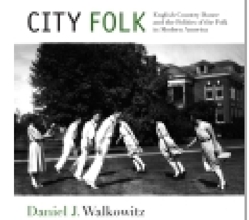
4 Planting a Colony in America



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4

Planting a Colony in America

> Miss Burchenal and all that crowd know what poor stuff they are passing off as folk-dance and they know that if I come & see it I shall have to show them—and those they have taught—how wrong they all are and so queer their pitch.
> —Cecil Sharp to Maud Karpeles, January 8, 1915, New York City

On December 23, 1914, the SS *Lusitania* docked in New York Harbor bearing renowned folklorist Cecil Sharp, chair of the English Folk Dance Society. The man cut an impressive figure. Sharp's square-jawed visage, firm posture, and formal dress belied his fifty-four years and the chronic asthma that left him often weakened and sick. Mrs. May Eliot Hobbes's description of him in 1911 when he entered a drawing room captured the imposing sense of the man: "the piercing blue eyes—falcon-like—the strong nose, the firm set of the head on the shoulders, the superb carriage, which he retained even when more bent with increasing age. There was a controlled suppleness in the whole body, loosely knit without being wobbly and this is what made his dancing unique in its grace and ease. It might be summed up in two words—'line and carriage.'"[1]

Sharp was not, however, the first English dancing master to visit Progressive Era America. His arrival had been preceded by visits from three other teacher-performers who were at once his protégés and competitors, and they embodied different expressions for the dance. Sharp prevailed, and his victory enshrined a particularly constrained bodily expression for English Country Dance that had a lasting impact on the shape and form of the dance in the United States. As important, though, Sharp put in place a leadership that embodied the nascent country dance movement with traditional gender roles and as white, Anglo-Saxon, and elite.

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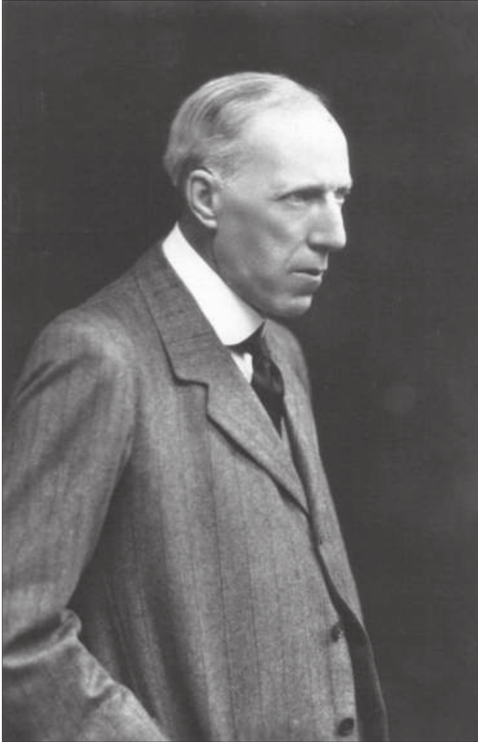

Cecil Sharp. (Reproduced courtesy of EFDSS)

Mary Neal and Florence Warren

The first two English folk dance teachers who went to America preceded Sharp by four years. On December 3, 1910, the SS *Arabic* set sail from Liverpool with Mary Neal, the fifty-year-old leader of the Espérance Girls' Club, and the group's leading dancer, the twenty-four-year-old Florence Warren. The girls had developed a remarkable performance morris side, and Warren had joined Neal on the trip to help demonstrate the dance. In the next three months, Neal led a triumphant tour of New York and Boston, awakening new interest in the old English dances among public-school educators and Anglophile reformers. The timing of their visit and practical considerations made morris dance rather than country dance Neal's focus, though the one quickened later American interest in the other. Kimber and the more flamboyant and showy morris dance had excited the early interest in English folk dance, and in 1910 the Playford repertoire remained largely unknown. Equally to the point, morris could

be demonstrated by individual dancers; unlike the country dances, it did not require a set of at least four and often several more dancers.

Eight days after departing from Liverpool, the two women arrived in New York to a rude awakening: Neal's feud with Sharp had preceded them, and all their engagements had been canceled. Neal was told that a friend of Cecil Sharp's in New York had gone to all the societies and educators in New York and told them that the education authorities in the United Kingdom had "thrown [them] over." Sharp's "friend" appears to have been Elizabeth Burchenal. As early as September 1908, Sharp's publications and public presence had attracted Burchenal's attention, and she had written him while collecting dances in England. "Especially" desiring to "see some of the morris men dancers in the country" during her time in Oxfordshire, Burchenal had sought Sharp's help in winning her access to Kimber.[2] Nothing more is known of their exchange at the time, but she had probably returned the favor. Burchenal returned to England in 1910 (though it is not clear that she attended the summer school) and concluded that Sharp and not Neal best represented the English tradition. As she wrote Sharp a year later, "It was a great thorn in my side to have Miss Neal here last winter representing herself as the morris dance authority and I feel that many people knew no better than to accept her as such."[3]

Discouraged, one part of Neal was ready to take the next boat back to London; another part, however, was determined to stay and fight Sharp. A feature article in the *New York Tribune* four days after the women's arrival heralding their visit undoubtedly helped convince her to stay on and fight back. In the *New York Times,* in a barely disguised attack on Sharp, she described the dance as "an eminently democratic thing." "The introduction of pedantry"—her charge against Sharp—"of sophisticated art, would utterly kill the movement." In a few weeks, she and Warren managed to rebook their dates, and by her account, their demonstration of morris dancing soon captured the hearts of both New York and Boston. Neal, in what was to prove a premature forecast of her triumph in a letter back to Clive Carey in London, trumpeted, "Cecil Sharp has done his best to poison people's minds over here. But we are here and he is not! . . . Nor do I think he will ever come now."[4]

Thought to be a surviving pre-Christian ritual, Neal and Warren's triumphant performance—with its exuberant leaps, twirling handkerchiefs, and the rhythmic jangling of the bells tied to their calves—was heralded by the *New York Times* as a refreshing example of the folk revival under way in England. Lost on the reporter was the transformed or "invented" quality of the women's morris "revival" of a dance traditionally performed by men.[5] For the

Times, ECD held the promise of reawakening what the reporter bemoaned as the repressed spirit of the Anglo-American race.[6]

Having agreed to press on with their tour, Warren promptly assumed responsibility for teaching three different sides of morris dancers (in an intense nine days) for the MacDowell Club's Christmas Festival at the Plaza Hotel. Described in the *New York Times* as "one of the season's brilliant events," the affair reflected the city elite's fascination with English heritage dance. But the two women's experience also reflected the burgeoning interest in folk dance for schoolchildren, native-born and immigrant. The two women taught morris dance to New York City schoolteachers, which Burchenal, who had led the teaching of folk dance to the city's teachers, must have found personally galling. They then traveled to New Haven and Boston, where their dances were soon incorporated into the emerging folk repertoire. Neal lectured on the morris at Boston's prestigious Twentieth Century Club, and by late April 1911, the Women's Athletic Association of Boston, under Helen Storrow's leadership, included three morris dances as part of its International Folk Dance exhibition.[7]

