Music and Dance in Middletown, Connecticut in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

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A Major Endeavor

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It is a cold, clear night in the beginning of December, dancing night in Middletown, Connecticut. Main Street is fairly empty, but a few people seem to be walking with direction. They head for the brightly lit assembly hall, huddled in their winter coats. They climb the stairs, check in at the door, and look around for their friends and neighbors. Everyone is wearing clothes that are a bit more special than those for everyday, and smiling in anticipation of the dance. The two fiddlers are standing on a small raised platform at the head of the hall, arguing over what tune to play first. Finally, the director of the evening steps onto the platform and says, "Okay, let's try a contra - ladies on the left, gentlemen on the right, up and down the hall, for as many as will..."

This scene actually took place in December of 1979, but it could just have easily have taken place in Middletown in 1779. People in New England have been involved with music and dance for hundreds of years, and the activities that happen in Middletown today are direct descendants of these New England, and earlier, English, traditions.

An examination of these traditions can reveal a great deal about lifestyles in Middletown during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Though a busy river port during this period, Middletown was much like other small, New England country towns. Almost all social life was centered around activities that one could participate in along with family, friends, and neighbors. Music, both sacred and secular, and dancing were important examples of such activities.

At this time, however, distinctions based on wealth and social position were gradually becoming more important. These were naturally reflected in both the dance and music that was popular in Middletown. There were still many aspects of dance and music, however, that everyone knew and enjoyed, and that involved the community as a whole.
In London in 1651, John Playford published what is recognized as the first dancing manual, using then popular English dances and tunes. It was extremely successful, and went through eighteen editions, appearing at various times over the course of one hundred years. The dances were refined versions of traditional and ritual dances that had been done in England for centuries. The refinements were due to the influence of those at the English court, and foreigners, such as the French and Italians.

These dances and tunes were reabsorbed into the English folk culture, and were brought over to New England with the colonists. As the strict Puritan clergy lost their influence over the New Englander’s lifestyle, dancing became increasingly widespread. By the eighteenth century, beginning with coastal cities and towns, and later, in more inland and rural regions, evidence can be found in newspapers, diaries, and copybooks of the popularity of dancing. A wide range of people participated in country dancing, though not necessarily together. In Middletown, the diaries of Mary Russell written 1796-1801, and Joshua Stow, written 1783-1785, both speak about dancing.

According to Mary Russell, there were three types of dances to which one could go. The first were private parties, where the host carried all expenses, and invited whom he or she pleased. Public balls were also held, such as the ball at the Yale commencement in 1797, that Mary Russell described as "very crowded". Some towns, including Middletown, also had dancing assemblies, where a person payed a flat fee of membership, and
was then entitled to entrance to all the assemblies of the season. The assemblies were naturally limited to those that could afford them, but anyone could have a dance in their largest room, with their family, friends, and neighbors.

Mary Russell lived in Middletown for about five years. She was extremely well written, and sensitive in her comments about the world in which she lived. Her friends, such as Samuel Watkinson and Elijah Hubberd, were among the wealthiest in Middletown, and it can be assumed from her descriptions that she was also fairly well off.

In 1797, Mary Russell wrote that they had one assembly during the year, which was "very pleasant". There were fifty people, and eighteen couples that danced, which, she continued, "for the very poor dancing room was quite enough". In 1798, she wrote that they had several assemblies, which were all "very agreeable". There was a private dance at Captain Vanduerson's home, where there were thirty people besides the family, and ten couples that danced in the back room "very commodiously". Mary Russell's concern with the size of the room is interesting, as houses were generally not very large, and thirty six people scrambling for space in a small back room could certainly spoil everyone's style and enjoyment.

On February 12, 1798, Elijah Hubberd had a dance at his house, "the best house in town". There were fifty people besides the family, and it was a "very pleasant dance", in "a charming room for dancing". On February 22, Mary Russell
wrote, "Last week we had another assembly, which is the last". There were forty people, very good music, and "some new Country Dances which we had from England" which were very well liked.

In 1799, the Russels had a dance at their own house. They had fourteen couples, and they brought a fiddler up from New Haven to play. She wrote, "We have besides this only had one dance this winter, which makes us think Middletown very dull indeed". There seems to be little other kind of entertainment in Middletown, such as theater or concerts, as one might find in Hartford or Boston. There were probably not enough people that would support such activities.

Joshua Stow, writing from 1783-1785, lived in Middlefield, a small rural district near Middletown. He was about eighteen when he wrote this diary, and was not particularly descriptive. He went to dances at the Butler's home on March 1, 1785, the Burdesay's on May 27, and the Wetmore's on October 10. Although he does not say much about them, it shows that a young man in a rural community did go to dances as a part of his round of social activities.

The dances that were done at this time were fairly simple. Most of them were in longways sets, where a line of men faced a line of women, each person facing their partner. The dance was done in subsets of the line of two or three couples groups that changed progressively, so that as many people that cared to could dance. These were called contra dances, from the French "contredanse". Other types of dances included
cotillions, or quadrilles, which were the forerunners of modern square dances, and circle dances for two, three, or an unlimited number of dancers.

The dances themselves were composed of standard figures done in various combinations. Once a person mastered these figures, they could do an unlimited number of dances. The dances all fit a standard tune form of thirty two measures, which could be repeated as many times as the dancers wished. This was especially important in the progressive contra dances, so that each couple could dance with all the other couples in the set.

An example of a dance that was popular in Middletown is "Soldier's Joy". It is a contra dance, done to a tune by the same name. This is common among dances and tunes, although it is possible to play any number of tunes to fit with a specific dance, because they are all of the same standard dance tune form.

"Soldier's Joy" was printed in a book of dances called Twenty Four Figures of the Most Fashionable Country Dances, Together with Eight Cotillions, for the year Eighteen Hundred. It was compiled by John H. Ives, who taught music in Middletown at that time. It was advertised for sale at the newspaper office on December 6, 1799, in the Middlesex Gazette.
Soldier's Joy

A 1- First couple (of each subset of three couples) lead down the outside and up again

A 2- First and Third couples draw partners quite around

B 1- Third couple promenade quite round

B 2- First couple cast off, rights and lefts

Although it is more difficult to find information concerning the less wealthy of Middletown, it is probably safe to assume that these dances were done by all the groups of people in town. François Marquis de Chastellux, a French army officer, wrote in his description of his travels through North America in the early 1780's, that "the most handsome young ladies of the neighborhood danced with the officers on the turf, in the middle of the camp..." Differences between groups most likely occurred in style of dancing, and when and where dancing took place. Because the dances were so simple, one could learn the basic steps and figures from anyone. By the turn of the nineteenth century, it is possible that children had grown up watching their parents dance, and that is how they learned.
Dances were generally held in people's homes, and although there had to be a minimum of space in which to move, it did not have to be much. It is certainly possible to push back the table and chairs, and dance with eight people. A musician did not even have to be present, as the beat could be stamped out or the tune sung by onlookers. In addition, many of the tunes had words, which could be sung to keep time.

