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VIRGIL FULFORD'S BARN DANCE:

AN ORAL HISTORY

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This paper is a history of a traditional activity in a small section of Monroe County, Indiana. The picture of square dancing presented here is based on material obtained from oral sources. The information is valuable for the dance historian, for it fills in part of a large gap left by the conventional dance histories that rely on written sources. The folklorist should also be interested in what is presented here, for it throws light on how a traditional activity has been a vital part of the life of a small community through several generations and into the 1980's.

Before presenting the oral history, it would be helpful to sketch in the basic features of the conventional view of the history of square dancing in America. The roots of the square dance are in the so-called country dances of England, which came to light in the mid 17th century when they became fashionable among the upper classes. The craze for English country dances spread to the continent. The French responded by creating their own form, the Cotillion. This latter was a dance for four couples, with each couple forming one side of a square. Most of the English dances, on the other hand, were danced in longways sets made up of two lines. The men were all in one line, each facing his partner in the opposite line. ¹

In America, both the square cotillions and the longways English dances were popular. Dancing masters, usually French, could be found in the large cities, or travelling a circuit of small towns, in the 18th and 19th centuries. After the Civil War, the cotillion was updated in style and became known as the Quadrille. Another popular type of dance for four couples in a square formation, at this time, was the Lancers. In the cities, however, these types of dances had fallen out of fashion by the turn of the century. The dancing masters were more interested in dances for couples.

The situation was different in the rural areas. The longways type of dance retained a hold on the fancies of New Englanders. The English country dance lives still in the Northeast, in a much changed and Americanized form known as the 'contra'. Outside of New England, a square dance of some sort was popular in the countryside, though we do not have enough evidence to know exactly how it was danced by rural Americans in the late 1800's. In the Midwest, the name 'quadrille' was used for the type of dance that in the 1920's became known as the 'square dance'. That dance ^{is} strikingly different from the quadrilles described in the manuals published by dancing masters up until the very early 1900's.

A square dance or quadrille of a different character was also done in the Northeast. And another style of square dancing was 'discovered' in the Appalachian South by English folklorist Cecil J. Sharp, and was named by him the 'running set'. The more widespread form of square dancing has often been called the 'western square'. When this type of dance was supposedly dying out in the 1930's, a revival was sparked by a variety of events. Western Swing music became popular on records and the radio, and was played at huge dances held in Texas and California in the 1930's and 40's. Western square dances were also featured at the 1939 New York World's Fair. The influential book, Cowboy Dances by Lloyd Shaw, a Colorado schoolmaster and square dance promoter, also appeared in 1939.

After World War II, the square dance revival gained a fresh impetus from the formation of a national organization, based in Los Angeles, that sought to promote square dancing throughout the country. This group, now known as 'Callers Lab', soon realized that each community or area had its own way of doing square dances. What the folklorist regards as variation was thought of by the national organization as a problem to be dealt with. The standardizing of dance figures, names, and calls has been a major concern of the Callers Lab.

The style of dancing spawned by the revival has become very popular. It is usually what is meant today by the term 'western' square dancing. It is also called club dancing, for its basic unit are the clubs from all over the U.S. (and the world) who do the same figures to the same calls standardized by the national organization. Other important qualities that should be noted are that western square dancers learn a standard progression of about 60 basic moves through a series of lessons. Only when they have successfully completed the course of 20 lessons can they do 'mainstream' dancing. Also, all modern western callers call exclusively to records.

Most conventional histories of square dancing are written from the point of view of modern western square dancing. The 'party line' is that New England quadrilles and the Southern running set gave rise to old-time western square dancing, which in turn gave way to modern western square dancing.² What this point of view overlooks is that regional variations are not simply a problem to be overcome, but the manifestations of a kind of local creativity expressed in the performance of a traditional art. Also, modern western squares are not the only game in town. Old-time square dancing is a living custom in many rural and small-town communities in the U.S. In Indiana, the old-time dances are almost unanimously called 'hoedowns.' And one place where hoedowns are still popular is Monroe County, Indiana.

INTERVIEW WITH JIMMIE CAMPBELL

James Campbell has lived all of his 75 years in the area of Dolan, a small community located north of Bloomington, Indiana on old State Road 37. I first became aware of Jimmie Campbell and his fiddle playing through recordings deposited in the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University.³ These recordings from the 1960's were made at the music parties that Jimmie held at his house about every Wednesday evening. A regular circle of friends would show up to play and sing old-time songs with fiddles, mandolins, banjos, and guitars.

