

MASON

DANCES AND STORIES OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN



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Richard of Buskey





DANCES AND STORIES OF

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THE AMERICAN INDIAN





*By the Same Author*

THE JUNIOR BOOK OF CAMPING AND WOODCRAFT  
WOODCRAFT  
DRUMS, TOMTOMS AND RATTLES  
ROPING  
PRIMITIVE AND PIONEER SPORTS  
JUD GOES CAMPING  
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*As Co-Author with E. D. Mitchell*

SOCIAL GAMES FOR RECREATION  
ACTIVE GAMES AND CONTESTS  
THE THEORY OF PLAY





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# DANCES AND STORIES OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN



By BERNARD S. MASON



*Photographs by* PAUL BORIS  
AND OTHERS

*Drawings by* FREDERIC H. KOCH



A. S. BARNES AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK





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ACC NO.....93-43198

DATE.....14.12.93

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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Centre for the Arts



To  
THE CAMP FAIRWOOD DANCERS  
with happy memories of  
those inspired Grand Council nights  
when together we donned  
our moccasins and plumes.





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## Acknowledgments

The author expresses his appreciation:

To James C. Stone whose artistry is reflected in the many photographs of him which adorn these pages, for posing for these pictures and for carefully checking the manuscript.

To Robert Raymond, Lawrence Ratliff, and John Landis Holden for their co-operation in dancing these routines and in posing for certain photographs.

To Ernest Thompson Seton for inspiration during youthful years, and for permission to include his "The Lone Scout," "The Courtship of the Eagles," the "Zuni Call to Council," and the ritual of Council.

To Julia M. Buttree Seton for permission to use the "Winnebago War Dance," the "Yei-be-chi" and the "Apache Devil Dance."

To Julian Harris Salomon for permission to include the "Plains War Dance" and the "Sioux Buffalo Dance."

To Dr. William D. Heintz for his notes on the "Cheyenne Buffalo Dance."

To all of the dancers who appear in the photographs. In keeping with the purpose of presenting the dances in such form that they can be re-enacted by us today, these photographs are all of white interpreters of the Indian's dance art whom it has been the author's privilege to train.

To the photographers who made these pictures: to Ralph Haburton for taking those facing pages 134, 135, 182, 183, 247, and 263; to Arthur C. Allen for taking those facing pages 87, 151, 214, and 262 (top); to Homer Jensen for taking those facing pages 167 and 262 (bottom); to Paul Boris for taking all the others.

Acknowledgment is hereby made to Harper and Brothers for





permission to use material from *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore* by Julian Harris Salomon; to Hale, Cushman and Flint for permission to use material from *Indian Story and Song from North America* by Alice C. Fletcher; to E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., for permission to use material from *Manito Masks* by Hartley Alexander; to Theodore Presser Company for permission to use Zuni Sunrise Call by Carlos Troyer; to A. S. Barnes and Company for permission to use material from *Rhythm of the Redman* by Julia M. Buttree.





# PART I

## PROLOGUE





## RED WINE IN THE WHITE DESERT

The gap that often exists between popular conception and truth is nowhere better exemplified than in the treatment of the dance-drama of the American Indian. "A crude jumping about," "a mere hopping up and down," "a leaping about in the most comical manner imaginable," "a frenzied expression of uncontrolled passion"—with comments such as these the memoirs of early travelers among the Indians have indicted the dance. After some such fashion as this the entertainment profession of years past has often depicted Indian dances. With expressions such as these the average person today is inclined to dismiss the subject as unworthy, interesting only as an example of the bizarre customs of savagery.