Style of dancing is partially based on the consciousness of how one looks while dancing, and what image one desires to present to others. The late night who ever is around dance in my livingroom looks a lot different from the Country Dance and Song Society sponsored dance in New York City. Apparently in Middletown during this period, some people became concerned with their image and their dancing style. They wanted to appear like proper and cultured ladies and gentlemen, and so, in 1796, the Middletown era of the dancing master began.

The dancing master was an itinerant teacher of the polite art of dancing. His presence in a town was solely based on the town's ability and desire to support him. The average price in Middletown for dancing lessons was about six dollars for three months, approximately what some people earned in one week. Classes were generally segregated by sex, and sometimes there were special courses for children.

The first dancing master to advertise in the Middlesex Gazette was John C. Devero, on October 14, 1796.
"Dancing School: J.C. Devere, Dancing Master, respectfully informs the inhabitants of Middletown and its vicinity, that he intends opening a dancing school on the twentieth of October on the moderate terms of six dollars per quarter, days of attendance Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from half after three till six o'clock for Ladies, and for Gentlemen, from six to half after eight in the afternoon. He teaches plain fancy Minuett, Cotillion, Pettycotes, Irish Jigg and Reel in their various figures, the and much admired Scotch Reel, first second treble Hornpipes, Country Dances, etc. in the most elegant and modern stile, the greatest attention paid to carriage and address of his pupils. He humbly solicits the Patronage and protection of the Publick which will always be his constant study to merit. Private tuition, eight dollars per quarter."

It is interesting to note the stress that is placed on "the most elegant and modern stile" and "the carriage and address" of the pupil. The dancing master not only taught specific dances, but how to be refined and elegant. Those who could afford a dancing master were interested in appearing different from those who could not. This interest coincides with increasing differences in wealth, lifestyle, and material culture during this period. As an added bit of snobbery, lessons could be taken privately.

The actual dances that were taught also became examples of differences between classes of people. Traditional dances are generally simple, and easily transmitted from one generation to another through an oral/aural process. Soem of the dances that were taught by the dancing masters, however, were complicated, and necessitated a trained teacher. Dances such as minuets and Irish jigs can not be learned only through imitation.

John C. Devere continued teaching in Middletown through 1799.
The next teacher to come through Middletown was Mr. Armour, whose first advertisement in the Middlesex Gazette was on June 5, 1801.

"Mr. Armour presents his respects to the inhabitants of Middletown, and informs them that he proposes opening a Dancing School in this city on Friday, the twelfth of June. Mr. Armour solicits the patronage of the inhabitants, and assures them that every attention on his part shall be given to progress his pupils. The best attitudes given to move with grace, form a genteel carriage, and handsome address."

Mr. Armour continued to arrive in town every spring for four years.

In September 1805, Joseph Delarue arrived in Middletown, one of many French dancing masters found throughout New England. He held his classes at Mr. Ferno's Ball Room, where many of the Middletown assemblies were also held. He taught "French Cotillions, Waltz, Minuets, etc." and his lessons were Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, from three until seven. It is assumed that a person did not go to dancing school every day, as that would leave little time for work. Mr. Delarue lodged a Henry Duc's hotel.

Mr. Gimbrede taught in Mr. Swathel's Ball Room in 1807, and H.T. Fuller taught in Mr. Duc's Assembly Room in 1808 and 1809. In 1810, Louise Gervais became the Middletown dancing mistress.

"Louise Gervais has the honor to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Middletown that she intends opening a dancing school on the first of July next, until the first of October following. She hopes from the encouragement she has received for some years past in New York, that she will meet the approbation of the inhabitants of the town. The terms, days and hours of tuition will be made known when Miss Gervais arrives in Middletown."
The Middletown dancing assembly did not begin advertising in the Middlesex Gazette until 1804, though they were held for several years previous to that time, as evidenced in Mary Russel's diary. It is possible that the town was spreading out, and in order to reach a large number of people, an advertisement was necessary. The assemblies were held throughout the winter months, and arrangements were apparently made through the gentlemen of the town, who then, in turn, invited the women. To attend an assembly, one had to pay a membership fee, or be a specially invited guest. This naturally limited those who could take part. Usually, the same people who subscribed to the assembly, sponsored the dancing master.

"November 23, 1804: Those Gentlemen who wish to subscribe to the Middletown Dancing Assemblies are requested to meet this evening at Mr. Nichols', a seven o'clock, for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements."

"October 24, 1806: Those Gentlemen who are disposed to attend the Dancing Assemblies the ensuing winter are requested to meet at Mr. Nichols' on Wednesday evening the twenty ninth."

"November 26, 1807: In pursuance of the notification in the last Middlesex Gazette, a number of the gentlemen of the town met at Mr. Nichols'- They thought it best to have Dancing Assemblies the ensuing winter, and appointed Friday evening of this week for the choice of managers, at Mr. Nichols'. The gentlemen who are disposed to subscribe are requested punctually to attend, as in addition to the choice of managers, certain new regulations will be proposed."

Thaddeus Nichols was the town post master.

The job of manager could include acting as treasurer, membership secretary, keeping the books in order, renting the hall, hiring musicians, choosing the dances, insuring proper
protocol and behavior for the evening, and leading the dances.

On February 15, 1805, the following poem was printed in the Middlesex Gazette:

"From the New England Palladium

Horace Surpassed

In a Beautiful Description of a New England Country Dance

How funny t'is, when pretty lads and lasses
Meet all together, just to have a caper
And the black fiddler plays you such a tune as
sets you a frisking

High bucks and ladies, standing in a row all
Make finer show than a troop of continentals
Now see ______ it, rigadoon and chasse
Brimful of rapture

Spruce our gentlemen are, essenc'd with pomatnoi
Heads powdered white as Killington Peak snow
Ladies how brilliant! Fascinating creatures!
All silk and muslin

The poets tell us how one Mistery Orpheus
Led a rude ______ to a Country Dance, and
Play'd the brisk tune of Yankee Doodle on a
New Holland Fiddle

But now behold a sad reverse of fortune
(Life's brightest scenes are chequer'd with disaster)
Clumsy Charles Clumfoot treads on Tabby's gown
Tears all the tail off

Stop, stop the fiddler! -all away this racket
and wait! -see the ladies fainting
Paler than primrose: fluttering about like
pigeons affrighted

Not such the turmoil, when the sturdy farmer
Sees turbid whirlwinds beat his oats and ______ down
And the rude hail-stones, big as pistol ______
in his windows

Though's was unhappy, never seem to mind it
Both Punch and Sherry circulate the brisker
Or in a bumper, flowing with Madeira
Drown the misfortune

Willy Wagnimble dancing with ______ as light as air ballon inflated
Rigadoons round her, till the lady's heart is
Forc'd to surrender
Thus have I seen a humble bee or humbird
Fly rings about a violet or sunflower
Quaff from its blossoms many rich potations
Sweeter than nectar

Benov Bamboorg cuts the drollest capers
Just like a camel or hippocotamos
Jolly Jack Jumble makes a big as
Forty Dutch Horses"

Though the dance is called a "country dance", it is not particularly rural in character. "Country", however, is commonly used in place of "contra". The most popular instrument played at dances seems to have been the violin, though flutes and other woodwinds were also used. Professional musicians were rare in the eighteenth century, and the worth of a servant or slave was probably greatly increased if he could play the fiddle, like the black fiddler in the poem.

