

THE BIRTH OF TENNESSEE'S  
STATE SQUARE DANCE ORGANIZATION

The state square dancing organization for Tennessee now known as "Tennessee State Association of Square and Round Dance Clubs Inc.", had its beginning during the spring of 1972. At this time there were five central areas, Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville-Oak Ridge, Tri-Cities and Nashville, where square dancing was becoming a big thing. There was a growing need for closer cooperation and communications between these more centralized areas. All that was needed now was a catalyst to bring the major areas together under one organization to serve all dancers throughout the state, and adjoining areas of other states.

The Nashville area was a geographical center for square dancing in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama. The National in Kentucky had placed emphasis on the need of a state organization in Tennessee. At this time, Bill and Ruby Alderman were presidents of the Cumberland Valley Western Square Dance Association(serving Nashville and surrounding areas). Bill and Ruby recognized the need and became interested in bringing the major areas closer together for the purpose of promoting Square Dancing in the state of Tennessee. This interest plus the fact they were in a position at the opportune time, established the ground work for action. Since many were familiar with the Memphis and Chattanooga events, it was only natural for the names of Bill Crawford of Memphis, and John and Janet Hughes of Chattanooga to be associated with dancing in their respective areas. When they were contacted, both were very receptive to the idea, offered encouragement and assured cooperation. Hughes, Crawford and Alderman presented the idea to the square dancing leaders

in their respective areas. It was the consensus that each area was interested and would support a state organization.

At this time the East Tennessee area had not entered the picture. Through contacts with Roy Davis of Louisville, Kentucky (associated with the NES) and John Hughes of Chattanooga, a meeting was scheduled in Oak Ridge with Mr. Curt Payne. This meeting was not productive. Later this same day Bob and Janette Kemper managed to have several interested Oak Ridge dancers meet at John Napier's (a local square dancer) home. The idea of a state organization was well received. There was some concern about its success, since Bob Baker had been instrumental in the Old Tennessee Federation, which was established for the same goals but was not successful and had gone out of existence, but still everyone agreed, it was worth another try.

Through the contacts of the Oak Ridge dance leaders, ground work was laid for a Knoxville area contact in the way of Ralph and Grace Stephens and Joe and Nancy Flatt. Alderman and Hughes arranged for a later meeting at the Jessamine Street Center with many interested Knoxville and surrounding area dancers in attendance. It was obvious the enthusiasm was great in this area for a state organization. The closeness of Knoxville to upper east Tennessee had produced ties with the dancers in that area. The Knoxville Association accepted the responsibility of contacting individuals in the Tri-cities area, which was later to be called Area 6, and keeping them informed and finding someone to work with the people from other areas who were interested in forming a state organization. This completed the basic framework for an "across-the-state" organization for square dancing. The next step was a combined meeting of individuals from each

area. This meeting was held at the McCabe Community Center where the Nashville Squares dance and the four areas represented were Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Nashville. It was decided at this time the best approach would be to have an organization dance to be held in Nashville due to the central location, with all areas participating. This dance was to be called the 1st Tennessee State Festival to be held in the Cultural Building at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds in Nashville. Each agreed to support the endeavor by sending \$100.00 to the treasurer of the event. A slate of acting officers were selected as follows:

Chairman: Bill & Ruby Alderman - Nashville

Co-chairman: John & Janet Hughes - Chattanooga

Secretary: To be selected by Nashville Association

Treasurer: Tom & Nancy Jackson - Chattanooga

Publicity: Selection by Memphis Association - Memphis

Housing: Lucius & Marie Greene - Nashville Association

The second meeting of the central committee for the 1st Tennessee State Festival was held January 6, 1973 at the Donelson Christian Church with 40 square dancers from across Tennessee attending. All members from each area selected one member from their group to be group leader and to represent their area on all items to be decided. This meant all areas would have equal representation on all voting matters and would establish the basic concept for all future policies governing the state organization which was to be formed later.

It was at this second meeting the basic concept for the format of the State Festival was established. Bill and Ruby Alderman presented a basic "Outline of Responsibilities" for each of the festival committees. The outline was approved and

and many of the committee positions were filled, with Bill and Ruby selected as the first Festival Chairman. The following people were selected for the 1st Tennessee State Festival:

Central Chairman: Bill & Ruby Alderman - Nashville

Co-Chairman: John & Janet Hughes - Chattanooga

Treasurer: Tom Jackson - Chattanooga

Secretary: Reba Kelly - Nashville

Program Chairman: Eddie & Sally Ramsey - Memphis

Publicity Chairman: Bill Crawford - Memphis

Housing & Reservations: Lucius & Marie Greene - Nashville

Ticket Chairman: Cornell & Renee denHertog - Nashville

Dance Facility Chairman: Ed & Sue Strasser- Nashville

Concession: Gray & Louise Mitchell - Nashville

Special Events: Tommy & Jean Hannagan - Nashville

Each of the working committees had a representative in each area to assist in carrying out the operation of the committee.

The many hours of effort contributed by many dedicated individuals culminated in a very successful, "First Tennessee State Festival". This is borne out by some 120 squares attending and a gross income of \$2,260.00