



Ed Dillon knows the old tunes so well, above, that he doesn't even need the music on his stand. A couple, left, spontaneously breaks into a practice jig with each other while waiting for the competition to start.



One dancer, above, gets a critical appraisal from both and below the table; Josephine Warn, left, makes a pretty sight as she performs solo dance.



CHESTER FEIS Draws the Irish

Across the United States and Canada, Irish immigrants have been holding Feises on summer weekends since the early 1930s.

Many of the participants are the children of Irish immigrants who grew up in Ireland, and many of them will travel miles to attend a Feis. Typical is Alphonsus O'Leary, an accordion player and father of seven Feis-dancing children. Born in Cleveland but raised in Ireland, he moved back to Cleveland.

At the Rochester Feis, Al said, "It's good for the children to mingle, especially," explaining why he makes the circuit. A big, soft spoken man with more than a touch of the brogue, he says most of the children who dance "drop out in their teens," after starting sometimes at the age of four or five.

Most of the competition involves solo dances in fancy homemade costumes before a single judge seated at a table and a musician, usually to the judge's right. The dancers hold their arms rigidly at their sides, and all the movement is of the feet, which flash and kick and stamp in the staccatto rhythm of the jig, the reel and the hornpipe.

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