The poem notes that the dancers are in a line, as in a contra. Rigadoon is a step one uses at the conclusion of a chasse, consisting of

- beat one: hop on the left foot, right foot extended to the side
- beat two: Hop on the left foot, right foot extended in back of the left calf
- beat three: repeat beat one
- beat four: hop on the left foot, right foot in front of the left shin

The dancers are all dressed in their finest, which seems to show that the popular conception of a New England country dance was one of elegance. The poem, of course, is a satire on all the finery, including clumsy dancers, torn dresses, mad turmoil, mild inebriation, and passions of the heart.
For a satire of this nature to be successful, however, one must assume that many people of the day knew about or participated in country dancing.

In Wallingford, Connecticut, the Thanksgiving ceremonies of 1801 ended with dancing in the meeting house to the tune of Yankee Doodle.
While popular country dancing tended to divide the residents of Middletown and other New England towns according to their wealth, sacred music brought them together. A random sampling of the estate inventories in the Middlesex County probate records show almost everyone during this period in possession of two books - a Bible, and a Psalm book. Sacred music was overwhelmingly important in the lives of New Englanders.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the art of psalm singing had deteriorated to the point where a congregation might only know two or three tunes. These were learned by rote and sung by memory, and, according to contemporary accounts, sounded confused and discordant. In the 1720's, a movement began to teach the art of "regular singing".

On September 26, 1771, Enoch Huntington, the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Middletown, preached a sermon "On the Occasion of a Public Singing Meeting", advocating the singing schools.

"Religious singing is a duty of instituted worship, and in order for the decent and edifying performance of it, persons must take pains to learn and improve in the art; and surely our pains can no how be better bestowed than learning and improving in that which belongs to the more immediate service and worship of God: besides singing in itself is a very manly, ornamental, and useful accomplishment; and the time spent in learning it, as opportunity offers and duty requires, is well and laudably spent."

Singing schools were important in relation to religious activities, and were also an integral part of the social life
of New England towns. In addition to learning to sing and read music, singing meeting provided an opportunity to get together, see friends, and share an entertaining activity. A Yale undergraduate wrote in 1782:

"At present I have no inclination for anything, for I am almost sick of the world and were it not for the hopes of going to singing meeting tonight and indulging myself a little in some of the carnal delights of the flesh, such as kissing, squeezing, etc. etc. I should willingly leave it now, before ten o'clock and exchange it for a better."

Singing meeting, like church attendance, cut across lines of social distinctions and lifestyle.

On January 22, 1784, Joshua Stow wrote in his diary, "Went to Mr. Ezekiel Kellsey to learn to sing". He went to singing meeting on February 4, 5, and 6, and March 5 and 25 of that year. In 1785, he went to singing meeting on March 23, 30, April 19, 20, 22, 26, and May 1, 17, and 22. Sometimes he wrote that the meeting was held at the home of the Butler's. The fact that the dates of Joshua Stow's attendance at meetings are grouped together, possibly shows that an itinerant singing master came through Middlefield, and taught for a few weeks at a time. Itinerant teachers were common throughout New England during this time. In rural towns, they often stayed and taught at people's homes, such as the Butler's.

In Middletown, singing meeting was sometimes held at the courthouse. On January 30, 1801, a letter to the editors of the Middlesex Gazette complained of poor attendance at singing meeting:

"The writer of this will cheerfully devote his time and assistance to facilitate the progress of music, but, not being destitute of other pursuits, he is unwilling to be dragged to
the courthouse—to witness the expiring progress of music, to the utter loss of his time and efforts"—A Citizen

Singing meeting, like other social activities, apparently had some years when it was more popular than others. In another letter to the editors of the Middlesex Gazette, on March 29, 1810, a writer complimented the singing school teacher, Mr. Roberts:

"The progress made in psalmody by the school under the instruction of Mr. Roberts is both honorable to the scholars and creditable to the master, who has shown taste, skill, and unwearyed industry."

Sometimes a singing school had a sort of graduation ceremony or concert, as evidenced by this ad in the Middlesex Gazette on March 17, 1797:

"A Vocal Concert of Church Music will be performed by Mr. Spicer's scholars, in Chatham first society, in the sixth day of April next, precisely at two o'clock."

John Adams visited Middletown in 1771, and complimented the singing in his diary:

"Went to meet with Dr. Eliot Rawson and heard the finest singing that I ever heard in my life. The front and side galleries were crowded with rows of lads and lasses, who performed all their parts in the utmost perfection. I thought I was wrapped up. A row of women, all standing up, and playing their parts with perfect skill and judgement added a sweetness and spightliness to the whole which absolutely charmed me."

The fact that a wide assortment of people knew the art of "regular singing" is evidenced in this general appeal to the residents of Middletown to meet at the courthouse to learn music for the installation of Daniel Huntington as Congregational minister, in 1809:

"The Ladies and Gentlemen of the First Ecclesiastical Society who are singers are requested to meet on Friday evening next at the court house precisely at candle lighting,
for the purpose of learning some music for the approaching installation. It is hoped that every person who is able to sing will not fail to attend."  

A great variety of psalm and hymn books were for sale in Middletown, some complete with instructions on the rudiments of music. These included Read's *New American Singing Book* and *Columbian Harmonist*, Benham's *Federal Harmony*, Holyoke's *Christian Harmonist*, Olmstead's *Musical Olio*, Law's *Musical Primer*, and Dwight's *Psalms and Hymns*.

Religious music was also prominent at many public occasions. July fourth was often celebrated with parades, speeches, bands, and group singing. There were grand ceremonies in Middletown, as in other towns, commemorating the death of George Washington, in February of 1800. The ceremonies began and ended with prayer and were interspersed with music. A few hymns and psalms were sung at the gathering, including a hymn especially written for the occasion, dedicated to George Washington, which was sung to the tune of "Windham", an extremely popular psalm.  

Certain types of secular music, however, were not quite as widespread, and point out differences in lifestyles. Classical music was just beginning to become popular in the United States, and, at this point, was mostly confined to larger cities. (An advertisement for a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music ran in the Boston Columbia Centinal, on November 21, 1792. It included a Hayden symphony, a sonata on the pianoforte, a hautboy concerto, and several pieces on the harmonica.) Apparently in Middletown, only a small group of people were involved in this type of music.
On August 5, 1798, Mary Russell wrote in her diary of a picnic where "Miss Pomeroy sang several songs, and Mr. Samuel Watkinson played on the flute". She does not mention what they played, but as her description of the picnic shows it to be a genteel and refined affair, one can assume that the music was, also.

Lessons in instrumental music were offered at various times in Middletown. In 1800, John H. Ives ran this advertisement in the Middlesex Gazette:

"January 17, 1800—J.H. Ives most respectfully begs leave to acquaint the amateurs of music in Middletown, that he proposes opening a school, by subscription, for teaching the violin, violin cello, and German flute. Those gentlemen who wish to patronize his undertaking may know his terms by applying at the office of S.T. Hosmer Esq., where the subscription may be seen."

