

Benton County, Dance Cards from Various Events, 1928–1932

Natalie Burriss and Caroline G. Emenaker

Dance cards were accessories to formal dances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These miniature cards were given to attendees to be worn around the wrist attached by a ribbon or string. Inside, each dance was listed with a space next to it for names. When a dance was reserved, both partners wrote the name of the other for that particular number on their card. While called “dance cards,” these were often elaborately decorated booklets meant to be kept as souvenirs.¹

Below are transcriptions of seventeen dance cards from 1928 to 1932. Kept from a variety of dances, many of them in Bloomington, Indiana, these cards list the names of dance partners, designated chaperones for the function, committee members, and the individual or group providing the music. In some cards, there is an “x” next to certain dances. Per tradition, this was a girl’s escort’s indication that he was claiming those dances for himself. A number of these cards belonged to Ione Swan, a resident of Fowler, Benton County, Indiana, who was a student at Indiana University in the late 1920s.²

Notes

1. [“Shall I Pencil You In? Dance Cards at Special Collections,”](#) University Libraries, University of Arizona, February 1, 2016.
2. [Ione Swan Paugh Collection](#), 1872–1971, M 0404, box 5, folders 4 and 5, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis; Ione V. Swan, Census Year: 1930; Place: Fowler, Benton, Indiana; Page 13A; Enumeration District: 0003; FHL microfilm: 2340312, Ancestry; Ione Swan, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880–2012; Indiana University; 1929, Ancestry.

Dance Cards

Folder 4

Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pledge Dance

Chapter House

November 3, 1928

Dances: Lewis, Marks, Stone

Chaperones: Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Johnson, Professor and Mrs. Chauncey Sanders, Mr. and Mrs.

Douglas Hoskins, Professor C. W. Barker

Music: Russel Stubbs

Best Wing “Blue Dance”

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, Memorial Hall

January 12, 1929

Dances: Thelma Avery, C. Creigmeile, Alice Moomaw, Mary Patton

Chaperones: Miss Edna Wells, Miss Mabel Compton, Miss Grace Moberly, Miss Catherine Waller, Miss Margaret Bridgman, Miss Dorothy Donald, Miss Florence Bond

Music: Wendall Hanna

St. Patrick’s Informal Dance

[handwritten] Ione

West Memorial Hall

March 22, 1929

Dances: Van Horn–Paugh, Bob Brown, Howard Harrell

Chaperones: Miss Bond, Miss Waller, Miss Bridgeman, Miss Moberly

Music: Arnold Peak’s Orchestra

Rowery Dinner Dance

Memorial Hall

April 16, 1929

[*List of dances*]: Beer Brawl, Pretzel Roll, [Gunman's?] Shuffle, Hijacker's Jump, Whiskey Wobble, Cheese It, De Cops (Sit Out), Drunken Drag

Junior Prom

Indiana University

Men's Gymnasium

April 26, 1929

Chaperones: President and Mrs. W. L. Bryan, Dean and Mrs. C. J. Sembower, Dean and Mrs. J. J. Robinson, Dean Agnes E. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. U. H. Smith, Dean and Mrs. B. W. Merrill, Dean and Mrs. S. E. Stout, Dean and Mrs. D. A. Rothrock, Prof. and Mrs. S. L. Crawley, Prof. and Mrs. C. E. Sanders, Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Page, Mr. and Mrs. Z. G. Clevenger, Col. And Mrs. O. P. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Al. Robbins, Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Douglas, Prof. and Mrs. W. E. Jenkins, Captain G. C. Cleaver, Prof. G. E. Morrison, Mr. and Mrs. Frank R. Elliott, Mrs. Everett S. Dean, Mr. and Mrs. John Cravens

Junior Class Officers: James Strickland, president; Wayne Stackhouse, vice president; Thomas Quinn, treasurer; Janet Johnston, secretary

Committee: Henry C. Smith, chairman; Wilbert Catterton; William Jenner; William Nixon; Loren Brewer; James Beattey; Mary Cooper; Martha McLaughlin

West Memorial Hall Formal

May 11, 1929

Dances: Hubert Hartman, Red Barton, Tom Mooney (last half)

Chaperones: Miss Williams, Miss Bridgman, Miss Moberly, Miss Waller, Miss Bond

Music: Arnold Peake

Knicker Dance

Indiana Chapter of Acacia, Chapter House

June 8, 1929

Dances: Russ Paugh, Rufe Hanna, Winow Van Horn, with you, Doc Cotton, you and me, we together, finis-ours

Chaperones: Mrs. Sheffler, Mrs. Childs, Mrs. Blackledge, Mrs. Sears, Dr. and Mrs. Esarey

Social Committee: Theodore C. Brouwer, Franklin Petry, Jr.

