Irish Dance in the State of Utah: A History

India Eve Henrichsen

Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

India Henrichsen
Department of Dance
Bachelor of Science

This thesis summarizes the history of Irish dance in Utah. Over the past 35 years, from its beginning in 1983 to today in 2018, Irish dance schools have multiplied in Utah and evolved following international trends. The first school of Irish dance in Utah was started by Maureen McTeggart Hall at the request of Harold Gottfredsen in 1983. Five years later, in 1988, Brigham Young University established an Irish dance instruction program. Following the first television broadcast of Riverdance from Dublin in 1994, the interest in Irish dance increased exponentially. The number of schools has grown, new schools have emerged from older ones, and school names have changed regularly, complicating the task of tracking their history. The research for this history was conducted primarily through personal interviews, primary source documents, and current Irish dance school websites.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all who made this history happen in the first place. To my first dance teachers, Gina Gottfredson and Maureen McTeggart Hall, whose fierceness and determination brought Irish dance to me and so many others. Thanks also to Katie Register Cummock and Clare Duignan Masterson who were my mentors in the Irish dance world, as well as to Jill Crawford and Tina Shelley who created the Rhythm of Ireland and instilled in me a love of performance.

Thanks also to those who helped with its compilation by sharing their stories— the Gottfredon family, Terena Lund, Katie Vanhoeven, Aubree Walker Shelley, Amy Webber Stanfield, Christy Dorritty, and so many others who were instrumental in gathering all the facts and connecting the dots.

Many thanks to my dance teachers at BYU who taught me how to think critically about dance forms and expand my creative and technical horizons, such as Ed Austin, Marc Cameron, and Emily Kleinkopf Hatch. With special thanks to the BYU Honors Department, and to my teachers and mentors throughout this project Jeanette Geslison and Johanna Lambert.

And of course, last of all, to my family, Kirk and Esther, whose support and enthusiasm made my journey through Irish dance possible.
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Photo Credit: Thanks to all of those who donated photos for use in this project.

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Figure 1. Ireland and its counties, 2018.
INTRODUCTION

Irish step-dancing as we know it today made its way to Utah in 1983. The precursor forms of Irish dancing assuredly came to the Intermountain West with the original European settlers in the 19th century. While there were many pioneers of Irish descent, the solo competitive form of Irish dancing had not yet developed, even in Ireland. Irish music and the traditional group céilí dancing, however, permeated the ‘Mormon melting pot’ of the late 19th century in Utah.

Documented stories of Mormon pioneers or Irish immigrant miners who danced in Utah are rare. Even the more famous story of Thomas Dobson who famously recovered from severely frost-bitten feet on his way across the plains, and continued to dance throughout his life, was of a boy from Lancashire, England, not Ireland. Step-dancing in the 1800s was common in nations outside of Ireland as well, with unique styles and steps from area to area. Irish dance was enormously influential in the United States for centuries, influencing other genres of dance such as tap dancing and clogging. The early strongholds of Irish dance in the United States tended to be near the East Coast, in places such as Chicago and New York City which had a high concentration of Irish immigrants and their descendants. California and the West Coast were next. Only later would Irish

step-dancing be established in the Intermountain West, more than 100 years after its first Irish and European settlers.

The Gaelic League was formed in Ireland in 1893,\(^3\) approximately fifty years after the first pioneers settled in the Salt Lake Valley. The independent Irish State was formed in 1916. Shortly thereafter in 1930 the oldest and largest commission governing Irish dance was formed. \textit{An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha} (CLRG) was established to govern and promote Irish dance, language, and culture.\(^4\) Irish dance expanded and evolved throughout the 20\(^{th}\) century, but no single event was as influential as Michael Flatley’s revolutionary performance \textit{Riverdance} in 1994. After \textit{Riverdance}, Irish dancing exploded in popularity throughout the United States, worldwide, and in Utah—the number of schools grew rapidly post-\textit{Riverdance}.

Irish step-dancing has faced challenges and change over the past 35 years, from 1983 to 2018. Still, the number of students, teachers, and schools has grown dramatically since the 1980s, and today there are many more options for students. While Irish dance in Utah has had some of its own unique challenges, it has also grown and changed within the greater network of international Irish step-dance. This brief history of Irish dance in the state of Utah explores the growth and evolution of this sport and art form, so far from its original home.


I. IRISH DANCE IN IRELAND AND NORTH AMERICA

Dr. John Cullinane, historian-author of numerous books on the history of Irish dance, has identified “three great milestones in the history of Irish dancing.” First, the advent of the travelling dance masters in the early 1700s played an enormous role in its proliferation. Second—the founding of the Gaelic League in 1893, which later led to the creation of the Irish Dance Commission. Third—the Eurovision song contest interval act in 1994, a performance called Riverdance.5

Travelling Dance Masters

Ireland felt the looming presence of England heavily in the 17th-19th centuries. Long before the official annexation of Ireland in 1801, conquest and colonization of Ireland suppressed its people and much of their culture. Amidst this turmoil, the traveling dance master emerged, teaching dancing, deportment, and even fencing to pupils. Before the dance masters, dancing in Ireland was a true folk art inherited by observation, trial, and error. The travelling dance masters formalized dancing, including current standards like (1) keeping hands straight to the sides, and (2) reciprocating right-footed then left-footed steps at alternating 8-bar intervals.6 Travelling dance masters taught in Cork, Kerry, and Limerick since the early 18th century.7 Cork and Kerry were the great strongholds of the traveling dance master.8

The travelling dance master is not just an important figure historically, but also mythologically.9 Almost all of the literature which references this figure references

6 Ibid., 16
7 Ibid., 18
8 Ibid., 20
“the” dancing master, rather than specific people, a Platonic rather than an Aristotelian approach. He taught not just dancing, but a way of life. “Dancing! Why, it is was the least part of what he taught or professed to teach… He taught the whole art o’ courtship wid all politeness and success, accordin’ as it was practiced in Paris durin’ the last saison.” Surely, all the dance masters had not been to Paris the last season, but he certainly taught a sort of ‘outside manners’ to his countrymen—a “propriety, civility, a genteel conduct not originating in the indigenous population but imported from courtly custom.”

As Irish dancing evolved, eventually it became what it is today, modern Irish step-dancing. Modern Irish step-dancing is not a true folk-dance form, in the way that the Russian ballet might not be considered true Russian folk dancing. Extensive training is required. Choreographies are documented, and sometimes learned from books. Formal schooling, and committee-made decisions also exclude it from this category. As one American anthropologist stated (perhaps a bit snobbishly), “you know there are two kinds of Irish dancing: the fake kind done by little girls in gaudy dresses and the real stuff known only by a few old men here and there.” Well, the “fake stuff” is what is recognized both internationally and by the Gaelic League as Irish dance. The other traditional form of sean-nos dancing still exists. This “old-style” sean-nos dancing was not purposely excluded from the “Irish dancing” category, but simply left behind. Why is this? Perhaps Frank Hall puts it best, “the sets [group dances which were banned by the

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13 Ibid., 8
The Gaelic League for being ‘imported’ in favor of ‘true Irish’ cèili dances] and sean-nos dancing have not been burdened with the task of representing Irishness, while competitive solo step-dancing has.”

