800's. Or if no fiddles were in the Mormons' handcars when they paused in Wyoming on their way to Utah in the mid-1800's, then surely one was in the camps of homeseekers headed for the Oregon territory or of fortune hunters bound for the California gold fields in the 1840's and '50's. When towns began to spring up along the new Union Pacific Railroad that stretched from Cheyenne to Evanston in the 1860's, and when large herds of Texas Longhorn cattle were trailed into the territory to create a cattlemen's commonwealth in the 1870's and '80's, fiddles were certainly among the possessions of the railroaders and range-riders.

Formally trained and musically literate violinists have, of course, contributed to the state's cultural scene since at least the burgeoning of music and literary clubs, such as the Cecilian Club in Sheridan, in the late 19th century. More numerous have been the ear-players, the informally trained fiddlers of varying degrees of skill who have resided in Wyoming through its nearly 100 years of Statehood. These musicians, who probably were not concerned that their names and skills be noted for posterity, enriched the lives of frontier communities by filling the air with tunes learned by ear from their forebearers.

Fiddling has remained popular, a passion, even, for many people in America. This album presents the musicians who represent the old-time fiddling scene in Wyoming today. Old-time fiddling, as we have identified it for this project, centers around the activities of the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association and its district organizations. The fiddling tradition exemplified by these fiddlers comprises several styles of dance music, popular songs, and stylized show pieces prepared especially for fiddle contests.

This idiom of instrumental music is properly differentiated from the kind of fiddling used in country and western bands where the fiddler most often accompanies singing. Old-time fiddling should also be distinguished from bluegrass-style fiddling. The latter features faster tempos on instrumental numbers and improvised "licks" or halfstrains that fill out the vocal phrase. In the old-time style of playing, in Wyoming and elsewhere, the fiddler, other lead instrumentalists, and accompanists all play continuously through each repetition of the tune. Bluegrass instrumentalists, on the other hand, swap "breaks" or solos that are alternated with sung verses, a practice also common in western swing ensembles.

Nor does this exploration of old-time fiddling attempt to cover traditional fiddling in all its manifestations. It is possible that the fiddle has played a part in a number of Wyoming communities with other ethnic musical traditions than the ones covered here. The fiddling of Slavs, Basques, Mexican-Americans, and Native-Americans is left to future investigators.

The music heard on these tapes emerges from an American fiddling tradition that is largely British in origin. American fiddlers, however, have developed a substantial homegrown body of tunes, stylistic features, and technical innovations. Similar instrumental music can be heard in all sections of the United States and Canada, with finer stylistic distinctions apparent between the fiddling of separate regions and ethnic traditions. While it is difficult to describe a particular musical style with any verbal precision, the experienced listener can readily identify the difference between Southern and Northern, or between French Canadian and Irish fiddling.

Where does Western fiddling in general, and old-time fiddling in Wyoming in particular, belong on the stylistic map? Since so very few fiddlers from the western Great Plains and the northern Rockies have been recorded, it is difficult to assess the accuracy of this statement made by Dennis Coelho, one-time Folk Arts Coordinator for the Wyoming Council on the Arts:

Wyoming sits in the center of a regional dialect of old time fiddle playing. The style spreads into the adjoining states, especially western Nebraska and eastern Idaho, but it is centered here. It is a style quite different in both repertoire and performance from the fiddle regions in the Southwest and the Southeast.¹

This project aims to bring the Wyoming fiddle tradition more clearly into view and will leave to others the task of determining the boundaries of this regional dialect. Old-time fiddling in Wyoming will be characterized according to its (1) Place of Origin, (2) Contexts of Performance and (3) Musical Characteristics.

1. You Know That Wyoming Will Be Your New Home, p. 2.

(1) **Place of Origin.** The sources of fiddling in Wyoming are to be found in the musical traditions of states east of the frontier. Most of the Senior fiddlers represented here originally learned to play as they were growing up in Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, or Oklahoma. And those who were raised in Wyoming from the central states or the old Southwest. In terms of the derivation of the oldest tunes—e.g., "Wagoner," "Soldier's Joy," "Cincinnati Hornpipe," and several unnamed "quadrilles"—the Wyoming fiddle tradition has its roots in the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the South.

The ethnic composition of Wyoming's settlements gives its fiddle tradition further distinction. Rather than forming separate cultural enclaves (as they had in other sections of the United States), the northern and central European ethnic groups that came to Wyoming in the early years of this century mixed with the Anglo-American homesteaders who streamed into the state during the same period. And though they became mostly assimilated, the Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, and Bohemians still made small contributions to Wyoming's emerging Western culture, as is evidenced by the music and dances performed at Wyoming Fiddlers' Association events today. According to Dennis Coelho, while elsewhere in America, fiddling developed primarily from British traditions, "in Wyoming the dominant musical influences came from Scandinavia, Germany and the Slavic countries of eastern Europe. Instead of (Scottish and Irish) step dances and jigs, one finds here the polka, the schottische, the varsovienna and the waltz."²

The contributions of European ethnics to fiddling in Wyoming are mostly indirect; the prevalence of waltzes and schottisches in the repertoires of nearly all of today's fiddlers points to the long popularity of these continental European dances among Wyoming residents. Direct continuity with ethnic European traditions is represented by a handful of the fiddlers. Two of these musicians of Bohemian heritage grew up hearing Czechoslovakian music. From the two of them, however, I recorded only one Bohemian tune: "On the Meadows Green," played by Henry "Hank" Hlavacheck, who was born in Oklahoma. Garret, Wyoming native John Kafka remembers his father playing old world melodies on a button accordion; but John's standard American repertoire evidences his assimilation into the American cultural mainstream. Several fiddlers contributed Scandinavian pieces. Harry Jerup, for example, performed schottisches played on accordion and fiddle by his father, an immigrant from Denmark.³

(2) **Contexts of Performance.** The contemporary fiddling scene in Wyoming is distinctive in offering older and younger fiddlers alike fresh contexts in which to play. A combination of general cultural trends and the influence of key individuals has created a revival of interest in old-time fiddling. The revival has provided older fiddlers with opportunities to perform in new settings—contests, public jam sessions, parades, festival concerts and programs sponsored by various organizations. All of this exposure, in turn, has inspired young people to take up an art form many of their peers view as antiquated.

Historically, the most common context in which fiddlers performed was the community square dance or hoedown. In the last two decades, the fiddle contest has replaced the square dance as the most visible public forum for old-time fiddlers. The growing popularity of contests across the country was due in large part to the success of the National Old-Time Fiddle Contest held annually in Weiser, Idaho since the early 1960's. The first contest certified to send a Wyoming State Champion on to Weiser was held in 1974 in Shoshoni. Every Memorial Day weekend since has

2. The step-dance traditions of the British Isles, as well as of Anglo- and Afro-Americans, feature solo displays of rhythmic prowess. Clogging and tap-dancing have developed from these traditions. The term "step-dances" is used later in these notes to describe an unrelated dance form. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

3. The role of German musicians in the Wyoming fiddling tradition poses some interesting questions. Many fiddlers today play one or two polkas common to German and Polish polka bands across the country. The German bands in the western section of the Great Plains, however, often spring from the "Dutch Hop" tradition of the Russian-German, descendants of those Germans who came to America after a sojourn of over a hundred years on the Russian steppes. The contemporary Dutch Hop bands feature, not fiddle, but accordion and hackbrett (hammer dulcimer); though I was told of German fiddlers from previous generations.

seen increasing numbers of fiddlers and listeners descend on this small town (population 879) in central Wyoming. The organizational work is performed by the Shoshoni Chamber of Commerce. The idea originally came from the late "Lazy" Harold Donelson, a fiddler from Shoshoni, who was also instrumental in establishing the state contest's parent organization, the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association.

