

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION
Presented by Jeff O'Connor

Welcome to Big Circle Square Dancing! I have found Big Circle Square Dancing in many parts of the country. It is not necessary at this time to trace its background -- just to say that it has been danced for many years and is truly our own American dance. The important thing to remember is that it has come to us by way of folk who have enjoyed dancing and being together. The dance is simple enough for everyone to enjoy it, yet even in its simplicity, is beautiful to watch.

The past few years have been great years for the Big Circle Dance. The Bannermans are keeping the dance alive on the East coast, and on the West coast myself and others do the same. We all keep the toes tapping, the hands clapping, and the feet flying around the Big Circle. Because of our love of the dance, we share the following hints to the caller and to the dancer.

TO THE CALLER

Enjoy the dance yourself.
Demonstrate the figures, early in the evening.
call from the floor, if possible.
Call loud and clear. Keep it simple.
Call in rhythm with the music.
Keep one jump ahead of the dancers.

TO THE DANCER

Listen to the caller and the music.
Use a smooth walking shuffle. (Please, not hopping, skipping, or jumping steps).
Remember, it takes team work.
Enjoy the calling, the music, and especially the fellowship of your fellow dancers.

The Big Circle Dance consists of two basic formations -- BIG CIRCLE FIGURES and SMALL CIRCLE FIGURES. A dance is usually put together in the following manner:

1. OPENING -- Big Circle Figures
2. BODY -- Small Circle Figures
3. CLOSING -- Big Circle Figures

For the Big Circle Figures or opening and closing figures, eight or more couples form a single circle, hands joined, man with his partner on his right. The lady on the man's left is his corner lady. From this formation, any of the calls listed as Big Circle figures may be danced.

Small Circle Figures or the body of the dance, are figures done by two couples dancing together. These couples have been designated as odd and even couples before the dance begins, by counting off, beginning with the lead gent, counterclockwise around the ring.

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

As you design your Big Circle Dance, keep in mind the following sample pattern:

OPENING or BIG CIRCLE FIGURES

Circle Left	Promenade
Circle Right	Queen's Highway
Single File, Lady in the Lead	King's Highway
Grand Right and Left	Circle Left
Swing	Circle Right

BODY or SMALL CIRCLE FIGURES

Odd Couple Out to the Even Couple
 Birdie in the Cage
 Odd Couple on to the Next
 Birdie in the Cage

CLOSING -- BIG CIRCLE FIGURES

Promenade	Swing
Circle Left	Promenade
Circle Right	London Bridge
Make a Basket	Swing

DESCRIPTION OF FIGURESBIG CIRCLE FIGURES

- a. Circle Left -- Dancers join hands, M with his ptr on his R and dance to the L.
- b. Circle Right -- Dancers join hands, M with his ptr on his R and dance to the R.
- c. Single File, Lady in the Lead -- Single circle with gent's ptr in front Dance CCW around the circle.
- d. Grand Right and Left -- Sing circle of cpls, ptrs facing, M CCW, W CW. Ptrs join R hands, pull by passing R shoulders, then join L hands with the next person, pull by, passing L shoulders. Continue R and L around the circle until you meet your original ptr.
- e. Swing -- Ptrs face. Assume ballroom pos. Each take one step to the L. Walk fwd around each other. This is known as a walk-around swing.
- f. Promenade, Over the Shoulder -- Cpls, facing CCW, W on M's R. M extends R arm across the back of ptr's shoulders to take her R hand in his R hand above her R shoulder. L hands are joined in front of M's L shoulder. In this pos, dance around the circle, CCW. This is known as a courting promenade.
- g. London Bridge -- From a promenade, the lead cpl reverses direction, M holding W's R hand with his L hand, to form an arch over the heads of the other dancers. Each cpl in turn follows the cpl in front. When lead cpl reaches the end of the line, they turn and duck under archs, followed by the other cpls, until they are back to the head of the line and then promenade.