**Conradh na Gaelige & An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha**

*Conradh na Gaelige*, or The Gaelic League, was formed in 1893 as a cultural organization dedicated to promoting all aspects of Irish culture. Originally the League was “non-political and non-sectarian.” The original intentions of the League were strictly cultural. Specifically, the League’s objectives were “(1) the preservation of Irish as the National spoken language of Ireland and the extension of its use as a spoken tongue, and (2) the study of and publication of existing Gaelic Literature and cultivation of modern literature in Irish.” One cofounder, Douglas Hyde, was opposed to the political involvement of the Gaelic League, convinced rather that the way to recognition of a distinct Irish nationality was through a distinct Irish cultural identity. Hyde later resigned in 1915 when the League’s constitution was altered to include achieving a free Gaelic Ireland. It was indeed difficult to separate cultural nationalism from political nationalism. While many (correctly) associate the Gaelic League with independence movements of the mid-20th century, the Gaelic League was originally formed as a cultural organization, not a political one. Promoting dance and music were borne from the primary objectives—promoting Irish language and literature.

The Gaelic League promoted nationalism through not just language and literature as stated, but through music, song, dress, sports, and dance. It was under the Gaelic League

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16 Ibid., 17-18
that “dancing” became “Irish dancing,” and what used to be common dances came to be referred to as “National Dances of Ireland.”

The League created a greater demand for Irish dancing as entertainment, exhibition, and competition. Dancing classes were more in demand and took on a more formal structure. Before the League, classes had mostly been a part of rural life, and mainly held in the Munster counties of Cork, Kerry, and Limerick. Under the League, “Traditional Irish Dancing classes” were introduced to new areas, such as Dublin and London.

The League organized competitions for language, singing, and dancing. Feis was the term introduced for local events, and oireachtas for the larger national event. The first oireachtas was organized in the Rotunda in Dublin City center in 1897. It included only two competitions which were both open to all ages and both sexes. The concept of a “national champion” was introduced by this first oireachtas. The following March of 1898, the Mascroom branch held the League’s first feis, a cultural competition of dancing, music, and Irish language recitation. Three decades later, the League created a commission specifically for dancing. This commission has since become largely independently operated from the League, but in its charter is required to share board members with the League.

An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, literally the Commission of Irish Dance, and frequently referred to as An Coimisiún or CLRG, is the first and largest official governing body of Irish Dance both in Ireland and worldwide. The founders of An Coimisiún first

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20 Ibid.
met in 1927 and the organization was officially formed in 1930. Since its formation, *An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha* has been the leading force in the Irish dance world, overseeing teacher examinations, adjudicator examinations, and all competitions affiliated with the Commission.\(^{21}\) An Coimisiún created the now-standard teacher’s examination for certification—Teagascóir Choimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, or TCRG.

Irish Dance teachers in North America began to organize themselves in the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century. The earliest known organization was created in the 1940s, simply “The Dancing Commission of the United States,” although others probably existed. Their name changed later to “The Irish Dancing Teachers Commission of America” or IDTCA, officially founded in 1953. The commission would meet at an IDTCA convention annually to discuss issues in Irish dancing, such as metronome settings at competition and age groups at competition. The present day IDTANA “Irish Dancing Teachers’ Association of North America” was founded in 1964, responding to an urgent need for standardization at feiseanna. IDTANA originally required ADCRG, TCRG, or TMRF certification by CLRG (*An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha*).\(^ {22}\) It was officially founded in March of 1964 at the Irish Institute in New York City. This meeting was led by Mae Butler, Fedelmia Davis, Kevin McKenna, Peter Smith, Cyril McNiff, and Anna O’Sullivan. The IDTANA now has 7 regions across North America.\(^{23}\)

The 1960s were turbulent years in the Commission. A split between *An Coimisiún* members resulted in the formation of an organization known as *An Comhdhail* (the

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Congress) in the early 1960s, formally *Comhdhail na Muinteoirí le Rinci Gaelacha Teoranta*. However, it was not until 1969 that “the split” occurred, when teachers had to choose between one organization or the other. This divergence of organizations occurred in the years leading up to the first World Championships (*Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne*), held in 1970.

In 2004, another alternative Irish dance organization, the World Irish Dance Association or WIDA was created in Germany. WIDA is an “open platform” association, meaning that it accepts dancers organized under any organization. WIDA is currently one of multiple organizations to organize an annual World Championship event, the World and International Championships.

Other notable organizations to do so are of course *An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha* (which hosts *Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne*), and *Comhdháil na Muinteoirí le Rinci Gaelacha Teoranta*.

Informal competition is probably as old as dancing itself—one challenge for “champion of the United States” was issued in 1918 by John McNamara of Chicago, which consisted of only one competition. There were four feiseanna held annually in the U.S. as early as 1914. These early feiseanna were held in cities in the eastern half of the United States, especially New York, Chicago, and Boston.

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25 Ibid., 32


the West Coast occurred in 1936 in San Francisco. After this feis, it took over a decade for the 1950 feis in California Hall to be organized. The American branch of the Gaelic League was instrumental in hosting these feiseanna, indeed all of the aforementioned feiseanna were organized by the Gaelic League. Tom Hill remarked that “thanks to the American branch of the Gaelic League, Irish dancing is in a flourishing condition.” The first West Coast Oireachtas occurred in 1974 in San Francisco.

Competition has been one of the main forces in the evolution of Irish dancing (see Appendix A), encouraging both innovation and a narrowing of style. Creating and learning new ways of moving is innovation, but dancers often imitate winning styles, resulting in a narrowing of style after innovation has taken place. The style of Irish dancing changed drastically during the 20th century. Before mid-century, classes were almost entirely taught by teachers from the province of Munster, particularly Cork, Kerry, and Limerick counties. At the beginning of the century it is possible that the only dancing schools in Ireland were in Munster—this is at least where the greatest dance schools were located. The Cork and Kerry technique was very fast, strong, battering and close—possible to perform on top of a barrel, a table, or half-door. It dominated throughout North America until the mid-1950s, when the more slow, graceful Northern/Belfast style developed. As more teachers from outside of Munster arrived in

32 Ibid., 32, 41
33 Ibid., 32
34 Ibid., 42
the United States, this decline in the Cork-Kerry style continued.\textsuperscript{37} New innovation and creativity in Irish dancing continued.