I first met Jimmie at a music festival in northern Indiana where he was in the company of several younger musicians with whom he regularly played for square dances at Virgil Fulford's barn in the community of Hindustan. They were the first to give me definite information about the barn dance that I vaguely knew of as 'somewhere north of Bloomington.' Several weeks after meeting Jimmie, I found his name on a mailbox while driving on a backroad near Dolan. I decided to pay him a call, and found him out by the garage and willing to talk for a while. It was a pleasant day, so we leaned against an old car while we visited. I did not have a tape recorder, but immediately after leaving Jimmie, I parked by the side of the road and wrote as much as I could remember of what he said, trying to capture his exact words as closely as possible. The interview took place on July 24, 1980.

Jimmie Campbell: My people came here from Belfast, Ireland when they had that great potato famine over there. And strange enough, they came to New Orleans. Most of them went to the East Coast, but my people came to New Orleans and worked their way up. They didn't get here till 1856, when they cleared some land and settled here. My grandfather was two years old when they left Ireland. But some of my great-aunts were in their teens, and they had real Irish ways about them. They had a brogue. One of them lived with us. She wore a dress with big pockets. She put her arms into them up to her elbows. On one side she had needles, thread, pins and ^esowing things. In the other she had tobacco and her clay pipe. The

matches they had over there were sulfur, and they left a taste in tobacco lit with them. Our matches weren't like that, but she was against matches by that time. So she'd get her pipe out, put in a pinch of tobacco and tamped it down. She'd say, "James, fetch a coal from the 'hairth' /hearth/ for me." I'd get a spoon and get a glowing ember on it, and take it to her. She'd pick the coal up in her fingers and light her pipe with it.

They were Presbyterians, that's why they left Ireland, because they were all Catholics there. On Sunday, they'd put their good dresses on and walk into town. When they'd get to Griffey Creek, they'd wash their feet and put on their shoes. They'd been carrying them. They didn't have far to go then. The Presbyterian church in Bloomington was on north College. It's gone now. On the way back, they'd take their shoes off at the creek and walk home barefooted. They didn't get shoes much in those days. They'd go barefooted all the time.

I had to work hard at fiddling. There was no music in my family. My mother used to sing around the house when she was doing chores. My father didn't play an instrument, though sometimes he would hum while driving the wagon on the farm. There was an old feller over here, Ben Jackson. He was an old bachelor, never married. He lived in a cabin over here. He was a fine old-time fiddler. He started to teach me, to show me tunes.

There was a group of us young ones at that time, trying to learn to play. We'd get together...of course, the depression came up and no one had any money, so no one could hire us for a square dance. The others said, we need someone who can call. So they told me that I should learn to call. So I started to call dances. I couldn't get through the figures anymore [he broke a hip], but I could probably still call.

I never tried to be a show fiddler. I just wanted to play hoedowns for dances. Time is of the essence for dancing. You can't just put all those notes in like you can when you're a show fiddler. You have to play a whole dance. A

show fiddler, with all those notes can't play for long.

We've played all over the country [a three or four county area]. We used to play for a dance every week for Art Headdy from Gosport.⁴ And someone else would want us to come over in the middle of the week for a dance. That would put us out too much, with our families. So one night, we sat down and made a bunch of tapes. And if someone wanted us to come out in the middle of the week, one of us would go over with the tape.

Once I went to dance over in Worthington. I'd played at a street dance over there, and they had a woman calling, a good caller. The fiddler that night was a young fellow, right out of high school. He was a note player. But he couldn't fiddle. They couldn't dance to him. So she spotted me out there with my crutches. She came over and asked me to play. She said, 'I'll do anything to get you to play.' I said, 'well I need something to lubricate my arm a bit.' She said, 'we'll find something.' I said, 'I don't want to cut in on those other fellows.' She said, 'don't worry, I'll take care of them. We can't dance to that.'

Well, I gave them every excuse. But finally, I got up there. They had a banjo player, a four string banjo. I thought he could probably chord along. So we started playing and in a couple of minutes the floor filled up. I thought we'd stop and let them set up, but they just started in. I never saw people so ready to dance. I talked to that violinist and said, 'I didn't mean to cut in on you.' He said, 'that's okay, I'd rather dance.' I heard him a few years later and he wasn't any better.

Jimmie also told me of other fiddlers and dance callers in the area. There was a Brinson from the flatwoods west of Ellettsville, a Dillingham or Dillingworth from around Stanford, and another fiddler from over by Spencer, whose name he couldn't remember. Someone from the north shore of Lake Lemon used to have dances at his place, but Jimmie couldn't remember his name. Then there's Virgil Fulford, for whom Jimmie's the regular fiddler at his monthly dances. The most recent one, however, didn't draw a very big crowd.