Neal returned to London sometime in the early spring 1911. She had managed to rescue the tour, and she was probably fortunate that it was the modest success that the dance historian Roy Judge considers it to have been. Florence Warren stayed on to spread the morris gospel, and her experience proved as much a success for her personally as for the morris dance movement. One highlight of Warren's tour occurred in early May when Adeline Genee, in an extraordinary offer, invited her and her new American morris side to take the stage with her and share the billing for Genee's Carnegie Hall dance concert. The Boston papers gave the morris dancers mixed reviews, but *The Times* of London, in its humorous delight in the event, inadvertently caught the class ironies (and appeal) of morris dance at Carnegie Hall: "We may yet hear of a 'side' of American Morris-men, multi-millionaires every one, dancing the Processional Morris down Wall Street."[8]

Warren followed her New York success with teaching and demonstration classes in Hartford, Connecticut, and Albany, New York. Again, the upper-class Anglo-American constituency for the dance was apparent. The Hartford performance took place at the home of Archibald Welch, a wealthy insurance executive who later became president of Phoenix Mutual. In Albany, Warren's appeal was such that she was kept on for six weeks, teaching upward of two hundred schoolchildren and teachers. The numbers suggest that her Albany classes attracted students with a broader social background, but a local newspaper's comment indicates the continuing elite appeal of the Eng-

lish dance: "several families" decided to delay their "summer home plans" so that their children could participate.[9]

Little more is known of Warren's dancing career. Rhett Krause, in his history of the tour, suggests that she taught in Chicago in 1915 and later coauthored a children's book. She does not appear to have returned to England, however, until 1937, and then she did not travel alone. Warren had found good personal reasons to remain in the States: just before the scheduled return to London in March 1911, she had met a Yale law student, Arthur H. Brown, at a dinner in conjunction with a morris demonstration in New Haven. Brown tells a romantic story of his impetuously leaving a golf game and racing to New York Harbor to propose marriage to a delighted Warren just as her boat was about to sail. On Valentine's Day 1912, they married—at the home of the New York writer, lecturer, and folk collector Emily Burbank. In 1937, on their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the Browns visited London, where Florrie Warren and Neal had a reunion with the Espérance girls.[10]

A. Claud Wright

One of Sharp's protégés was the other teacher-dancer to precede him to America, and their conflict may have been as important for the history of English Country Dance in the United States as had been that between Sharp and Neal. A. Claud Wright (1888–1977) was one of the original six male dancers from Sharp's own morris demonstration side.[11] George P. Baker, Harvard University professor of dramatic literature, attended the Stratford Summer School in 1912 and was captivated by the bold athleticism of Wright's dancing. Upon Baker's return to the United States, he inaugurated a folk dance class in 1913. The group, which consisted of fifty-six members, often used the open-air theater at Chocorua, New Hampshire, at George Baker's summer camp 130 miles north of Boston, and Baker's hope was that Wright would teach them morris dance. Subsequently, at Baker's invitation, Wright visited New England on two occasions, in the summers of 1913 and 1914.[12]

Wright's verticality and energy contrasted with Sharp's more forward-moving, fluid, but composed style. As James C. Brickwedde has concluded in his careful study of Wright's American visits, "Claud Wright took the base created by Cecil Sharp and added strength, height, and power to the movement."[13] The difference was probably lost on most Americans, who knew of Sharp at most by reputation and were thrilled by the dramatic character of Wright's bold leaps. A growing community of folk dance enthusiasts in the New World embraced Wright during his visits. But Wright's success, of course,

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A. Claud Wright displaying his verticality while morris dancing. (Used by permission of the Country Dance and Song Society Archives, www.cdss.org; Milne Special Collections and Archives Department, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH)

threatened to undermine any aspirations Sharp had about his own prospects in the United States. To the extent these ambitions animated him, Sharp kept them at bay; to speak of financial ambition was unseemly, if not unprofessional. Instead, Sharp expressed his dispute with Wright as one of style: he found his protégé's athleticism (Wright had a background in gymnastics) incompatible with what he considered authentic country dance style.

Wright's visit in the summer of 1913 came at the high point in his folk dance career and won him an enthusiastic following in the United States.[14] After two weeks at Chocorua, he spent what appears to have been a hectic and extraordinary week in Lincoln at Helen Storrow's grand country home teaching and demonstrating morris, sword, and country dance. He was, he chortled in a letter to "My Dear Baker," "the sole specimen of masculinity amid a crowd of 14 maids. You can imagine my confusion (?) better than I can describe it."[15]

The visit also won Wright impressive moneyed connections. The Storrow house was "a wonder"; he observed that he had the third floor all to himself. He marveled at the breakfasts and banquets of food. The earnings—all his expenses and fifty pounds—were not insignificant either, especially to a person of relatively modest means. In contrast to Sharp and most of his group, who were a similarly well-heeled part of the intellectual-artistic elite, Wright's father was a skilled cabinet maker. Wright contrasted his own situation by noting, "we are not money folk and what little comfort we have has been gained through long years of striving."[16] Unlike others in the performance troupe, Wright lived entirely on his teaching income and continued to support his parents. The teaching offered potentially significant financial benefits, especially for Wright. Hinman, with whom he had also established contact for projected teaching in Chicago, assured him that "the financial end [of the American teaching] will be alright."[17] Wright and his American hosts also had begun to talk of a return visit, and soon after his return to London, Wright wrote Baker, "I must simply get in another visit to the land of freedom—if the dances become popular and my friends wish me to come."[18]

Unfortunately for Wright, jealous English compatriots had begun to wish otherwise for him. Although coincidence is not necessarily causation, Sharp's reservations about Wright coincided with increasing pressures from Americans attending the August 1913 Summer School for Sharp to consider his own visit. The previous year, when Baker first raised the prospect of an ECD "export to America," Wright had found Sharp "quite bucked" by the idea, thinking Sharp "very pleased" with his "work and success." But upon his return from America, Wright picked up negative vibrations. Sharp, he noted, "had a curious air of complaisance." Wright worried that the source of Sharp's displeasure was a mistaken belief afoot that he was an agent of EFDS and a personal ambassador for Sharp, and he pleaded with Baker to let Storrow know that he was not "sent out by the Society" and that he preferred "to be known as a free agent and [Baker's] guest."[19]

Sharp's opposition to Wright was more rooted in his concerns about Wright's style and increasing role in the United States—both concerns Sharp could not disentangle from his own ambitions abroad—and there was little Wright could do to counter the growing hostility to him on the English side of the Atlantic. Sharp had initially agreed that he would "not stand in the way" of Wright's teaching abroad, but by the fall 1913, Wright found Sharp's response and that from other members of his group noticeably cooler. Wright understood the hostility as veiled jealousy, but it was complicated by his sense of himself as an outsider in a tight little club, the "Sharpeles":

> What the matter is with Sharp & his band I know is jealousy—that I might forestall. . . . This is where I see the shoes pinching—Wilkinson & Kennedy [two of the dancers] through the Karpeles (Kennedy and Miss Helen [Karpeles] are more than friends—all the world may see) hold Sharp close. See thus, Helen Karpeles is Secretary for the Society. Maud [Karpeles] is Sharp's Private Secretary, so that no correspondence reaches Sharp without one or the other knows it. Hence at Stratford I was amused by a perfect stranger referring to them as the Sharpeles.[20]