Music: Jordan Serenaders, Louisville, Ky.

Indiana Chapter of Acacia Announcing Its Pledges

Chapter House, Bloomington, Indiana

November 9, 1929

Dances: “Doc” Cotton, W. Leuenberger, “Bob” Hanna, “ours;’many xs”

Chaperones: Dr. and Mrs. Logan Esarey, Prof. and Mrs. W. E. Treanor, Prof. and Mrs. Fred V. Chew, Mrs. and Mrs. Boyd Porter

Pledges: Paul Dingle, Bertram Ewer, Burton Gorman, Lee Kramer, Walter Leuenberger, John Newton, Winfred Pegram, George Van Dyke, Thomas Warring, James Weaver, Clarence Witham

Folder 5

No place; no date

Dances: Collier, Rittenhouse

Chaperones: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Finney, Mrs. Robertson, Mrs. Schneider, Mrs. Gabriel

Music: OTSTOT and his Boy Scouts

Pi Beta Phi Arrow Dance

[handwritten] Ione Swan

Chapter House

September 13, [n.d.], Eight to ten

Dances: Mary Agnes [Nurre?], Esther Schroue, Kathryn Scott, Sara Gilseworth, Dorthy Davis, Jo Parrisly, Geneviese Ferguson

Formal

Indiana Chapter of Acacia

Graham Hotel

March 22, 1930

Dances: Russ Paugh, Walter Luenberger, “Doc” Cotton, “Hub” Sears

Chaperones: Prof. and Mrs. Fred V. Chew; Mrs. and Mrs. Frank Level; Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Porter

Music: Cap Shepard’s Vagabonds

Informal Dinner Dance

Acacia, Chapter House

June 7, 1930

Dances: Russ, “Hub” Sears, John Sicks, “Last but ‘Best;’ many xs”

Chaperones: Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Porter, Prof. and Mrs. Fred V. Chew, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Setser

Music: I. U. Bandoliers

Pi Beta Phi Spring Rush Dance

[handwritten] Swan

Chapter House

May 2, 1931, 8:30–12:00

Dances: Mary E. Pell, Dorothy Hack, Frances Mann

Chaperones: Mrs. Schmidt, Mrs. Whitney, Mrs. Gabriel, Mrs. Robertson

Music: Otstot’s Serenaders

[Indiana Chapter of Acacia Presents the “Kid Brothers”

[Chapter House, Bloomington, Indiana

[October 24, 1931]

[Dances]: “Kid Brothers”: Wayne Hobson, Glen Brown, William Maxwell, Dwight Sadgebury, Joseph Harris, Harold Hendrickson, Roy Johnson, Normal A. Flaningam, James Mentzer, Miles Blue, Arthur Lautzenheiser, Bryon Somers, Richard Corns, Hubert Shepard, Edmund Ortmeyer, Harold E. Burns

Chaperones: Prof. and Mrs. Logan Esarey, Mrs. and Mrs. Ralph Esarey

Music: The Paul Driscoll Orchestra of Indianapolis

Acacia Easter Formal

Chapter House

Saturday, March 26, 1932

Dances: Swanee

Chaperones: Dr. and Mrs. Logan Esarey, Prof. and Mrs. Fred V. Chew, Prof. and Mrs. Harold F.

Lusk

Music: Clemens–Schergens’ Band

Pi Beta Phi Spring Dance

[handwritten] Frances Dix

Chapter House

May 21, 1932

Dances: Helen Harlow

Chaperones: Mrs. Evelyn B. Schmidt; Mrs. and Mrs. Hugh Norman; Mr. and Mrs. Guy Burnett;

Mrs. Alice Gabriel

Music: Michael Hauer

Acacia Spring Dance

Chapter House

Saturday, June 11, 1932

Chaperones: Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Porter, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Fisher

Social Chairman: Wayne Hobson

Music: Hal Roberts and his Orchestra

[Online Connections](#)

[Regional Sources and Stories](#)