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INTERVIEW WITH VIRGIL FULFORD

Virgil Fulford lives with his wife Dee in the community of Hindustan, which is about ten miles north from Dolan on old 37. Virgil has lived all his life in that community. He is 51 years old. He and Dee have no children. The Fulford family has been in Hindustan since at least before Virgil's father was born. The family originally came to Indiana from North Carolina.

Virgil is proud of his rural community and his place in it. He jokingly claims that he's the mayor of Hindustan. According to Virgil, Hindustan has always been a tightknit community where people get along. They're friendly with each other, but not 'too friendly' that they can't poke a little fun at each other. Yet Virgil is afraid that things are changing. For the last two years, he's felt the need to lock his doors when he's not home. That's because there are a lot of new people moving in who aren't known. The people who've been there trust each other. It seems to be a standard practise that if you need something that someone else has, you can borrow it, even if the lender is not at home. It's all right as long as you use it and return it right away. This is an arrangement that everyone accepts, according to Virgil.

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Like Jimmie Campbell, and perhaps even more so, Virgil talks freely and easily about himself. When I went to visit Virgil, he knew that I was coming to talk about square dancing. But he talked just as easily about his prize chickens, the history of his family, and the values held by his community. In the same way, when I went to visit Jimmie, he knew that I wanted to talk music, but it seemed that he also wanted me to know about his family. And so he related some of the family history that he had probably heard many times, and told several anecdotes which he undoubtedly had told before. Jimmie also had some twice-told anecdotes relating to music and square dances. Yet other remembered items of information about music did not seem to come so easily to his tongue. That was not the case with Virgil. He recounted the history of his barn dance with the same ease with which he told a joke he had heard a few days earlier. His conversation included

formularized sayings and jocular comments that seemed to have the familiarity of repetition. For example: several times he summed up a speech with the comment that "we started out with nothing and still got nothing;" in talking about Hindustan, he inserted the comment that "the population never grows, for everytime a baby is born some man leaves town."

I went to interview Virgil in the evening on April 23, 1981. He was doing the farm chores that waited until he got home from his day job at the R.C.A. plant in Bloomington. He wanted to finish up and go listen to his square dance band practise. He thought that I had caught him on the best night possible, because he could take me over to hear the band. I will not present the transcription of the interview in sequential order, for the interview was disjointed. Part of it was made following him around with a tape recorder while he did his chores, some material was gathered in his house while we got acquainted (and the tape recorder wasn't on). I was able to ask a series of questions while we rode in car to where the band was practising. Other questions had to wait till between songs by the band. In this case, I think it would be more valuable to arrange self-contained portions of the interview according to subject. It seems natural to start with Virgil's childhood.

Paul Tyler: Whereabouts did you grow up? right around here?

Virgil Fulford: Right there. Well almost where I live right now. Just up the road and to the left. Or to the right I mean...Go on up there. We had a little six room house, and there was twelve kids and Mom and Daddy. But we survived.

Now we had to dig ginseng, we had to dig, cut hoopoles, of course nobody knows what that is, that's hickory poles. There was a furniture factory in Martinsville that, "the Old Hickory" they called it. Old Hickory Furniture Factory. They made hickory chairs for the president's office on up to everywhere. In them days...

P.T. What did you call them.

V.F. Hoop poles [pronounced hupole], 'cause you could make a hoop [hup]. You could make a hoop. Hickory will bend if you wet it and steam it. It'll bend.

P.T. Right.

V.F. That's what they called 'em. Hoopoles. They had to be a certain length. If they was six foot long and straight, you got a penny for 'em. If they had, if they was eight foot long and straight you got two cents a pole from 'em. And I can cut three hundred poles in a day. But then you had to carry them out on your back, and haul 'em to the market so you made, uh, on the average, about uh two or three dollars a day cutting. Then it took you a day to carry 'em out and a day, and a day to haul 'em to the market. And so you averaged a dollar a day for about twelve hours a day. But you had to do it in the winter time before the sap come up. They'd only take 'em on just a certain time of the year. From November until I think it was the 15th of February was the only time that they would accept 'em. These poles...and nothing but hickory.

We dug may apple root. And we sold that for a nickle a pound. And we worked all spring when the may apple was up. It's up right now. Now's when we'd start diggin' 'em back 'n I's a kid. And you could, we could dig. Me and my mom and my brother and my sister, four of us could dig 14 pound and have it dried a week. We sold a week, after we dried it a week. Then we sold, this week's we'd sell next week, you understand...Brought a nickle a pound, which was 70 cents a week four of us'd make, diggin' may apple.