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

h. Queen's and King's Highway -- From a promenade, the lead W turns R, leaving her ptr, and dances in opp direction around circle followed by the other W in succession. When she meets her ptr, she promenades with him. King's Highway -- The lead M steps out behind his ptr, turning R, to follow the W immediately in front of him in opp direction around the circle. Each successive M follows him out, around and back to his ptr for a promenade. (M steps in behind his ptr from the promenade.)

i. Roll the Ladies In -- From an over-the-shoulder promenade pos, keeping hands joined, W do a L face turn ending up on the inside of the ring (to her ptr's L). Roll the Ladies Out -- W do a R face turn back to place, M assisting in the same manner.

j. Shoo Fly Swing -- Lead cpl out to the middle of the ring, Turn your ptr R -- then L at the ring. Back to the middle with a R ahnd swing, Back with a L at the outside ring.

The lead cpl moves inside the circle and swing a ptr with a R hand around. The lead W leaves her ptr and turns her corner with a L hand around, returns to ptr with a R hand around and continues L to next M and R to ptr. When first cpl begins figure with the fourth couple, the #2 M takes his ptr and begins the R and L reel. Each cpl continues the figure until they are back at home. (NOTE: While in the middle of the circle, M turns no other W but his ptr.)

k. Basket -- Promenade
Ladies to the ctr and circle L,
Gents keep going, circle R,
The other way back.
Gents step to the L of ptr
Raise hands and make that basket
Ladies bow, gents know how,
Circle L and away you go.
Reverse the basket and away you go,
Break and swing your ptr.

W drop hands with M, move twd ctr of circle, join hands and circle to the L. M join hanas and circle R. Reverse circles, M going L and W R. M step to ptr's L, raise joined hands over W heads and in front of W waists. Circle continues to move L. M raise hands over W heads and back to place while W raise joined hands over M heads and behind their backs. Circle continues to move L. Bread and swing your ptr.

SMALL CIRCLE FIGURES

a. Odd Couple Out to the Even Couple --
Odd Couple out to the even couple,
Circle L, now the other way back.
Single circle of cpls, numbered off or having been designated odd or even before dance begins. Odd cpls move out to cpl on the R, join hands and circle to the L. Reverse circle, move back to pos.

Continued.

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

b. Right Hands Across -- Right hands across and howdy do
Back with the L and how are you?
M join R hands, W join R hands and walk fwd. Reverse direction,
joining L hands.

c. Duck for the Oyster -- Duck for the oyster, dive for the clam,
Duck right through and roll it around,
Circle L, once around
Swing your opp lady
Swing your own.

Hands joined with even cpl, odd cpl ducks under arch formed by
the even cpl and back to place. Even cpl dives under arch formed
by the odd cpl and back to place. Odd cpl ducks under arch again,
odd M drops R hand (this is the only hand hold that is broken),
odd M goes L, odd W goes R pulling even cpl through under their
own arms. Circle L once around, swing the opp W, then swing ptr.

d. Take a Little Peek -- Circle to the L, circle to the R,
'Round that cpl and take a little peek,
Back to the ctr and swing your sweet,
'Round that cpl and peek once more,
Back to the ctr and swing all four.

Circle L, circle R. Odd cpl separate, peek at each other around
the even cpl. Return to place and swing ptr. Separate and peek
once more, back to place and both cpls swing ptrs.

e. Birdie in the Cage -- Circle to the L, and back to the R,
Birdie in the cage, six hands around.
Birdie hop out, crow hop in,
Six hands up and you're gone again.
Crow hops out and hops on a limb,
Circle to the L,
You're gone again.

Circle L, circle R. Odd W moves into the middle of the circle,
six hands joined around her, circling L. Odd W moves back into
her pos in the circle while odd M (crow) moves to ctr of circle.
M moves out to pos and all circle L.

f. Four Leaf Clover -- Circle L and back to the R,
Odd, duck right under for a four leaf clover
and turn on over
Odd arch and even go under
Circle L
Swing your opp lady
Now swing your own.

