

History of Jefferson County Squares

The Clipper "Jefferson County Squares" set sail in March of 1983 with a full crew of 41 members, 32 of whom had just graduated on the 6th of March. They had started square dance lessons in the Twin City Motel, Crystal City, Missouri last September with their teacher, Floyd and Marilyn Bohnert. Our first Captain (President) Lloyd & Carol Bates took the helm as we sailed off to join the St. Louis League of Clubs on March 21. We stopped on shore long enough have our first official Club dance April 17, at Gateway Hall where we had recently moved, giving us more room. It was an old building with floors carpeted and a small area of hardwood that slanted toward the river.

We sailed on and quickly started to Raid & Retrieve. The first Club outfit was a navy and white check dress, white lace with Red or white petticoat for gals and navy pants, checked shirt for men.

In September a new dancer class was started, with 27 new members to join the crew in March of 1984. We were well on our way to higher seas.

We sailed on to the Conservation Club where we enjoyed large crowds at the monthly dances. In June, 1985 we had an Appreciation Dance for our caller, This is your Life, inviting family, friends and anyone who had been involved with Floyd's learning to call, and gave him a western suit. We celebrated our 1st "We Done It" this year.

Aug. 31, 1986 we launched our 1st Amateur Caller Dance with 5 prospective callers participating. 1987 sailed by with lots of exhibitions and visiting other Clubs.

In 1988 another Amateur Caller Dance was with 8 new Callers showing their talents. Our caller, Floyd moved away and Harold Rowden came aboard to carry on the duties of calling and teaching.

Dianne & Jerry Broadwater started teaching round dance. We docked long enough to have a Winter Holiday special weekend at the Holiday Inn, Festus, Missouri. J. R. Sparks & Harold as Caller and Jerry & Diane Broadwater as round dance cuers. There were 110 on board for that dance.

By this time we had acquired a crew of 110, Two more Winter Holiday weekends were held, the last one at the Festus Armory. In 1991 we also hosted the Belleville Jamboree, theme was "Let's Go Country".

Jul 31, 1992, 42 Jefferson County Squares sailed off to surprise our caller Rowden at a dance in Humbolt, Tennessee.

June 1993 came a huge project as we were to manage the Hospitality Committee for the National Square Dance Convention Held in St. Louis. All crew members had a special job to do.

In June of 1994 our caller, Harold Rowden decided to jump ship. He retired. Round dance lessons started with Judy & Hank Scherrer teaching.

In June 1995 found our Club changing the R-7 school cafeteria, October 29 we held another Amateur Caller Dance 13 new callers and cuers to grace our deck, Judy & Hank Scherrer had taken over most of the round teaching by now. 1996 in March more changes, John Stuart was

voted in as Club Caller and Judy Scherrer as Cuer. 1st Whole Hog Roast was held August 10 that year. Our members did the roasting and all the fixins. Mark Turner and John Stuart did all the calling, Judy & Hank the Rounds. These were held for the next 9 years, with different themes and lots of decorations and dancing friends coming back each year. What Fun!

Square dancing was dropping off, as it was happening over the whole country. So if anyone showed interest in dancing, John, our caller, would start lessons for them. Combining lessons with our workshops worked well.

By 2000 we were ready to change Ports again, this time until the present our home port is at Our Lady's School and Church, Festus for our 3rd Sunday dances and at the American Legion Hall for all workshops every Tuesday. In August of 2000 we hosted a "This is Your Life" Dance in honor of our caller John Stuart. Inviting all family, friends and anyone who had been involved in his calling life.

2001 brought us to a Mystery Trip in Clinton, Illinois for an all Gospel dance. Won a "Toot Your Horn" badge from Missouri Federation in 2002. Sailed off on another Mystery Trip to a Passion Play in Bloomington, Illinois in 2003.

We have had quilt raffles, entertained guest at Shepard of the Hills, Branson. Danced between acts of a play at Jefferson College, did Relay for Life, cooked at McDonald House and had yard sales. Even danced at the Muny Opera in St. Louis. In 2004 a Cook Book was printed with recipes from members, family and friends. 2008 brought us into the lime light with the production of the "Hee Haw" show presented at our regular dance in November with all characters of the original TV show performed by the members of Jefferson County Squares. It was successful and very enjoyable, tempting us to do it the next year.

Square dancing for us has increased in the past 2 years. We are happy to announce that we just graduated 26 new dancers.

We still have John and Judy at the helm, may not have profited so much money wise, but the enjoyment and fellowship we gained from knowing all the Special People in the Square Dance World is an award that cannot be matched. To quote one of our Charter Members. "SQUARE DANCING Is FRIENDSHIP SET To MUSIC".

(thanks LeRoy)

History Provided By Mrs. Imogene Hardgrave