

Valley musicians to fiddle, pluck and stomp away at Sunday Jamboree

By BARBARA STACK

HADLEY — It's going to be a country music good time all day Sunday at the Quonset when the first Pioneer Valley Jamboree of Country, Bluegrass, and Old Time Music and Dance comes to town.

This time it's a winter festival, held indoors, but festival organizers hope to create the kind of friendly and relaxed atmosphere that has made Pickin' in the Pines at Look Park such a popular gathering of country music fans for the past four summers.

Not only will the music be live as can be, but these historic performances will be recorded by Pioneer Records, a brand new Country and Bluegrass label in the Valley. Art Steele of Audio Pro Media will record the day's music on sophisticated 16-track equipment, with the release of the first Pioneer Valley Jamboree record due for early 1981.

The daylong event, 2 p.m. 'til midnight, will feature a wide variety of music as well as demonstration and participatory dancing by more than 30 of the people who keep these American music traditions alive and kicking in the Pioneer Valley. The Jamboree is being produced jointly by BG Productions (that's the talented Bob Green of The Valley Partners and Raintree) and the Pioneer Valley Folklore Society, which is dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of traditional music and folk life.

At a local pickin' party last summer Bob Green approached Deb Radway, president of the folklore society, about trying to bridge the traditional American music fields which have been flourishing in the Valley these past few years. Bluegrass was going strong, with new bands, a growing and enthusiastic audience, and local festivals. Wynn Fay's fiddle contests were attracting fiddlers and fans from all over the Northeast. And the contradance scene with its live and lively music was becoming a popular alternative to disco. Bob Green and Deb Radway decided that it was time for a celebration, a gathering of the finest traditional musicians in the Valley. And the Jamboree was born.

The program will begin with old time music, the traditional



RAINTREE WILL BE one of the many groups playing traditional American music at Sunday's Pioneer Valley Jamboree.

fiddle and banjo styles which gave birth to contemporary forms like bluegrass, country rock, and country and Western music. We'll see a number of local favorites showing what they can do in the language of their musical roots. The clawhammer or frailing style of banjo champ Diane Sanabria of the River Valley Ramblers is sure to bring dancers (and would-be dancers) to their feet.

The growing popularity of this music has given rise to the creation of two new local clogging teams in the Appalachian tradition. The Last Call Cloggers from Amherst and the Quabbin Cloggers will try to outdo one another in the flashy footwork and general nonsense which make Southern square dancing so irresistible. There will be New England Contradancing as well, with calling and instruction for both experienced dancers and Bluegrass and Country and Western fans who want to cross over for the afternoon.

Emcee duties for the day will be split between the Pioneer Valley patriarch of country and bluegrass music, Wynn Fay, and the popular (and very funny) revivalist-songster Nick Plakias.

They have promised to explain the styles to new fans, keep the show moving, and return lost children.

Of special interest to local country and Western fans will be the appearance of Blue Country, featuring Roger Simpson of Holyoke on electric guitar and vocals. Roger is bringing in the phenomenal Kenny Kosek of New York City on fiddle, Alien Playboy Lionel Wendling of Paris, France, on pedal steel, and the unavoidable James T. Heffernan of Amherst. Jimmy also expects to be jamming with 14-year-old banjo whiz David Dick of West Brookfield.

Billings Gap, The Valley Partners, Willow Creek, Nick Plakias, Roger Simpson and Blue Country, Plain Dealing, Raintree, River Valley Ramblers, Poor Farm Ramblers, Quabbin Cloggers and the Last Call Cloggers. Sunday the Pioneer Valley is going to celebrate itself as a hotbed of country music.

The Quonset Restaurant promises warm weather inside and is wheelchair accessible. There will be discounts for senior citizens and kids under 12.

And Bob Green says that everybody is going to have a fine old time.