Stephen T. Hosmer was one of the more wealthy of Middletown, and his association with Ives suggests the sort of patronage that Ives might have received.

"January 23 1801: Music—A room is provided at the house of Captain Timothy Cornwall for the purpose of teaching instrumental music. The first meeting will be on Monday next, at half after five o'clock pm."

An examination of the estate inventories in the Middlesex County probate records show that apparently very few people owned musical instruments. This might not be an accurate representation, due to possible omission by those who took the inventories, or the fact that some people no longer had their instruments when they died. Mary Russell, for example, wrote that Samuel Watkinson played the flute at the picnic,
but the inventory of his estate does not include a flute.
But in general, it seems that there were few instruments in
Middletown, and most of them belonged to wealthy men.

Nathaniel Boardman, who died in May, 1807, owned one
small flute. His estate was valued at $2790.34 12

Nathaniel Shaler, who died in 1817, owned a piano forte.
His estate was valued at $37,962.09 13

Samuel Dickinson, who died in March 1818, owned one old
brass (?) violin. His estate was valued at $59.24 14

William Hand, who died in October 1820, owned one flute
and one clarinet. His estate was valued at $3146.78 15

Israel Kelsey, who died in July 1824, owned a violin and
bow and two pitch pipes. His estate was valued at $4480.77 16

Nathaniel Shaler was only listed as owning a piano forte
when he died, though John Adams wrote about him in his diary
in 1771, when Shaler was twenty five, describing him as "a
great proficient in music, plays upon the flute, fife, harpsichord,
spinet, etc., associates with the young and gay, and is a very
fine Connecticut gentleman."

There are no advertisements of musical instruments for
sale in the Middlesex Gazette. Instruments were most likely
ordered from Hartford, New Haven, or Boston. Isaac Bull
advertised in the Connecticut Courant, in Hartford, on December
23, 1799, selling flutes, fifes, violins, other stringed
instruments, books, and wires. In the inventory of the estate
of Daniel Mitchell, however, in 1806, amongst the entire
contents of a dry goods and general store was found one flute.
Thus, it is possible that instruments were periodically for
sale in Middletown. a Mr. Lalemant

On April 27, 1797, advertised his household goods for
auction in the Middlesex Gazette, including a piano forte.

Instruments were not entirely confined to the ownership
of the wealthy. On June 22, 1797, an advertisement was run
in the Middlesex Gazette, looking for Abial Abby, a deserted
soldier from Tolland, Connecticut, who played the fiddle and
the fife. On February 7, 1800, another advertisement noted
that a handkerchief of boys clothing, including overalls and
a checked shirt, and a fiddle, were found by the river. This
might have belonged to a runaway slave, servant, or apprentice.
Also, the fiddler in the poem about the New England country
dance was a black man. The instruments that most likely
belonged to poorer men were fiddles, fifes, and drums.

In addition to the previously mentioned popular dances
and dance tunes, another type of music that was easily
accessible to all groups of people was military band music.
In 1801, an instructor was provided in Middletown for a band
of musicians for the Eleventh Company of Light Infantry in
the Twenty Third Regiment. He was to

"occupy a central room in the city, beginning instruction
on Monday the twenty sixth, and give private lessons constantly
days and evenings each week, at three dollars per month, to
all persons who wish to learn to play on the fife, flute,
hautboy, clarinett, bassoon, violin, etc. Those who make such
prefficiency on the instruments used by the band as to be able
to play in it will, if they choose to be annexed to it for three
years, be provided with instruments and a uniform for that
period, and have their lessons without expense." 19

An offer such as this could provide anyone with the
instruction necessary to learning an instrument.
On January 29 of the same year, Michael Meloney offered instruction for playing on the drum, at his house.

Military bands played at many types of public gatherings, where the community was involved as a whole, in addition to being used for the militia. Events such as the Fourth of July, and public hangings usually involved the presence of the band. The music they played, mostly on fife and drum, was similar, and often identical to dance tunes.

In 1777, eighteen year old Giles Gibbs Jr., a fifer in the Revolutionary War, wrote out a collection of military and popular music then in use for the fife. His manuscript, from Ellington Connecticut, was most likely copied from printed fife tutors, and other manuscripts. The music was apparently widely known in New England. Many of his tunes are found in other manuscripts of dances with tunes from the same era.

"Nancy Dawson's March" (Giles Gibbs Jr. His Book for the Fife)

"Nancy Dawson" (Clement Weeks Commonplace Book of Country Dances)
Thus, it seems that the two forms of instrumental music, dance tunes and military music, often overlapped, and were accessible and popular with all ranges of people. Individuals might not have been able to play the tunes on an instrument, but most likely knew them from dancing or hearing a military band. In addition, many of these tunes had words set to them, the most well known being Yankee Doodle. This is a tradition that reaches back to sixteenth and seventeenth century England. For example, the dance "Friar in the Well", which is found in John Playford's first edition of The English Dancing Master, is also found as a ballad, to the same tune.

"The Friar in the Well" Longways for as many as will

Leade up a double foward and back. That again.

First couple cast off and goe to the lower end and stay there the rest following, set and turn single. All this back again to your places.

Sides all. That again.

Men slip just before your Women and goe a double up and fall on the Womens sides, set and turn single. Women slip before your women goe up, fall all to your own places, set and turn single

Armes all. That again.

First man put back the second woman by both hands while the second man puts back the first woman, fall into each others places, all the rest doing the like, set and turn single. All this again to your owne places.
The Friar in the Well

As I lay musing all alone, fa la, la la la, la la la
A merry tale I thought upon, fa la, la la la, la la la
Now listen a while and I will tell
Of a Friar that loved a bonny lass well
Fa la, la la la, Fa la long-tre down dilly

He came to her when she was going to bed
Desiring to have her maidenhead
But she denied his desire
And said that she did fear hell fire

Tush, tush, quoth the friar thou need not doubt
If thou wert in hell I could sing thee out
Why then, quoth the maid, thou shalt have they request
The Fryar was as glad as a fox in his nest

But one thing more I must request
More than to sing me out of hell-fire
That is for doing of the thing
An angel of money you must bring

Tush, tush, quoth the Fryar, we two shall agree
No money shall part thee and me
Before thy company I shall lack
I'll pawn the grey gown off my back

The maid bethought her on a while
How she might this Fryar beguile
When he was gone the truth to tell
She hung a cloth before a well

The Fryar came as his bargain was
With money unto his bonny lass
Good morrow, fair maid, good morrow quoth he
Here is the money I promised thee

She thanked him and she took the money
Now let's go to it my own dear honey
Way stay a while some respite make
If my master should come he would us take

Alas, quoth the maid, my master do come
Alas, quoth the Fryar, where shall I run
Behind yar cloth, run thou, quoth she
For there my master cannot see

Behind the cloth the Fryar went
And was in the well incontinent
Alas, quoth he, I'm in the well
No matter, quoth she, if thou wert in hell
Thou said thou couldst sing me out of hell
I prithee sing thyself out of the well
Sing out, quoth she, with all your might
Or else thou art like to sing there all night

The Fryar sang out with a pitiful sound
Oh! Help me out or I shall be drowned
She heard him make such a pitiful noan
She helped him out and bid him go home

Quoth the Fryar I never was so served before
Away, quoth the wench, come here no more
The Fryar he walked along the street
As if he'd been a new washed sheep

"Over The Hills and Far Away", which, like "Nancy Dawson", is found in Clément Week's commonplace book of country dances, is also found as a British army recruiting song, and a song from the popular Beggar's Opera.

