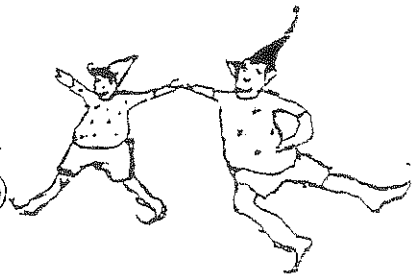


# Time to Dance

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As a young parent I remember being encouraged to read out loud to our children, following that advice, and having many wonderful times not only with the reading, but with the following family discussions. Brain research now confirms all the valuable growth that happens on many levels through this activity, and the advantage children who are read to have in learning.

Charles Ingalls was a fiddler in the old time tradition, and the "Little House" books contain many wonderful episodes of music & dance in the Ingalls family life. One reason I like these tunes and dances is because they belong to each and every one of us, and because by simply reaching out to those next to us we can share history and make our own fun. This is the type of country spirit I strive to project through my dance programs.

These selections are from the Harper Trophy editions, are ideal for reading out loud, and have wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams.

Little House in the Big Woods: Pop goes the weasel p.98-99.

Dance at Grandpa's p.144 -155.

Little House on the Prairie: Mr. Edwards dancing p.65-70.

Tunes on the prairie p.332-335.

On the Banks of Plum Creek: Heart into a man p.211.

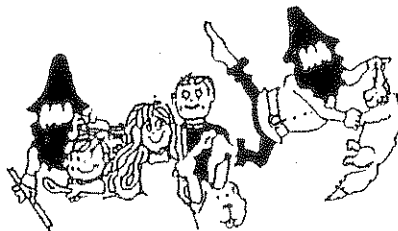
House of music p.336-339.

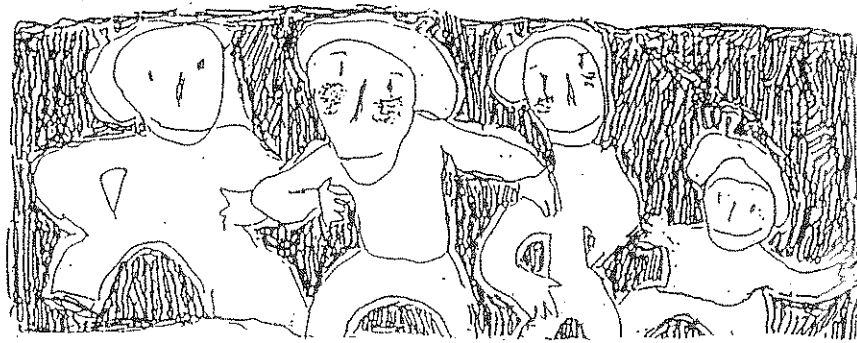
By the Shores of Silver Lake: Winter fiddle & dance p. 154-157.

Music & song p. 211-213. Nighttime fiddle p.264-265 p.289-291.

The Long Winter: Wintertime march p.42-43.

These Happy Golden Years: Music & memories: p.155-156. p.276-278





In teaching about the natural environment, educators describe a biological community as being like a spider's web. Each connection between participants in this network of life strengthens the web. Removing some of the strands weakens the web, although it may not collapse until a certain number of connections are destroyed. It just becomes more and more fragile, until suddenly it breaks and is gone.

Similarly, a cultural setting - such as a rural neighborhood - is like a spider's web. If strand after strand is damaged or lost, one day the web disappears, as did many traditions of fiddling and neighboring.

If this is alarming, remember that the opposite is true. A strong web is built strand by strand too. As each strand is spun, at first it seems so flimsy as to float in space. Then another is added and joined together. By persistence is created something strong, functional ... even a thing of grace and beauty.

Perhaps a revival of old-time music is one strand of something greater we are slowly putting back together.

Philip Martin

In his book "Farmhouse Fiddlers"