Circle L, circle R. Even cpl makes an arch. Odd cpl ducks under
arch and turns away from each other passing their joined hands
over their own heads, forming the clover leaf. Odd cpl arch and
even cpl ducks under and all circle L. Swing the opp lady, the
swing your ptr.

continued...

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

- g. Chase that Rabbit -- Circle to the L, now back to the R,
Chase that rabbit, chase that squirrel,
Chase that pretty girl around the world,
Chase that 'possum, chase that 'coon,
Chase that big boy 'roun the room.
Circle to the L,
Swing your opp, then swing your own.

Circle L, circle R. Odd W leads out, in between the even cpl,
around and behind the even W, Back between the even cpl, around
behind even M, odd M following all the way. Then the odd M leads
out, following the same pattern with the odd W chasing behind.
Circle L, swing the opp, swing your ptr.

- h. Basket -- Circle to the L and back to the R,
Eight hands across,
Ladies bow, gents know how,
Break and swing your opp
Now swing your own.

Circle L, circle R. M reach across joining hands. W join
hands under gents. M raise hands over the W heads and W raise
hands over the M heads, forming a basket with hands joined at
waist level. Circle continues to move L throughout figure.
Break and swing your opp, swing your ptr.

- i. Ladies Chain -- Circle L and back to place,
Two ladies chain,
Chain them over and chain right back,
Swing your opp,
Swing your own.

W move to the ctr, joining R hands and passing by. W joins L
hands with the opp M, who places his R hand in the small of her
back and moving fwd. turns her around to place. W chain back,
turning to place in the same manner with ptr. Swing the opp. W,
swing your ptr.

- j. Little Girl Step Through -- Circle to the L and back to the R,
Little girl step through
Little boy, too,
Swing the lady on the right.
Circle to the L and back to the R,
Little girl step through
Little boy, too,
Swing your ptr.

Circle L and back to the R. Drop hands. M and opp W join R hands
W step through the circle passing L shoulders, continue walking
as M step through circle passing L shoulders. All join hands and
circle CW. M swings the W on his R, put her on his R and circle
L, then circle R. Repeat entire figure, ending up swinging with
original ptr.

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

- k. Georgia Rang Tang -- this figure is called by different names in various parts of the country. This as done in class.
Circle L, circle R.
At home pos, turn opp with R hand all the way around
Turn ptr with L hand
Repeat turn with opp and turn with ptr
Swing opp -- Swing your ptr.

CLOGGING
(Western North Carolina)

Clogging consists of a basic walk enhanced with embellishments according to the desire and skill of the dancer. The feet are kept under the body, knees slightly bent, toes and knees turned out a little. Steps are done flat-footed, with one foot always on the floor (no leaps, jumps, etc.

Basic Step (Singles): For the R ft.

A "shuffle" is a short, quick movement of the foot, brushing the ball of the ft fwd and back prior to stepping on it, and is done prior to the beat of the music, that is on ct &,ah. The shuffle is always part of the basic step.

- (&,ah) Shuffle with R ft.
- (ct 1) Drop onto R ft, bending knee slightly
- (ct &) Straighten R knee sharply, letting ft slide bkwd (chug) slightly. (Note: the chug should not be emphasized as such, but occur naturally as an accompaniment to the straightening of the knee)
- At the same time, the L ft does a shuffle on cts &,ah.
- (ct 2) Drop onto L ft, bending knee slightly
- (ct &) Straighten L knee sharply. If dancer wishes to continue with the basic step the shuffle is done with the R ft while the L knee straightens.

The basic step is done on alternate ft moving fwd. The arms swing freely at the sides or may be raised as the dancer desires, unless they are joined with a neighbor.

Doubles

A quick step may be added to the basic step to produce the double.

- (ct &,ah,1) Basic step on R
- (ct &) Step on L toe behind the R ft

continued...