In fact, Sharp's own financial ambitions probably added to his disquiet with Wright's success. In the fall and winter of 1913, as Wright contemplated his return, he also became increasingly aware that Sharp had his own plans for the United States, and they did not include Wright. Wright, who at the time was twenty-five years old, complained to Baker that Sharp spoke of sending a "Mrs. Hobbes" as his representative, who "can neither dance nor teach" and was "about forty-five years of age."[21]

Wright could do little about the animosities he felt but soldier on. In the next months, while his own teaching flourished, conflict between the two remained below the surface. "The jealousy is still out there," wrote Wright, "but disguised or recognized so plainly that we are all much happier." At the same time, Wright, perhaps aware that Sharp thought his style problematic, wrote triumphantly to Baker of glowing evaluations he had won from the board of education inspector. The inspector had "no advice or criticism to give him" and, rather, brought the head inspector to see his teaching. Meanwhile, his classes at Stratford, "always overcrowded," were "pleasingly successful." In contrast, he evinced sadness about what he thought to be Sharp's "joyless" teaching and style. With comments similar to those voiced by Neal, Wright described Sharp's style to Baker: "You know what the dances mean to me, & when I see the hand cutting here and pacing there—throwing out all joy of the dances & making of them far too much of a business, I am grieved." One suspects that the "business" of the dance referred to fussiness about style, but it inadvertently bespoke larger financial concerns of Sharp's that also shaped his views of "proper" country dance and his role in authorizing them.[22]

By May 1914, plans for Wright's return had formalized, and Sharp, at least publicly, expressed his support for the trip. Sharp outwardly blessed the trip, sharing with Wright a letter he had received from Storrow asking for Wright's revisit. Sharp could even appreciate that Wright's trip could be to the advantage of the movement. Wright's return would further establish ECD in the United States and keep a wealthy patron such as Storrow happy. But Sharp's

subsequent complaints and own ambitions suggest that he did continue to harbor reservations about Wright. Sharp was explicit about his concerns with Wright's "athletic style": "So far I have found it easier to make dancers out of those who have not been trained and have done little or no athletics. Nearly all physically trained people and athletes suffer from stiff or inflexible joints, and muscles that have been developed beyond their power of control. What faults Wright has, may all be traced to his early physical training. The *ideal* physically trained person . . . is far more likely to be the product of the dancing master than of the gymnast."[23]

Sharp's reservations did not dissuade Storrow, however, and with Baker's support, Wright embarked on a two-month return visit between July and September 1914. Wright's second American visit was, at least by his own account, another success, although the outbreak of war had distracted some potential dance students. Wright bracketed his trip, teaching for two weeks again at Chocorua and, at the end, for two weeks in Lincoln on the Storrow lawn. Wright described the two weeks at Lincoln as "tremendously successful," although the session attracted but twenty-two students, and only seven for the fortnight. Still, being paid $1.25 an hour to teach—a day's work for a garment worker then—he did rather well, netting $629.25, less $58 for the pianist.[24]

The month between the teaching at Chocorua and at Lincoln foreshadowed both the widening impact Wright was having in the United States and his plans to expand his reach in the future. Wright spent the interval visiting in York Harbour, Maine, and teaching at Lanier Camp in Elliot, Maine. He followed those assignments with classes at the MacDowell Artists' Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, where one of his students was Doris Humphrey, later to be one of the pioneering American modern dance choreographers. Moreover, even as he completed this trip, Mary Wood Hinman and Percival Chubb (the English-born Fabian leader of the St. Louis Ethical [Culture] Society) were planning for Wright to teach in Chicago and St. Louis later that fall.[25]

Baker organized what was to be one last but extensive four-month visit for Wright in early 1915. A tour was to take him to Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Madison, Wisconsin (presumably mostly to venues where he could teach young women and men in physical education and settlement house and playground programs), as well as through New England. Ultimately, the trip never took place, but it was neither jealousy from the Sharpeles nor Sharp's personal agenda that deterred Wright; rather, it was the coming of the war that did, and in ways that were personal and ugly.

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As the war engulfed England in 1914 and young men enlisted, Wright was conflicted. All the other members of Sharp's demonstration team enlisted. Wright's brother and James Paterson, a friend and fellow dancer in Sharp's troupe who boarded with his family, also enlisted, and Claud was now the only support for his parents. "Were I to enlist," he wrote Baker, "I do not know what would happen to my people [his parents]—they would almost be destitute."[26] His commission was unlikely to come through for another few months, and he could assume it after earning some money in the United States with which to provide for his parents. Seeking advice from Baker, he explained that he had no intention of going abroad "if it damages his reputation with him [Baker] or his American friends." At the same time, Wright acknowledged that his larger ambitions for himself in the United States did influence him: "I do not want anyone else to step in the place I, with your help, have made. That's why I want to come!"[27]

As late as December 27, with Sharp already in New York for two days with his own folk dance agenda, Wright still hoped to fulfill his planned tour. He had been busily taking on all the work he could in England, teaching classes at various folk dance centers and organizing public dances for the military effort. The efforts, according to Brickwedde, had allowed him to put aside some extra money for his family. In any case, it was increasingly apparent to Wright that many Americans might look askance at an Englishman traveling to America while England was at war. And Sharp was particularly clear and vocal about his feelings: patriots enlisted. But as the war escalated, Sharp's views were increasingly echoed by others, and dance organizers in New Haven and elsewhere soon also voiced their reservations about Wright's pending visit. Baker's explanations about Wright's family situation settled some concerns, but organizers wrote Baker that they could not guarantee attendance while the war raged.

Ultimately, the pressure on Wright to cancel his trip was too great. On January 1, 1915, Wright received a telegram from Baker suggesting he come for a shortened tour. The telegram tipped the balance for an obviously ambivalent Wright; later that day, he cabled to cancel his tour, explaining that his commission in the Royal Flying Corps had materialized. Wright's withdrawal could not have been made easier by the fact that Sharp had told him less than a month earlier—only three days before Sharp's departure—that he was going to the United States. In Wright's absence, Sharp would have free rein to "step in the place" that Wright had made for himself.[28]

Cecil Sharp's First Visit to America

Cecil Sharp arrived in the New World in December 1914 with a full agenda, both personal and political, and the one shaped the other. He had immediate personal needs to make enough money to allow him to live in the comfortable manner he thought appropriate to his station. His larger cultural and political project was to establish English Country Dance in America. As the director of the English Folk Dance Society, where better to spread the folk revival gospel than in the former American colony, where so many kinfolk had settled. And as the leading teacher and collector of folk song and dance in England, who better to lead this mission than himself. Yet to do so required him to establish his authority in the United States, where Mary Neal and, especially, A. Claud Wright had already made names for themselves.

Upon his arrival in New York, Sharp's financial and professional anxieties set the tone for his trials and tribulations. He had traveled first class—as indeed he always did—and settled in the Algonquin Hotel on West 44th Street. But he could scarcely contain his disappointment at the accommodations. It is "a fairly comfortable but distinctly 2nd class hotel," he wrote in a letter, penned on Christmas Day 1914, to Maud Karpeles on hotel stationery.[29] The disparity between his second-class circumstances and the high style in which he sought to travel reflected the genteel poverty of his privileged intellectual class. The class pretensions and anxieties of the bourgeoisie, of course, lay at the heart of the liberal problematic: they celebrated the "natural" culture of those "below," accepted their own social privilege as an extension of their moral and intellectual superiority, and worried all the time about the fragility of their status. These tensions, in fact, shaped Sharp's attitudes toward other Americans and the occasional ruthlessness into which he lapsed toward those he viewed as competitors for the folk dance mantle.

