



# "Cadillac" Jack Smith 1995

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I was born in Burlington, NC and that is where my love for beach music and fast dancing (Shag as it is now called) started. When I was very young, my parents took me to White Lake, NC and I watched dancers around the juke box doing a style of dance that was different from the Jitterbug. It was the smooth style that really impressed me -- that was the type dancing I wanted to do and do well.

In high school, I ran around with older people who did this style of dancing. Bonnie Lashley helped teach me the basics so that I would be able to dance at all the hangouts with my friends. Some of the good dancers I remember are Louie Madden, Barbara Henderson, Jeppy McDowell, Virgil Fear and Edward Rhue. Some of the places we danced were the Driftwood Club in Durham, Tobacco Warehouse, Highpoint Lake, Jokers III and the Castaways.

In 1960 I started going to Myrtle Beach for the summers. At that time, fast dancing (shag) was the only way to dance. I saw many great dancers and saw how popular they were because of their dancing. Some of the greats were Shad Alberty, Spider Kirkman, Tommy White, Mike Osborne, Johnny Barringer, Mike Zimmerman, Eddie Page, Rose Goad and Buzz Sawyer. We would dance at the Pavilion at South Myrtle Beach during the day and then go to OD at night. We danced at Sonny's, the Pad, Forks, Fun Fair and the Continental Lounge. This was probably one of the greatest times of my life.

In 1974 I moved to Greensboro, NC and I got the name "Cadillac Jack" (That's too long a story to go into). At this time, I decided that I really wanted to learn all of the fancy steps and Shad Alberty agreed to teach me. I traveled to Charlotte with my wife, Connie, as much as possible for two years. With Shad's help, I was able to compete in shag contests and to win quite a few.

For me, the greatest contest was at Fat Jack's on Labor Day weekend. I was fortunate to have all the good dancers willing to help me. Mike Osborne taught me the drop spin, Jo Jo taught me the kick-back and Eddie Page helped me to put it all together in a style of my own. Many good dancers were from Greensboro and Winston Salem. I met Steve Henley, Danny Bean, Jet Jackson, Ronnie Duggins and Ken Carter among others.

In all the years of my dancing, I have met some of the greatest people in the world. My goal is that I will be able to leave some part of myself to this dance and I will be able to help someone as I was helped. It's an honor to be part of this select group of people!