"Over the Hills and Far Away"

First and Second men change places, passing right shoulders, and set twice to each other, while first and second women do the same

Repeat to places

First couple cross over one couple with one and one half turn
First and Second couples right and left

"Over the Hills and Far Away"

Hark now the drums beat up again
For all true soldier gentlemen
Then let us 'list and march, I say
Over the hills and far away
chorus: Over the hills and o'er the main
To Flanders, Portugal and Spain
Queen Anne commands and we'll obey
Over the hills and far away

All gentlemen that have a mind
To serve the queen that's good and kind
Come 'list and enter into pay
Over the hills and far away

No more from sound of drum retreat
While Marlborough and Galway beat
The French and Spaniards every day
When over the hills and far away

The 'prentice Tom he may refuse
To wipe his angry master's shoes
For then he's free to sing and play
Over the hills and far away

We then shall lead more happy lives
By getting rid of brats and wives
That scold on both night and day
When o'er the hills and far away

From the Beggar's Opera

Were I laid on Greenland's coast
And in my arms embraced my lass
Warm amidst eternal frost
Too soon the half year's night would pass

Were I sold on Indian soil
Soon as the burning day was closed
I could mock the sultry toil
When on my charmer's breast reposed

And I would love you all the day
Every night would kiss and play
If with me you'd fondly stray
Over the hills and far away
On August 21, 1801, an advertisement for The Vocal Companion and Masonic Register appeared in the Middlesex Gazette. This was a collection of songs for the Freemasons, which was sold by subscription to all the Freemason groups in New England. The songs were set to popular tunes, mostly dance tunes. No tunes were actually printed in the book, but next to each title was the name of a tune, to which the song would fit. One must assume that many people knew the tunes, if it was not found necessary to print out the notes.

One such song was set to the tune of "Rural Felicity", now commonly known as "Haste to the Wedding".

"Rural Felicity"

A1 First couple turn with right hand (8 beats) cast off (8 beats)

A2 First couple turn with left hand (8 beats) cast up back to place (8 beats)

B1 First and Second couples circle four hands around and back

B2 First couple cross over two couples and lead up the center to second place, second couple dancing up

A3 First couple set to contrary corners

B3 First couple lead out at the sides
"Rural Felicity" from the Compleat Tutor for the Guittar

Come haste to the wedding ye friends and ye neighbors
The lovers their bliss can no longer delay
Forget all your sorrows, your cares and your labours,
And let ev'ry heart beat with rapture today
Ye voteries all, attend to my call
Come rebel in pleasures that never can cloy
Come see rural felicity
Which love and innocence ever enjoy

Freemason Song from the Vocal Companion and Masonic Register
sung to the tune of "Rural Felicity"

Ye dull stupid mortals, give o'er your conjectures
Since Freemasons' secrets ye ne'er can obtain
The bible and compass are our directors
And shall be as long as this world doth remain
Here friendship inviting, here freedom delighting
Our moments in innocent mirth we employ
chorus: Come see Mason's felicity
Working and singing with hearts full of joy

No other society that you can mention
Which has been, is now, or hereafter shall be
However commendable be its intention
Can ever compare with divine Masonry
No envy, no quarrels can here blast our laurels
No passion our pleasure can ever annoy
chorus:

To aid one another we always are ready
Our rites and our secrets we carefully guard
The lodge to support, we like pillars are steady
No Babel confusion our work can retard
Ye mortals come hither, assemble together
And taste of those pleasures which never can cloy
chorus:

We are to the master for ever obedient
Whenever he calls, to the lodge we repair
Experience has taught us that 'tis most expedient
To live within compass and act on the square
Let mutual agreement be Freemason's cement
Until the whole universe time shall destroy
Come, see Mason's felicity
Working and singing with hearts full of joy
If New Englanders were so fond of psalm singing during this period, which they apparently were, it is probably safe to assume that they did other types of singing as well. Many English ballads were brought over with the colonists, and could, up until recent years, still be found in their early English forms in rural parts of this country. In 1720, Thomas Symmes, while advocating the establishment of regular singing schools, argued that they would have "a tendency to divert young people... from learning idle, foolish, yea, pernicious songs and ballads, and banish all such trash from their minds."

Ballads and songs were often printed in the Middlesex Gazette in Middletown. One song, of an obvious secular nature, was called "The Cabin Boy". It was printed on November 13, 1807.

From dad and mam's society, whose worth I dare maintain
I brav'd the wind variety, upon the dangerous main
Quite young I'm drove about the ship, though I my time employ
In trolling a glee, or quaffing my flip
And I swear and tear and smoke and joke
And hard reef and steer, like an old heart of oak
Although but a cabin boy

I've a pretty lass as young as I, for whose sweet sake I roam
Resolv'd right manfully to try, to bear her riches home
While up I mount the top or yard, and cannons loud annoy
The whizzing shot I ne'er regard
But swear and tear, smoke and joke
And stand to my gun like an old heart of oak
Although but a cabin boy

Should the news reach home (to shock her)
That alack! I'm lost at sea
Why sure in Davy's locker, there's room enough for me
But if successful little Ben, steers homeward to his joy
With a cargo of shiners, messmate, then
I'll drink and sing and smoke and joke
And stick to my Sal like an old heart of oak
Although but a cabin boy
On August 21, 1801, the Middlesex Gazette printed "Madeline of Aberdeen", a song of common theme and strange rhyme.

The first verse:

"So fair a maid was never seen
As Madeline
Of Aberdeen
When she tripp'd lightly o'er the green
Her face was rosy, gay her mien
And happy had I ever been
Had I ne'er known young Madeline"

In 1798, the *Columbian Songster* was published in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Though it is unknown whether any of these songs were sung in Middletown, or even Connecticut, it is interesting to note the types of songs that were published in this songbook of the period.

"When I was of tender age, and in my youthful prime
My mother oft would in a rage, cry, girl, take care in time
For you are now so foward grown, the men will you pursue
And all the day this was her tone, mind hussey, what you do...

and

Let's be jovial, fill our glasses
Madness tis for us to think
How the world is ruled by asses
And the wife are swayed by chink

Wine will make us red as roses
And our sorrows quite forget
Come, lets fuddle all our noses
Drink ourselves quite out of debt...

Music and dance in Middletown appeared in many forms. Sacred music, most of which involved group singing, was shared by all the members of the community. They learned the music together, and sang together in both church and singing meeting.
Psalms and hymns were also sung at home, with family or friends.

Other styles of singing, including songs and ballads, were also widespread, and accesable to all the people in town. Military band and dance music might not have been played by everyone, but it was probably familiar to all. It also seems that many people danced, no matter what their economic or social position.

