

Square Dance Legislation Collection

AFC 1984/024

Guides to the Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture



**American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
December 1994**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2004695189>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af010005>

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Encoded by Valda Morris-Slack, March 2011

Collection Summary

Collection Number: AFC 1984/024

Title: Square Dance Legislation Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1975-1995

Bulk Dates: 1984-1988

Location: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Extent: 0.8 linear feet

Extent: (2 boxes) including 405 manuscript items

Creator: American Folklife Center

Creator: Parsons, Gerald E.

Language: English

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2004695189>

Summary: The Square Dance Legislation Collection consists of manuscript materials (1975-1995) compiled by the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, documenting the history of legislative efforts to designate the square dance as a national or state folk dance. The bulk of the materials concerns the public hearing on House Resolution 1706 held June 28, 1984 before the Subcommittee on Census and Population of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives, 98th Congress to "designate the square dance as the national folk dance of the United States."

Scope and Content

The Square Dance Legislation Collection consists primarily of correspondence, copies of proposed legislation, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and other publications that document the history of legislative efforts to designate the square dance as the national folk dance. The collection also includes material concerning related efforts at the state level. It spans the years 1975 to 1995, with the largest portion concerning the public hearing on House Resolution 1706 in 1984. National Western-style square dance organizations have fostered a movement to add square dance to the list of national symbols. Between 1965 and 1995, more than thirty bills were introduced at the federal level. Their efforts also have focused on passing legislation at the state level; by 1995 at least 17 states had designated square dance as the official folk dance of that state.

Administrative History and/or Biographical History

This collection arose out of the American Folklife Center's 1984 involvement with the House Subcommittee on Census and Population, which was then responsible for reviewing commemorative measures. This subcommittee turned to the Center for assistance and guidance in planning and developing the public hearing on H.R. 1706, a bill designating the square dance as the national dance of the United States. As an expert in American folk culture, Gerald E. Parsons, Reference Librarian for the Archive of Folk Culture, was detailed to help organize the hearing. The materials he accumulated for this task form the basis of this collection. Hearing testimonies, newspaper and magazine articles, and editorials in the collection provide insight into the perspectives of both proponents and opponents, while government documents trace the official legislative history.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Nevell, Richard. Time to dance : American country dancing from hornpipes to hot hash

Parsons, Gerald E., 1940-1995

Organizations

American Folklife Center

Archive of Folk Culture (Library of Congress)

Subjects

Folk dancing--Law and legislation--United States.
Signs and symbols--United States.
Square dancing--Law and legislation--Maryland.
Square dancing--Law and legislation--United States.

Form/Genre

Articles.
Clippings.
Legislative bills.
Legislative materials.
Manuscripts.

Arrangement

Series I consists of background information and administrative materials. Included is literature about modern Western-style square dance organizations and publications, material documenting related non-dance federal legislation, some administrative correspondence, and newspaper clippings about pertinent dance genres. Series II concerns federal legislation from 1975-1988. It contains copies of official government documents, correspondence, newspaper and magazine articles and other materials. Series III concerns state legislation from 1984 to 1995. It also contains copies of government documents, correspondence, newspaper and magazine articles, and related materials.

Access

The collection is open for research use. Please contact the Folklife Reading Room before requesting materials: folklife@loc.gov or 202-707-5510.

Acquisition

Gerald E. Parsons, Reference Librarian for the Archive of Folk Culture gathered the materials as requested by Congress in an effort to evaluate the proposal to designate square dancing as the national folk dance of the United States. Accessioned, 1984 to 1995.

Preferred Citation

Square Dance Legislation Collection (AFC 1984/024), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Collection Concordance by Format

Manuscript Materials

405	manuscript items (original)	AFC	FOLDERS 01-22
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Description of Series

Container	Series
	<u>Series I:</u> ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS
	<u>Series II:</u> FEDERAL LEGISLATION (1975-1988)
	<u>Series III:</u> STATE LEGISLATION (1984-1995)

