The Green Grass Cloggers (Organization)

The Green Grass Cloggers of North Carolina burst onto the national folk festival scene in the early 1970s, combining the dance traditions of the Appalachian region with their own youthful innovations to create a new and distinctive style of team and performance clogging.

The Green Grass Cloggers were organized by students of East Carolina University in 1971. Rather than using the "big-set" mountain square dance figures of traditional freestyle clogging teams, the Green Grass Cloggers used choreography based on four-couple Western square dance figures, performing short energetic routines designed for audience appeal. The group's footwork was synchronized, as in precision clogging, but its performances included high kicks and other unconventional steps.

The Green Grass Cloggers won the World Clogging Championships in 1971 and 1973. The Philadelphia Folk Festival is noted as being their first "big break" in the national festival scene, inspiring group members to dance on a more regular touring schedule. Part of the group that was interested in becoming a full-time touring dance company formed the "Road Team" in 1977, and that group relocated to Asheville in 1980. The Road Team continued touring nationally and internationally until 1988, while the "Home Team" continued to perform in eastern North Carolina.

Both the Road Team and Home Team now perform regularly around the country, often joining forces to create 16-couple sets as in the early years of the organization. At last count, thee have been more than 150 members of the Green Grass Cloggers through the years, and more than 100 clogging teams, overseas and in the United States, have been inspired during Green Grass Clogger workshops and performances to create their own groups to dance in the unique Green Grass Clogger style.

(Excerpted from an article by Phil Jamison in the "Old Time Herald," and information provided by Trina Royer.)