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SHAPE-NOTE SINGING

By BEBO EDMUNDS
CHAPEL HILL—Almost anyone can sing shape-notes.

And if you go to a singing convention, most people are compelled to join in the native American tradition. No one singer has the melody. Treble, alto and bass do as much running around as the tune-carrying tenor.

is reviving the shape-note tradition using the "Sacred Harp" hymnbook with monthly sings beginning this Sunday (Jan. 5), 2-5 p.m. in Gerard Hall.

They will sing acapella (without instrumental accompaniment) "just like they do in the singing conventions in Georgia," UNC folklorist and professor of English Dan Patterson said.

They will also sit in the traditional hollow square formation so that no one singer is spotlighted. No one is expected to sing. Also acoustics are better in the hollow square, according to Patterson.

In the 1850's the "Sacred Harp" was acclaimed to be the most popular book next to the Bible in the rural South. You could buy it at the general store as well as bookstores.

Now it must be ordered from the publishing company in Bremen, Georgia. However, the shape-note singing tradition is still going strong, Patterson said.

Although many Americans have never heard of it because no recordings or singers are publicized, shape-note singers know who they are. Conventions are listed in special directories.

Within the shape-note singing tradition, there are several different schools each with their own followers, conventions and hymnbook.

The Mennonites in Virginia use the "Harmonica Sacra," for example.

All the songs are religious, although the "Sacred Harp" is non-denominational. Most deal with salvation, the pitfalls of hell or the glories of heaven as in "Saint's Delight."

"When I read my title clear to mansions in the skies, I'll bid farewell to every fear, and wipe my weeping eyes, I feel like, I feel like, I'm on my journey home."

Patterson, himself, loves the music, most taken from ballads and fiddle tunes. "Wondrous Love," for example, is sung to the tune of the 15th century "Ballad of Captain Kidd."

Patterson describes it as "beautiful" and "stark". He thinks it has more life than much traditional church music which tends to be

slower and duller. He added that an emotional involvement with the music makes it especially lively. By the third verse of "Holy Manna," the folklore goes, everyone is crying in religious ecstasy.

Many of the songs originated at camp meetings. They would camp out, sometimes in the middle of the wilderness," Patterson said. "In the 1850's they began to set up conventions to sing, usually in August, when farmwork was done. Often 5,000 people would show up."

Patterson has been to singing conventions in Georgia where he said, he met no "musical illiterates." Before each song they sing the musical notes, and then the words.

In North Carolina, he has found singings in a school house in Etowah, near Brevard; in the Church of the Morning Star in Dutch Cove; and a church at Harmony, near Statesville where he has joined in shape-note singing.

"Usually they are very pleased to have you there," he said "The Primitive Baptist Church gives it most support nowadays."

When Singing' Billy Walker from Spartanburg, S.C. introduced his hymnbook "Christian Harmony," in which he used seven note shapes, devotees of the four-shape Sacred Harp were outraged.

Theirs was the purest, one said, "with few of the twisted rills and frills of the unnatural snaking of the voice which have in the last decade demoralized church music."

Benjamin Franklin White compiled the "Original Sacred Harp" hymnal in 1844. He married Thurze Golithly and their children helped spread the book up and down the East Coast. "It's always been a family thing" Patterson said.

Patterson feels that interest among musicians is reviving in the shape-note singing traditions. In the early days of the colonies, however, composers felt they had to copy Europe to be artistic. They shunned their rural roots to be "miniature Europeans."

"If someone like Charles Ives had known about it he would have liked it," Patterson said.

REV. CLARENCE J. KNUPP Missionary Wesleyan Speaker

Rev. Clarence J. Knupp, a missionary of The Wesleyan Church to Guyana, South America, will speak at 7:30 p.m., January 8, at the Brevard Wesleyan Church, North Broad St.

Mr. Knupp is on furlough after having completed his fifth term of missionary service. During his years in Guyana he has served as pastor, district superintendent and field superintendent. As field superintendent his duties have taken him over a vast area reaching from the Pomeroy River in Western Guyana to the borders of French Guiana and deep into the hinterland of Guyana to the Indian mission stations at Paramakatoi and Pipilipai (pronounced Peepeeleepee).

Missionary Knupp will tell about the country where he has served, the people and his work in this interesting land with its friendly people. Curious will be on display. Colored slides of the work will be shown.

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Sapphire-Whitewater News

By Wallace Brewer

The Sapphire-Whitewater Community Development Club Christmas program was held on Saturday night, Dec. 21. The emphasis was on youth and games were played under directions of Brenda Owen, youth director, and Jeanette Shipley.

Hostesses included Pat Barclay and Debbie Owen. Christmas decorations included a beautiful decorated Christmas tree and windows.