\textbf{Riverdance}

1994 was the year that the world learned of Irish dance, and “public perception of Irish dance within Ireland was transformed literally overnight.”\textsuperscript{38} The interval performance act of that year’s Eurovision Song Contest featured Jean Butler and Michael Flatley in an experimental dance production—\textit{Riverdance}. The following year, the expanded stage show opened in Dublin on February 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1995. It played to full capacity for ten weeks. When it moved to London’s West End it sold out for five months. Millions of Europeans discovered Irish dance.\textsuperscript{39}

The popularity of Irish Dance exploded after \textit{Riverdance}. Although many people did not know what Irish dance or Irish step-dancing was, they could probably identify it (if incorrectly) as “Riverdance.” After \textit{Riverdance} the demand for Irish dance schools rose dramatically. In 1996 Michael Flatley’s \textit{Lord of the Dance} premiered, followed by \textit{Feet of Flames} in 1998. Both stars of \textit{Riverdance}. Jean Butler and Michael Flatley were American-born Irish step dancers. Perhaps their immigrant heritage helped them to stretch boundaries, creating a new way to perform Irish dance which moved beyond the rigid upper body posture and traditional costumes.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 1-4.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
II. IRISH DANCE TRAVELS WESTWARD AND INLAND

Before the 1994 broadcast of *Riverdance*, Irish dance was mostly available in Irish immigrant strongholds such as Chicago, California, and the East Coast. How then, did Irish dancing make its way to the states of the Intermountain West so many years earlier, in 1983? Maureen McTeggart Hall was instrumental in introducing Irish dancing to much of the Western United States. She and many other individuals established Irish dancing in the state of Utah.

Peggy, Nancy, Maureen, and Betty McTeggart were all champion dancers in Ireland, taught by the Irish dance master Cormac O’Keefe in Cork. Maureen established the McTeggart School of Irish Dance in Cork in 1938, and in 1950 passed her TCRG. The first member of the McTeggart family to emigrate to the U.S. was Nancy McTeggart in 1956. She won the 1957 and 1958 Californian Championship in Los Angeles. In 1958, Maureen McTeggart Hall came to the U.S., and in 1959 she moved to Fresno, California. In her lifetime Maureen was Director for the West Coast Region of IDTANA, Vice-president of the CRG, gave lectures and classes at universities on Irish dancing, and was a director of the Irish Traditional Dance Foundation. She travelled, teaching dancing in seven different states and helped set up the first feiseanna in the south-eastern states.

Travelling across the Western United States, she taught at multiple locations each month, and frequently returned to Ireland. During the 1990s the McTeggart school had locations in Fresno, CA, Salt Lake City, UT, and Denver, CO. Many of the teachers who later

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created their own schools in the Intermountain West area originally trained with McTeggart schools. IDTANA calls Maureen McTeggart Hall “a major force” in spreading Irish Dance across North America, and affirmed her as a founding member.  

**The Gottfredson Family & Maureen McTeggart Hall**

Meanwhile in Salt Lake City, Harold Gottfredson was conductor of the Utah Symphony. Harold was born in Nevada, but was of Irish descent. He married his wife Clyde, who was from Donegal, Ireland shortly after her move to Utah. Mr. Gottfredson began a Utah Symphony tradition called Irish Night in 1980, at which traditional Irish music was performed. In 1980 guest Frank Patterson performed, and in 1981 Brendan O’Dowda performed. People began to ask Harold if this music could be danced to, so he did some research and found out about an Irish dance competition which was to be held in California, called the Western Regionals. He flew to this competition, sat on the front row, and spoke with Maureen McTeggart Hall. He explained the situation, and suggested she start a school in Salt Lake City. Maureen had already

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Figure 2. Program from the Utah Symphony Irish Night in 1983.
established McTeggart schools across the country and agreed to come to Salt Lake City. Harold’s daughter, Gina Gottfredson, who was 6-years old at the time, recalls when her family collected Maureen Hall from the airport, she was an intimidating presence. Anyone familiar with her knew she was a “strong Irish woman,” old-school in her approach to teaching. Maureen McTeggart Hall exemplified the modern figure of the “travelling dance master.”

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45 Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.
Irish Night hosted McTeggart Irish dancers onstage the next March, in 1984. Irish Night continued to delight Salt Lake City’s Abravanel Hall every March for many years, until Harold Gottfredson’s retirement. Sometimes he would even surprise the audience by jumping down from the conductor’s platform and dancing a wee bit with the dancers. Harold Gottfredson received an award from Raidió Teilifís Éireann in Dublin in honor of his efforts to promote Irish culture in Utah. 46

Various musical guests performed with the Symphony and the McTeggart dancers over the years. That first year after Harold and Maureen’s discussion in 1983, the Cheiftans performed and McTeggart dancers from Denver flew in to provide the dancing. In 1984 the McTeggart Utah dancers performed at their first Irish Night. 47

![Figure 5. Harold Gottfredson, conductor, dancing with McTeggart Irish Step-dancers in a brief interlude onstage at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.](image)

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46 Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.

47 Ibid.
Figure 6. McTeggart Irish Step-dancers at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.

Figure 7. McTeggart Irish Step-dancers at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.

Figure 8. McTeggart Irish Step-dancers at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.

Figure 9. McTeggart Irish Step-dancers at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.

Figure 10. McTeggart Irish Step-dancers at the Utah Symphony Irish Night, c. 1990. The McTeggart costume of the 1980s in red, black, and white.
Figure 11. Clyde Gottfredson in Irish cape (left), Maureen McTeggart Hall in McTeggart skirt (middle), and Gina Gottfredson in team costume at the Salt Lake City St. Patrick’s Day parade, c. 1985.

Figure 12. Clyde Gottfredson in Irish cape with the Irish flag at the Salt Lake City St. Patrick’s Day parade, c. 1985.
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing had a relationship with many of the Catholic parishes during these years, often holding classes in church basements. The first classes in Salt Lake City were held in St. Ann’s Catholic Church. Later classes were held for a time at the Cathedral of the Madeleine, at the First Baptist Church (near East High) as well as occasionally at Our Lady of Lourdes and Juan Diego private school in Draper. By the later 1990s, classes had moved to St. Ambrose Catholic Church.48 During March around St. Patrick’s Day McTeggart Irish dancers performed frequently at private Catholic schools. The McTeggart School also danced each year in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Salt Lake City, and at the Siamsa (literally translated as entertainment) afterward at the Gallivan Center.

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The McTeggart School of Irish Step-dancing hosted the first Utah feis in 1984. Gina Gottfredson recalls that in those early days, Salt Lake City’s McTeggart school had strong ties to the McTeggart dancers in Denver, CO, frequently attending the annual feis there, as well as workshops. Fun traditions of the *Utah State Feis and Championships* in Salt Lake City included the “Best Overall” travelling trophy and the father-daughter special, which Harold Gottfredson and his daughter Vanessa won one year.49

McTeggart continued to host one feis annually most years.50 It was the only school to host a feis in Utah until 2009. The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing was the only CLRG certified school in the state of Utah until 2000, when Kristina Shelley started the Shelley School of Irish Dance in Utah County.