Collection Inventory

Container	Contents
Series I: ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS	
BOX 1 FOLDER 01	Finding Aid Administrative materials regarding the collection. One copy of the collection register.
BOX 1 FOLDER 02	Correspondence, 1985-1986 Correspondence primarily between the American Folklife Center, the National Folk Dance Committee and the Sets in Order/American Square Dance Society concerning meetings held between their respective leaders.
BOX 1 FOLDER 03, 04	Background Literature: Square Dance Organizations/Publications, 1984-1987 Originals and copies of booklets, handouts, leaflets, magazine articles, and magazine issues produced by the American Square Dance Society, Legacy (International Assembly of Trustees of the Square Dance Activity), <i>Sets in Order</i> magazine, <i>Square Dancing</i> magazine, and <i>American Square Dance</i> magazine. The literature focuses on the promotion and history of square dancing and includes organization directories and editorials. Also included is an annotated copy of <i>A Time to Dance: American Country Dancing from Hornpipes to Hot Hash</i> by Richard Nevell (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977).
BOX 1 FOLDER 05	Newspaper clippings, 1984 Newspaper clippings on pertinent dance genres. Copies of two articles from <i>The New York Times</i> (1984) concerning the proliferation of square dancing and tap dancing in the United States.
BOX 1 FOLDER 06	Related Federal Legislation (non-dance), 1789-1989 Copies of United States Congressional Records, Statutes at Large, Hearing Reports, memoranda, and newspaper articles concerning legislation related to national representative entities such as the anthem, symbol, tree, motto, seal, flower, and so forth. Loosely arranged chronologically (1789-1989) and by subject.
Series II: FEDERAL LEGISLATION (1975-1988)	
BOX 1 FOLDER 07	Newspaper clippings, 1972; 1975 One copy of a one-page article, "The country squares off" (McCalls, 1972) that briefly mentions federal legislation. Copies of more than 50 brief newspaper articles from across the United States reporting that Representative Ted Risenhoover introduced a House Joint Resolution on July 31, 1975, to make square dance the national dance of the United States.
BOX 1 FOLDER 08	Legislation Documentation: 96th Congress (1979-1980) One copy each of the following resolutions: House Joint Resolution 69, Senate Joint Resolution 125, and House Joint Resolution 552. All concerned "designating the 'square dance' as the national folk dance of the United States of America."
BOX 1 FOLDER 09	Legislation Documentation: 97th Congress (1981-1982) Copies of the pertinent United States Congressional Record, Senate Joint Resolution 59, and Public Law 97- 188, the latter of which designates "the square dance as the national folk dance of the United States of America for 1982 and 1983." Included are copies of newspaper and magazine articles concerning the bill.

Series II:

Container	Contents
BOX 1 FOLDER 10	Legislation Documentation: 98th Congress (1983-1984) Copies of House Resolution 1706, "a bill to designate the square dance as the national folk dance of the United States," U.S. Congressional Records documenting the hearing on the bill, and a Congressional Record documenting the introduction of the Senate version, S.1448. Also included is a list of the members of the Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service, and the Committee Policy for Consideration of Commemorative Legislation.
BOX 1 FOLDER 11	Correspondence, H.R. 1706 Hearing (98th Congress) January-August, 1984 (1/2) Letters, sample form letters, drafts, and memoranda primarily between House Committee members, Library of Congress personnel, and interested parties outside the federal government. The correspondence documents the establishment of Reference Librarian Gerald E. Parsons' assistance to the subcommittee for the hearing, requests for testimony, results of the hearing, and responses to the outcome.
BOX 1 FOLDER 12	Letters and testimony, H.R. 1706 (98th Congress) January-August, 1984 (2/2) Originals and copies of correspondence from individuals and organizations addressed primarily to Chairwoman Katie Hall, Subcommittee on Census and Population, for and against H.R. 1706. Also included are submitted copies of testimony of some of the witnesses at the hearing.
BOX 1 FOLDER 13	Interested parties, H.R. 1706 Hearing (98th Congress) Lists of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the following: witnesses testifying in opposition to H.R. 1706, pertinent Congressional Staff Directory listings, North American record companies, state folk cultural programs, and cultural organizations.
BOX 1 FOLDER 14	Hearing report draft and scripts, H.R. 1706 (98th Congress) Draft of the report on the hearing held June 28, 1984, on H.R. 1706. Also includes scripts prepared for Chairwoman Hall (questions to ask witnesses).
BOX 2 FOLDER 15,16	Hearing report, H.R. 1706 (98th Congress) Four copies of the final hearing report on H.R. 1706 published by the U.S. Government Printing Office that contains a transcript of the hearing held June 28, 1984, as well as letters and written testimonies submitted for the record.
BOX 2 FOLDER 17	Handouts, H.R. 1706 Hearing (98th Congress) Copies and original booklets, leaflets, administrative information, and charts distributed at the hearing displaying the pros and cons of the Hearing.
BOX 2 FOLDER 18	Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, H.R. 1706 Hearing (98th Congress) June 1984-August 1985 Coverage of the bill and hearing in national and local newspapers, as well as commentary on it in square dance magazines and folklife newsletters.
BOX 2 FOLDER 19	Legislation documentation: 99th Congress (1985-1986) Copies of House Joint Resolution 316, "designating the square dance as the national folk dance of the United States for 1985 and 1986," a Congressional Record documenting action on the bill, and a Congressional Record documenting Senate Joint Resolution 425 on the same topic. Also included are magazine articles concerning the bill.
BOX 2 FOLDER 20	Legislation documentation: 100th Congress (1987-1988) One copy of House Resolution 2067, "to designate the square dance as the American folk dance of the United States." Copies of magazine coverage and commentary in <i>American Square Dance</i> magazine.

Series II:

Container	Contents
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BOX 2 FOLDER 21	Hearing on H.R. 2067, June 28, 1988 (100th Congress) One copy of the final hearing report published by the U.S. Government Printing Office that contains a transcript of the hearing as well as letters and written testimonies submitted for the record. Also includes the witness list and multiple copies of some testimony.
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Series III:

STATE LEGISLATION (1984-1995)

BOX 2 FOLDER 22	Documentation of state legislation, 1984-1995 Newspaper articles, editorials, and magazine articles that report on or give opinions about state legislation to make the square dance the official folk dance of that state (e.g., West Virginia, Idaho, New Jersey, and Ohio). Magazine articles document the square dance organizations' efforts to lobby for these measures. Also included is the text of Maryland's Senate Bill 43, "declaring square dancing as the State folk dance," January 1994, and testimony against it.
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