Truth rests somewhere near the opposite pole. A brief moment of study of an Indian dance will convince that it is far indeed from a mere hopping up and down, for its movements are intricate and highly skilled, its routines often involved and complicated. The seeming simplicity is after all a tribute to the artistry of the dancers, for it is the eternal way of the skillful artist to make that which is intricate appear simple and easy. That which is labeled as an impulsive leaping about is more apt to be a deeply significant ritual moving under the edicts of long-established tradition. Instead of a wild frenzy of uncontrolled emotions the dance is characterized by a peculiar reserve which gives the feeling, even in its most violent forms, that the dancer is using only a fraction of its latent power. Those who see comic antics in such seriousness of purpose and striving for perfection bespeak their own lack of horizon, the degree to which their own conventions have imprisoned them.

Our lack of understanding and appreciation of the Indian's dance-art is as abysmal as our lack of understanding of his personality. The distance is far between White and Red and the passing of the years has shortened it but little. The depths of the Indian's soul has never been explored, indeed its very surface is difficult to see in full vision. The barrier of reserve that he has erected to withstand the onslaught of the whites can be scaled only by years of intimate living, and even then the view beyond is hazy and obstructed.

But however great our lack of understanding the Indian, the fact still remains that we appreciate the worth of the other manifestations of his personality better than we do his dancing. In the excellence of his crafts,





for example, he is accorded the full stature of an artist. The supremacy of his blanket weaving, his basketry, his pottery, his jewelry making, his beading, to mention a few, and of his design as it manifests itself in all of these, is well-established. Similarly, his music has been credited with a unique quality of special interest. Again, his legendary lore is acclaimed both for its richness of quality and its amazing quantity. As compared to these, little effort has been made to assay his dancing. It has just been assumed to be relatively lacking in significance.

And yet, it is in his dancing that the height of the Indian's artistic attainment is reached, the peak of the aesthetic expression of a truly aesthetic people. Here all of the elements of his other arts are combined, as integral parts of an animated design in which the movement of the human body is the dominant means of expression. The voice of the drum is the controlling factor that brings order out of chaos, commanding as the Chief controls his warriors. It is the song that expresses verbally the human hopes and aspirations, and addresses them to the All One. It is the spectacle of painted bodies, of shimmering feathers, of urgent design and potent symbol, that expresses again in different form these same emotions. But all of these combined—drum rhythm, song, ornamentation—do not define the dance-form. Nor do the supplementing legends as related by the older folk complete the understanding. It is movement of rhythmic bodies that is the dance's central characteristic, its animated essence. It is

"Brown limbs lifting, brown limbs falling, lifting, falling, all together." \*

All this combines into a dance-drama that is addressed to no idle purpose but to the worship of the One Great Spirit. It may be purely such, a ritual of praise and thanksgiving, a supplication for life's needs and for success in human ventures. Again, it may be secular, even for sheer fun and satisfaction of appetite, but always the relation to the spiritual is present. Indeed, the dances of the people become more than a dramatic representation of life activities, they reflect and symbolize the full scope of their philosophy. Like the Bantus of Africa who asked of a stranger, "What do you dance?" and thereby learned all that was essential to know about the visitor's people,\*\* so the Indian embodies in his dances the representation of all phases of his life, his ideals and his values.

To the extent that the Indian dance has been adequately analyzed, its related or marginal elements have received the most attention—its music, its instruments, its symbols, its costuming—and not the dance movements themselves. Whether in pursuit of dance steps as done by the individual or the pattern of dances as done by groups, one can often read for weary days through book after book of Indian customs without finding the slightest ray of light. One envies the opportunity of the anthropologists

\* Hartley Alexander, "The Singing Girl of Copan," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, Vol. XVII, No. 8, page 595.

\*\* Havelock Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, page 38. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923.





of the past who lived long among the Indian tribes in the study of their culture, and whose findings are recorded in voluminous reports. In attempting to visit these tribes vicariously through reading these reports, one is often amazed at the dearth of material on dances, even in cultures where a wealth of dance-art is known to exist.

The same fate awaits one in delving into the works of the highly skilled and specially trained musicians who have spent long lives in study of the songs of the various tribes, and whose reports occupy long shelves in the libraries. The songs have, indeed, been well-recorded. So closely related are the song and the dance that the Indian often uses the terms interchangeably, speaking of the dance as the song and the song as the dance—yet, it is only in rare instances that any detailed mention is made of the dance that accompanies the song. After all is said and done, the scientists, regardless of type, have done little better for the dance than the early travelers, explorers and missionaries.