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49 Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.
50 Ibid.
Beginning around age 14 and continuing until 2002, Gina Gottfredson taught the majority of weekly classes. Maureen McTeggart Hall would travel to Salt Lake City to teach a class each month to maintain the location’s An Coimisiún certification. Hoping to have a TCRG in Salt Lake City, Maureen suggested that Gina take the TCRG examination. Not knowing the extreme rigor of the exam, Gina did not pass the music section. In 2002 Jill Polkinghorne Crawford, a McTeggart dancer from Denver, CO passed her TCRG examination and began teaching the McTeggart Utah locations.\footnote{Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.}

Figure 18. Gina Gottfredson (back row, second from left) and Maureen McTeggart Hall (right) with McTeggart dancers in team costume, c. 2000.
McTeggart continued to teach students in Salt Lake City until 2004 when it became the Crawford School of Irish Dance.52

**Brigham Young University & The Edlinger Sisters**

The only other institution in Utah to teach Irish dance pre-*Riverdance* was the World Dance (or Folk Dance) program at Brigham Young University in Utah County, 40 miles south of Salt Lake City. BYU invited Katie Edlinger to come teach their first Irish dance classes in the fall of 1988, essentially starting the Irish dance program at BYU. The three Edlinger sisters, Katie, Tina, and Jo, all helped to establish Irish dancing as part of the World Dance program at BYU.53

The eldest Edlinger sister, Katie, recalls that BYU folk dance director Edwin Austin was eager to include Irish dance in that fall’s production of *Christmas Around the World*, for which Katie choreographed a 6-hand for six women. That same fall, her freshman year, she taught a beginning class of Irish dance.54 Tina Edlinger (Shelley) and Jo Edlinger (Lambert) both taught the class in later years and helped expand the program.55

**Independent Schools**

In the mid- to late-1990s, an interesting trend began to appear. Non-certified Irish Dance schools operated independently from An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha. Connie Roberts, a mother in Utah county, hired Jo Edlinger, still a student at BYU, to teach Connie’s children and a small group, after learning Irish dance from videos of Colin

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52 Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.
53 Katrin Edlinger Vanhoeven, (creator of first Irish dance class at Brigham Young University) interviewed by the author, June 1, 2018.
54 Ibid.
55 Kristina Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Shelley School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Cedar Hills, UT, January 9, 2018; Johanna Lambert (adjudicator), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, January 13, 2018.
Figure 19. Rinceoiri Don Spraoi, St. Patrick’s Day Parade c. 1998.

Figure 20. Rinceoiri Don Spraoi parade truck at St. Patrick’s Day Parade, c.1998.
Dunne for weeks on their own. This became the first independent Irish dance school in Utah, *Rinceori Don Spraoi* (Irish for “dancing for fun”), which officially started in 1997. It appealed to BYU students who had taken a beginning Irish dance class at BYU through its World Dance program, and to other residents of Utah county who either did not know about the McTeggart School in Salt Lake City, or to whom an hour or more of travel time was not an option.\(^5\) Independent schools may have competed with An Coimisiún certified schools, but also provided opportunity and exposure to Irish dance. Utah as a state did not have a resident TCRG until 2000. With only one certified school in Salt Lake City (McTeggart) until 2000, it is remarkable that so many people were exposed to a form of Irish dance before then. In a post-*Riverdance* world, there simply were not enough certified teachers to respond to the interest in Irish dance Utah, especially considering that many families outside of Salt Lake refused to travel so far for classes. Independent alternatives were and still are controversial to some An Coimisiún certified schools nationwide. While a purist approach to ADCRG-regulated Irish dance necessitates teaching proper technique, all seven types of solo dances, standard set dances, and standard figure dances, in the 1990s there simply were not enough people with this background across the state to meet the interest in Irish dance, so independent schools started to multiply.

A number of independent schools developed from this trend which began with *Rinceori Don Spraoi*. *An Dragan Ceilteach* (the Celtic Dragon) was started in 1998 in Riverton by Leia Jones, Liesl Allred, and Mindie Emmertson. *An Dragan Ceilteach* later

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\(^5\) Kristina Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Shelley School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Cedar Hills, UT, January 9, 2018.
moved to Draper, back to Riverton, and in the fall of 2017 moved to South Jordan.\textsuperscript{57} Celtic Beat also formed in 1998. A part of LaRae’s Dance Unlimited, Celtic Beat continues to teach classes in Layton and performs across the state.\textsuperscript{58} Inishfree was created around 1998 in Logan,\textsuperscript{59} and merged to become part of the An Coimisiún school \textit{An Tus Nua} (the New Beginning) in 2014.\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure21.jpg}
\caption{An Dragan Ceilteach, Irish Dancers 2017.}
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\textsuperscript{57} Liesl Allred, (co-founder of An Dragan Ceilteach), Facebook correspondence with the author, July 6, 2018.


\textsuperscript{59} Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.

\textsuperscript{60} Terena Lund. http://loganirishdance.blogspot.com/ (2018); Terena Lund (former teacher of An Daire Utah, An Tus Nua, and Comerford Utah), interviewed by the author, June 1, 2018.
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Figure 22. Celtic Beat Irish Dancers, c. 2017.
III. A NEW MILLENNIUM OF IRISH DANCE

A New Certified School – The Shelley School of Irish Dance

Tina Edlinger Shelley created the Shelley School of Irish Dance in 2000, after achieving her TCRG. She was the first resident TCRG in Utah. She grew up dancing with the Deely School in California. When she began her undergraduate education at BYU in 1993, the Irish dance program which her sister Katie had started was still in its infancy. Tina continued to travel with the BYU Performing Art Company (PAC) as their Irish dance soloist, and expanded the Irish dance program from one class to three classes—beginning, intermediate, and advanced. As students at BYU, Tina Edlinger and Jo Edlinger were offered side jobs teaching people interested in Irish dance, and eventually used a small dance studio in downtown Orem. Unnamed and unofficial, this apparent demand for Irish dance in Utah County showed Tina that she had grounding for a business in Irish dance. After her marriage in 1999 she obtained her TCRG in 2000 and started the first An Coimisiún certified school in Utah Valley, the Shelley School of Irish Dance. Tina’s school has remained and operated in Cedar Hills from 2000 to the present.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) Kristina Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Shelley School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Cedar Hills, UT, January 9, 2018.
The McTeggart School becomes the Crawford School

Maureen McTeggart Hall was travelling regularly to maintain the An Coimisiún certified status of multiple locations across the country. She hoped to cut down on this travel time and expense by hiring a McTeggart TCRG besides herself to teach at the Salt Lake City location. In 2002, Jill Polkinghorne Crawford, a McTeggart dancer from Denver, CO passed her TCRG examination and began teaching the McTeggart Utah locations, replacing Gina Gottfredson and Maureen McTeggart Hall.62

Many changes occurred under Jill, particularly moving from church basements to dance studios with mirrors. Jill had never danced in a studio until age 18 as a McTeggart CO dancer, rather dancing in church basements with tile floors and no mirrors. The first studio was the dance studio attached to Larry Pino’s Accordion Studio. In 2004, the school was transformed into the Crawford School of Irish dance. Jill designed new team dresses, and the McTeggart solo steps and figure choreography could no longer be used in competition. Later the Crawford school moved to create a studio on 33rd South in Salt Lake City, with satellite locations in Murray and Layton. Around 2008 the Crawford School moved to its last location in West Valley on Redwood Road. This is the same location the Scariff-Hardiman Academy used after they bought Crawford in 2012.63

Tina Shelley and Jill Crawford teamed up to host the Utah Feis that first year, and for a number of years afterward. Their collaboration later led to the creation of a two-school dance company, called the Waves of Galway Bay in about 2005. The company was renamed the following year as The Rhythm of Ireland, which performed until about 2009.

