



The above sketch of the play-party participants was made for this issue by Loretta McFarland, a talented KSTC art major from Arkansas City. In 1960, when she was a freshman, Miss McFarland designed the cover for *Heritage of Kansas*, under the direction of J. Warren Brinkman, Department of Art.

Facts and Fiction

The play party—real do-it-yourself entertainment. The participants furnished the music by singing, and they furnished the activity by playing the games that went to the music. A large yard served as the recreation area, the moon as lighting, a good time as the reason for going, and word-of-mouth notice as invitation.

Well, of course sometimes it rained. Then the group had to play the games in the barn or on the porch or in the house (if the rooms were large enough). Yes, and sometimes the moon didn't give enough light, so lanterns and lamps had to be used. But anyway the play parties of earlier days were happy informal affairs where everyone entered in and had a good time.

Though most of the games were partner games, it was not necessary to have a date in order to go. If there were more boys than girls, the extra fellows would tie scarves on their heads or around their necks and would take the roles of girls in some of the games. If there were extra girls, they would take boys' roles and would wear boys' hats or caps.

Some communities report a difference between a *play-out* and a *play party*: refreshments. A *party* implied food such as home-made ice cream and cake; a *play-out* meant that when the games were ended people were to go on home (where no doubt they raided the cooky jar!).

Kansas, like many other regions, had a number of communities in which play parties were very popular until about twenty-five or thirty years ago. Dr. S. J. Sackett of Fort Hays Kansas State College has made a study of these get-togethers in our state, and has written "Play-Party Games from Kansas" for this issue of the *Heritage*. Before we learn about them, however, let's learn a little about Dr. Sackett first.

"Sam" Sackett is a serious but jolly scholar with a big grin. He was born in Redlands, California, and has degrees from the University of Redlands and the University of California at Los Angeles. At present he is an associate professor of English at Fort Hays Kansas State College where he has taught since 1954. He's pretty hep about folklore, and maintains membership in the American Folklore Society, the California Folklore Society, and the Kansas Folklore Society. He is a founder and a past president of the Kansas group. Moreover, he is co-editor with William E. Koch (whom we met in the May 1961 *Heritage*) of the forthcoming book *Kansas Folklore*. He also serves on the staff of *Western Folklore* as its book review editor.

Dr. Sackett is married and has two young sons. Besides being a family man, teaching, folkloring, book editing, writing, and attending conventions, he is Cubmaster of a Cub Scout pack. (It is difficult to imagine what he does in his spare time!)

Anyway, Dr. Sackett has given us the most complete study on Kansas play parties that has been done: "Play-Party Games from Kansas."