Following the program gifts were given to the children, Christmas Carols were sung, refreshments were served with cake and cup cakes for dessert.

Those people in attendance included Brenda Owen, youth director, James Owen, vice president; Pat Barclay, secretary; Jeanette Shipley, Lewis McNeely, McKinney Children, Ramsy Children, Reeves Children, Mrs. Russell Fisher, James "Buttons" Fisher, Becky Hooper, Mary Barclay, Eugene and Roseanne, Anton and Jackie Hansen, and President Wallace Brewer.

Following the Christmas program the Community Club Members went "Caroling". Lewis McNeely drove the truck that was on loan from the Tom Willis family. To them we express our appreciation. "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear," and many other songs of Christmas echoed through the cold, clear night.

A reminder to all club members of the regular dinner and business meeting at the Sapphire-Whitewater Community Development Club Building on Tuesday night Jan. 7, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a covered dish and a yen for an evening of fellowship.

Wallace Brewer, secretary of the Lake Toxaway

Volunteer Fire Department reminds all members to attend the fire meet at the department Thursday at 7 p.m. for further firemanship training. Eighty hours of training have been completed under the direction of Luke Harrison, of Brevard, under the auspices of the Blue Ridge Institute of Hendersonville.

Erik and Hester Hansen attended the wedding of the latter's brother, Lawrence Denslow, to Lois Avery at Sanford, Fla. at 3 p.m. on Dec. 28 at Grace United Methodist Church.

Lawrence's son, D. Ross Denslow, the pastor there, performed the ceremony.

David A. Denslow, a younger brother, was best man. Norman E. Denslow, a son, of Valdosta, Ga. sang "The Wedding Prayer Beautiful."

The reception was held in the home of Ross and Bea Denslow in Sanford with the daughters and daughters-in-law on both sides serving.

The bride was Lois Avery of Enterprise, Fla. She is a friend of long standing and recently widowed. She and Lawrence honeymooned at Crystal River and Cedar Key, Fla. and are now at home in De Land, Fla.

Eric and Linda Thomas and daughters, Renay and Michelle, of Bearwallow Drive spent last weekend visiting with his parents, the Gilbert Thomases at Bakersville.

Erik and Hester Hansen visited with his brother and family, the Harold E. Hansens in Orlando, Fla. and they also visited with a niece, Mrs. Laura Garner of Barnwell, S.C.

Beverly and Melvin Dann spent the Holidays visiting the Louis Johnson family in

Fla. They also visited with the T. Don Batson, Joe and Thelma Welch, Emma Ekstrand, and the Frank Days.

Mrs. Nevea Whitted and Rotha Matson visited in Brevard and did some shopping.

To Mary Jo and T. Don Batson: after the heavy winds here a few nights ago you have only one layer of roofing on your enclosed porch at Sapphire instead of the two previously.

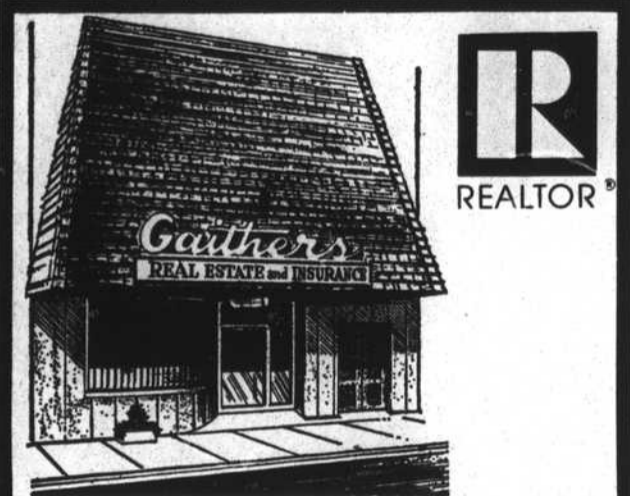
The Hansens enjoyed a double-header Christmas celebration this year. On Christmas Eve the Gené Hansens hosted a Danish Smorgasbord for the immediate family.

Attending that function were Erik and Hester Hansen and their houseguest, Candi Garner of Barnwell, S.C.; Denny and Carol Hansen of Rosman; and the host family, Gene and Rosanne Hansen and their children, Jackie and Anton.

On Christmas Day dinner guests at the home of Erik and Hester Hansen included Tom, Marian and Susan Condon; Gene, Rosanne, Jackie and Anton Hansen; Denny and Carol Hansen, Candi Garner, Mary - Robinson, Janet Thompson, Terrie Wilson, and Bobby Lowe. The dinner was covered dish furnished by the four families. After dinner the guests enjoyed a gift exchange. Many of the guests remained or came back for supper also.

Stuart and Lois Youngblood have returned home to Sapphire after spending their winter vacation on the Eastern Coast of Fla. They arrived home in time for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

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