63 Jill Crawford (former teacher and owner of Crawford School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, January 2018.
The Rhythm of Ireland show of 2006 played in Salt Lake City at the Cottonwood High theater, in Orem at the Scera theater, and in Logan at the Eccles theater. Perhaps many Irish dancers from the next decade were exposed to Irish dance through this show.

Crawford School dancers were involved in numerous other performances. Five Crawford School dancers performed with the original Riverdance musician Eileen Ivers on the stage at Abravanel Hall in February of 2010. The Crawford School, like all Irish dance schools, was busy performing in March. Performances included many public schools, and the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and Siamsa in Salt Lake City each year.

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65 Jill Crawford (former teacher and owner of Crawford School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, January 2018.
Fearon O’Connor, Claddagh, and the Webber family

Meanwhile, in 2003 Cecilia Webber and her family moved from Connecticut to Utah. The Webber girls had quickly advanced to championship level competition while in Connecticut, and regularly qualified for and competed at national and world competitions. At this time, neither the Shelley nor the McTeggart schools yet had championship programs which were as developed as schools on the East or West Coast. Ms. Webber and her daughters began driving every month to California to classes at Fearon O’Connor. Eventually in April of 2004, Fearon O’Connor opened a location in Sandy, UT, flying out a teacher from California once a month. Two years later in 2005, the Claddagh School of Irish Dance replaced Fearon O’Connor, flying out teachers from Claddagh’s California location once a month. The Claddagh location in Sandy continued until 2010.66

When Amy Webber (later Stanfield) passed her TCRG in 2009, she intended to continue teaching for the Claddagh School. However, the Claddagh school was based in California, and wanted the Utah school to charge California prices for tuition, as well as send any championship dancers to California once each month, which Amy Webber did not think was practical. These business complications led her to create Webber Academy instead that same year. The school’s name was changed in 2012 to Acadamh Rince (pronounced “Aka-dove Rink-ah”), translated as Academy of Dance. Claddagh continued to teach classes in Sandy until 2014, when it stopped sending teachers from California and closed its location. Interestingly enough, Fearon O’Connor and Claddagh

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66 Amy Webber Stanfield (teacher and owner of Acadamh Rince), interviewed by the author, Murray, UT, February 2018.
were located in the same building which the Scariff School currently occupies in 2018. Acadamh Rince hosted Feis SLC in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Acadamh Rince has three TCRG teachers, Amy Webber Stanfield, Katie Register Cummock, and Clare Duignan Masterson. Acadamh Rince is now partnered with the Caroline Greene School of Dance in Scotland.67

The Scariff School

In 2011, Alan Scariff and Kieran Hardiman bought the Crawford School and renamed it the Scariff-Hardiman School of Irish Dance. The Scariff-Gilleoghan School of Irish Dance was a sister school to Scariff-Hardiman, run by Stephen’s brother Stephen Scariff in Tampa, Florida. Today in 2018 the school is named the Scariff School of Irish Dance. Terry Gillan and Phillip Owens have also been part of the Scariff school teaching staff.68 The Scariff School inherited the Utah State Feis from the Crawford School, which it continues to host each summer. Known for having “former Riverdancers” as teachers, the school places an emphasis on technique, athleticism, and competition. The school has performed with visiting Irish musicians such as Danú and Eileen Ivers. Most students compete regularly at feiseanna and championships. They also host an annual Christmas show and perform at St. Patrick’s Day events.69 The Scariff School of Irish Dance now has locations in Sandy, North Salt Lake, and Logan.70

67 Amy Webber Stanfield (teacher and owner of Acadamh Rince), interviewed by the author, Murray, UT, February 2018.
Power Academy and Harp Irish Dance Company

Aubree Walker Shelley began Irish step-dancing at age 5 with the Deely School in California, after seeing a sign for free Irish dancing classes at a local elementary school. She and her sister Meghan competed and danced with the school until their family moved to Utah. A few years later, when Aubree brought up her desire to start Irish dancing again, her mother discovered Rinceori Don Spraoi, based in South Jordan, close to home. Within a few years she became a teaching student at Rinceori. Later she found out about the McTeggart School in Salt Lake City and began attending classes there too in order to learn more challenging steps, and a variety of dances which were not taught at Rinceori such as the hornpipe. Soon thereafter, she was told by Maureen Hall that she must choose one. Not wanting to abandon her friends and with it being closer to home, she continued dancing with Rinceori, but pursued advanced Irish dancing by attending a summer camp, where she met Lisa Powers.\(^1\) The two continued to communicate, and Aubree co-

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\(^{71}\) Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
founded the Power Academy’s Utah location in American Fork in 2002. Aubree began to compete again under Power and received her TCRG in 2009.  

Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.

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Figure 28. Power Academy Dancers in original class costume, 2002.

Figure 29. Power Academy dancers in class dress, 2011.

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72 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
In 2012, the Power Academy Utah location became the Harp Academy of Irish Dance. Today Harp has an association with Corda Mór, an An Coimisiún school in Edina, Minnesota. Corda Mór does workshops for Harp, a common practice, which includes advanced choreography for championship dancers.

The Pack Academy and Legacy Irish Dance Company

Victoria Tanner was teaching for the Crawford School of Irish Dance in Layton. In 2010, she separated from the Crawford School and created the Pack Academy of Irish dance. Pack became part of the Webber Academy that same year, was renamed Acadamh Rince in 2012 along with the Sandy location. In 2012 Victoria received her TCRG, and separated from Acadamh Rince to become Legacy Irish Dance Company. In 2013 Victoria got her World Irish Dance Association (WIDA) teaching certification and severed ties with An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, instead associating with the WIDA. In 2015 the name was changed to the Legacy School of Dance. When Victoria moved to California, Christy Dorrity began to direct the school, and she directs the Legacy School.