The success of the venture at Shoshoni and of similar contests in neighboring states stimulated the growth of contests in other communities throughout Wyoming, usually in conjunction with some community event sponsored by a local organization. Fiddlers and fans of fiddling got into the habit of traveling from contest to contest, and thus the crowds at the local events were enhanced with residents of other communities from a five-state region (depending on which corner of the state held the contest). Besides sparking further interest in fiddling, the proliferation of contests aided the development of personal networks of musicians and enthusiasts that stretched across Wyoming and into Utah, Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

As these networks strengthened and expanded, many an old-time fiddler who had almost forgotten how to play was encouraged to once again tune his fiddle and rosin his bow. Fiddlers who hadn't played for a square dance in 20 years, and who had become accustomed to playing only a few tunes at home for their own enjoyment or for their family and close friends, found themselves trying to learn new pieces or remember old ones that they could polish up to play before a large and eager audience at the next contest. The contests encouraged and revered Senior fiddlers by giving them their own division, complete with prize money and trophies.

Complementing the growth of contests was the development of the organized Districts of the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association. In fact, Districts #1 and #2 were begun in the early 1970's before the first certified state contest was held at Shoshoni.⁴ The districts' primary activities are monthly meetings or jam sessions at which each fiddler in attendance has center stage to play the allotted number of tunes (usually three). In addition, the district organization helps promote old-time fiddling by providing groups of musicians to perform for local programs, festivals, and family celebrations. Like the contests, these district activities have afforded Senior fiddlers public appreciation for their role in preserving the tradition through the lean years of the 1950's, when fiddling suffered from the growing popularity of rock and roll music and increasing moderation of country and western.

The flourishing of old-time fiddling as it ventured out of the parlor and gained community-wide acceptance, through both the contests and the districts, encouraged a large number of young people to try their hand. In some cases the new fiddlers rekindled latent or moribund family traditions; while in other instances, embracing the fiddle meant linking oneself with the culture of another time and place. The new fiddlers in Wyoming come from all age groups, including a few novice fiddlers who are Seniors, or very near that bracket. A large number of children, those who enter contests in the "*Li'l Tykes*," "*Junior-Junior*," or "*Junior*" divisions, are learning the fiddle

informally from grandparents or formally through lessons given by other fiddlers. A surprising number of teenagers, mostly girls, are learning to play and have been entering contests in the last ten years. Among young adults, women fiddlers again outnumber the men. As it stands now, the next generation of fiddlers will reverse the situation with today's Seniors, where the overwhelming majority are male.

(3) **Musical Characteristics.** The distinctive musical characteristics of old-time fiddling in Wyoming involve features of musical structure, performance style and fiddlers' repertoires. It is

4. Currently there are six Districts in the Wyoming Fiddlers Association, with a seventh gradually gaining stability. They are numbered according to the order in which they were founded: #1 - Sheridan, #2 - Big Horn Basin, #3 - Cheyenne, #4 - Casper, #5 - Jackson, #6 - Torrington, and #7, the newest, - Riverton and Lander.

difficult to describe the musical structure without embarking on a prolonged technical exposition. In short, Wyoming fiddlers play in a straightforward manner. Tunes are neither adorned with melodic embellishments, such as trills or rolls, nor are they augmented harmonically beyond the occasional use of double stops. (The leading contest fiddlers present contrary evidence to this assertion, but it could be argued that they represent a nationally dominant "contest" style more than a local regional dialect.) Rhythmically, the Wyoming style could be described as "square," in that bow strokes solidly emphasize the downbeat. I found few instances of the syncopated bowing patterns—i.e., bowing that stresses the off-beats—that are widespread among Southern fiddlers.

The current norm for accompaniment for a Wyoming fiddler is a guitarist who chords in standard positions, as do Leo Wilson, Bob Good, John Tarter, and Eric Stewart. Walter Fay and Lyle Sheets are exceptions; each is jazz-influenced and primarily plays chords in closed positions. Tenor banjo, but not usually the five-string banjo, has been a part of fiddle-led string bands in Wyoming. And while the piano is seldom used to "second" for Midwestern and Southern fiddlers, Nellie Hale, Bernice Land, Evalyn Hoover, Mary German, Jean Slichter, and Gladys Watson prove that the keyboard is still put to good use in Wyoming.

The Wyoming repertoire of the 1980's embraces two broad classes of tunes: 19th century dance music, including hoedowns, waltzes, schottisches; and 20th century popular music, an array flavored by Tin-Pan-Alley and Nashville. The older stock of 2/4 tunes played in Wyoming—such as "*Turkey in the Straw*," "*Arkansas Traveler*," "*Soldier's Joy*," and "*Liberty*"—mirrors the standard repertoire of square dance fiddlers in all corners of the United States, though I did hear a few pieces, mostly unnamed, that were new to my ears. Jigs and other tunes in 6/8 time, while not widespread, are not unknown (as they are in the South). These Wyoming tunes, both the rare and the common, display neither the melodic intricacy of New England reels nor the rhythmic complexity of Southern breakdowns, but are more closely related to harmonically square Midwestern hoedowns and quadrilles. Such pieces emphasize the notes that make up the primary chords (the tonic and dominant and, less frequently, the sub-dominant) underscoring the melody.

In the 1980's, however, 19th century hoedowns are of less importance than they were 40 years ago. Hoedowns today are often dressed up for display, especially at contests where added fancy "*licks*"—which do nothing extra for a floor full of dancers—bring greater applause from the audience and higher marks from the judges. Other genres of 19th century dance music are currently more popular; in fact, the prevalence of waltzes, schottisches, and two-steps in the local repertoire provides one of the unique features of the fiddling scene in Wyoming. Another distinctive quality of this scene is the extensive use of 20th century popular music. When people want to dance, Wyoming fiddlers will play everything from "*My Gal Sal*" and "*Wabash Blues*" to "*The Band Played On*" and "*When It's Lamplighting Time in the Valley*." Whichever came first, the demise of square dancing or the increase of modern popular songs played on the fiddle, it is clear that the contemporary preference of Wyoming fiddlers for waltzes and 20th century music is closely related to the popularity of couple dancing.

The nearly 60 tunes included on these two cassettes represent 35 fiddlers and over 20 back-up guitarists, pianists, and bass-players. The first tape focuses on social contexts of fiddling: dances (**Side A**) and formal and informal jam sessions held by the Districts of the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association (**Side B**). The second tape is oriented to more individual dimensions of fiddling: the sources of the individual fiddler's repertoire (**Side C**) and the influence of contests and the acquiring of competence among the next generation of fiddlers (**Side D**).





"Bessie Barney"

SIDE A: DANCE MUSIC

Fiddlers have always played for dancers. Old-time social dances in Wyoming formerly featured a mix of square dances and couple dances. Although many fiddlers say they haven't played for a square dance since the 1930's, old-time square dances, also called hoedowns, probably didn't completely die out until after World War II.

Square dancing is a distinctively American form of dance that involves a set of four couples, each forming one side of a square, executing simple figures or floor patterns with the other couples in the set. Square dancing is rooted in English country dancing, which became quite fashionable in polite English society in the 17th Century. The square formation was introduced as a French variation of the greatly popular English dances. French dancing masters brought their "*coillions*" to eager students on the American shores beginning in the 18th century.