Sharp always worried about money, and not without cause. The Cambridge-educated son of a London slate merchant, he had been bred for the comfortable life. But his tenure as music master at Ludgrove from 1893 to 1910 had given him modest prospects. The 1911 government award of a civil list pension of one hundred pounds in recognition of his services collecting and preserving folk songs gave him a cushion that permitted him to embark on a career teaching folk dance. Indeed, the addition of his wife Constance's one hundred pounds a year gave him an annual income of five hundred pounds (approximately twenty-five hundred dollars, at a time when a schoolteacher earned about fifteen hundred dollars per annum). Now, just prior to arriving

in New York, he and his wife had purchased a new home at 27 Church Row in the fashionable North London suburb of Hampstead. They moved there in October 1915, when Sharp was back in London.[30]

Sharp wittily dated the Church Row house as "about the time of the sixth edition of Playford."[31] A rather simple red-paneled house dating from the late seventeenth century, its neighborhood was anything but simple. Charles Booth's London social map paints the street red—"Middle Class. Well-to-Do"—and it is surrounded by streets in "upper class" gold. On a walk about the village in 1898, Booth's investigator, George Duckworth, was more impressed: "the Row itself [is] almost the most picturesque street in London with its quaint old Georgian red/sash brick houses. Yellow."[32]

Sharp's financial position improved after the end of the war. With the return of some measure of social stability after the war, EFDS was able to pay him an annual salary as director of four hundred pounds; before then, the post had been honorary. As his biographers note, the salary "did not make him a wealthy man, but it did relieve him of financial anxiety."[33] As his book royalties also rose, three years later, in 1922, Sharp relinquished his civil service pension, feeling that his "instinct" told him that he "had no longer a right to it."[34] Sadly, after developing heart trouble from a bout with scarlet fever in the early summer of 1915, Constance was often housebound, a semi-invalid for the rest of her life. Still, with Sharp's finances improved, the family was able to move into a more commodious four-story brick semidetached Victorian with a garden about half a mile away, at 4 Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead. Ironically, Sharp's final home was originally half of Westfield College, an institution with precisely the kind of women whom Sharp targeted as his folk dance teachers. It, too, was a quality address, and in the next decade, Sigmund and Anna Freud moved in eight doors up the block.[35]

But in New York in the winter of 1914–15, these better days were in the distant future and difficult for Sharp to envision. His financial problems were also more immediate. It was unseemly for the well-to-do to complain about money, and even as he acted the part, his own financial obsession, about which he was keenly aware, made him uncomfortable. Still, he could not escape it, and it shaped his attitudes and responses to life daily. The same Christmas Day that Sharp complained about the Algonquin to Karpeles, he wrote worryingly to his wife, Constance: "I only hope I may bring back a little money to pay for the move and to make our house a little more decent than Dragonfield [their prior home in Uxbridge, a northwest London suburb]. It has been on my mind—as I think you know—that my inability to make money has pressed so hard on you and the children."[36]

Sharp continued to stay at the Algonquin whenever he visited New York. It was fashionable among the artistic set, and Sharp found it convenient to dine there or at the nearby Players' Club. His modest, by his count, income and his initial impressions of New York made him at times an unhappy camper. In the United States only forty-eight hours, he vented in a Christmas letter to Maud Karpeles: "What I have seen of NY and the people I do not like overmuch." Finding the combination of central heating and arctic conditions "overbearing," he returned to his usual theme, his obsession with money. With no sense of the irony of his critiquing American materialism, he castigates his hosts:

> Everything is money and everything hideously expensive. The only thing one cares for is dollars. Their quest of which is conducted nakedly and unashamedly! The degree of efficiency in ordinary matters conceiving material living is amazing, but there it stops—and I prefer my own country and my own countrymen. The Americans are foreigners. Their city does not talk English nor do they behave like English people. I fancy the predominant element outside the Anglo Saxon is German and the two make an abominable mixture.[37]

Sharp's comments prefigured more than his financial anxieties: his negative view of Germans reflected the hostilities that had already erupted in Europe, conflict that profoundly influenced his ability to move back and forth between England and the United States. In addition, Sharp's appreciation of American "efficiency" became one basis for a growing appreciation that he came to have for the United States. Not that his view of the United States ever seemed far removed from the money question, though. Upon his arrival in New York City, he also made a quick visit to H. W. Gray of Gray and Novello, his publisher, who "seemed very impressed with the number of books he [Sharp] sold," a judgment that encouraged Sharp immediately to speculate on lecture possibilities.[38]

Sharp's days were filled with rehearsals for Granville Barker's staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* but he quickly moved to explore his lecture prospects. Folk song, for which his collecting in England had begun to win him international acclaim, seemed the logical best bet, so to illustrate his lectures, Sharp sent to England for Mattie Kay to sing to his piano accompaniment. But the decision proved both costly and unwise. Sharp had to assume Kay's costs in America, and folk song proved unremunerative. The first public lecture at the Plaza Hotel "went very nicely," according to Sharp, but the quality

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of the reception was insufficient if it did not meet his expenses—which it did not: it was a "good audience but not a paying one."[39]

Until he found his moorings, Sharp's first month in New York found him vacillating between hope and despair about ever establishing himself as a lecturer. Dinner with the Burchenals on the evening of January 7 led him to conclude, "They won't be able to help me much. They were full of plans for me to speak here and there for nothing but dried up when I asked about fees." Word from Hinman led him to fear that the same was true of Chicago. Sharp understood the problem, however, as less about their access to money than about their status as folk dance teachers, which he would surely undermine, as he was quite convinced that "that crowd know[s] what poor stuff they are passing off as folk-dance." Any intervention on his part would require a balancing act: he would have to show them "how wrong they all are and so queer their pitch," but he would have to do so "without showing them up."[40]

Yet, when the prospect of both lecture and dance classes improved, Sharp's spirits rose, and so did his attitude toward his hosts. After spending a week in which he got to know Burchenal better, his criticism of her softened. He concluded, "She has the right idea about folk-dancing & is painfully impressed with the necessity of accuracy, etc. but of course her knowledge is painfully small."[41] The lecture she arranged for him at the Colony Club was not a success, however, and sent Sharp's emotional roller-coaster downhill again. Ninety percent of the crowd, he complained, was not the least interested in hearing him talk about dance. A noisy, "social crowd," it was a "terrible ordeal" that left him "feeling very depressed." With a flair for the melodramatic, he added to an always sympathetic Karpeles, "So I must be philosophical and resigned to my lot, and to dying a poor man! After all the work I have done is far more important than a mere means of making a living."[42]

A dance class soon after, however, convinced Sharp that he had a future—it was just not to be as a lecturer. Burchenal had arranged for Sharp to teach a class at Susan Gilman's fashionable dance studio, and to his delight, Sharp found it surprisingly easy. Despite a slippery floor, and the fact that the twenty students had only ballet training, he taught them two country dances that he had reconstructed, both with roots in the "peasant" past: the circle dance "Gathering Peascods" and the two-couple dance "Hey, Boys, Up Go We."[43] As important as the success of the class, in Gilman, Sharp discovered a dancer who met his standards, a person who became one of his disciples, giving up all her other work, according to Karpeles, to teach ECD in New York.[44]

