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Interview with Duncan A. MacDonald, July 13, 1986.

005- Duncan A. MacDonald, March 14, 1913, in Judique, Box 11 Judique.

014- Dancing.

When I started going to dances, they danced square sets. There were only four couples to a set and they had a violin player then and they wouldn't dance unless somebody prompted the set. They danced four figures to a set. They stopped having four figures and four couples to a set when they started dancing in those big halls. The dances I used to go to were in school houses. There were just two fiddlers playing together and the prompter and they danced until 1 or 2 in the morning. Once they started in the big halls, they started gathering up 25 couples in the set. They don't dance it right at all. I went to a few of them but I didn't like them as well. The dances in the halls started after the 30's in Judique here. Even then when they started in the halls first, they used to dance four couples to a set. The halls were bigger so they had 12 or 14 or 16 sets going at one time. The prompters were there. They got up to a piano then with the violin players. The calling stopped in the fifties. Angus Hugh MacEachern was a good caller and he used to dance in all the sets. It made it alot better when the caller was in the set. There was nobody going wrong then. When the dances moved to the halls, the caller started being on the stage. When there was no caller, they just started the music and they danced without a caller. At the old time dances in the school houses and at the box parties, after they danced a few sets, they called for a Scotch Four.

080- Scotch Four

(In school houses or at box socials) There used to be older people there, 2 men and 2 women got on the floor and they'd do a scotch four. Four people go to dance together. They just went around first in a circle. Then the girls faced one another and the men faced one another and after they danced for part of the tune, they went around again and when the fast turn came on, the men went back and stepped her off. Once in a while people do this today. (Strathspey first then the reel) They danced until they got tired.

117- Eight-hand reel.

Another dance that I danced. It was all one figure. It started off with the ladies on the right...there was a prompter with it. I got that going here too. Alex Graham was one of the people. I could put it together again. All the people could step dance. Here is his description as he told it for the video:

They started in a circle and went to the left half way and back to the right. They step danced before swinging their partners. Then right hand to your partner and swing your partner when you get back. Ladies in the centre holding hands, half way around (go around in a

circle) and the gents go the opposite way. Then they come back to their places and swing their own. Then step-dance and right hand to your partner again. Then the men go up and do the same thing and back to their places and right hand to your partner and swing your own and you still step-dance all the time. Then the next one after that right hand to your partners and once and a half on the heads and once and a half on the sides and swing your left-hand lady till you get to the last one (you do each lady) till you get to your own. You do it four times, twice each side. (You do a half-promenade across with your left-hand lady) You swing your left-hand lady and then right hand to your partner. You make sure when you get to your left-hand lady you get back to your places and swing again. You do this once with a different partner until you get back home. At the end, all up in the centre and drive 'er on the steps.

160- Box parties.

They danced sets and about 10:00, everything stopped and they had an auctioneer and they auctioned off the boxes. The girls had their names on the boxes and you wouldn't know whose box it was until after you bought it. Then you went looking for the lady and you sat some place and had tea and a lot of times and often she had a package of cigarettes you could buy for 10 cents for the man. A lot of times, maybe he took her home after they ate what was in the box.

172- Church Picnics.

The church picnics they had them going here in Judique pretty well for years. It was a lot of hard work for the women. Everybody went there two or three days before building stages---no one getting paid for it either. They get everything ready and the women prepared the food and they bought an animal from somebody and butcher it and got a roast made. They always put up a good dinner that you could buy for fifty cents. You could get into the picnic for a quarter. Pop was five to ten cents a bottle. They danced the sets on stages. You paid 10 cents a set. You bought tickets. A man came around and collected the tickets before they started the set. Just the men paid. They done lots of Scotch fours then. There could be about 8 sets on the stage. There was only one stage. They'd put a few poles on top to keep it kind of cool. The last picnic was in 1967.

210- Weddings.

The weddings used to be at the houses. There'd be just a big feed on and dancing. The sets and the scotch four. He doesn't know what the wedding reel is.

224- Eight hand reel.

Talks about the eight-hand reel again. The ladies led off to the right one time and the gents led off to the left one time. They swung around then and they come to their places and then they went over to the left (grand chain) until you meet your girl again and then they promenade back to their places. Then they step-danced to beat the band after that

in a circle. Then all the girls went in the centre and joined hands and they went around and they step-danced and the men went around the outside and step-danced. Then the girls came out and the men went in. There's a right ahnd to your partner after that all the way around and step-dance again. That's about the whole thing.

246- First time he danced the 8-hand reel.

It was 59 years ago. I was up to my mother's people in River Denys Mountain. We went on a ceilidh down to this John Maclellan's. There was music there and they decided to dance the eight-hand reel and they got me to go in with them. I remember it from that. I learned to step-dance by myself. My father was a step-dancer. He'd be half brother to Angus MacEachern and Johnny the Carpenter. They were step-dancers too.

264- Jigging tunes.

My sister knew them all. She lives in Glencoe Mills. Her name is Rachael MacDonald.

274- He jigs a tune. (279)

That's the way you learned tunes first. I used to go to dances and I'd wake up in the morning and if I'd hear the tune it would be right in my head and I'd have to get up and take the fiddle and play it. I quit long ago. I used to play at dances. I played at box parties.

291- Song-dances.

He doesn't know about these.

294- Story about a box party.

They always had a few drinks around and get feeling pretty good and they'd go into the bedroom. All join hands and sing away the Gaelic songs. The songs were by themselves. The dancing went by itself too.

301- End of interview.

302- Description of eight-handed reel from filming day.