The old-time hoedowns that grew out of these French and English seeds were particularly suited to the American soil. American square dance callers removed the formalized airs and fancy steps and devised straightforward figures that ran the dancers through a vigorous series of movements in which the couples interacted equally with each other. The lively 2/4 time hoedown expressed in movement the ideals of democracy on the American frontier.

Early dance programs in Wyoming also featured a variety of couple dances -- some were built upon simple, repeating basic steps and others had a unique, sometimes complex repeated sequence of steps which Floyd McLean of Thermopolis describes as "*step-dances*." The couple dances popular in Wyoming in the last century and the first half of this one included the waltz, the schottische, and possibly the polka. Today waltzes and schottisches are as prevalent as ever, but the only step-dance still widely known is "*Put Your Little Foot*," otherwise known as the Varsouvianna. Couple dances were sometimes identified as round dances, as opposed to square dances, since the dancers moved freely "*round*" the dance floor.

The two-step and the foxtrot, more modern developments from the urban ballroom, are now commonly danced to old-time fiddle music in Wyoming. The relative absence of older polka tunes in the fiddlers' repertoires (compared with other regions of the country) may suggest that this 19th Century European step is a more recent introduction (as it is elsewhere) to social dances in Wyoming. Or perhaps the polka's progress is the reverse of the hoedown's. The polka survived as a dance, but the tunes disappeared; old-time hoedowns died out, but the tunes continue to be played.

A1) "*Lonesome Homesteader*." "*I have carried my fiddle under my arm many miles, in all kinds of weather, horseback, to play for dances, sometimes for as little as a dollar.*" So Warren Cromwell of Glenrock describes his experience in the 1920's when dances lasted "*from dark til daylight*" and about every fourth dance was a hoedown. Warren didn't know many square dance tunes, so he made up a couple, including "*Lonesome Homesteader*." The title fit Warren's circumstances at the time. Born in Oklahoma in 1906, his family moved to South Dakota when he was seven and then to Wyoming to homestead when he was ten. About the time he started playing for dances -- he played his first dance at age 16 -- the rest of the family moved back to South Dakota and left him alone to work the homestead in Wyoming.

A2) "*Down Home Waltz*." Born in Arkansas in 1918 and raised in Missouri, Jack Brewer of Powell comes from a family of musicians, including a brother who plays the fiddle. Jack started playing the guitar at the age of 19. It wasn't until 1952, two years after he moved to Wyoming, that he took up the fiddle. Still, his playing reflects the styles of fiddling characteristic of his home region more than those heard in the West. "*Down Home Waltz*" he learned from Arkansas fiddler Art Galbraith while on a trip back to the Ozarks.

The waltz originally appeared in the ballrooms of Europe in the early 1800's. It revolutionized social dancing by allowing couples to turn freely about the floor in a close embrace. The waltz has continued as a staple of social dancing in all regions of Europe and North America, though it has long since shed its scandalous reputation.

A3) "*Honest Irish Lad*." According to Stip Wolff of Moran, this tune was formerly used in Jackson's Hole for the "*Virginia Reel*," a dance in 6/8 time for couples facing each other in a long line. Dances in this formation, originally from English country dancing, are variously identified as country dances, contras, or reels. The figures used are related to those of the square dance.

Such dances had fallen out of favor in Wyoming by 1950. Before then, Stip Wolff played for many dances at the Moran school and during the Prohibition era, at abandoned ranch houses. He remembers one night in particular when the weather was 65 degrees below zero and a blizzard was raging. The musicians and dancers were all bundled up and had to keep playing and dancing in order to stay warm. Hoedowns and reels are vigorous dances well-suited for that purpose.

A4) "*French Minuet*." Charles "Pop" Hale of Powell was born in South Dakota in 1898. He learned to fiddle from his grandfather and was already playing for dances when he was seven years old.

The "*French Minuet*" was a step-dance that was a regular part of social dance programs in South Dakota, Montana, the Big Horn Basin, and presumably elsewhere in northern Wyoming in the early decades of this century. Few people today remember the step sequence for the French Minuet: a series of touches and crossing steps danced to the first strain of the tune, which is in 6/8 time. The second strain, in 3/4 time, calls for the basic waltz. Pop Hale plays several other tunes of which he says, "*There's a dance that goes with that.*"

A5) **Unnamed Tune.** Ervin "Spike" Dovenspike was born in Iowa in 1907 and came to Wyoming at the age of nine -- the same year that he started playing the fiddle -- when his family homesteaded near Fort Laramie. Ervin ended up in Cheyenne where he worked for the railroad most of his working life. On a trip back to Iowa, he was once asked if he played for the Indians. He

answered, "No, but I played for the homesteaders that run the Indians out." He learned this tune from an Iowa fiddler named Dinsmore, but he doesn't know its name. Ervin has played tunes like this one for many hoedowns through the years, working with an old-style caller who he says "just called them, he didn't sing them."

In many parts of the country today, singing calls have become dominant over the older, chanted calls or patter calls. In Wyoming, hoedowns and the patter caller (an American invention) have all but disappeared, though hoedown tunes are still played by fiddlers.

A6) "Sit 'n' Sew Schottische." Several Wyoming fiddlers call this schottische "Horace Greeley." One offered the following couplet: "Horace Greeley, Horace Greeley/Does your mammy know you're out." Leroy Haygood of Casper doesn't have a name for his version, so he identifies it by some of the lyrics his mother sang to help him learn the tune when he was a young fiddler.

*Come along little girl and extend to me your hand,
And we'll go in pursuit of a far and better land;
Where the girls can sit and sew
and the boys can reap and mow,
And we'll land them on the banks of the Ohio.*

A7) "Red Fox Waltz." The waltz has retained its popularity at social dances in rural America and figures heavily in the repertoires of Wyoming fiddlers. Pete Germann of Node learned this waltz recently from Harry Hansen, a well-respected fiddler and contest judge from Gordon, Nebraska. This is one of the most prevalent waltzes in the Wyoming repertory.

When Pete was learning to play the fiddle, he became acquainted with two fiddling, bachelor-farmer neighbors, Joe and Earl Laughtry, who played for square dances. By chording for them on guitar, he learned a number of tunes to try out on his own fiddle. He first played fiddle for a dance when he was in his early teens and later had his own dance band for several years.

A8) Unnamed Two-Step. Floyd McLean was born and raised in Montana, but he has spent most of his life in Thermopolis. His father, who died when Floyd was a child, played the fiddle. Floyd took up the instrument in his teens and played for dances. These dances in Montana were often attended by Norwegians who insisted that he play the Mazurka, a step-dance in 3/4 time. Floyd knows a number of other step-dances that were popular in Montana and Wyoming before World War II: "Some of the old step dances are 'French Minuet,' 'Scotch Highland Schottische,' 'Heel-and-Toe Polka,' and three-step, and more I won't mention," such as the "Oxford Minuet." He can demonstrate the steps for some of these dances, even though he told the project in a letter, "I am no spring chicken, I was born April 8, 1899." Though he quit playing for a number of years, he has started again and recalls a number of old waltzes and quadrilles.

The two-step pattern of "step-close-step" is found in many forms of dance. Around the turn of the century, the two-step was the basic ballroom dance step in both rural and urban sections of the country. The 1920's ushered in the jazz age and swept the two-step aside in favor of the One-Step, the Grizzly Bear, the Turkey Trot, the Castle Walk, and other more up-to-date inventions. The two-step, however, endured in rural areas where it continues to be danced to any 2/4 tune played at a moderately fast tempo.