The success at Gilman's studio got Sharp's mind racing. He began to envision sources of income in awarding dance certificates, attracting Americans

to Stratford, and selling back issues of the *Folk Dance Journal*. "There is heaps of talk here of folk dance but absolutely no knowledge whatsoever and if I do no more than expose their lack of information I shall have done a lot." Now, for the first time, he began publicly to express the hope of establishing a permanent presence for the English Folk Dance Society in the United States. Writing to Karpeles, he said he wished she were there to team in the dance with him: "if you were here, one demonstration would do the trick!" Meanwhile, he would try "to work Miss Ferris for all she is worth." Locals seemed reasonably content with "the magic word 'folk-dancing'" and with Ferris as the teacher, but Sharp thought this more a commentary on their infatuation with "anything so long as it can be called by that name." He obviously thought Ferris's ability limited. So while his dream of establishing a branch of EFDS in the United States appeared increasingly plausible, Sharp realized that someone other than himself had "to take general command of the folk dancing in N.Y." His thoughts immediately turned to his cadre of dancers in England and initially to Maud's sister, Helen Karpeles Kennedy.[45]

A full-time paid teacher from England would need an organization and dance community for support, and Sharp set out to build both. At the time, he was still preoccupied with rehearsals for *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* on top of which Barker had induced him to arrange some songs and dances for a production of Anatole France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife.*[46] Nonetheless, an indefatigable enthusiast on a mission, Sharp filled his free days and nights teaching folk dance and planning for his American branch.[47] Focusing on the early dances, such as "Mage on a Cree," "Rufty Tufty," and "Sellenger's Round," his commentary on the attendees' dancing, while alternatively acerbic and conciliatory, teasing and direct, gives a sense of his candid (or, to some, brutal) teaching style: "They were quick to learn but their style was simply awful—dreadfully affected. . . . But I chaffed them mercilessly and imitated their air & graces & recommended them to look at themselves in the looking glass when they were doing their movements, etc.! By the time we got to Mage they were dancing more or less like human beings."[48]

Buoyed by the responses of audiences, Sharp's agent, Miss Wick, suggested he set up a course of six country dance classes that would allow students to earn an EFDS certificate. Sharp, delighted with the prospect, immediately wrote Karpeles to send him twenty-five certificates signed by the secretary as soon as possible. Sharp envisioned a fee of fifteen dollars for the course of six lessons and the examination. He realized, however, that he had to tailor his program to his American audience. EFDS had developed a graded certificate scheme, but Sharp was convinced that ambitious and status-conscious

Americans would not be interested in an “Elementary” certificate. Instead, he asked that “Associate” certificates be sent, conceding that a bonus might be additional business from Americans who would then decide to attend the Stratford-on-Avon Summer School.[49]

While awaiting the certificates and with plans for a course in development, Sharp set out to drum up more business in New York and elsewhere. The planning for Sharp’s lectures, however, both for those scheduled for New York and the prospective tour, had disappointed him, and Sharp was quick to blame his agent, Miss Wick, railing against her gender. Sharp needed someone who could negotiate among what he reported to be three competing folk dance organizations—possibly Burchenal’s Athletic League or the dance studios run by Beiderhaze, Cass, and Gilman. He found them “all very jealous of each other & more or less antagonistic.” He conceded that Wicks worked “very hard to get [him] arrangements,” but as we have seen, Sharp’s rather traditional views on gender roles undermined his ability to work easily with women as equals. As he concluded in a letter to Karpeles about Wicks, “Business women are a mistake. . . . She works . . . with people she likes but is very abject with those she objects to.” “She makes the whole thing a purely personal matter and it is impossible to do business with her as one would with a man! I can’t speak straight to her without her making a flare up—she takes umbrage very quickly, and the result is I do not know how my affairs stand. . . . She is going to have a baby soon and I dare say she is in consequence not quite compo [mentis]—another argument against a woman-agent!” Having vented, though, Sharp seemed to recognize the irony of his having written what could be read as a misogynist diatribe to a woman (Karpeles), and in an era of intense suffrage agitation. Accordingly, he closed his rant to Karpeles with a conciliatory coda: “I am not railing against her [Wick’s] sex so much as against her. Some woman might do her job all right—but she can’t and I am suffering from her hubris.”[50]

After firing Wicks, Sharp did, in fact, look to hire a female replacement, but a wholly compliant and devoted one with whom he could complain and rail with impunity. A woman named Lellah offered to be his secretary, but his preference was the diminutive and loyal Maud Karpeles, who he affectionately addressed as “little minimus.” In his usual manner, he teased her as he held out the prospect that she would take charge of his arrangements: “I like someone rather smaller & merrier—if not so beautiful—upon whom I can sit when I want and upon whose good-nature & generosity I can always count. That I think is one of my typical compliments: ‘Hot ice and wondrous strange snow,’ and should amuse Joan [his daughter] even if it angers you.”[51]

Sharp now moved to consolidate the rest of his financial obligations and recommitted himself to a career as a teacher of folk dance, not as a performer of folk song. Two months after having summoned Mattie Kay to New York, he sent her back to England. With his expenses now substantially reduced and his prospects brighter, he crowed, "I could coin money out here," set up a "swagger studio," and charge high fees to society people. He appreciated that to do so would go "against the grain," but high costs would make it justifiable nonetheless. All told, he admitted to "a sneaking satisfaction" at his sudden ability, for the first time in his life, to make a good deal of money.[52]

Sharp's energies now focused on establishing himself as a folk dance teacher. The logical places to do so were New York and Boston, the two centers where Mary Neal and Claud Wright had helped to establish ECD. But, again, for Sharp to succeed politically and financially, he had to supplant them both as the recognized leader of the ECD movement. Neal had helped establish an Anglo-American network of settlement house dance teachers in New York, Boston, and London, but her focus on morris dance, with its performance sides of six to eight dancers, meant that she had not left an appreciable following of dancers in her wake. Moreover, Florrie Warren had settled into her new marriage and retired from teaching dance.

Elizabeth Burchenal now smoothed Sharp's reception in New York City. Burchenal had concluded that Sharp and not Neal best represented the English tradition. "Many [other] people knew no better than to accept her [Neal] . . . as the Morris Dances authority," she had written Sharp late that year, but she reassured him, "You may be sure that all of my circle know you as the authority."[53] She had, of course, established a relationship with Sharp over the course of the past decade during her regular trips to England and attendance at the Stratford summer schools. She now knew him as the director of the English Folk Dance Society and represented him as the undisputed leader of the country dance community there. And her friends counted: she was head of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League and close friends of Luther Halsey Gulick, Professor Farnsworth of Columbia University's Teachers College, and Dr. Richard Cabot, of the Boston Brahmin Cabot family and renowned pioneer at Boston Psychiatric Hospital in psychiatric social work. So with all the advantages of Burchenal's social and financial connections in both New York and Boston, Neal had been supplanted well before Sharp disembarked in New York Harbor.