...But I'll tell you. We made it. we enjoyed it. On Saturday night. We worked hard ten or twelve hours a day. Saturday night we got to go to a square dance. Sunday morning, we got up. We had to go to church. We'd dance till 12 o'clock. Sunday School was at ten. And I quarantee you we was there in the best you had, whatever it was. And then a white shirt, maybe. But if you had a shirt you put it on. You went with what you had. And everybody was in the same cate-

gory. Everybody there, though, there wasn't one guy with a tux on and the next guy dressed in bluejeans. Everybody there was pretty much in the same category. We all. Nobody had anything.

But we square danced, on Saturday night. You could count on that. That's one thing that was just automatic. Church was just automatic on Sunday, too. It's just, you know...

P.T. What church?

V.F. Christian Church. Hindustan Christian Church. It's still standing there, right now.

P.T. On old 37?

V.F. Yessir. Where you turned down to my house. Just turn left and you'll be right in the church yard. All the Fulford's are buried there.

P.T. How long have the Fulford's been in Hindustan.

V.F. Uh, ever since, you know, ever since I can remember. My Grandad owned the grocery store there. And there was a Post Office at one time. That's why it's still on the map. My grandad ran the Post Office. However, that was my mother's dad. His name was Ed Knight. See. So he ran the Post Office until they closed it. Had a grocery store of course, you know. And uh, so uh, And he never danced a lick in his life that I knew of. My grandad. Because he, well his wife died when my mom was nine years old and my mother raised three brothers. She was nine and there was two brothers younger and one older. And by grandad never did, probably didn't have time.

But my grandad on my Daddy's side, on the Fulford side...That's where your music come from, the Fulfords. It didn't come from the Knights. It come from the Fulfords. There ain't a Fulford in this whole area right here...My dad is 71 years old. And you get up there and play 'Sally Gooden' or 'Cumberland Gap' and that due'll knock the boards off the floor. You ought to watch his feet hit the

floor. He's 70, and he can't last too long. But while he's there, I'll be damned if he don't tear up the boards on the floor. Now he can hit her. My mother is a good dancer. My mother is a good dancer. She's 66. But they cain't last too long, you know, it's too tough for 'em. If they done this every day, they could, like jogging, you know. If they's ^d done it every day...

But boy, I'll tell you. There used to be a Fannie Fulford. She married this uncle of mine, that one that Jimmie Campbell said was the best caller that he ever heard. She was a Speers [sp. ?], her name was Speers, and my dad said that he'd rather dance with Fannie Fulford than with anyone. Of course, she was a lot older than him, you know. But that's the way kids do. I've got people right now. The mother of 'em is Dave's [Fulford] neice...and that's the dancingist woman. If you come out there and wonder. She'd ^s half Fulford or a third Fulford or something. And that gal's feet...and she's got a daughter eight years old. And I'll be damned if that girl's feet don't absolutely tear the boards up. She's just eight or nine years old. Now I ain't kidding you. That little gal can dance. But she listens to that music. She wants to keep time with than music, you know.

P.T. Let's see, you're 51, you were probably born about, what, 1930?

V.F. '29...Yea and I'll be 52 in December.

P.T. Did your folks have dances at their house when you were growing up?

V.F. Oh no, not when I was growing up. They had 'em in the neighborhood. 'Cause we didn't have a house big enough to, to have a square dance in. There was twelve of us kids, you know, and every room was full. We'd go to somebody's house. And they'd just, a lot of times the'd just clear out a bedroom. Set the furniture in another room. And the band would stay in the living room and play. We'd dance in the room back, uh, in the dancing room. You could run just one set at a time, eight couples [eight people make one set]. That's all you had room fer. In them little bedrooms you know. And they'd dance, and if there was that many people out there then they'd want to go in and dance the next dance, see?

And us kids'd be wanting to dance and we'd be standing out there on the

floor just a stomping our feet and a trying to learn how. Doing this, and we'd all get together, but they didn't have time for us then, 'cause when they went to square dance, they went to dance, see?

But Dad and Mom would get us at home, wasn't long we'd tell 'em we wanted to learn. Trying to show us, 'cause there was enough of us kids that we had two sets [?], you know, eight of us at a time. We could put four boys and four girls together. And they taught us at home, lot of it.

Then I got away from it when I was about 13 or 14. Of course I was the oldest one. Mom and Dad had so many kids they couldn't go, you know. And so when I got about twenty-five, got out of the army and got married, I forgot a little bit of it. And so four couples of us, me and another, two more couples that was raised down the road from us; we got our dads and mothers together and we decided that, by golly, we wanted to learn how to square dance again, 'cause we forgot. You know, it being how you're a kid; you didn't have it on your mind, you don't have it. And our parents got us together again, and they come up and showed us what, what they'd remembered, too, it'd been 15 years since they'd danced, see. And by golly, they started showing us. And somebody had to do the calling, so they said 'Virg, you're a big loud mouth; you're gonna be the caller.' So I just started calling for them four couples, See?