A9) "Put Your Little Foot." The Varsouvianna is the one 19th Century step dance that is still played by fiddlers in many sections of the U.S.; however, few dancers remember the steps to any of the many Americanized versions of this dance. Dancers in Wyoming seem to be an exception to this rule. The name, Varsouvianna, has been associated with the capital cities of Poland and Austria. The dance's prevalence in Wyoming may signify a cultural contribution from the Germanic and Polish people who settled in the state.

Here, Harry Jerup of Shell plays the tune for dancers at a Wyoming Fiddlers' Association District #2 jam session at the VFW hall in Powell. Notice that this performance is longer than any of the others on Side A. Harry plays through the tune six times instead of the usual two or three repeats played by the other fiddlers who were displaying their tunes for the tape recorder and not for a room full of dancers.

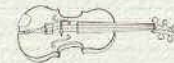
A10) Unnamed Schottische. The Schottische was imported from 19th century European ballrooms. The dance form itself may be older than its appearance in polite society in the 1850's would suggest. It probably originated in northern Europe. The dance steps and a number of schottische tunes have continued to be popular among Germans, Poles, Finns, and Scandinavians on both sides of the Atlantic. The large variety of schottisches played by Wyoming fiddlers attests to the influence of these nationalities in the peopling of Wyoming. This is further born out by the experience related by Duke Parrish of Douglas at the beginning of this essay.

A11) "South." Marshall Turnell of Meeteetse began playing the fiddle in his early teens. His father would take him to dances and let him play for about three dances a night, probably, as Marsh surmises, so he could go out and have a drink. Marsh has played for many square and round dances, but as a young musician in the 1930's, he was more interested in learning the popular songs of the day than in playing old-time tunes (see C6). Dancers in Wyoming today would treat "South" as a two-step or a fast foxtrot.

A12) "Sweethearts and Strangers." Warren Cromwell started playing the fiddle when he was 12 years-old, and has been playing the same instrument for 68 years, a "Strad" model dated 1736 that his father paid \$15 for in 1919. "I learned to play by ear, as there was no one to show me. I tried to learn tunes my granddad used to sing. Sometimes I didn't get them just right, but that is the way they sounded to me." "Sweethearts and Strangers" is an example of the kind of song his grandfather sang, ones popular around the turn of the century. Warren's playing has smoothed out some of the harmonic and chromatic complexity of urban popular music and reworked it into the diatonic or eight tone scale favored by rural instrumentalists who learn by ear. This tune would bring dancers out on the floor for a slow fox-trot.

A13) "Leather Britches." When he lived in Thermopolis in the 1940's, Harry Jerup had a three-piece orchestra that played for dances. "Leather Britches" is one of the many hoedowns in Harry's repertoire, but he hasn't played for a square dance for nearly 40 years. Harry was born in Iowa in 1913. He moved to Eastern Wyoming in the early '30's and then to the Big Horn Basin where he farmed.

Since hoedowns are no longer called at District #2 jam sessions, the dancers do a fast two-step or a polka (which is essentially a two-step with a hop added) to hoedown tunes. Most fiddlers, however, have one or two polkas in their repertoires which they play at the same tempo as hoedowns. The polka itself was a Bohemian folk or peasant dance that burst into the European ballrooms in the 1840's, causing as much excitement and outrage as the waltz had stirred up 40 to 50 years earlier. The acceptance of the waltz and polka in the 19th century paved the way for the development of couple dancing. In the contemporary Wyoming fiddle scene, the polka is more prevalent as a dance form than as a musical form. Where the hoedown once reigned, couple dancing is today the basis of social dancing in Wyoming, at least when old-time fiddlers are providing the music.





"Eric Stewart & Marshall Turnell"

SIDE B: FIDDLING IN THE DISTRICTS

Side B takes us to three districts of the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association: District #1, Sheridan; District #4, Casper and Douglas; and District #2, Big Horn Basin. The state Association's major enterprise is running the State Championship Old Time Fiddlers Contest in Shoshoni each Memorial Day Weekend (see D1-3). Most public old-time fiddling in Wyoming occurs under the auspices of the local Districts.

District #1

The impetus for starting District #1 came in the early 1970's when Walter Fay talked George Vuylstake into going with him to a district jam session in Montana. There they teamed up with Clifford Thex as a trio for the first time and *"had a ball."* Pop Hale encouraged them to model their organization on the association and districts of the Old Time Fiddlers' Association in Idaho, which had been organized in 1963. From the beginning, District #1 meetings have been primarily social affairs held in halls with a dance floor and a bar. The music played by some District #1 fiddlers encompasses a unique, local tradition that has recently been influenced by Swedish music.

B1) *"Life in the Finnish Woods."* Fiddlers **Kent Reindahl** and **Clifford Thex** gathered for an informal jam session in guitarist Walter Fay's cabin retreat on a ridge outside of Sheridan. The log house was built and owned by the late Eric Nygard, a fiddle-playing logger who had been born in Sweden and had spent the last years of his life in Sheridan. Kent Reindahl, who now lives in Story, learned this Scandinavian waltz while growing up in the Norwegian community of Bemidji, Minnesota, where he was born in 1930. His primary instrument is the accordion. He began playing the fiddle several years ago after he found one that had been thrown in the trash. He also became interested in the instrument through his friendship with Eric Nygard. Eric was a fiddling enthusiast who traveled nearly every weekend to attend various district sessions in Wyoming and Montana. Pop Hale and others have named this tune *"Eric's Tune,"* because it was his signature piece.

B2) *"Redbird."* **Clifford Thex** of Ashland, Montana learned this hoedown from the late Shorty Phelps, another Montana resident who was very active in the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association. Shorty was one of the early members of District #2.

Clifford was born in Montana in 1917 and has worked at everything from ranching to railroading. His father and brother were fiddlers. Even though he had played for square dances when he was young, he considers the piano, which he plays in a ragtime style, his primary instrument. When he started playing with Walter Fay and George Vuylstake, George insisted that Clifford play the fiddle more. At that time he knew only enough hoedowns for the band to play three square dances in an evening. Through his participation in district sessions and contests over the last 15 years, his skill and repertoire have grown considerably.

B3) *"Dreaming of Ellen."* Through Eric Nygard, Walter Fay and his family have developed close contacts with a number of Swedish musicians. They have been to Sweden several times, and have hosted visiting Swedes in Sheridan. Walter's son, Clinton, learned this song from a tape of a jam session held in Sweden. **Clinton Fay** of Sheridan was born in 1949. A former rodeo rider, he is currently on the Sheridan Fire Department. A self-trained artist, he creates bronzes of cowboy scenes and has recently taken up saddle making. He started playing the fiddle only a few years ago, inspired by the activities of District #1.

Walter Fay was born in Missouri in 1922, but he has spent his adult life in Wyoming. After a career on the railroad, with time off to teach school and to own the Dairy Queen in Sheridan, he spends most of his days in his workshop at the cabin doing leather stamping. He credits his jazz-flavored guitar style to his one-time neighbor, George Vuylstake, a professional banjo-player who was the undisputed artistic leader of the band he formed with Walter and Clifford. Walter describes how he came to play with George in the mid-60's: *"I'd played with a guitar for years and I knew a lot of chords, but I didn't have the faintest idea what to do with them...And that like to drive George up the wall...He had a way about him that you followed the path of least resistance."*

B4) *"Swedish March."* Another Eric Nygard tune, played by **Kent Reindahl** and **Clifford Thex**, has a Swedish title that identifies it with a certain village.