Harvard professor George P. Baker's personal commitment to Wright was not so easily surmounted. Sharp never really won over Baker, but they remained on good terms; by way of contrast, he forged a strong relationship

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with Helen Storrow, and within a week of his arrival in New York, he was off to Boston to take up Storrow's invitation to visit her in Lincoln. He hoped a lecture he had been promised there would cover his expenses and admitted that he hoped it would "perhaps till the soil for another & and more profitable visit later." The larger gain, though, was the close and long-term relationship Sharp forged with Storrow. The tie that bound the two gave Sharp a Boston counterweight to Baker, but more to the point, it forever shaped both Sharp's personal fortunes as well as those of English Country Dance in the United States.[54]

From Sharp's account, he and Helen Storrow hit it off right away. For instance, whereas his letters during his first week in America complained endlessly about his lack of money and his loneliness, after visiting Lincoln, his letter home for the first time struck a positive, albeit oxymoronic, note: "I had an awfully nice time in Lincoln." He and Storrow did "not see eye to eye about dances because she is primarily interested in physical education rather than dancing for its own sake," but Sharp could recognize her type. Storrow's wealth and demeanor made him feel quite at home. She was decidedly not a suffragist, and he found her "quite charming" with a "great kindliness." Years later, a devoted family friend described her as a "super patriot" devoted to the Girl Scouts and physical culture. In that regard, however, she shared a family resemblance to the generation of physical-cultural devotees who were familiar to Sharp and had shaped the growth of gymnastics, the playground movement, and physical education in both countries. In England, these were the people associated with groups such as the Boy Scouts and with Sharp's own dance group from the Chelsea physical-training college. Much the way teaching a folk song and dance would further English (and Anglo-American) culture, the physical-culture movement sought to preserve "the race" through the careful training of young men's and women's bodies.[55]

By mid-March 1915, Storrow had committed herself to traveling to New York to take one of Sharp's classes, and Sharp had come to consider her the chief supporter of his teaching, "thoroughly capable in every direction, straight as a die and transparently sincere."[56] He did have a problem with her dancing, however. Sharp believed Storrow first had to learn to appreciate that the value of folk dance extended beyond physical culture to the realm of moral uplift and "racial" naturalness. Then Sharp saw his primary task as ridding her of aesthetic dance training associated with ballet and the new "modern" barefoot dancers.

Sharp might appreciate aesthetic dance in its own place, but he certainly did not see its place in folk dance. Truth be told, though, he was less than enthusiastic about aesthetic dancing elsewhere either. Early in his New York

visit, he attended a private performance of Isadora Duncan at her studio. He found the heavily draped studio oppressive and complained that the troupe "wore the scantiest of clothing." Observing "scarcely a rhythmical moment" in any of the dances, he found that "the whole thing left a nasty taste in [his] mouth." Nonetheless, the next day they had tea together.[57] But Isadora Duncan and the "barefoot" or "aesthetic" dancers had broad influences on many of Sharp's potential students at the time. Sharp complained that "nearly all" the young women in his classes had "been taught 'aesthetic dancing,' which is a bowdlerized form of the so-called classic ballet. This form of dancing, God Save the Queen, has overrun this country. Even Mrs. Storrow," he noted, "has qualified in it and had taught it before I counseled her of its artificiality and general badness. My chief technical difficulty is to get them to do the running step."[58] Before the month was out, Sharp had succeeded, at least to his satisfaction, in raising the quality of some students to an acceptable and appropriate standard. Storrow and four of her teachers, presumably all young women training to teach folk dance, received certificates from EFDS attesting to their basic proficiency in ECD.[59]

In Storrow, Sharp had trained a local teacher, established a friendship, and won himself a powerful patron. Helen Storrow was an ally to whom he could relate socially both as a person and as a dancer—and the two went hand in glove, shaping the politics of his dance world. Noting to Maud Karpeles how "thoroughly capable" Storrow was in comparison to Mrs. Dawson Callery of Pittsburgh (who was "a little deaf, poor thing, younger [and pettier] but not so capable"), Sharp returned to some of the underlying obsessions in his narrative—money, class, gender, and an apparent reference to suffrage: "Both are well off. They are the only women I have met here whom I should call *ladies*, except perhaps Mrs. Huntington, and *you* know what I mean by that."[60]

Sharp found displacing Claud Wright both easier and more difficult than winning over Storrow. It was easier in that when Wright's commission in the Royal Air Force came through, he had enlisted and canceled his own planned tour just as Sharp arrived in America. Wright would be unavailable for a return visit any time soon. But displacing Wright was more difficult in that Wright and Baker had hit it off rather well and formed an alliance of sorts, a relationship that could be an alternative to Sharp-Storrow leadership of any new folk dance movement, either nationally or in the Boston area. This remains pure speculation, however. Yet two things became increasingly apparent to some of the concerned parties: Sharp's opposition to Wright's athletic style had grown more personal, and at issue was the leadership of the English Folk Dance Society in the United States. In a meeting at the Har-

vard Club in late February, Baker told Sharp that he and those who Wright had taught were "very keen" to have Wright as their teacher if and when a permanent appointment was made to run an American branch of EFDS. In response, Sharp pressed Baker for an alternative who he thought would be better "from the dance point of view," someone who "carried beautifully." Sharp lamented, "But [for Baker] it was W[right] or nothing."[61]

In retrospect, Maud Karpeles seemed to know that Sharp's (and her own) hostility toward Wright was bad form, for in editing her letters from Sharp (for the archives), she on two occasions crossed out critical references to Wright, and in the first instance to Baker as well. In the first instance, Karpeles tried to delete Sharp's outraged response to Wright's hiring Baker as his agent (for 10 percent of Wright's earnings), an arrangement that Sharp believed would undercut the financial health of any new American branch.[62] In the second instance, Karpeles censored Sharp's criticism of Wright's supposed reluctance to go to war, crossing out "What you [Karpeles] wrote about Wright is very amusing but very deplorable too. I think he told Prof. Baker that he was training to go to the front but that his duty to his parents made it quite impractical. He showed himself apparently in his true colours when he wrote to Mrs. H. about his American honours. He's a poop stick."[63] In any case, Wright was drafted, and the question of his appointment as permanent teacher in the States was moot. Not that Baker was pleased. Storrow found him "cutting up rather rough about Wright," and Sharp, ever mindful of the need to sustain a working relationship with Baker, had to craft a "very careful reply" to a "rather nasty letter" from him.

Baker continued to play a role in the new society during the next few years, but in the interim, Sharp surrounded himself with his own team of players. Though there was the occasional male leader, his "team" consisted mostly of female devotees: young "ladies"—not suffragists!—who were wealthy patrons like Helen Storrow and relatively well-off young women from England who he had trained personally.[64] As significantly, in rejecting both Wright's athleticism and Storrow's aestheticism as inappropriate English Country Dance styles, by subtraction Sharp emphasized the forward movement and restrained gestures of the running step that he authorized as an enduring legacy of his reign.

An American Branch

As an authority, Sharp now needed to construct the dominion over which to rule: an American branch of EFDS. He began by assessing the state of folk dance in the New World on two fronts, one national, one local.

New York City was the logical place to base his movement. The city, home to the Russell Sage and Carnegie foundations, record and book publishers, and many wealthy society leaders, offered the prospect of patronage and funding for Sharp's efforts. It also had Burchenal's legions of dance teachers in the schools and a host of folk dance enthusiasts in the teachers colleges.