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

(ct 2) Step onto R ft again (no shuffle) with slight knee bend.

(ct &) Straighten R knee sharply.

The step may then be repeated with the opposite ft, or the dancer may continue with basic steps.

Basic steps and doubles may be intermixed throughout the dance, with additional variations or embellishments at the desire of dancer. Some of the variations possible are noted below.

Chug with both feet

This step may be used as a resting step or as preparation for the chug on one ft (described later). Some Southern Appalachian dancers also use it as a traveling step.

(ct 1) Chug fwd on both ft, ft apart, toes turned out

(ct &) Chug bkwd on both ft, closing ft together a little.

This step may be repeated until the dancer is ready to do another step.

Chug on one foot

After a basic step the dancer may continue to chug fwd and bkwd on that foot keeping the other foot free.

(ct &,ah,1) Basic Step

(ct &) Straighten knee sharply

(ct 2) Chug fwd on same ft, bending the knee slightly again

(ct &) Straighten knee sharply.

This step may be executed as often on that foot as desired; the change the dancer begins with a basic step onto the other foot. The free foot may do anything the dancer desires (within reason) Characteristic positions are as follows:

- a) touching the toe in front or side
- b) lifted to ankle height
- c) lifted in back
- d) shuffle as in basic step

The dancer is free to do as he feels - there is no fixed way of moving the free foot.

Backing step

The backing step is characteristic variation on the chug on one foot.

(ct 1) Step on one foot behind the other, bending knees

(ct &) Straighten the supporting leg sharply

(ct 2) Chug fwd on same foot

Continued

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

(ct &) Straighten the knee sharply

The step may now be repeated starting on the other ft. This step would normally be used when dancing in place although the dancer may also travel forward or backward while doing the step. The free foot is still free to be placed anywhere.

Lift step

The lift step is also a characteristic variation of the chug on one foot.

(ct &,ah,1)Basic step

(ct &) Straighten knee sharply

(ct 2) Chug fwd on same ft, lifting the knee of the free ft sharply in bent position, foot held under the body ("lift" position)

(ct &) Straighten knee of supporting ft sharply.

This step (cts 1-2) may be executed on alternate feet but is more commonly done while doing the basic step. For example:

(ct 1,&) Basic step on R ft

(ct 2,&) Basic step on L ft

(ct 3,&) Basic step on R ft

(ct 4,&) Cug and straighten on R, lifting lknee as in cts, 2,&above

The dancer may then execute the same sequence but starting on the other foot. The "lift" position itself may be repeated for more than one count before beginning another step. For example:

(ct 1,&) Lift and straighten as in lift step, cts 2,& above.

(ct 2,&) Lift and straighten as in lift step, cts 2,& above.

Brush Step

This step is another characteristic variation on the chug on one ft described above.

(cts 1,2) Lift step as described above, cts 1,2

(ct 3) Brush free ft bkwd, ending in back

(ct &) Straighten knee as in basic step, ct &

(ct 4) Brush free ft fwd, ending in "lift" position

(ct &) Straighten knee sharply as in basic step

BIG CIRCLE MOUNTAIN SQUARE DANCE INSTRUCTION (continued)

Again the free ft is free to move in any direction, not necessarily fwd and back.

Presented by Jeff O'Connor
Adapted from Glenn Bannermans
notes Stockton Folk Dance
Camp 1973

Music

Any good heedown music. Big Circle Mountain Dance Music,
Folkraft LP 36, RCA 447-0569 "Down Yonder"
Jewel J153B "It's Going to Take a Little Longer"
AR108 "Mountain Dew" & "Lonesome Road Blues"
AR 107 "Little Liza Jane" & "Boil them Cabbage Down"
WRS 175 Traditional American Folk Music

*John
Filsich Has this*

For learning purposes I suggest AR53 Appalachian Clog Dancing
and Big Circle Square Dancing By Glenn Bannerman