

~ ~ CENTRAL DISTRICT ~ ~

Western square dancing, as we presently know it, began to flourish throughout the United States in the early 1950's. The State of Missouri, including what is now the Central District, became deeply involved in this different "new" kind of square dancing.

Those who were participating in the new activity, which included people from all walks of life, wanted very much to learn this new way of dancing whereby callers "cued" the different movements, rather than each couple memorizing and dancing their own routine.

The furtherance of this trend, aspiring callers visited Kirkwood Lodge to learn this newest art of square dancing. Marshall Flippo, a member of the National Square Dance Hall of Fame, welcomed local callers to the Lodge to watch and learn.

The Don Donath's were among many who were dissatisfied with the confusion and uncertainty of the older method, so they traveled out West in the early 1950's to learn and improve, and brought back their knowledge to this area.

We would specifically mention Don Donath, Ray McCorry, Leo Kure, Les Robinette and Benny Benjamin as local Callers who furthered this early movement, as well as National Callers, Marshall Flippo, Les Gotcher, Frank Lane, Bud Able and Willie Harlan, who also called in this area in those early days.

Soon, from Columbia and Jefferson City to Rolla, and from Sedalia to Versailles, Eldon and other cities, square dancers were getting together and forming groups, or Clubs. These new groups began sponsoring lessons to teach others who also wanted to learn this new activity, forming the basis in our area for what is now the Central District.

When the Missouri State Federation started organizing in Sedalia in 1958, it became a catalyst in the formation of member Districts throughout the State.

The Central District became a member of the State Federation the first year it was formed, represented solely by the Ozark Whirlers of Eldon, Missouri, until the mid-1960's.

Historian's Note: There are so many Callers and Members who have given of the time and expertise to further square dancing that it is virtually impossible to give credit here to all those who are deserving of it. Please know, however, that your contribution lives on in our Clubs today.

Milli Crabtree 2005