Boston, where a small but influential group of enthusiasts congregated, was the other logical place to establish an ECD colony. Storrow, who was an obvious well of patronage, lived in the suburb of Lincoln but had her dancing school in the city. Baker and Dr. Charles Peabody were secretary and president of the American Folk Lore Society, which was based in the Boston area and had hosted Wright's earlier visits and classes. According to the *Boston Herald*, many of the other early ECD enthusiasts were "Harvard faculty and their families."[65] Still others seemed to congregate around Wellesley College. For although Wellesley placed Sharp in the middle of the suffrage movement, the institution, like many women's colleges and land-grant universities, had several spring folk pageants: a Tree Day pageant and a May Day celebration. A woman, Mrs. Shaw, who represented the college's leadership, was also herself taken with ECD. The college was, then, a prospective jumping-off point from which Sharp could try to replicate his Stratford Summer School program in the United States.[66] But that lay in the future.

The meeting to establish an American branch of the English Folk Dance Society occurred in the midst of a whirlwind three-week national tour on which Sharp embarked in early March to demonstrate, teach, and spread the ECD gospel.[67] The trip, which he found enormously encouraging, took him to Boston and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Surveying the whole of his tour, he reflected that he "could make a heap of money" in the United States, and he acknowledged in letters home to increasingly thinking about return trips.[68] But in the middle of his tour, flush with the success of his receptions, word reached Sharp that supporters had agreed to meet in New York to consider the creation of an American branch of the English Folk Dance Society.

On March 19, 1915, a select group of ECD enthusiasts gathered with Sharp at lunch at a Miss Ware's home to discuss the possibilities. The major account of the meeting is from Sharp's letter soon after to Maud Karpeles. In addition to the host, who seems to have been the sister-in-law of a local dancer, it appears to have been a relatively intimate group. Storrow, Baker, and "several others," presumably representing New York, were there. Prominently in attendance as well was Mrs. Morris, representing Wellesley College.[69]

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Sharp was particularly concerned to have a representative of his own choosing direct the American branch, a person who, in his words, could function "as a central authority with respect to English folk-dancing." Sharp had learned his lessons from previous battles with Mary Neal over control of an English style that was taught and sustained according to his criteria. Moreover, as regards "authentic" style in the dance, he did not need to look far to see present dangers: he worried about the impact of "artificial" aesthetic dancing, the lack of grace in the muscular physical-training tradition, and the "commercially-minded teachers" who cared more about keeping clients happy than teaching "good" (as he authorized it) style.

Sharp's concerns about teaching "authentic" style focused his desire for control of the American branch. He also believed in the importance of a national American movement and was concerned to oversee local teachers in far-flung reaches of the country. The situation in Chicago was a case in point. He had heard rumors that in Chicago Mary Ward Hinman was altering dances to make them easier for schoolchildren to learn.[70] Hinman, like Burchenal, had pioneered the introduction of folk dance into New York and Chicago settlement houses and public schools, from which it was fast expanding into physical-education programs of East Coast and Midwest teachers colleges. These programs made efforts to teach the folk dances of many lands, many of which Burchenal had helped collect and disseminate in her published collections. In this context, Sharp saw the American branch as having what he believed to be its deservingly leading role in sustaining the hegemony of Anglo-American national culture.

Sharp's campaign envisioned an American branch that would provide a model and legacy for the future: an "authentic" and ennobling folk dance tradition of supple but controlled Edwardian bodies in "gay" but decorous motion. Sharp's authorized ECD was an alternative to the dance halls, but it also avoided the excesses of aesthetic dance, gymnastics, and other folk traditions. The American branch was to be specific to English folk dance but also a model for other, albeit what he considered inferior, folk dance traditions. People dancing in other traditions should set up parallel organizations (for example, for Russian dance and the like). Such a scheme, he believed, would develop good folk dancing in the country. He said this, though, "knowing" it would "mean the complete domination of English folk-dancing over all other forms, for ours," and here Sharp was at his most nationalistic and chauvinistic, "is probably the best and certainly, technically, the most accurate and definite."[71]

For Sharp, then, the appointment of one of EFDS's senior certified teachers for a year to run the American branch—someone of his choosing—was of paramount importance for English Country Dance in the United States, for Anglo-American culture, and for folk dance more generally. Indeed, an appointee of his choosing was a condition for any affiliation with EFDS. Sharp recognized that this position put him up against Baker's interest in appointing Wright. Admitting that this was a "difficult matter to engineer," Sharp noted that he had to "think straight & and walk warily" if he was "to pull it off."[72]

Also troubling Sharp was the question of whether to base the branch in New York or Boston. Sharp's initial preference was for an autonomous organization based in Boston, with Storrow as secretary and treasurer and Baker as president. Whereas Sharp had early established a personal connection with Storrow, he never exuded any personal warmth toward Burchenal, and in coming months he was, in fact, to grow increasingly wary of her ambition and strong will. Storrow, perhaps trying to help Sharp negotiate the groups from each city, proposed instead that the branch become a subcommittee of the New York–based Playground Association. But Sharp did want to subordinate his organization to anyone, much less an organization such as the Playground Association led by Elizabeth Burchenal. In addition to his growing reservations about her personally, he thought that her Athletic League Society, which was tied to the Playground Association, "produces no results in the way of folk-dancing because no one knows any!" Thus, the proposal to form an autonomous New York–based branch led by Baker and Storrow may have been a compromise to assuage both Burchenal and Baker. In any case, at a subsequent meeting that evening at the Colony Club, it was determined that New York would be the base of the American branch and that Baker and Storrow would be its president and secretary, respectively.[73]

The surprise of these organization meetings for Sharp, however, was a subsequent decision to mount a "Summer School this coming June!!!!!!" which the Americans wanted Sharp to teach. This opportunity was, in turn, doubled with an offer from the Wellesley representative. The college had an annual summer pageant—actually it was their Tree Day/May Day festival—and it was the president's recommendation that it have a demonstration of English folk dances, songs, and games that year.[74]

Sharp was delighted with all the possibilities, but he remained concerned about how they would be financed. His immediate response was to contain costs, albeit not at the expense of his own income; rather, he volunteered the labor of his female teachers, holding out the prospect of future income from a stable program. Thus, he dismissed Storrow's suggestion that the col-

lege pay a teacher from England to run the summer program. All that was needed, according to Sharp, was expenses; he would find someone "happy for the holiday." He had in mind a woman such as Helen Kennedy and, as a backup, a young teacher recently installed as the head of his Scarborough branch, Lily Roberts. Immediately writing Maud Karpeles, he instructed her to offer the director's post to each of them, in that order, and to invite each to assist at the summer school as well. He also insisted that Karpeles would have to join him at the summer school—and then stay on as his assistant—though he warned her that she would have "to risk some money," as the organizers could only guarantee his expenses. In fact, Karpeles, who came from a wealthy family and was herself a woman of independent means, was committed to Sharp's mission and could handle the risk; Sharp envisioned the teacher—either Helen Kennedy or Lily Roberts—staying on after the summer school and becoming the "Branch Teacher at 500 or rather 300 pounds a year." The former, approximately Sharp's own annual income, was about twenty-five hundred dollars, roughly the salary of a university professor or a school principal. Sharp's only condition was a guarantee of one hundred entrants, a condition that no one seemed to question.[75]