P.T. Yea.

V.F. And by god, I've ended up with 'em for 25 years now. Been married 26 years and we started dancing the first year we was married. 25 years I've been doing the calling. And I'm one of the worst callers that there is, 'cause nobody ever taught me. I just had to try to teach myself and try to learn how to dance, too, and all at the same time. And that really is difficult. It, it's hard. Really, I'm not a good caller. I am not. I know I'm not. I've been places where I've heard some good callers. And I know the difference between where I call, or what I call, and what they call. Now they's dancers that dance with me; they go to other places too and they said there ain't nobody like me. But

they, it's because they learned under me, you know. If they learned under them...

P.T. Yea.

V.F. In fact, my calling is...besides being a whole lot to be desired. I don't know enough of the old hoedowns, call, I mean, old hoedown figures, see, to call. I, I, I've got a capacity of maybe ten dances and that's all I know how to do. Them old callers, they can call all night. Well I can call all night and not use the same one. But they can call three nights in a row, or four, and not call the same one, see.

P.T. Well, what are some of the figures you do? You do, you said, 'Chase the Rabbit, Chase the Squirrel'.

V.F. Oh, we do the 'Figure Eight', We do the 'Gal from Arkansaw'. We do 'Over and Under'. We do 'Duck the Oyster, Duck the Clam'. We do, uh, "Take a Little Peek", 'Down the Center and Break (uh) Split the Ring'. We do 'Oh Johnny'. We do, us...uh let me think. Heck, I can't right off hand. Oh, uh, let's see. We do the 'Texas Star'. We do...well I can't think. You know, It's hard, somebody just comes up and asks you. Let me think, 'Swing your Corner and Take Her with You'. That's one we do.

P.T. I don't know that one.

V.F. Oh that's where you get a new partner every time. You know.

According to Virgil, he got away from square dancing for a period of ten to twelve years. It also appears that others in his generation and circle of friends, as well as their parents had gotten away from it for about fifteen years. It is not clear whether any one was square dancing in the area at this time. The break that Virgil talks about must have come around the time the second World War broke out. They started dancing again around 1955, or several years after the revival had made square dancing fashionable in urban areas.

The revival did indirectly affect square dancing in Hindustan. When Virgil was elected to be the caller, he sent away to Chicago for a book of

square dance calls. I don't know what the book was, or how much Virgil learned from it. His list of figures is fairly standard. The 'Figure Eight' might be a local variation, based on what I've seen done at other dances in Monroe and Greene Counties. His names for some of the figures are not the standard dance book names. 'Over and Under' is a widespread figure that is done with an interesting variation around here. The name used for it in most dance books is the 'Dip and Dive'. Another common dance with a local variation is the 'Texas Star'. The name probably has been borrowed from square dance books. Arthur Headdy used to call the same dance, but he did not call it the 'Texas Star', to the best of my knowledge. Arthur Headdy, by the way, is the one elder caller that Virgil credits with helping him become a caller. 'Oh Johnny' is a dance that Virgil most likely got out of the book. It's the only singing call, as opposed to patter call, that he does. A singing call is one in which the dance calls are fit to a melody and sung. Patter calls are chanted, and have more flexibility in terms of lyrical improvisation and metrical phrasing.

Virgil's 'Oh Johnny, Oh' is danced with all the couples in a circle, rather than in four couple squares. At times at the end of a dance, he'll also get everyone into a circle and call, "Swing the gal right behind you and promenade Indian style." He repeats the call enough so that everyone gets to dance with everyone (of the opposite gender) all around the circle. Other dances are done at Virgil's barn dance. The band often plays a "waltz for free", meaning anyone can get out and do it; there's no constraints on the number of couples that can dance at a time. Virgil is also know for his 'Can Dance', where everyone is dancing but two people, one of each gender. These two each have a can. They give the can to someone and take that person's partner. Whoever is caught with the can when the music stops has to put a dime into it. This is repeated, as in 'musical chairs'. Several can dances are played a night to raise a little extra money for the band.

Virgil is not a musician, though his father plays mandolin and his

Grandfather Fulford was a fiddler. He loves old-time square dance music, hoe-down music, and does not want to call to records, as the modern western callers do. He does give square dance lessons to anyone who comes to the barn dances and says they want to learn how. He uses records when he gives lessons, for practical reasons.

