

COUNTRY COUSINS

The Middletown Country Cousins Square Dance Club was started in 1973. Five couples made up the first club that met weekly to dance at the Elk Creek Grange Hall, West Middletown, under the direction of Larry Parella, the first club caller. In 1975, the first beginner square dance class graduated adding 32 new square dancing couples to the new clubs' ranks. Later, club dances were held at the Madison Jr. School during the school year and at the American Legion Hall for the summer months. Next, the club moved to the Holy Trinity Parish Center with club dances held every second and fourth Wednesdays. From that site, the club moved to the AK Steel Personnel Building then to the Middletown Area Senior Citizens Center.

Larry Parella was succeeded by callers John Hick and Jim Erbaugh. In 1993, Pam Courts, from Batavia, became the club caller calling not only square dancing but round dancing. In 1997, the consisted of 85 dancers ranging in ages from 45 to 80.

Beginner classes start in September on the first Monday after Labor Day. The club is socially and civically active with non-dancing activities such as an annual mystery trip, annual picnic, game night and participation in local parades. The club entertains regularly at area nursing homes, gives demos at functions such as the Pollen Farm Autumn Festival, Kettering, and donates money or goods to local charitable organizations.

Submitted by: Clair L. Esposito, Middletown 4/8/97