



Rena Tino, eight years old, plays the fiddle. Her mother, Pat also plays, and encouraged her daughter to try the fiddle when the young girl got discouraged having to read notes for the piano. Playing by ear suits Rena just fine, and she says she doesn't miss the piano at all.



Not a whole lot of rockin' going on in Osceola last week, but a whole lot of reelin' - Virginia, that is. Above, Anna Reed shows off a few of her fancy steps.



Pictured above, Margaret Flake of 'The Girlfriends,' a group of women who played together at Fredonia State when they were students in 1931. They were reunited last year for the first time at the Fiddlers' Picnic and decided to return for a repeat performance this year. Other members of the group are Tellea Atwell, Sylvan Beach, and Alice Millman.

The histories of the fiddles themselves is almost as interesting as the histories of the fiddlers. One woman was selling a copy of a Klotz violin, made in Germany, for \$1,500. (She was willing to part with the case for \$60.) Other fiddlers informed me that some instruments, such as the prized Guaneri del Gesu, can be worth as much as \$150-\$300,000. Apparently old Guaneri had extravagant tastes—he liked to use wood from rare sources like 14th century churches and maple boat oars from northern Italy. The quality of the wood and the craftsmanship is unequalled to this day and commands a respect among musicians as high as its price tag. Most fiddlers claimed it takes between 15-20 years, and plenty of playing, for a fiddle to age properly. That's when it's tone becomes richest and its value increases, too.

If I had to pick my personal favorite encounter of the three-day weekend it would have to be John Pietras of Rome, N.Y., a self-styled Charles Kerauld in a flannel shirt who seemed to best personify the spirit of Osceola: independent, low-key, and happy to just be alive. Wherever I turned, I saw John, equipped with his sound-on-film Canon 514 XLS Super 8 movie camera. Filming was a hobby which he learned on his

own. "The best way to learn anything, though it takes a little longer," John was a dedicated fiddling fan and he carried two beautiful instruments with him, one which he had crafted himself. Despite his love of music and film, John doesn't dream of being an anchorman for CBS. He prefers the freedom to roam on assignments of his own choosing to the rigors of the modern media business. Content with his small, but select, audience, John keeps his films on hand for interested friends and fellow musicians.

By all signs the audience for fiddling is expanding. Association members say efforts are presently under way to secure funds for the building of a \$1 million Hall of Fame to be located on the present concert site. Some people I spoke with seemed to think the idea was a bit extravagant for the Osceola woodland. One man commented he thought a pole barn would be more in keeping with the area's ambiance. But pole barn or poured concrete, the spirit of Osceola will live on. And who knows, maybe some day even John Pietras' work will find itself housed in the archives of a building dedicated to the fine art of fiddling. After all, everyone wants to be in movies, even fiddlers!



The apprentice system works well for Lisa Rhodes, a Nebraska girl who heard Dick Barrett perform in concert and asked him to listen to her and assess her talent. Dick decided Lisa was "a natural," and since that time has become her legal guardian and professional tutor. Lisa, at 17, plays professionally at folk festivals, colleges, and fiddlers' picnics like this one in Osceola. "I couldn't make it without him," she says, in praise of Barrett's support.



The Carlton brothers, Mark, left, accompanied on guitar by Mac. Mark is only 16 and was acclaimed by many as one of the finest fiddlers at the show. His father plays the fiddle, also.



At far right, Simon Eddle, a visitor to this country from Scotland, leads a group of dancers in the "Shattish," a folk dance from that country. His father, Bill, played the fiddle and introduced the audience to a number of old English tunes like "The Dashing White Sergeant," among others.