Since George Vuylstake's death in the early 70's, Walter and Clifford have maintained their musical partnership and their leading roles in District #1. They do have one point of disagreement: Walter doesn't like contests, and will not play back-up for Clifford at a contest. He believes that District meetings should be social affairs with dancing rather than tune-ups for competition.

District #4

The activities in District #4, Casper and Douglas, accentuate the importance of fiddle music as the display of an artistic tradition. Meetings or jam sessions highlight the fiddler performing before an audience, where District #1 and #2 meetings are judged successful if the floor is full of dancers. Preparing members, especially the young fiddlers, for the numerous fiddle contests seems to be a major thrust of District #4.

B5) *"Burgandy Waltz."* At home, **Leroy Haygood** of Casper has a workshop full of fiddles to be repaired and a shelf full of fiddle contest trophies. A retired rancher, sheepherder and railroader, he is a leading participant when District #4 is asked to provide music for a wedding anniversary, parade, club banquet or some other event in central Wyoming. Leroy learned the *"Burgandy Waltz"* from fellow District #4 fiddler, Fritz Neilson of Douglas, who passed away in March of 1986 before recording began for this project.

B6) *"Canebrake."* **Warren Cromwell**, retired rancher and regular entrant in fiddle contests, plays frequently for dances at senior centers in Glenrock and Douglas. Evalyn Hoover, director of the Glenrock Senior Citizens Center credits Warren with helping her learn to play second to a

fiddler on the piano. A Michigan native and a talented multi-instrumentalist, Evalyn plays piano and banjo in Duke Parrish's band *"The Musical Country Kids."*

Before Warren fiddles the tune, Pearl Parrish sings a verse to this old schottische recorded in the 1920's by Frank Crummit, a singer who accompanied himself on the ukulele. Pearl plays guitar on these recordings of Warren and of her husband, Duke Parrish.

B7) **"Wagoner."** Duke Parrish plays an unusual version in the keys of D and G of a tune that most fiddlers play in the key of C. Duke has only recently become involved with the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association, entering the Senior Division at Shoshoni for the first time in 1987. He placed high and is planning on entering the State Division as well next year.

Duke was born in Texas in 1907. In 1916, his widowed mother brought her two sons with her to Wyoming to homestead, which is where he learned to play the fiddle (see C4). His repertory includes only a few old-time hoedowns, waltzes, and schottisches. For years he played mostly pop and jazz standards.

B8) **"Montana Plains."** In 1982, Duke Parrish married Pearl, a singer, yodeler, and guitarist who likes country songs. According to Duke, *"I especially like tunes that I can put my feelings and expression into. That is why we of our little group like country music."* Here, Pearl Parrish gets to show off her yodeling in a song first recorded by Montana Slim (Wilf Carter). Carl Wenderott of Cody called this melody *"Out on the Texas Plains."*

District #2

District #2 was begun in 1971 as an offshoot of District #1. Walter Fay and Clifford Thex convinced Peggy Buntin, Pop Hale's daughter, to take on the organizational chores of running monthly jam sessions and promoting fiddling in the Big Horn Basin. As in most other districts, the officers arrange for musicians to perform at local events. Today, District #2 is probably the largest of the six districts in the Wyoming Fiddlers' Association. Besides having a large roster of fiddlers and back-up musicians, District #2 sessions attract a hall full of dancers. The fiddlers who perform at District #2 jam sessions are of all ages. All are treated with respect, regardless of their level of skill. Senior fiddlers are especially revered, and young fiddlers are given a great deal of encouragement.

B9) **"Old St. Joe."** Jack Brewer has taught this southern-style hoedown to 16 year-old Kelly Murdock of Denver. Jack, from Powell, and Bob Good of Cody, have taken it on themselves to promote this young fiddler whose talent and potential they admire. Kelly considers Jack her honorary grandfather.

B10) **"On the Meadows Green."** Henry "Hank" Hlavacek was born in Oklahoma in 1908 to Czechoslovakian immigrants. In his own words, *"My parents, native-born of Czechoslovakia, came to America as young children. Father made the run for land in Oklahoma in 1893 when the government opened the Indian Territory for settlement. There were eight children in our poor but happy family. I can remember the folks wearing out three or four phonographs."* From that phonograph young Hank learned the songs of Jimmy Rodgers, country music's first star, and heard the fiddling of Clark Kessinger of West Virginia. He also learned to fiddle from musicians closer to home: *"When I grew up to be a 'young feller' and allowed out at night, I would sometimes go to a country dance and stand behind the fiddler's chairs to watch and listen to their fiddle playing."* When the Dust Bowl drove him out of Oklahoma in 1937, Hank came to Wyoming where he worked as a farmer for most of his life. As is often the case, he put the fiddle away while working and raising a family, and started playing again as he reached retirement age. This performance of an old-country Bohemian tune remembered from his childhood was recorded at Hank's last appearance at a District #2 jam session. Hank passed away on July 25, 1987.

B11) **"Out Among the Black Hills and the Pines."** Charles and Nellie Hale are commanding figures in District #2, even though their personalities are anything but domineering. They are called *"Pop"* and *"Mom"* by nearly everyone. They celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary in 1987, yet it has only been in the last ten years or so that Mom has been Pop's regular piano player. He had previously worked with several musicians in Buffalo, including Lyle Sheets (see C14-15). Here they are joined by their daughter Peggy Buntin and two of her fiddle students, Candy Hufford and Karen Dietrich.

B12) **"Wabash Blues."** Carl Wenderott, one of the most respected and influential fiddlers in District #2, consistently placed high in the Shoshoni contest. In this recording, Candy Hufford of Powell plays a piece that Carl *"played all the time."* *"Wabash Blues"* was published in New York in 1921, but it was a 1930's recording of the song by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys that made the song popular among rural musicians.

Candy Hufford was born in Nebraska in 1953 and moved to Wyoming with her husband in the mid-1970's. As a child she learned to play the piano by ear but was not given much encouragement because she had trouble learning how to read notes. Three years ago she enrolled her daughter Chanda in fiddle lessons with Peggy Buntin, thinking she'd learn to play at home with Chanda. Peggy said, *"No, you come and take lessons too."*

B13) **"Brown-Skin Gal."** Carl Wenderott was born in 1911 in Alma, Kansas. An uncle taught him to play the fiddle, and he played his first dance at the age of 14. Carl first came to Wyoming in 1938, then returned to Cody in 1974 after retiring from 23 years in the aircraft industry in Wichita and Seattle. When he arrived in Cody, his realtor Bob Good, discovered that Carl once played the fiddle, and he brought by an instrument that had been given to him in Ohio. This prompted Carl to get out his own fiddle, which he hadn't touched in years, and start to play again. Carl Wenderott passed away in August of 1986 before field recordings were made for this project.

This is an earlier home recording of Carl playing an old-time hoedown that was first recorded in 1929 by Texan A.C. "Eck" Robertson under the title *"There's a Brownskin Girl Down the Round Somewhere."*



"Leonard Zierlein, Joselyn Dietrich & Tanya Jones"





H. Inghel
"Pop' Hale & Peggy Buntin"

SIDE C: PERSONAL STORIES

Side C celebrates the senior fiddlers in Wyoming, those who have nourished the tradition through the lean years of the '50's and '60's. They preserved a wealth of old tunes and stories of the times in which those tunes lived. Interest in old-time fiddling was sparked in the early '70's, and burst into full flame in the next 15 years. Because of the senior fiddlers, the tradition was found to be in good shape, ready and anxious to receive new generations. Through the stories older fiddlers tell about their music and their lives, the listener can discover that with a single tune the individual fiddler can build a strong connection to other people, other places, and other times.