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73 Ibid.
75 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
of Dance. Legacy has hosted the annual Utah Open Feis since 2012. The 6th annual Utah Open Feis was held in 2018. Christy plans to return to An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha in the future, since it would provide more opportunities for dancers to compete in Utah.\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{center}
Figure 31. Legacy Irish dancers in team costume c. 2012.
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Figure 32. Legacy Irish dancers in team costume 2018.
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\textsuperscript{76} Christy Dorrity (teacher of Legacy School of Dance), email correspondence with the author, UT, February 2018.
Irish Dance in Cache Valley

*Inishfree*, an independent school which emerged from *An Dragan Ceilteach*, was the first school of Irish Dance in Cache County. Julie Zuselt taught Inishfree for many years. Terena Lund started dancing with Inishfree in 2003, then danced with the Crawford School in Salt Lake City in 2006. She later collaborated with Jim Mueller of *An Daire* in Oregon, an CLRG-certified school to create an An Daire location in Logan, UT in 2007, under which she obtained her TCRG. In 2011 the school became *An Tus Nua*, unassociated with any other schools. Inishfree merged with An Tus Nua in 2015, the school again partnered with an outside CLRG school in Oregon, the Comerford School of Irish Dance, and became Comerford-Utah, until 2016. In 2017 opened a location in Logan.77

77 Terena Lund (former teacher of An Daire Utah, An Tus Nua, and Comerford Utah), interviewed by the author, June 1, 2018.

78 Trisha Walker, correspondence with the author, July 3, 2018.
IV. IRISH DANCE IN UTAH TODAY (2018)

Irish dance has changed since 1983 worldwide, and Utah has also been affected by changing trends. The increased athleticism, drastic changes in costuming and its rising expense, and changing dispersal of schools all affect a dancer’s experience and the new status quo. Irish dancing, as it has become more popular, has in some ways been distanced from its roots in the Irish culture.

Increasing Athleticism

Irish dance today has become as much, if not more, a sport as it is a cultural art. This may be part of a greater trend in dance in general toward athleticism and almost gymnastic appeal. However, this same trend of an increase in athleticism was of concern even in the 1940s, as J.G. O’Keefe and Art O’Brien wrote in their 1944 *A Handbook of Irish Dances*,

“Another feature very noticeable to-day is that men and women are frequently seen to dance precisely the same steps. This is entirely at variance with the practice of the old dancing-masters, who always taught women steps of a lighter and simpler character than those taught to men… To such a man it would have been a source of the utmost pain to witness a girl “treble” or “batter” or perform other manly steps; he possessed a large repertory of light, somewhat dainty steps for women, which were so framed as to make up in grace what they lacked in complexity… the women of Cork emulated the men of that county, whereas the women of Limerick were far more staid in their dancing, and would have thought it quite unbecoming to dance men’s steps as the Cork women did.”

There were some people who balked at *Riverdance* when it came out for being non-traditional. But as Frank Hall notes in his book, *Competitive Irish Dance: Art, Sport*

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Duty, “the facts are that people learn, create, and select ways of moving, acting, [and] dancing… Even though Riverdance has expanded the context of Irish dancing, the dancers who perform in this and other Irish dance theatre have learned their art form and technique through competition, in schools authenticated by nationalist organizations that are now international in membership.”

Sarah Klopp Christensen researched this athletic increase’s effect on Irish dancers. The ground reaction forces on the dancers over the past decades “has evolved to become more athletically demanding…Irish dancers must land from difficult moves without letting their knees bend or heels touch the ground, causing large amounts of force to be absorbed by the body.” This athleticism has increased dramatically since the 1980s and even in the past decade.

**Costumes**

Costumes in Irish dance have changed drastically over the past century (see Appendix B). Some teachers seek to limit the expense of competitive team dresses, both to the dancer and to the school, by keeping a set of team dresses and renting them out to students. Most schools however, expect a student (or their family) to buy their own team dress. Since Irish dance dresses are difficult to make and require heavier than average machinery, making them requires skilled specialists. Natural evolution in style...
makes expensive team and solo dresses go out of fashion in a few years, so the expense must be recognized as a temporary investment. If ample opportunities for competition and performance are not available or pursued, this investment can become cost-prohibitive to families and dancers or seem too expensive. Opportunities for competition are affected greatly by location. Additionally, frequent changing of school name and team costume design can exhaust families, particularly if a team costume cannot be resold due to a school’s name being extinguished as it is absorbed by another school.

Former dance mother Maureen Gallagher recalled the elaborate process of obtaining a McTeggart team costume, which included driving to Draper to have a certain woman embroider patches to be sewn on by someone else. Obtaining her daughter’s solo dress required even more driving, this time to Denver where her daughter tried on the dress, it was altered there, and they drove home with the dress. They made this trip in combination with their travel to a feis in Denver. Still, she wondered at the dedication required at the time to simply obtain an Irish dance dress.85

Even the difficulty of obtaining proper Irish dance shoes can have a huge effect on a dancer. Another dance mother recalled the difficulty of obtaining dance shoes in the 1990s under McTeggart, during which one would place an order with and give the money to Maureen, who would return with the shoes in a month or two. There was no trying on of shoes or in-person comparison of different brands. She bought four or five pairs of hard shoes for her daughter in this manner, who had wider-than-average feet, before at last finding a pair that fit while attending a feis. The search occurred over a few years.86

85 Maureen Gallagher (former dance mom of McTeggart and Crawford schools)), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT. June 26, 2018.
86 Esther Truitt Henrichsen, (former dance mom of McTeggart and Crawford schools)), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT. January 2, 2018.
Many dancers and families would only buy new shoes or socks at feiseanna, where shoes were available in person to try on. The difficulty of obtaining footwear has certainly decreased with the advent of online shopping, but obtaining Irish footwear is still not as straightforward as other forms of dance such as ballet, jazz, tap, or even clogging.

**Location and Culture**

The place in which we live and the people who surround us affect our culture. The McTeggart school in Salt Lake City had close relationships with the Catholic parishes and was an integrated part of a greater Irish community. This was a natural effect in large part because McTeggart’s classes were held in the heart of Salt Lake City at church facilities, and because the Gottfredson family was so connected with the Catholic community. Today in 2018, there is not a single dance school in Salt Lake City proper, the nearest schools being in North Salt Lake (a distinct municipality in Davis County), Murray, and Sandy. While in the early days of McTeggart (the 1980s and 1990s), the Irish dancing community had strong connections with local parishes, using their facilities, occasionally hosting céili dancing at church social events, and dancing at all the private Catholic schools. Today in 2018, not one school interviewed had close connections with local parishes. The one exception to this is around St. Patrick’s Day, when dance schools from around the state may come to Salt Lake City and dance between the many Catholic schools marching in the parade, but even this is more association than close connection or collaboration.