V.F. I've been teaching eight couples here the last two or three weeks in a row since the last square dance we had. We had one, it'll be a month. The next square dance we have, it'll be a month. And a bunch of them want to learn that. Well, Okay. 'What do you charge?' I said, 'whatever you got. Nothing!' I know they didn't have nothing so I didn't charge them to teach 'em square dancing. I do it because I love it. Every square dance I have costs me money. I furnish the water, the lights, and I do the calling. And I give all the money that I take in...I charge three dollars a couple, and where can you go for a night's fun for three dollars. Of course you have to bring your own beverage or food or if you want to eat, or whatever.

...I just do square dance calling 'cause I love to dance to start with. And I love that kind of music. And I love to hear a good band. And it costs me every time that I have one because I do it. What I take up I give to the musicians. You see what I mean.

P.T. Yea.

V.F. I charge three dollars a couple. If anybody wants to go out for a night. If they want to drink a case of beer. That's what it costs them. It don't cost them no more than what you buy at the store. And if you want to dance all night and listen to music. I think they ought to contribute at least a dollar and a half a person, to the band, see, so I can keep a band. And I don't have the best or the greatest. They're not big name bands and

not great performers. It is was, you know what you'd pay to go see a concert, twelve bucks apiece, right? For an hour or so. And here, them guys play from eight till midnight, you know, because they like to do what I like to do. And they've stayed with me. Most of them have been with me for a long time.

(Virgil holds his dances in the upstairs of a small barn he built.

"I built that barn in '67, but we danced in my house in the basement before that. That was in '56." Downstairs from the dance floor is where Virgil keeps his prize chickens--he shows them for a hobby--which are only part of the many animals on his 46-acre farm. The dance 'hall' is well furnished with padded benches along the wall, a woodstove in the corner, and a railed off area for the band. It's fairly small for a barn. There's room for about five or six squares to crowd in. As Virgil showed me the dance floor, we talked about other callers and dances in the area, and Virgil's view of square dance history.)

P.T. You had Jimmie Campbell playing with you?

V.F. Jimmie use to; he played for me up until this year. And he just decided he couldn't, couldn't play anymore [after 20 years of playing for Virgil]. He said, 'I'm 75 years old and I just can't. Nobody practises with me,' he says, 'and I can't.' He played with us, this same band for a long time. And then he, he, he just, Jimmie's just getting where he can't hack her anymore. Just to tell the truth about it. A nice a fella as I've ever met.

P.T. Oh yea.

V.F. He's a gentleman, if there's ever one. Jimmie Campbell is one of the nicest guys I've ever talked to. Now he knows more about square dancing and playing the fiddle and hoedown music than I'll ever know. If I studied it for the rest of my life, Jimmie Campbell know more about it. So if you really want to talk to someone, you go see Jimmie Campbell.

P.T. I've already been to see him.

V.F. Have you?

P.T. Yea.

V.F. I'll guarantee. Jimmie's the guy that knows it. He can tell you more about the music. I do the calling.

P.T. Are you a musician at all?

V.F. No. I just do the calling and the dancing. If I get a chance. If I get another caller I love to dance it.

P.T. Well, are there any other callers around here?

V.F. No, I don't know anybody. I wish somebody'd learn it, so I can dance, really.

P.T. Do you know Garrell Hash? in Cincinnati, you know, in Greene County?

V.F. Oh yea, Garrell and Betty Hash.

P.T. Yea, he calls.

V.F. Yea, but he don't come to my dance. We have a little thing there going with us. We drink here and they don't like to come to dances where you have liquor. And so, you know, it's not, nothing personal. I mean we're friends. Hell, I work with Betty every day and we speak and talk and all this, that and the other thing. They just don't, and when they come here, he wants to dance he don't want to call. That's the way, when I go somewhere, I want to dance. I don't want to do no durn calling.

P.T. Do you ever go to any of their dances?

V.F. Oh yea. Newberry, Newburg, I mean Newberry. Yea, I go. Bloomfield and places over in ther', yea. But they've for a little bit different dance from what we've got 'cause they don't allow liquor. Same way with...There's a guy that lives out on Knightridge, uh, Duke...

P.T. Harvey Duke?

V.F. Harvey Duke. Hell of a good, nice guy. Me and Harvey's good friends. But he is absolutely against having beer. It's out. If you have a beer, he's done with you, you know. That's his business. I don't bother them. They want

to come here, they're welcome. If they don't want to come, you know, but that's the way you have to operate a square dance. But those people know a helluva lot more about square dancing than I do. Boy, I'll tell you that right now. They've been around as long as I have and they've danced for years. And they're musicians. And Jimmie Campbell, especially, he's, he's one of the originators in this part of the country, now, that's now; of course my granddad and my dad was before Jimmie Campbell's time, you know. My dad's as old as Jimmy.