C1) **"Dill Pickles Rag."** Besides playing hoedown fiddle, **Ervin Dovenspike** is an accomplished tenor banjo player. After retiring from the railroad, he played ragtime and jazz standards with a pianist in a Cheyenne pizza parlor (see A5).

The *"Dill Pickles Rag,"* which Ervin has known for so many years he has forgotten where he learned it, is a piano rag written in 1912 by Charles L. Johnson. Of all the melodies from the ragtime era, this rag has become the most widespread among rural instrumentalists. Ervin's fiddling is here accompanied by an electronic organ played by Bernice Land. Bernice also played piano and accordion in a dance band led by her husband, Bud Land of Cheyenne. Like Ervin, Bernice was born in 1907; he in Iowa, she in Nebraska. Their musical partnership has been formed in the last five years since they have both been widowed.

C2) **"Fish and Brown Taters."** In recent years, **Ervin Dovenspike** has been going to fiddlers' gatherings in Nebraska and Missouri. He learned this jig at a session in the Missouri Ozarks. Bernice, playing piano on this and the next number, does not like to play in 6/8 time. Ervin claims that some callers like jig time, and that it works well for square dances.

C3) **"Red Apple Rag."** Another tune that **Ervin** picked up two years ago from a fiddler in Nebraska. *"Red Apple Rag"* was composed by Fiddlin' Arthur Smith of Grand Ol' Opry fame. He recorded it at his first recording session in 1935.

C4) **"Over the Waves/It's the Loveliest Night of the Year."** **Duke Parrish's** first musical instrument was a mandolin, which is tuned the same as a fiddle. He already knew 24 tunes before he got his first violin. He received some formal training from a couple in whose house he boarded while attending high school. He also taught himself to play by ear, after hearing a melody he wanted to remember while attending the movies. Ironically, the woman he boarded with had been the pianist for the movie house. She and her husband, a violinist, **"both protested my doing that, and strongly advised against playing tunes by ear. However, it's almost like advising lovers not to get married--they do it anyway."**

C5) **"Danish Schottisches #1 & #2."** **Harry Jerup**, born in Iowa in 1909, learned these schottisches from his father, Kris, a button box accordionist and fiddler. Harry's parents were immigrants from Denmark. His father came to the U.S. in 1893 and worked for two years before he was able to send for his wife and two sons. Harry was the youngest of three children born in this country. He thinks the real bravery was demonstrated by his mother, who traveled with two children across the ocean to an unfamiliar land without knowing a word of English. Harry's nephew, fiddler Dwight Lamb of Onawa, Iowa, still owns and plays Kris Jerup's accordion.

C6) **"Horigan."** **Marshall Turnell** learned this two-step from his father. He has never heard it played by another fiddler. When he was a young man, he was more interested in playing the newest popular songs. Now he has renewed his interest in the old-time hoedowns played by his father and brother (see A11). He doesn't think that people who run fiddle contests today really understand what old-time hoedowns are.

Marsh was born in Nebraska in 1917. His family moved to Montana when he was five, and then to Wyoming when he was nine or ten. He was sent back to Nebraska for schooling, but he dropped out at age 15 and came back to Wyoming. He worked as a cowboy, had his own ranch, and then worked on the Pitchfork Ranch for many years. After he retired, he started a second career in the oil fields which he retired from after 16 years. Today he regularly plays with guitarist Eric Stewart of Meeteetse.

C7) **"All Alone Tonight."** **Warren Cromwell** learned this tune from Jean Slichter of Casper, who normally plays piano for him. She had played it with her uncle for dances for many years. After her uncle died, she asked Warren to learn the tune.

C8) **"Kingdom Come."** **Stip Wolff** was born in 1913 on the ranch where he still lives. He started playing the fiddle when he was 15. His father had played a 32-string zither. In the 1930's, Stip played in a dance band with fiddlers Bill Rema (pronounced 'Ree-mie') and Lee Caldwell. He also played guitar in a band that performed in a hotel in Jackson during that town's gambling era. Stip thinks he probably learned this tune from Lee Caldwell.

The song was written by Henry Clay Work and published under this title in 1862. The song told about the emancipation of the slaves, and it became quite popular on the minstrel show stage of the late 19th Century under the title *"Year of Jubilo."* The tune has remained quite well known among fiddlers in all parts of the country. Marshall Turnell also plays a version of this tune he calls *"Darkies Jubilee,"* a title that reflects the speech of 19th Century minstrel shows.

C9) **"Home, Sweet Home/Show Me the Way to Go Home."** **John Kafka** was born in 1913 in Garrett. He was a rancher all of his working life. John's father, Bohemian in background, played the harmonica and the button accordion. John's grandmother played the piano. As a child, John

was fascinated with the fiddle playing of his uncle, Tom Garrett. His grandmother supplied him with a fiddle, and his uncle got him started. John's father would make him go out into the barn to practice. Then one day his father heard him practicing in the barn, and later that evening in the house said, "Why don't you get that fiddle out, play that tune you was playing in the barn." John knew he had made the grade when he saw his father tapping his foot. "From then on, why, I could hear a tune and I could play it. Don't tell me why, or how, but I could."

C10) "Unnamed Tune." Pete Germann was born in Node in 1914. At age seven, an older neighbor of Pete's rebuilt an old three-quarter size fiddle and gave it to him. The first tune he played was "Long, Long Ago." Early on he learned tunes from the Laughtry brothers who played for dances in the area (see A7). Soon Pete swapped for a better fiddle and started playing such tunes as "Cincinnati Hornpipe," "Haste to the Wedding," and this ubiquitous breakdown in D know variously as "Soapsuds Over the Fence," "Too Young to Marry," or a multitude of other names. The tune is an Americanized version of the Scottish song, "My Love's But a Lassie Yet."

C11) "Unnamed Waltz." Another waltz Pete picked up from Harry Hansen whom he has gotten to know through attending fiddlers gatherings and contests in Nebraska and South Dakota.

C12) "Crooked Stovepipe." Pete has recently been learning a number of tunes from recordings of Canadian fiddlers. His current favorite is Ivan Hicks of New Brunswick. Pete's wife, Mary, joins him on piano for this rendition of a standard piece in the repertoire of Canadian fiddlers.

C13) "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." Elsewhere on these tapes, Leroy Haywood displays his ability with traditional dance tunes. Here he plays a popular air that was published in England in 1912 and was popular on both sides of the Atlantic during World War I.

Leroy was born in Alcova in 1908 and started playing fiddle when he was eight years old. His brother, Hershel raised enough money by herding sheep to send away to Montgomery Wards for a fiddle. A neighbor put it together and got them started. Their mother taught them their first tunes by singing melodies such as "Where the River Shannon Flows." Leroy picked up additional tunes from fiddlers in the neighborhood, especially those who played at the dance hall his father built and ran. For 25 years the hall served the community as a place for meetings, dances, and gatherings.

C14) A Tune. This 6/8 time tune dates back to the early years of this century when Pop Hale was playing the fiddle for square dances and round dances in his native South Dakota.

C15) "Up a Lazy River." Through the '30's and '40's, Pop played saxophone and led a 17-piece dance orchestra in South Dakota. He took up the fiddle again when he moved to Pocatello, Idaho after retiring from a career as a miner and plant forman. His fiddle repertoire shows his love for the music of the '30's and '40's, such as this Hoagy Carmichael composition.