Dancing, however, and certain forms of instrumental music, show the beginnings of a culture where participation in social activities is based on wealth and status. (One did not attend the dancing assembly just because one lived next door to someone who did.) This breakdown of community is apparent in many other aspects of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century life, and continues to this day, where everyone knows and enjoys widely ranging and different forms of music and dance.
Notes

1. VanCleef  *Social Dance in 18th Century Connecticut*  p. 6
2. Ives  *Twenty Four Figures of the Most Fashionable Country Dances*
3. Francois, Marquis de Chastellux, quoted in Camus  *Military Music of the American Revolution*  p. 171
4. Middlesex Gazette March 8, 1810
5. VanCleef  *Social Dance in 18th Century Connecticut*  p. 26
6. Middlesex Gazette March 11, 1801
7. as quoted in Hazen  *Brief History of the First Church of Christ*
8. as quoted in Cobb  *The Sacred Harp*  p. 61
9. as quoted in Hazen  *Brief History of the First Church of Christ*
10. Middlesex Gazettee August 24, 1809
11. Middlesex Gazette February 14, 1800
11a. Middlesex Gazette  January 23, 1801
12. Middlesex County Probate Records  volume 3
13. Ibid.  volume 11
14. Ibid.  volume 11
15. Ibid.  volume 12
16. Ibid.  volume 13
17. as quoted in Brooks  *Olden Time Music*
18. Middlesex County Probate Records  volume 8
19. Middlesex Gazette January 23, 1801
20. Middlesex Gazette January 29, 1801
21. Gibbs  *His Book for the Fife*  p. 34
22. Keller and Sweet  *American Country Dances of the Revolutionary Era*
23. Playford  *The English Dancing Master*
24. from the singing at the School for Traditional Dance and Song, Brattleboro, Vermont workshop in the Era of the Dancing Master
25. Keller and Sweet  *American Country Dances of the Revolutionary Era*
Notes (continued)

26. from the singing at the workshop the Era of the Dancing Master
27. Keller and Sweet *American Country Dances of the Revolutionary Era*
28. Van Cleef *Social Dance in 18th Century Connecticut* frontispiece
29. Freemasons *The Vocal Companion and Masonic Register*
30. as quoted in Chase *America's Music* p.15
31. Larkin *The Columbian Songster*
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10. Larkin, S. **The Columbian Songster** J. Melcher Portsmouth New Hampshire 1798 (Evans #33983)


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diaries of Mary Russel (1796-1801) and Joshua Stow (1793-1795)

workshop in "The Era of the Dancing Master" at the School for Traditional Dance and Song, Brattleboro, Vermont November 16-18, 1979
"The Yankees of England made up a little group of people to go to any world they could find and make a home of it. Their ancestors taught them to go out and plow the fields, not to be put out of touch with the world. It was a matter of necessity that they developed the industry, the patience, the faculty for everything, the deep-seated all-around knowingness which made them yeoman Yankees."

-Mrs. Frank Cheney, trustee of the Mary Whitall Ewen, Guilford, Connecticut speech on opening day, 1964

Although a modern reader might smile at Mrs. Cheney's otherwise charming image of the "real" Yankee, it is no mean omen. Through popular culture, the media, and even through the educational system, notions of what it means to be a Yankee remain reinforced. Anyone who has read an issue of "Country Journal" or "Vermont Life", cut out like it's hats in elementary school, or bought Vermont Earl "milk" at the supermarket has shared in this myth.

"Months after leaving the valley...I called my child tolling the virtues of the valley. I am often tempted to trade when slick for country chic and a warming memory, sing in old songs with old friends."

-Perry Sandkofski, article on New York, A Tourist's Guide, "Vermont Valley National Geographic", 1980

Alongside the myth of what it means to be a Yankee, or to be Vermonter, is the myth that the New Englanders are unique, who, because of their virtues and their lifestyle, live in a more fulfilling life than those in the mainstream of society. Because that sort of lifestyle is not as common in the modern society, it is assumed that these folk groups are relics of an earlier way of life. It naturally follows to assume that in the "olden days", [Transcribed page immediately follows this page.]
“The yeoman of England made up an agricultural population equal to any the world has seen: and were men of such bone and sinew and pedurable [sic] toughness as to make the best possible material for colonization. It was, however, only after they had been trained for generations in the school of dire necessity that they developed the ingenuity, the ready wit, the faculty for everything, the comprehensive all around knowingness which go to make up the finished Yankee.”

-Mrs. Frank Cheney, trustee of the Henry Whitfield Museum, Guildford, Connecticut

speech on opening day, 1904

Although a modern reader might smile at Mrs. Cheney’s enthusiasm, this image of the “real” Yankee is by no means foreign. Through popular culture, the media, and even through the educational system, notions of what a true “Yankee” is are reinforced. Anyone who has read an issue of “Country Journal” or Vermont Life”, [sic] cut out Pilgrim’s hats in elementary school, or bought Vermont Maid “maple syrup” at the supermarket has shared in this myth.

“Months after leaving the valley… I find myself valuing the virtues of these valley people more and more. I am often tempted to trade urban slick for country hick and a warming evening singing old songs with old friends.”

-Perry Carfinkel, article on Madawaska, A Maine-Now Brunswick border valley

“National Geographic” 1980

Alongside the myth of what a Yankee, on New England is all about, is the myth that there are folk groups in New England, who, because of their virtues and simple life styles, lead better and more fulfilling lives than those in the mainstream of society. Because that sort of lifestyles is viewed as an anachronism in this society, it is assumed that these folk groups are relics of an earlier way of life. It naturally follows to assume that in the “olden days”,
everyone led this virtuous, well-ordered sort of life, and
time evenings were spent singing the old songs with one's
old friends.

The evils of modernization are commonly charged with
the destruction of these old ways. Supposed lost traditions
are dutifully lamented, while the past, and what relics of
it that are found in the present, is revered. As evidenced
by Mrs. Cheney's speech, this idealization of the past was
as strong in the early twentieth century as it is today.

Folklorists and historians of culture generally see
themselves as working outside of these popular images of the
past, and dismiss them as romanticized. Yet, those involved
in folklore and historical scholarship, upon whose work
most general knowledge of past lifestyles is based, share
in many of these same myths. A close examination of these
intellectual's definition of "folk groups", and the way they
view the "folk" in terms of New England culture reveals that
much scholarship concerning the "folk" is based on the same
attitudes and idealized notions as is found in popular culture.

While definitions have been a source of discussion and
argument for years, there are certain characteristics of the
"folk" that are generally agreed upon. Folklorists and
cultural and social historians consider the "folk" to be a
homogeneous group of people, defined by regional, ethnic,
or occupational boundaries. As social scientists are fond of
definitions, these boundaries are important, as they enable the folklorist to decide who is in a group, and who is not. As a result of this homogeneity, the "folk" share common lifestyles, material culture, values, and traditions.

In addition to the physical community, these shared cultures create a mental sense of community within the group that is vital to their own definition of themselves. It also enables non-academic outsiders to define the group.

Folk groups are generally thought to be isolated from the rest of society, by either geographical boundaries, or mental attitude. They are divorced from the mainstream of society, having different lifestyles and folkways, and are removed from popular, commercial, and high culture, due to their own choice, or their own ignorance. These outside influences are not seen to play any major role in folk culture. What outside cultural information that is received is either suitable for incorporation into the folk culture, or is ignored.