A meeting at the Colony Club on March 23 put the finishing touches on what, for Sharp, had to be a successful American trip that augured well for the future. The New York meeting established the American Branch of the English Folk Dance Society, with "Centres in New York, Boston, Chicago and Pittsburgh." (In fact, the only bona fide "centres" that year were in New York and, later, Boston; the other locales hosted small groups that struggled to attract enough dancers to sustain longways sets.) During the next month, Sharp made additional trips to Pittsburgh and Chicago to consolidate his agenda and help build these groups.[76]

On April 21, 1915, Sharp set sail for home on the SS *Adriatic*. He could take pride and comfort in knowing that he had left behind a group of trained dancers and teachers in New York, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Pittsfield to carry on his work. Most notably, in New York, the city with arguably the largest potential dance community, he had two disciples in whom he had confidence. Charles Rabold, a musician and piano teacher, had become, according to Karpeles, "one of Sharp's most ardent followers." In the past two months, Rabold had grown into Sharp's favorite male dancer, a man he regularly came to rely on to help him demonstrate couples dances. In years to come, Sharp increasingly entrusted him to teach ECD.[77]

Meanwhile, Susan Gilman had transformed her Studio of Dance into a center for ECD in New York. So while at sea, Sharp could pace the deck

worrying about U-boats, but he could do so with a great anticipation and full pockets. The pageant and the summer school were to bring him back to America in two months. Meanwhile, the profits from his lecturing and teaching—each expense and income carefully detailed in his diary—had in four months pocketed a net $1,748.53, an amount his biographers estimated as over four hundred pounds.[78]

Conclusion

By 1915, Sharp and his coterie had established hegemony over the country dance movement, broadly understood as an Anglo-American tradition that in its celebration of white, Anglo-Saxon culture spoke as much to an essential Americanness as to Englishness. The war also became the occasion for the "Sharpeles" to establish a dance style that gave women teachers a public voice, but in traditional coupled patterns. In the settlements, public schools, and playgrounds, reforming dance teachers taught "democratic" lessons to young men and, in particular, to women in how to have respectable bodies. In teachers colleges and ECD groups themselves, far from the madding immigrant crowd, highly educated, white, Protestant elites embodied these lessons for themselves.

The women and men supporting the revival in both the United States and England also had a class distance from their immigrant and "peasant" subjects. The revival dance community constituted a well-heeled coterie of people, most of whom had independent means or relatively high-status professional careers. And while folk song and dance may have had to be imposed on the immigrant working class in the school curriculum, the English aristocracy and their bourgeois idolizers—and their American cousins—embraced its heritage: New York society, for instance, could delight in reading in the *New York Times* of holiday pageant dinners in the Swiss Alps resorts attended by rich Americans such as the Duchess of Marlboro (the Brooklyn-born mother of Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill), who had married into English society. The highlight of the banquet, served by men and women in Tudor dress, was schoolchildren singing folk songs and performing morris dances.[79] And while Lady Spencer danced in swanky Swiss resorts, her scions folk danced in hoity-toity New York hotels. "Society Women in Folk Costumes" headlined the *New York Times*, noting in particular the presence of Mrs. T. J. Rhinelander, Mrs. Lorillard Spencer Jr., and Mrs. Frank Phipps dancing the "Fjallnaspolka" at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel gala for the benefit of the Girls' Branch of the New York Public Schools Athletic League.[80]

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The leadership of the ECD movement likewise shared privileged class positions. As noted, Neal and Sharp had similar class backgrounds. The class difference between Sharp and Wright was also small, but it was greater than that between Sharp and Neal, and it undoubtedly complicated the men's relationship. Wright, for instance, felt that his more modest social background and economic position did not quite "fit in" with that of the other members of the demonstration team. Neal came to believe that gender politics (notably, suffrage) was the basis for her conflict with Sharp, and there is much evidence that Sharp had difficulty dealing with strong women.

Ultimately, Sharp's conflict with both antagonists seems to have been rooted in serious differences that each invested with considerable moral and social import over the "authentic" style in the dance and who was to authorize it. Sharp's victory over Neal in this struggle had implications for the politics of the body and its "respectable," "authentic" expression: the spirit of the dance would be codified by "experts" rather than given more free-form expression by the Espérance working girls. So would there be a price for Sharp's victory over Wright's "aestheticism": the dance would be more restrained and contained, more horizontal than vertical.

Wright had his own critique of Sharp, albeit one that was less well articulated. A glimpse of his concern about Sharp suggests that it mirrored Neal's belief in a certain "spontaneity" in the dance. In a letter to Baker in late 1914, a few months before Wright enlisted and Sharp arrived to take the American movement in hand, Wright worried that Sharp was "not well" and was "aging." Both observations were true, although Sharp's indefatigable energy continued to carry him through brilliantly. More to the point, Wright complained that Sharp's personal interests and formality were misrepresenting the accuracy of the figures and style of the dance: "He is altering the dances in places, without authority it seems to me—so they lack now the old spontaneity that I loved."[81]

Sharp's victory over Neal and Wright, then, came with a price: Neal's alternative socialist-feminist embodiment of the dance in the exuberant, idiosyncratic expressions of her working girls and Wright's athletic physicality and love of "spontaneity" gave way to Sharp's more highly stylized bodily expression. Wright thought Sharp had lost the "joy" in the dance; for Neal, the "pedant" in Sharp had a similarly stultifying effect on the dance. Sharp's contained dancing bodies were, however, precisely the liberal body he and other "professional" Progressive Era experts valorized. Much like efforts at sanitation, lighting, and municipal reform, Sharp's dancing body—"gay simplicity" with authorized "style" rather than "vitality"—meant to bring order

to the “disorder” that he and others of his social class saw all around them, whether it was radical anarcho-syndicalists and suffragettes in the streets or unchaperoned young toughs in the dance halls. As “experts,” men such as Cecil Sharp expressed conventional patriarchal and benighted class attitudes of the day. They did so not to demean but to uplift, to transform urban newcomers from worrisome immigrants into respectable Anglo-American citizens with an infusion of what they saw as the vital spirit of the race that they believed to be innate in “simple” rural peoples. ECD was, then, the flowering of the liberal conscience of the day and the bodily expression of its social mission.

Neal and Wright were in the past, and Sharp put the exuberance and antielitism they embodied in the past with them—at least for a while. The war that soon enveloped both the United States and England was a transitional era for the English Country Dance community and the politics of the folk it embodied. The Progressive Era looked outward with a social mission to the immigrant poor. During the war and the decade that followed, these imperatives receded, and the conservative caste of liberal culture—the elitism of the cult of expertise and the celebration of the ordered and disciplined body in graceful balance—took a turn inward. An Anglo-American Anglophilia of a national folk identity increasingly characterized its recreational participants. This nationalism became vulnerable to the growing political currents of fascism on both sides of the Atlantic, currents in which Henry Ford’s nationalist version of folk dance and the Nazis’ invocation of the *volk* were an extreme caricature. For some folk dance enthusiasts, however, this worrisome national turn led toward an emerging International Folk Dance movement, a dance form that increasingly came to stand as an alternative political and cultural style of dance against which ECD stood.[82]