



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK ARTS & HERITAGE PROGRAM

FIELDNOTES

Fieldworker(s) [(Initials) Name]: (MH) , (CM) Maggie Holtzberg and Catherine Moore

Accession Numbers:

MH-04-01-FN

Fieldnotes

MH-04-01-D

Audio recordings

MH-04-01-V

Photographic documentation

- - -M

Additional materials

Initial Contact: _____ Contact Date: 4/27/2004

Related Accession Numbers: - - - - -

Individual/Group/Event: Apprenticeship site visit to Jimmy Slyde and Rocky Mendes, III

Address: Whitman Academy of Performing Arts

City: Whitman Zip: 02382 County: Plymouth

Phone: Daytime: _____ Evening: _____

E-mail: _____ Website: _____

Contact person: _____

Title: _____

Location of Interview: Whitman Academy of Performing Arts 781-447-2196

Street Address: 597 Washington Street

City: Whitman Zip: 02382 County: Plymouth

Special Needs (including translation):

Traditions documented on visit (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community):

Apprenticeship in jazz tap dancing

Traditions noted for follow-up:

Other Possible Contacts:

Summary Description: Maggie and intern Catherine Moore drove out to Whitman on a cold January evening. Whitman is off the beaten track -- some 35 miles southeast of Boston. Travelling south on 18, then east on 27, we made a left onto Washington Street, which appeared to be the center of downtown Whitman.

The Whitman Academy of Performing Arts is housed in an old wooden building with double doors and creaky stairs. The building looked kind of dark when we arrived around 8:10 p.m., but the front door was open. We entered the foyer and spotted a directory on the wall. Press-on white lettering announces the art forms currently being taught -- ballet, jazz, hip hop, tap, Irish. As we climbed the wide stairs we heard the distinctive sound of metal taps on wooden floorboards. At the top of the stairs a long hallway led to various studios. We followed the sound of the tap dancing. It was coming from a large dark studio space on the left. In the dim light that filtered in from street lamps outside, we could just make out two figures, dancing in the dark. A tall, wisp of a man stepped toward us and introduced himself as Jimmy Slyde, along with his apprentice Rocky Mendes, some 53 years his junior.