

# Boston Center Newsletter

Nov 1981

## IRVIN DAVIS: FOUNDING MEMBER

Irvin Davis, attorney-at-law and dancer at heart, has long been a part of the Country Dance Society, Boston Centre. In fact, he is the first to have been its president, and the Boston Centre was incorporated by him and his law office in 1945. In addition, he was also the incorporator of the New England Folk Festival Association (N.E.F.F.A.) and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston (R.S.C.D.S.), during the same years.

But with Irvin Davis there is far more than a procedural interest in country dancing; he has been interested in it for nearly fifty years to date, and at the time of CDS-Boston's incorporation he had already been dancing for over a decade and had been actively encouraging the incorporation of the groups that propagated the dancing he love so much. In fact, it was in 1933 that Irvin Davis first became enthralled with country dancing -- during the course of several ski trips in New Hampshire and Vermont. One evening after an active day of skiing, he was taken by a friend to a square dance -- and that did it; thereafter he sought out dances wherever he could find them. But that was just the American side of things; in 1939 he started English country dancing.

It was at the Leslie School (Boston) that he showed up one day expecting to find a square dance. However, instead he stumbled upon an English country dance, with Louise Chapin leading, and he just joined in -- and enjoyed it thoroughly. "Orleans Baffled" is the first English dance he remembers having danced. Thereafter Irvin Davis became an enthusiastic exponent of English dance, being especially enamored by its grace, rhythm and style. This is, of course, not to say that he appreciates American squares and contras any less!

When asked what he thought CDS-Boston should be encouraging and supporting most of all, Irvin Davis expressed his thoughts as clearly and succinctly as usual: English dance, both country and ritual (sword and Morris dancing), should be given the highest priority; these traditions are upheld in New England mainly by CDS, and they should be actively supported, developed and spread around. In addition, he would encourage re-instating song as an actively supported element of CDS-Boston, which has been devoting itself only to dance (and the music that makes the dancing possible, of course!). American dance should certainly be continued as actively as ever, but there is not the same cultural urgency for its support as there is for English dance.

In conclusion, this writer would like to express the most profound thanks, on behalf of all CDS members, to Irvin Davis for his many years of service and enthusiasm as a leading light in both the development and the maintenance of the Boston Centre. He is and will always be in our hearts.

Irvin Davis was awarded Life Membership in C.D.S. at the Annual Meeting in May, 1980.

- Roger Davidson