Even though all his children and many of his grandchildren are very accomplished musically--some have become professionals--Pop has always played entirely by ear (see B11). According to his daughter Peggy Buntin, Pop "can't read a note...Grandpa told him to play and he played." Eulan, Peggy's husband, once asked Pop how he learned where to put his fingers. Pop answered, "I don't know, I've always known where to put them. I can't remember not knowing where to put them." The Hale clan gathers each year for a reunion at the Buntin home in Powell where music and good times reign for three days among a large, loving, and fun-loving family. A highlight of the reunion is a public performance put on by this talented bunch.



"Sharon Poulson"

SIDE D: THE NEXT GENERATION

Side D focuses on the next generation of fiddlers and the impulses that have led a surprisingly wide range of young people in Wyoming to take up the fiddle in the 1980's. Probably the most influential factor has been the growth of fiddle contests, especially the State Championship held at Shoshoni. Many kids get the urge to play when they are quite young, and they see their grandfathers or their peers competing and receiving the hearty applause the audience consistently gives out at Shoshoni. Children who express an interest are given a few lessons, taught a couple of tunes, and entered in the Junior Division, or the Junior-Junior Division if they are less than 13 years-old. New fiddlers over the age of 18 get their start in the Novice Division, which is open to "anyone who has not held a championship in any other division." Besides the state contest, a number of other contests are scheduled throughout the year in various communities. And for those who want more, there are plenty of contests held throughout the spring, summer, and fall within a days drive in Nebraska, South Dakota, Montana, and Utah.

D1) "Swing That Gal." The rule book for the state contest states that the fiddler must begin his/her appearance in each "go" or "go round" with a hoedown. Leroy Haygood, a regular contestant in both the Senior and State Divisions, always plays his signature version of "The Gall Left Behind" at least once.

D2) "Ook Pik Waltz." Each contestant must play a waltz as the second of their three tunes in each go round. Bob Good of Cody, born in Michigan in 1924, played back-up guitar for fiddlers in District #2 before he took up the fiddle a few years ago. He has done well at the state contest in the Senior Division. Carl Wenderott helped Bob get started. The "Ook Pik," also called the "Eskimo Waltz," has been a favorite at contests.

D3) **"Cotton Patch Rag."** The third tune to be played in each go round is a tune of the fiddler's choice, *"other than a hoedown or waltz."* **Tobi Lyons** of Mills, born in 1970, has been a regular winner in the Junior Division in the early '80's. Now she is one of the most-respected fiddlers in the state. She plays in the so-called *"Texas style"* that is dominant at contests all over the country.

When a young person in the 1980's decides to take up the fiddle, some old traditions hold true. There are often willing fiddlers to be found who help the beginner out. But some young fiddlers are not fortunate enough to find a mentor. Other resources, such as books and records, are available on the market.

D4) **"Lamp-Lighting Time in the Valley."** **Kelly Murdock** was given a series of music lessons without much success, until her parents took her to Peggy Buntin, who has devised a notation system that relies heavily on ear-training and avoids standard music notation. Peggy's teaching worked for Kelly. Since then, she has come under the tutelage of Jack Brewer, Bob Good, and others. Her repertoire includes dance music as well as contest-style fiddling.

D5) **"Billy in the Lowground."** **Farron Eisemann**, born in 1955, started playing the fiddle after attending the contest in Shoshoni in the mid-'70's. A farmer who lives some miles from his nearest neighbor, he's had to rely on instruction manuals, tune books, and fiddle records in order to learn and build his repertoire.

D6) **"Jessie Polka"** is an Anglicized title for a Mexican polka called *"Jesusita en Chihuahua."* **Sharon Poulson** is a student at the University of Wyoming with a double major in music and anthropology. In the last few years she has developed a passion for old-time fiddling and is now planning to go on to graduate school and combine scholarship with her love for traditional fiddling in a career as a folklorist or ethnomusicologist.

D7) **"Possum On the Gum Stump."** **Veda Bafford's** mother, Maxine Hackleman, is an accomplished musician who was told when she was young that *"girls don't play the fiddle."* Veda, born in the 1950's, is from a generation that didn't pay attention to such traditional restrictions. In order to learn the fiddle, Veda turned to an old family friend, Andy Bannan. Andy was born in Missouri, raised in Nebraska, and lived as a bachelor in Torrington with his first love, the fiddle. *"Possum On a Gum Stump"* was Andy's signature piece. Veda tries to play Andy's tunes exactly as he played them. Since Rick, her guitar playing husband, was transferred first to Michigan and then to North Carolina, she has sought out gatherings of fiddlers and has increased their repertoire and stylistic range.

D8) **"Bill Rema's Tune."** **Bessie Barney** was born in 1914, one year after her brother Stip Wolff. She learned to play the fiddle some when she was young, but played mostly guitar and piano in the dance band with Stip, Lee Caldwell, and Bill Rema. After a number of years of not playing, Bessie, a rancher, got her fiddle out in the early 1970's to practice for the fiddle contest at the Teton County Fair.

Bobbie Currie, Bessie's 12 year-old grandson, has been playing the fiddle for two years. Bessie originally taught him and his older sister Kim so they could enter the contest. Bobbie has kept up with the fiddle and is now learning the guitar from his grandmother as well.

D9) **"Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes/You Are My Sunshine/Red River Valley."** **Peggy Buntin** charges a fee for the fiddle lessons she gives to children. Parents from all over the Big Horn Basin bring the kids to Peggy. She also gives free lessons to parents, especially mothers, of her students. Here Peggy and two of her adults students, **Candy Hufford** and **Karen Dietrich**, play one of the medleys they work on during their Thursday afternoon sessions.

D10) **"Sweet Betsy from Pike."** **Douglas Woody**, born in Kansas in 1952, lives near Freedom. He moved to Wyoming in the early 1980's to take a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He had an uncle from Missouri who played the fiddle, but he didn't try to play it himself until the age of 24. At that time he played guitar and was interested in bluegrass music. As a fiddler he's self-taught and has had to rely on books and recordings. His words for *"Sweet Betsy from Pike"* came out of a book. The melody came from his head after hearing the song a number of times. Since it was not possible to record Doug, this home recording he sent the project has been used.

D11) **"May Tway Assian,"** means *"The Wind that Blows"* in DeSoto Indian. Tobi Lyons travels with her father Tom to fiddle contests in the West where she soaks up tunes from jam sessions. This waltz is her reworking of a faster tune she heard on a tape of a French Canadian fiddler. Tom Lyons has several times been voted *"Best Accompanist"* by the fiddlers at the state contest in Shoshoni.

D12) **"Carroll County Blues."** **Cody Robinson** of Casper was born in 1972. She took some violin lessons in school, but decided she likes the fiddle better. She is one of Tobi Lyons' students.

D13) **"Soldier's Joy."** A classic tune performed by **Tobi Lyons** and a number of her students: **Cody Robinson, Mandy Tinker, Christy Tinker, and Janette Skjonhaug. Phyllis Lefevre**, an officer in District #4, is also playing.



CREDITS: The Wyoming Arts Foundation was extremely fortunate to have Paul L. Tyler accept the position of Project Folklorist. Paul knew that the project would include traveling around Wyoming to interview, photograph and record old-time fiddlers. And from the project description, he expected to help produce a tape with 25 or 30 tunes from 10 to 15 fiddlers. What Paul didn't know was that he would find an abundance of fiddlers throughout the state. He traveled over 2,400 miles (not counting three trips from Chicago to Wyoming) to record over 60 fiddlers; even so, he didn't have a chance to meet with many other fiddlers because of the limited time frame of the project. During recording sessions, Paul would frequently play back-up in addition to operating the tape recorder, taking photographs and interviewing the fiddlers.