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87 Gina Gottfredsen (former teacher of McTeggart Irish Step-Dancers of Utah), interviewed by the author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 10, 2018.
Utah held only one feis per year, the Utah State Feis and Championships, from 1984 until 2009, when Harp Academy hosted the Crossroads feis. The Shelley School also hosted the 2010 Winterfeis the following February. The number of feiseanna in Utah peaked in 2014, in which 4 feiseanna were hosted in Utah. Scariff hosted the Utah Feis, Shelley the Winterfeis,88 Harp the Crossroads Feis,89 and Acadamh Rince hosted Feis SLC.90 Now in 2018, there are once again two feiseanna hosted each year, the Utah Feis in June/July hosted by Scariff and the Winterfeis hosted by Shelley in January/February.

One teacher remarked in our interview that as a teacher with An Coimisiún, there was “always the feeling that Ireland doesn’t understand how big the U.S. is.”91 A person can

![Figure 35. The size of Ireland compared with the United States.](image-url)

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88 Kristina Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Shelley School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, Cedar Hills, UT, January 9, 2018.
89 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
90 Amy Webber Stanfield (teacher and owner of Acadamh Rince), interviewed by the author, Murray, UT, February 2018.
91 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
travel to the feiseanna in all the counties of Ireland in the same distance where in Utah, you can get to one or two. Another teacher who taught in Cache Valley remarked that sometimes the mountains felt like huge walls, which made it difficult to convince parents to attend feiseanna (which were in Salt Lake and Utah counties). Another said that she felt like the mountains sometimes insulated schools from each other, since a lot of the competition between schools occurs within the same valley, with students rarely transferring to another school that is in a separate valley, further from where they live.

Utah also has a high Mormon population. Many students and families will not compete in feiseanna hosted on Sundays due to Sabbath-day observance. Sunday competition is standard practice for the older dancer categories (see Appendix A on Competition Structure). So, even if a family is willing to travel to another state, often they will stop competing after a child reaches a Sunday age category, and without competition, a student often does not advance in class and can more easily lose interest and stop dancing. Additionally, most Mormons do not drink alcoholic beverages, a staple of many Irish cultural events associated with feiseanna, and of course, St. Patrick’s Day. Although not an issue for many, the presence of alcohol can be off-putting for some families. With the intense investment both financially and in terms of time which Irish dance requires, seemingly small things like Sunday competition and alcohol can have a large impact upon who continues to dance. This effect is certainly impacted by the culture of a particular school. This includes the personality of the teacher, the demographic of a school, and personal friendships made among dancers and parents.

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92 Terena Lund (former teacher of An Daire Utah, An Tus Nua, and Comerford Utah), interviewed by the author, June 1, 2018.
93 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.
While some teachers may stop giving attention to a dancer who will not compete on Sundays, other teachers might not let that affect their treatment of that student. Some teachers may encourage performance or competition more than others. These cultural factors which are influenced by location influence who begins and continues dancing and teaching, as well as the success and longevity of a school.

CONCLUSION

Irish dancing is a multi-faceted activity—it is art, it is sport, it is culture. The nationalistic element of Irish dance has made it into what it is today, along with the impact of competition on style. Though not a true folk-art, it is a nationalistic embodiment of the Irish culture and heritage, which has spread to other parts of the world.

Irish step-dancing in its modern form reached the state of Utah in 1983. The number of schools and students who learn Irish dance has grown since then, from one CLRG school in 1983 to four CLRG, one WIDA school, one independent program at a university, and at least three independent schools (See Appendix C: Maps). Some of these schools have multiple locations.

Utah Irish dancing has continued to change and evolve, following trends in dancing style and costumes. The increased athleticism of dance steps and sparkly appearance of costumes are both very marked. In addition to following national and international trends, Utah Irish dance has faced its own challenges to grow geographically and culturally.
APPENDIX A: IRISH STEP-DANCING COMPETITION

STRUCTURE

A typical feis is divided by a number of factors. These include age, championship or non-championship competitions, levels, and by the type of dance being performed. For example, the levels of completion at a feis typically include:

Non Championship:
- First Feis
- Beginner I
- Beginner II
- Novice
- Prizewinner

Championship:
- Preliminary Championship
- Open Championship

The number of age divisions can vary according to the size of the feis. If a feis is very large, the competition may occur over a two-day period, typically Saturday and Sunday (although Friday/Saturday feiseanna have occurred), typically with younger competitors the first day and older competitors the second day, or with figure dances the first day and solo competitions the next day.  

The national and world competition begins at the level of Open Championship. Under the Open category, a dancer may compete at Regional and Oireachtas competition, which are “world-qualifying” events. If a dancer places high enough at these events, they can

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qualify to compete in the annual Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne, or World’s competition. Feiseanna hosted under An Coimisiún are open only to dancers who are registered under An Coimisiún schools. Placing at feiseanna can move a dancer up in their competition level, and at the championship level, placing at feiseanna can qualify a dancer for national or world competitions. The solo dances competed at feiseanna are as follows:  

Non Championship:
- Reel
- Light Jig
- Slip Jig
- Single Jig
- Treble Jig
- Hornpipe
- Traditional Set

Championship:
- Reel or Slip Jig
- Treble Jig or Hornpipe
- Traditional Set

Additionally, for-fun competitions called “specials” are frequently held at feiseanna. Placing in these special competitions does not advance a dancer’s competition level, so there is not so much pressure on dancers during a special competition round. The Double Reel is a very common special competition. However, the feis host can be very creative in making up new specials—costumed specials, parent-child specials, and even the Blind

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95 Johanna Lambert (adjudicator), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, January 13, 2018.
Man’s Special in which the adjudicators turn around or are blindfolded so that they judge only the rhythm of the dancer’s feet in hard shoes. Sometimes the special is dedicated to a charitable cause, toward which the entry fee goes.96

Figure dances are also an important part of local and world feiseanna. Two hand (two-person), three hand, four hand, six hand, eight hand, and sometimes even sixteen hand figure competitions are standard.97

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96 Aubree Walker Shelley, (teacher and owner of the Harp School of Irish Dance), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, February 2018.

97 Johanna Lambert (adjudicator), interviewed by the author, American Fork, UT, January 13, 2018.
APPENDIX B: IRISH DANCE COSTUMES

The history of Irish costuming is extensive, and for a more complete history one should refer to John Cullinane’s *Irish Dancing Costumes: Their Origins and Evolution*.