And, uh, I had an uncle, Newt Fulford, that had a voice about three times as deep as I have and Jimmy said that he was the best square dance caller that he ever played the fiddle to. And if Jimmie told you that, now he was good. Newt Fulford had to be good, you know?

P.T. Yea.

V.F. But, you know, it came up. This family came up through North, Fulford's came up through North Carolina. And down there in West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee is where all your square dancing, uh, hoedown, originated from. Coming up through the valley.

Well, your Western style of square dancing, like out in Texas and Oklahoma and in there, that's a different thing all together. We cannot dance that because every caller changes every time you go somewhere. The caller, he'll put in his little bit and then you have to go to lessons in between dances. Once you learn how to do this, you've got hoedown. It's the same every dance you go to. If you know how to do 'Chase the Rabbit', Chase the Squirrel', you know how to do it. And you'll know wherever you go. Whatever caller calls it. You'll still know how to do it. But there, they've modernized it and they want to make money off of it. This modern, or Western, or Western Swing they call it. They do it to make money off of it. So in order to keep the crowds going, and coming, they teach lessons during the week and then they have one on Saturday night of what they've taught. We don't do that. Once you know this, you know it. If you

know how to allemande left and doseydo, you'll know it any hoedown dance you go to in Indiana, through West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. You'll know it. But just that one section of the country. All the hoedown dancers you've got left is more or less in that section of the country, because it's still tradition. They still pass it on. Modern Swing, or, uh, Western Swing, or whatever, it was invented. It wasn't traditional, see. It's just like the five-string. Do you know that that's the only instrument, that is purely an American instrument, is the five string banjo?

..So it all comes out as to how you was brought up, I guess, the origin of you're bringing up. Like I said, I'm not educated. I don't know how to say things. But it all comes up. You gotta like it to start with. And the way you like it, I think is to grow up with it. If you didn't grow up with it, you probably didn't like it. Some people do. I've had kids out here that just love it. I've had students from I.U. I've taught. And every time they...I got one boy in Colorado right now that's head of a big firm, and a guy in Cincinnati that's head of a big firm; and if they can fly in here and make a square dance. And get away from it. They call it getting away from it all. They come back and just stay the weekend with me. I don't know how many I.U. kids that I've taught over the years how to square dance. I've got hundreds of them. And if they all got here at one time, I wouldn't have room in the barn. You know, every weekend there'll be three or four fly in, or two or three, or something. Some of them will get here. Usually about every time I'll have a bunch that'll say 'well old Virg. boy, how are you doing,' you know. Course, they usually spend the weekend with me. We got extra bedrooms. Don't have no kids. And they like Dee's cooking. She makes a pretty good breakfast. And that's what they like. And they really have a good time. They say 'you're a place away from home,' in other words.

P.T. Yea

V.F. They're getting down, they say, 'this is the only place where we can get down to earth, you know. And they have to get here 'cause Virgil's down to earth. I mean, I don't put nothing on. I don't have to. I ain't got nothing. I never will have nothing. But I'm gonna be Virgil. If you life me, you like me. If you don't, I'm sorry. I can't change who I am.

Virgil's view that the hoedown originated in the Southeast is interesting. Historians who have dealt with pioneer life in Indiana do not seem to have understood the dances they tried to describe. William Cockrum mentioned four-handed reels and square sets, and claimed that people from old Virginia knew that the reel was called the 'hoedown'.⁵ Logan Esarey presented another description in which the reel is not necessarily a four-handed dance (for four people) and the hoedown is more of a free-style showpiece. Neither of them seem to be the same thing as a square dance.⁶ Where the historians have not been clear, perhaps folklorists can step in. Information and ideas of the sort that Virgil Fulford has offered, can hopefully provide a few pieces to the puzzle.

I would also like to note the irony involved with Virgil's assessment of the difference between hoedown and modern western square dancing. He's convinced that hoedown is the same wherever it's done, and that modern western callers each have their own variations that people must continually learn. There is some truth to Virgil's picture of things. Hoedown dancing requires the knowledge of only a few basic calls that are pretty much the same wherever they are done. But there are enough local variations that a dancer from southern Indiana could have some trouble if he would walk into a dance in Michigan or North Carolina. On the other hand, the modern western calls are standardized throughout the country. But there are a much greater number of them that a dancer needs to know. Callers in any given time and place will use only a portion of the calls at their disposal. Also, new moves and calls are being experimented with all the time, under the supervision of Callers Lab.