The oral/aural process is considered to be of prime importance to a folk group, as it is almost the sole way that cultural information is exchanged. This process of oral/aural transmission is important, as it allows for the influence of the individual. For example, Singer B, while learning a song from Singer A, might forget or change some of the words or melody. This is a continual process, so that
when Singer F learns the song, it might have become a totally new version. It is therefore helpful if a group is primarily illiterate, or does not depend on writing or mass communication, so that this process can take place. Writing something down freezes it, and makes it impervious to change.

The concept of tradition is also very important in a discussion of a folk group. Ideas and ways of living are passed from one generation to another, as each older generation prepares the new one for life within the same group - a life that will have continuity over the years. Those children in turn will teach their children the group's way of living, complete with the cultural forms necessary for that life.

Folk groups also have a sort of group attitude, or consciousness, so that, for example, a singer who hears a new song will know instinctively whether it would be appropriate to the group's general repertoire, and would either accept or reject it, according to the group's shared values. If a child grows up in that community, he or she will learn what is accepted through a child's normal socialization process, so that decisions of this nature become subconscious. Changes in what is accepted are possible, but they are generally seen to take place over long periods of time, without disturbing the continuity of the folk culture.

In the light of this general definition, it is easier to understand popular culture's preoccupation with "quaintness", and "the world we have lost" attitude when dealing with
"folk". Though couched in the terms of the social scientist, an emphasis is placed on values and lifestyle that are no longer a part of modern society. Folk culture is seen to be a part of a pre-modern, community-based society, where continuity and tradition are of great importance. Because such values are viewed as positive when compared to the alienating and fast-paced world in which we now live, the life of the "folk" is seen as "better".

True "folk", like the true Yankee, are believed to be a dying breed. Pete Seeger, a well-known performer of topical and "folk" based material, wrote in the early 1970's that "There are only a few of the genuine old country ballad singers left, who have not been influenced by radio, TV, and book learning." It would be interesting to find such a person, though the likelihood seems very small.

In addition to idealizing the world of the "folk", scholars have created a very exclusive category. It would be difficult to find a group in the United States that is homogeneous, and isolated, with a vital oral/fami tradition that remains uninfluenced by the outside world. The assumption is that it would only be difficult today, and that folk groups who fit the definition were widespread as recently as the early twentieth century, but in order to truly fall within the bounds of the definition, one would have to search further back in time. In New England, especially, one would have to reach back to the seventeenth
century, where, even then, it would be questionable.

In the Puritans were an average folk group, they would have, coming from England, a country rich in tradition, brought many of their English folkways with them. This is generally true of their material culture, though it was obviously adapted to their new environment, but it is not the case with their beliefs and values. Religion was the primary focus for the Puritan's life, and lifestyles and attitudes were structured around it, creating a totally new way of life.

It would be possible to argue that religion because the focus of a new folk culture, with sacred music functioning as folk music, transmitting values through its form and text. But unlike the previously defined "folk", the Puritans were all literate, and communication of ideas relied heavily on the written word. This is direct opposition to the model of the folk where the oral/auld process is the major mode for the transmission of values.

In addition, although the first few generations of New Englanders assumed that there would be a continuity in their lives and in the lives of succeeding generations, change came rapidly. Briefly, various opinions arose concerning Puritanism and its role, and the role of the new settlements. The Anglicans, with their more worldly attitudes, increasingly gained power. New immigrants, who did not share the original settlers' religious zeal, were arriving,
and families and parts of families were constantly on the move in the endless search for land. By the late eighteenth century, communication was open between the various towns in New England, and between New England and England. Information and styles were constantly exchanged. These trends continue into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at an increasingly rapid rate.

Enough of early New England's cultural activity, however, suited the model of the "folk", so that early folklorists, working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, found a suitable group to idealize. Though it was by no means the primary mode of communication of values, the process of oral/aural transmission did exist, as it does, to some extent, in every culture. Though small towns in the Green Mountains received newspapers and mail and visitors, it was easy to see them as isolates. And though dances were taught by paid, professional dancing masters, who emphasized deportment and manners, they followed forms found in England, and so were assumed to be "folk".

This idealized and almost worshipful attitude toward the "folk" can be found in folk music and folklore scholarship from the early twentieth century to the present. In 1917, the English Cecil Sharp published his collection of English ballads and folk songs that he discovered extant in the Southern Appalachians. Referring to the mountain people who sang the songs, he wrote, "Although uneducated...they possess an elemental wisdom, abundant knowledge, and intuitive understanding which those only who live in constant touch with nature and face to face with reality seem to be able to acquire."
Richard Dorson, a folklorist writing in 1976, noted that "Sharp established for American folklore scholarship the guidelines of pastness and physical remoteness which would be followed for the next half century." 

In the late 1930's and 1940's, Helen Harkness Flanders did a great deal of folk song and ballad collecting throughout New England. She, too, was charmed by the past and the simple life.

"I knew there were certain farmhouses where the past lingers into the present in haunting indescribable fashion... possibly it is sung by the spring water running into the barrel beside the soapstone sink, possibly it is concentrated in the timeless odors of old fabrics, worn pine floors and wide, sooty chimneys..."

In 1947, a Decca record album noted that "In the last decade America has learned that it possesses a treasure of folk music as rich and as captivating as that of any other country in the world. Decca published a series of folk music albums including such "folk" as Burl Ives and Carl Sandburg.

In notes edited by Alan Lomax, "one of the foremost authorities on American folk music", Carl Sandburg is described as

"a square-jawed Swede out of the Midwest who can moan a homespun Negro spiritual like a Black Baptist deacon leading his freedom hungry congregation... a grown up hobo, an expert "fright train humber", who can chant a western ballad like a saddle-bowed cowhand off the Chisholm Trail... he grew up with school and baseball and odd jobs and the prospect of having to scramble for a living... but always Sandburg, the poet and great creative listener, was digging into the heart of this simple and subtle people's music..."

Lomax also contributed such nonsense as "These songs grew out of the lives of the American people. In the beginning some of the ballads were composed by one singer, but, like a true folk composer, he preferred to remain nameless."

In the preface to his 1975 book Folk Song USA, Alan Lomax also wrote, "This art lives upon the lips of the multitude..."
and is transmitted by the grapevine, surviving sometimes for centuries because it reflects so well the deepest emotional convictions of the common man."

In Folklore On The American Land, a 1972 collection of a vast assortment of riddles, epitaphs, place names, and the like, Duncan Darich, a professor at American University writes, "Folklore is deep in us, immemorial. It is a child born with a caul, it is a pine coffin carried down a country road, It lies on the land, the roots and greatness of a people. It walks with us on the sidewalks under the neon lights... For some of us folklore is a memory of the American past, and our own past. For others it is a living heritage, as lively as a colt in the south pasture. For both it is good, as grass roots are good."

