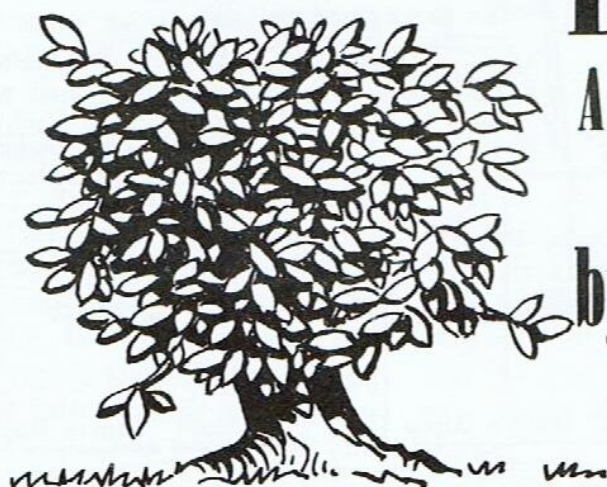




the **STORY**  
of **SQUARE**  
**DANCING**  
A FAMILY TREE



by **DOROTHY SHAW**

**E**VERYONE YEARNS TO KNOW more about his ancestors. Even the simplest American feels a thrill when a researcher digs up his "family tree" and unearths his "coat of arms," and finds far back along the line—perhaps—a king! The farther back he goes the more exciting it becomes. Here is a small, not-too-far-back study of the family tree of your American Square Dance.

Dancing is the oldest of the arts. Only one other art — the art of architecture — goes back nearly so far into man's past; and dancing is probably older than his attempt to build a shelter for his family, for we know that primitive tribes have become expert dancers long before they have bothered to build what we would call houses.

Dancing was a *fine* art before it was a *folk* art, and a religious and ritualistic performance long before it became a recreational art. It is only quite recently in the history of mankind that all of the people, if they chose, could join in the dance; and, as for women, there was a vast majority of dances in which they might not join at all, and there were some that they might not even see.

In a little study like this one, we cannot take time nor space to go back very far into the past. Let us decide that we shall travel back about 500 years. And let us prune out, before we start, the many tiny twigs that clutter the remote branches of any family tree. Let us reduce our story to approximations!