There is so much that needs to be learned about the history of local square dance traditions in the U.S. And there is still much to be explored in terms of dances at Virgil Fulford's barn, and at other places around Monroe and Greene Counties. I am not quite sure how big the crowds are at Virgil's, or whether they've been increasing or decreasing over the last 25 years. I have been told different things by different people. Also, I have not visited one of Virgil's dances yet. There is a wealth of information that can be obtained through the documentation of a dance event. That is something that needs to be done.

A final topic ~~to~~ be covered by this oral history is the music that Virgil has used at his dance. He's already made it clear that Jimmie Campbell was the central part of his band for 20 years. Now, Virgil's band is a group of younger musicians in their 20's and 30's. Some of them have been 'trained' by Jimmie Campbell.

V.F. The first fiddle player I danced to was Roger Richardson. He had a heart attack dancing. He was the best fiddle player, hoedown fiddle player...He was from Martinsville. ⁷ Rog's only problem was he never played with nobody except Rog. He knowed all the old tunes. You couldn't name one that he couldn't play. But his timing was a little bad. But once you set a, uh; Paul Harrison's dad...He'd beat the time for him. Or Johnny Fleenor playing the mandolin or the four string banjo. And he'd beat the time for Rog and they wasn't nothing. Why he was the best fiddle player that I've ever had. John's gonna be a good one if he stays with me. He's gonna learn a lot...And he's coming. He's a comer.

(The band that plays for Virgil now, is basically a bluegrass band. That's what they like to play when they practise. They're not as comfortable with hoedown music. Virgil likes to listen to bluegrass, but he insists on the right hoedown music for dances. The difference is that bluegrass is considerably faster than you can dance to. The band includes: John Robinson-fiddle, Paul Harris-bass, Rick

Hackler-banjo, Jim Riggs-dobro, Steve Bastin-guitar, and Dave Fulford-mandolin. Dave is a distant cousin of Virgil's. I asked Dave what hoedowns they played for Virgil.)

Dave Fulford. 'Boil Em Cabbage', 'John Hardy', 'Soldier's Joy', 'Ragtime Annie', 'Sally Gooden'. That's what we basically use on the, uh, square dances. There's some other ones: 'Fire on the Mountain' we play, but we don't play it too much. Then we have a lot of can dances, play 'Peacock Rag'...Oh I can't think of some tunes, to come right to my head.

V.F. 'Peek-a-Boo Waltz'.

D.F. Yea. 'Peek-a-Boo Waltz', and 'Wednesday Night Waltz', 'Saturday Night Waltz'.

V.F. 'Tennessee Waltz', and 'Kentucky Waltz'. Same with them. It's a good tune for the...

D.F. 'Turkey Knob.'

P.T. 'Turkey Knob'?

D.F. Yea, it's a new tune we learned here not too long ago.

V.F. 'Hell on Buck Creek'. You ever hear that one?

P.T. That's one of Jimmie's tunes.

V.F. Yea, that's one of Jimmie's tunes. A good tune. 'Eighth of January' is a good old fiddle tune. Real good old fiddle tune. 'Liberty', You name that one?

P.T. You do Liberty?

D.F. Yea, but we don't play that one too much. That's a hard one to play, really. Like I say, the fiddle player has only been playing about, well about two years. Something toward two years. And I've played the mandolin off and on a long time, out at the square dances. Well, here about two years ago I picked it up and started playing it a lot more, you know. I used to play guitar at the square dances. Played the bass, the gut house bass, I can play it. But I played the mandolin for about two years. Course me and the singer [Paul Harris], we played together for a long time, off and on, for about twelve years, I guess. He and I went to school

together.

V.F. He's as good a rhythm guitar player as you can find. He sings a good song.

D.F. I think we'll get a lot better.

NOTES

1. See S. Foster Damon, The History of Square Dancing (Barre, Mass., 1957).
2. E.G., Clayne R. and Mary B. Jensen, Square Dancing (Brigham Young University, 1973).
3. A Catalog of Indiana Music and Folklore held by the Archives of Traditional Music (Indiana University, 1981), pp. 5-6. Items 45, 47, and 49.
4. Ibid. Item 43.
5. William Cockrum, Pioneer History of Indiana (Oakland City, Indiana, 1907), p. 186.
6. Logan Esarey, History of Indiana Vol. I (Indianapolis, 1918), p. 487.
7. Op. cit. Items 43, 183, and 184.

A

Good interviews with Timmie Campbell and
Virgil Fulford, and good informed
commentary; there is an article in
the current JF/ by Burt Feintuch
on square dancing in Kentucky; readings
of the topics into which you divided the
transcript would have helped the reader
and clarified your organization

a value of your interviews is that
the talk about square dancing is set in the context
of talk about other matters concerning family and
community (page?)