A vital part of the Irish dance costume is the shoes. There are two different categories of shoes—soft shoes and hard shoes. The first is the soft shoes. Women wear ghillies (also called pumps) as soft shoes, which have undergone changes over the century. Today the ghillie is the standard soft shoe for girls and ladies. Boys and men wear a different shoe for soft shoe competition and performance, which resembles a dress shoe but has a thinner and more flexible sole, and a fiber glass heel which may be clicked as part of the boy’s soft-shoe choreography. The second shoe type is the hard shoe. Irish hard shoes are different from tap or clogging shoes in a number of ways. Trends such as the now outlawed bubble heel have at times made tricks easier. The bubble heel of the 1980s certainly made completing one’s midair clicks more consistent and effortless, but was soon defined as cheating.98

Irish dancing dresses have become more elaborate and flashy in recent years.99 An increase in cost of costumes, dresses in particular, has been of concern, worrying some that Irish dancing excludes low-income participants.100

APPENDIX C: LOCATIONS OF IRISH DANCING SCHOOLS IN UTAH FROM 1983 TO 2018

Map 1. 1983 (zoomed out)
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing was the first school of Irish dance in Utah, established in 1983. Its first location was St. Ann’s Church in Salt Lake City.
Map 1. 1983
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing is the first school of Irish dance in Utah, established in 1983. Its first location is St. Ann’s Church in Salt Lake City.
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, and St. Ambrose Catholic Church. It also sometimes holds classes at Our Lady of Lourdes.
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, and St. Ambrose Catholic Church. It also sometimes holds classes at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Brigham Young University establishes its first Irish dance class in 1988, which later grows into three levels of classes.
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, and St. Ambrose Catholic Church, and at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Connie Roberts hires Jo Edlinger to teach classes for Rinceoir Don Spraoi, which is established in 1997.

Tina and Jo Edlinger teach a small class in Orem in 1997.
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, and St. Ambrose Catholic Church, and at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi continues in South Jordan

An Dragan Ceilteach begins in 1998 in Riverton.

Celtic Beat begins in 1998 in Layton.

Inishfree begins c. 1998 in Cache Valley
Map 6. 2000
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, and St. Ambrose Catholic Church, and at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.


Tina Edlinger Shelley founds the Shelley School of Irish Dance in 2000.
Map 7. 2001-2002
The McTeggart School of Irish Step-Dancing holds classes at St. Ann’s, the Cathedral of the Madeleine, the First Baptist Church, St. Ambrose Catholic Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, and in Draper until 2002. Jill Crawford begins teaching in 2002 and moves classes to Holladay.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.


The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Power School of Irish Dance is established in American Fork in 2002.
Map 8. 2003
McTeggart classes continue under Jill Crawford in Holladay and Midvale.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Drangan Ceilteach, Celtic Beat, and Inishfree continue.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Power School of Irish Dance continues.

Fearon O’Connor is established in Sandy.
The McTeggart school becomes the Crawford School of Irish Dance. The school moves from Holladay to South Salt Lake c. 2006, with other locations in Midvale and Bountiful.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, Celtic Beat, and Inishfree continue.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Power School of Irish Dance continues.

Fearon O’Connor in Sandy becomes the Claddagh School of Irish Dance in 2005.
The Crawford School of Irish Dance in South Salt Lake moves to Redwood Road c. 2008 with other locations in Midvale, Bountiful, and Layton.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, Celtic Beat, and Inishfree continue.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Power School of Irish Dance continues.

The Claddagh School continues in Sandy.

An Daire, Logan is established.
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The Scariff School of Irish Dance retains the Redwood Road location in West Valley.

The Webber Academy in Layton is renamed Acadamh Rince in 2012, and splits to form the Legacy Irish Dance Company in 2012.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, Celtic Beat, and Inishfree continue.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Power School of Irish Dance becomes the Harp Irish Dance Company in 2012.

Webber Academy in Sandy is renamed Acadamh Rince.

An Tus Nua continues in Logan.
The Scariff School of Irish Dance moves to Sandy c. 2014.

Legacy Irish Dance Company leaves An Comisiún and becomes WIDA affiliated in 2013.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, and Celtic Beat continue.

Inishfree merges to become part of An Tus Nu in Logan.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Harp Irish Dance Company continues.

Webber Academy in Sandy is renamed Acadamh Rince.
Map 14. 2015-2016
The Scariff School of Irish Dance continues in Sandy.

Legacy Irish Dance Company in Layton is renamed the Legacy School of Dance and has a location in Mountain Green in 2016.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceoir Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, and Celtic Beat continue.

Comerford in Logan closes in 2016.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues.

The Harp Irish Dance Company continues.

Acadamh Rince moves to Murray.
The Scariff School of Irish Dance continues in Sandy, North Salt Lake, and starts in 2017 in Logan.

The Legacy School of Dance continues in Layton, with a location in Kaysville in 2017.

Brigham Young University continues its Irish dance classes.

Rinceori Don Spraoi, An Dragan Ceilteach, and Celtic Beat continue.

The Shelley School of Irish Dance continues in Cedar Hills.

The Harp Irish Dance Company continues in American Fork.

Acadamh Rince continues in Murray.
APPENDIX D: IRISH DANCE SCHOOLS IN OTHER STATES OF THE INTERMOUNTAIN WEST

Arizona
Bracken School
Maguire Academy of Irish Dance
Michael Patrick Gallagher School

Colorado
Bennet School
Celtic Steps
Heritage Irish Stepdancers
McTeggart Irish Dancers
Moriarty-Moffitt School of Irish Dance
Mountain Eire Irish Dance School
Reed School of Irish Dance
Wick School

Idaho
An Daire Academy, Idaho
Killarney Irish Dance Company
Scoil Rince na hEasan
Irish Dance Idaho

Nevada
Blanchette School of Irish Dance
Carrolier Academy of Irish Dance
Scoil Rince Ni Riada IDLV
Sharon Lynn’s Celtic Crown
GLOSSARY

An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha— the Commission of Irish Dance, also known as the Commission, An Coimisiún, or CLRG. The oldest and widest organization of Irish dance formed under the Gaelic League.

ADCRG— Ard Diploma Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, an adjudicator certified under An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha

Céilí (pl. céilithe)— party

Comhdhail na Muinntoirí le Rinci Gaelacha Teoranta— a.k.a. An Comhdhail or the Congress, an alternative organization to An Coimisiún formed in 1969 after a split amongst An Coimisiún members

Conradh na Gaeilge— The Gaelic League, an Irish cultural organization founded in 1893 which promoted Irish language and culture

Raidió Teilifís Éireann— the Dublin based Irish News organization

feile—dance festival and competition, does not require cultural competitions besides dance

feis (pl. feiseanna)— Irish arts and cultural competition and festival, includes at least one other cultural event in addition to dancing

ghillie— Irish “soft shoes” for women, made from leather

hard shoes— the style of Irish dancing shoes, made from leather with a fiberglass toe and heel. Used for the percussive style of Irish step dancing by both men and women.

lilting— a form of traditional singing in Ireland and Scotland, in which traditional dance music is sung, also known as “diddling,” or “mouth music”

oireachtas, (pl. oireachtaisi)— an annual competition, covers a wider area than a feis

Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne— annual global competition or “World Championships” hosted by An Coimisiún Le Rinci Gaelacha

Oireachtas Rince na hÉireann— the “All Ireland” annual competition

Siamsa— literally translates as entertainment

TCRG— Teagascóir Choimisiúin le Rinci Gaelacha, the certification required to be a teacher certified with An Coimisiún Le Rinci Gaelacha

WIDA— World Irish Dance Association, an alternative organization created in 2003 with “open platform” competitions
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