Still another example of the emotional attitude toward a supposed scholarly field can be found in Songs of Independence, a book of eighteenth century songs and ballads, compiled by Irwin Silber. He writes "...But there is another side to this America. I found it in the songs of black men and women resisting slavery, and young farm boys who marched off to death singing of Old John Brown. I found it in the songs of dirt farmers and homesteaders who tried desperately to hack a living out of the land and learned that in order to survive they had to fight not only the depredations of nature but the concentrated economic power of railroads, banks and monopolies. I found it in the songs of those who tried to make things better for themselves and others - sometimes through the ballot box, and sometimes, like the miners of Ludlow, Colorado in 1912, by picking up a gun to defend their own."

These idealistic notions had their beginnings in the work of intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of them came from middle-class families, and were raised to assume a position in middle-class America. To many of them, however, that life had little appeal, as it seemed dull, cold, and alienating. In addition, unlike previous generations, this generation had to deal with relatively little parental authority,
especially with regards to religion, and vocational choices. This independence led many to feel that they, along with society, had lost their innocence.

As a result, many intellectuals became preoccupied with the search for a wholesome, simple life. This was evidenced by the increased interest in immigrant groups, and the study of such fields as anthropology and folklore. In a sense, the image of the "folk" was created in order to fulfill that search for "lost innocence", and suitable peoples were then found to play those roles. To a society troubled by increasing alienation, the community and continuity of the "folk" was very appealing.

Intellectuals, by their very nature, must remain as outsiders to a folk group. They fit people into neatly established categories, but often ignore how the "folk" perceive themselves. The "folk" are seen to be genuinely concerned that the old traditions are preserved. It is tacitly assumed that modernization comes grudgingly, if at all, and there is always a wistful glance backwards.

It is only recently, however, that the "folk" have come to see their traditions in the grandiose terms of the rich cultural heritage that must be preserved. The average family of the eighteenth century did not build their house the same way the grandfather did, because, to them, there were better and more pleasing ways. By the same token, early twentieth
century "folk" were as eager to buy radios as anyone else. Rapid change and a desire for development and modernization have always been a part of the American scene.

One example of the "folk's" attitude toward preservation can be found in the Henry Whitfield House, in Guilford, Connecticut. It is a stone house, built around 1640, and it is considered to be one of the oldest surviving houses in the United States. In 1899, and again in the 1930's, it was "restored" to its supposed "original" state, but as recently as the 1860's, it was a run down, old farmhouse, and the stone walls, which are the pride and joy of the Guilford Historical Society, were covered with ugly, grey stucco.

Many cultural artifacts that are considered to be "folk" by scholars, are, in fact, unschooled imitations of high culture. For example, much has been made of the "folk art" paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and artists' "quaint" and "primitive" use of color and perspective. These artists, however, did not paint this way because of any subconscious attitudes formulated because of their relationship to their group. Rather, they were trying to follow high culture forms while untrained in actual methods and processes. If such artists' work is evidence of their need to identify with a group, it was not the "simple, wholesome folk" whose values they sought to express, but the values and aesthetics of high culture.
The glorification of "folk art" is evident in such publications as *The Art of the Common Man in America*, which was the exhibit catalog for a "folk art" showing at the Museum of Modern Art" in New York in 1932, one of the first exhibits of its kind. It explains the then recent development of interest in folk art:

"The discoverers of its (folk art's) esthetic quality were the pioneers of modern art who began coming back to this country from France about 1910. These artists were in revolt against the naturalistic and impressionistic tendencies of the nineteenth century, and their emphasis upon a return to the sources of tradition had given them an interest in primitive and naive art..."

Holger Cahill, the author of the introduction to the catalog, goes on to explain and define "folk art." While he includes such information as the fact that in 1733, a John Smith was advertising in the Boston News Letter that he had a large collection of prints after the great Masters to sell, indicating that New Englanders had high culture forms available to them, he describes this art solely as the "authentic expression of the American experience." Cahill also avoids any discussion of what the term "folk expression" might mean, and how this sort of expression might function within a folk group. Instead, he merely claims that because it is not high culture art, it must be folk art, existing amongst standards of its own. As he writes, "The work of these men is folk art because it is the expression of the common people, made by them and intended for their use and enjoyment."

While Cahill elevates this art to one worthy of notice (by high culture institutions like the Museum of Modern Art)
he also looks down on the artists. He claims that folk art is a "simple, unaffected and childlike expression of men and women who had no schooling in art, and who did not even know that they were producing art."

In 1957, the catalog of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Exhibit at Colonial Williamsburg made the claim that "folk art is not an unskilled imitation of fine art... It lives in its own world and is responsive to its own surroundings". The question of just what the world of these artists consists of is not particularly explored, though the catalog goes on to say that folk artists "often used classical columns, draped curtains and romantic landscape backgrounds as they were "not unaware of artistic conventions of their time".

In his work *Craven Images*, Allan Ludwig discussed the origins of New England stone-carving, and pointed out that many New England styles of gravestone carving come directly from English urban forms. This is especially true of forms found in the coastal regions, which Ludwig refers to as "provincial baroque". He traces the development of these styles from cultivated art forms in England, through their diffusion through rural areas of England, to their ultimate transmission to New England by popular woodcutters.

Ludwig also discusses the "ornamental" style of stone-carving found in inland New England, particularly in the Connecticut River valley. These styles are less related to English high culture art, and date from the late seventeenth
and early eighteenth centuries. This area of New England was more isolated than the coast during this period, and the people remained more strictly religious, so that these more individualistic styles of stonecarving can be seen as the expression of religious attitudes. Ludwig notes, however, that "as the eighteenth century progressed, Connecticut Valley carvers became more adept at miming the coastal provincial baroque style", and as a secular culture gradually displaced the religious one, the ornamental style gave way to the neoclassical styles, which, by the early nineteenth century, was the only form used.

Ludwig cautions against romanticizing these traditions, and writes, "Those who thirst after a truly American image, and image unculled by the watered down provincialisms which are so much a part of the colonial experience, will be quick to call the vernacular tradition of the rural stonecarvers both archaic and truly American."

These forms are not archaic, as they can not be traced back beyond the seventeenth century, and they are not "truly American", as they use symbols found throughout the world, but especially follow styles found in England.

The music and dance of early New England are other examples of vernacular cultural forms that have been pushed into the "folk" mold. Most scholarship in these fields has dealt with questions concerning what the people were singing or dancing, but little attention has been paid to the ways in which music and dance functioned in that society, or how it was viewed by the people of that time. Because much of the
music and dance that was popular in early New England took the forms of English traditions, it was assumed that they continued to play the same traditional roles.

Upon closer examination of primary sources, however, it appears that none of the music and dance that was popular in New England during this time could be called "folk music". The possible exception to this was the sacred music of the seventeenth century, which served as the music of a definable group, transmitting certain values and attitudes. But as the religious leaders gradually lost their power, religion played a decreasingly important role in culture, and by the mid-eighteenth century, a secular culture had developed.

Material based on English folk sources became popular, but no longer served to identify the traditions of a homogenous group. Unlike the folk mode of oral/aural transmission, music and dance were often learned from printed sources, and taught by paid professionals. Few people owned instruments, and those who did were usually wealthy, and interested in emulating high culture. Few "folk" type characteristics can be attributed to the music and dance of early New England, and as a result, some sort of redefinition seems necessary.