With the aid of an IBM portable computer on loan from the Wyoming Council on the Arts, Paul logged the tapes and wrote field notes as he traveled. In addition to producing this album, Paul organized and established the project archives. As additional recordings were made available to the project from the Wyoming Council on the Arts, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Wyoming Fiddlers' Association Districts and individuals, Paul graciously recorded and logged these additional hours of fiddle music for the archive. He didn't know when he signed on he would have these additional duties as an archivist too.

Once the field work was complete, selecting the tunes and writing the text required hours of thought. Contemplation began on the long drive back from Wyoming in July and continued until the Advisory Committee met in mid-September. After two days of lively discussion, every detail was considered again and final tune selections were considered and then reconsidered, text was drafted and revised. Computer discs with the latest revisions appeared in the Foundation's mailbox on a regular basis. When all decisions were final, Paul then worked with Acme Audio and Recording to produce the master tapes.

Paul's dedication to the project and attention to detail certainly went far beyond the "36 working days" of his contract. We knew that Paul was the right choice when he wrote in his application, "Seldom does a job come along that is so closely connected with my own research interests and experience." --N.J.



Paul L. Tyler

Side A: DANCE MUSIC

TITLE	FIDDLER	BACK-UP
A1 "Lonesome Homesteader"	Warren Cromwell	Evalyn Hoover (piano) & Pearl Parrish (guitar)
A2 "Down Home Waltz"	Jack Brewer	Leo Wilson, Bob Good & Gladys Robirds (guitars) & Ruth Brewer (electric bass)
A3 "Honest Irish Lad"	Stip Wolff	*
A4 "French Minuet"	Charles "Pop" Hale	Nellie "Mom" Hale (piano) & Lyle Sheets (guitar)
A5 Unnamed Tune	Ervin Dovenspike	Bernice Land (piano)
A6 "Sit and Sew"	Leroy Haygood	*
A7 "Red Fox Waltz"	Pete Germann	*
A8 Unnamed Two-step	Floyd McLean	*
A9 "Put Your Little Foot"	Harry Jerup	Leo Wilson, Earl Jones, John Tartar (guitars) & others
A10 Unnamed Schottische	Duke Parrish	Pearl Parrish (guitar) & Evalyn Hoover (piano)
A11 "South"	Marshall Turnell	Eric Stewart (guitar)
A12 "Sweethearts and Strangers"	Warren Cromwell	Evalyn Hoover (piano)
A13 "Leather Britches"	Harry Jerup	*

Side B: FIDDLE IN THE DISTRICTS

B1 "Life in the Finnish Woods"	Clifford Thex, Kent Reindahl & Clinton Fay	*
B2 "Redbird"	Clifford Thex	Walter Fay (guitar)
B3 "Dreaming of Ellen"	Clinton Fay	Walter Fay (guitar)
B4 "Swedish March"	Kent Reindahl & Clifford Thex	Walter Fay (guitar)
B5 "Burgandy Waltz"	Leroy Haygood	*
B6 "Canebrake"	Warren Cromwell	Pearl Parrish (guitar & vocal) & Evalyn Hoover (piano)
B7 "Wagoner"	Duke Parrish	Pearl Parrish (guitar) & Evalyn Hoover (piano)
B8 "Montana Plains"	Duke Parrish	Pearl Parrish (guitar & vocal) & Evalyn Hoover (banjo)
B9 "Old St. Joe"	Jack Brewer & Kelly Murdock	Leo Wilson, Bob Good, Gladys Robirds (guitars) & Ruth Brewer (electric bass)
B10 "On the Meadows Green"	Henry "Hank" Hlavacek	Leo Wilson, Gladys Robirds, Leonard Zierlein (guitars) & others
B11 "Out Among the Black Hills and the Pines"	Charles "Pop" Hale	Nellie "Mom" Hale (piano) & Lyle Sheets (guitar)
B12 "Wabash Blues"	Candy Hufford	Leo Wilson, Earl Jones, John Tartar (guitars) & others
B13 "Brownskin Gal"	Carl Wenderott	Bob Good (guitar)

* indicates Paul Tyler (guitar)

Side C: PERSONAL STORIES

TITLE	FIDDLER	BACK-UP
C1 "Dill Pickles Rag"	Ervin Dovenspike	Bernice Land (organ)
C2 "Fish and Brown Taters"	Ervin Dovenspike	Bernice Land (piano)
C3 "Red Apple Rag"	Ervin Dovenspike	Bernice Land (piano)
C4 "Over the Waves" ("Loveliest Night of the Year")	Duke Parrish	Pearl Parrish (vocal & guitar) & Evalyn Hoover (piano)
C5 "Danish Schottisches #1 & #2"	Harry Jerup	*
C6 "Horigan"	Marshall Turnell	*
C7 "All Alone Tonight"	Warren Cromwell	Evalyn Hoover (piano) & Pearl Parrish (guitar)
C8 "Kingdom Come"	Stip Wolff	*
C9 "Home, Sweet Home"/"Show Me the Way to Go Home"	John Kafka	& Sam Sallee (electric bass)
C10 Unnamed Tune ("Soapsuds Over the Fence")	Pete Germann	*
C11 Unnamed Waltz	Pete Germann	*
C12 "Crooked Stovepipe"	Pete Germann	Mary Germann (piano) & *
C13 "It's a Long Way to Tipperary"	Leroy Haygood	*
C14 "A Tune"	Charles "Pop" Hale	Nellie "Mom" Hale (piano)
C15 "Up the Lazy River"	Charles "Pop" Hale	Nellie "Mom" Hale (piano) & Lyle Sheets (guitar)

Side D: THE NEXT GENERATION

D1 "Swing That Gal"	Leroy Haygood	*
D2 "Ook Pik Waltz"	Bob Good	Leo Wilson, Jack Brewer, Gladys Robirds (guitars) & Ruth Brewer (electric bass)
D3 "Cotton Patch Rag"	Tobi Lyons	Jean Slichter (piano) & Tom Lyons (guitar)
D4 "Lamp-Lighting Time in the Valley"	Kelly Murdock	Leo Wilson, Bob Good, Gladys Robirds (guitars) & Ruth Brewer (electric bass)
D5 "Billy in the Lowground"	Farron Eisemann	*
D6 "Jessie Polka"	Sharon Poulson	*
D7 "Possum On the Gum Stump"	Veda Bafford	Rick Bafford (guitar)
D8 "Bill Rema's Tune"	Bobbie Currie & Bessie Barney	*
D9 "Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes"/"You Are My Sunshine"/"Red River Valley"	Peggy Buntin, Candy Hufford & Karen Dietrich	Lyle Sheets (guitar)
D10 "Sweet Betsy from Pike"	Douglas Woody	
D11 "May Tway Assian" ("The Wind That Blows")	Tobi Lyons	Tom Lyons (guitar)
D12 "Carroll County Blues"	Cody Robinson	Jean Slichter (piano), Tom Lyons (guitar) & Gladys Watson (keyboard)
D13 "Soldier's Joy"	Tobi Lyons & students, Phyllis Lefevre & Leroy Haygood	Jean Slichter (piano), Tom Lyons (guitar) Gladys Watson (keyboard)

* indicates Paul Tyler (guitar)