



Most of the dances I've been to, I was playin' in the band. But dancin' with my wife, Cindy Lou, is one of my life's greater joys.

LAKE VALLEY

A friend of mine said, "Happiness is a honky-tonk parking lot full of Texas license plates!" I've got to say, I know what she means. They say people from Montana will use any excuse to have a party! I can vouch fer that, but Texans are right up there with 'em! What you've got to remember in Texas, though, is everybody dances in a circle. It's like a skating rink. It's easy to get the hang of it once you've learned to do the two-step.

I grew up dancin' in New Mexico. They dance the same as Texans. The first Saturday of every month, they'd have a dance at Lake Valley. Lake Valley was a ghost town ninety miles from home. The ranchers and their wives would put on the dance. It was always packed! They would start at nine, and they held it in the old schoolhouse. Ol' man Doolittle played the fiddle and stayed up by the blackboard. Anybody that wanted to could "set in" with him.

The old board floors would give under your feet, and it was always a little dusty. Little girls would dance with each other if the little boys were out of reach. Grandpas would dance with daughters, and proud young bucks would dance with their mothers or sweethearts. It was grand!

They did the waltz, two-step, polka, schottische, varsouvi-
enne, and probably others I can't remember. At midnight we'd
all stop and eat sandwiches, potato salad, pie, cake, or what-
ever the ladies had brought. Then the hardiest of the cele-
brants would dance till 3:00 A.M.

They didn't allow firewater inside, so those with a mind to
would make an occasional trip to the pickup. I remember those

clear nights, the silvery stars, the high sounds of “Maiden’s Prayer” sailin’ on the breeze, and happy people’s laughter comin’ through the open window of that ol’ schoolhouse.

I notice in my travelin’ that they’re still playin’ some of the same songs ol’ man Doolittle played. Most honky-tonk bands will slip in “Faded Love,” “San Antonio Rose,” or “Double Eagle” somewhere before the night’s over.

By the way, if you wanna polka—I mean *really* polka!—get up there somewhere between Glendive, Montana, and Winner, South Dakota. They really get my feet to tappin’.

I guess, when you think about it, music is good for your soul.