One cannot watch the meticulous chorus perfection of a group of Hopi Katchina dancers in their amazingly dramatic costumes without feeling that the best of chorus performance on the modern stage and screen is somehow wanting. One cannot watch a Pueblo Eagle dancer without sensing an innate capacity for imitation, a oneness in spirit with the being that is portrayed, that is wholly superior. One cannot behold the eager dramatics of a dynamic, forceful story-dancer of the northern Plains without labeling it as the manifestation of a native dramatic genius. One cannot even witness a conventional chorus dance in which the dancer's only function seems to be to fill a space for the sake of symmetry, as a feather occupies its place in a warbonnet, without feeling that here are beings wholly absorbed in a task that to them is supremely significant. One cannot watch a dancer pulsating and throbbing in every cell and corpuscle without realizing that here is more than mere movement of limbs, mere quiver of muscles—that here is a being who is dancing with his very soul.

One cannot enter the "powwow" arena of the Woodlands or Plains, moccasins afoot and bells on ankles, joining as one with the vibrating forms, obeying the booming commands of the mighty drum, without a forthright admission that here is a conception of dancing that, for solid fun, ours cannot match.

These impressions combine to leave one with an insistent conviction that in the dancing of the Indian is a consummate artistry, a vital, living dance-art that finds no exact counterpart in our own conception and use of dancing. Indeed, it leaves us with a feeling that if it is not preserved our own culture will be the loser. Until the time comes that an American dance-art evolves that has meaning to all the people, participated in by all as exemplifying our life philosophy, fulfilling our desires and satisfying our needs—until that time comes we must sit at the feet of the Indian as our teacher. Here is Red Wine for the parched lips of those who travel the White Desert.







## ANCIENT MOCCASINS ON MODERN FEET

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"Are these dances authentic?" The question seems to arise whenever Indian dances are presented outside their native tribal homeland, whether danced by Indians or by interpreters of the Indian way, whether seen as dances or read from the printed pages. The attitude it reflects is welcomed by the sincere interpreter, for the virtue of authenticity is none other than the virtue of truth, and it looms as more significant still against the background of untruth and misconception that has beclouded the Indian's dance-art in years past. Important as it is, however, there are other considerations.

The purpose of this book is to preserve the dances of the American Indian, but to preserve them *in action*, not merely in printed word... to preserve them as dances that we ourselves may use and enjoy. It presents the dances in such manner that they can be re-enacted for stage or camp-fire entertainment.

In the light of these facts, the question of authenticity is already answered in part, if by "authentic" one implies an exact reproduction of the dances as the Indians did them. To be of practical use a dance must bring enjoyment and aesthetic satisfaction to the audience and to the dancers. Many dances, if reproduced exactly, would not accomplish this for either group, for what we speak of as dances are often ritualistic ceremonies in which the same movements are repeated over and over, and may continue thus for hours. In their native setting such ceremonies captivate the Indian audience, because there the audience is in fullest harmony with the motion-language, and has vital concern with the purpose for which the dances are an instrument in achieving, whether it be rain for the crops, thanksgiving for the harvest, success in the hunt, tribal propagation, or whatnot. But the non-Indian audience, holding no such concern for the purpose, would find them hopelessly monotonous. From a practical standpoint all that is possible in such cases is to lift out a segment of the dance for reproduction, as an orchestra might select one movement of a symphony, or to re-enact the general movements so as merely to give an impression of the dance.

Not all dances are of this repetitious type and so do not offer such complications. Indeed, some are brilliantly dramatic and admirably suited in





*Photograph by Paul Boris*





*Photograph by Paul Boris*



their exact form, and still others need only minor omissions and adaptations.

In the handling of these dances, two pressures have relentlessly influenced every thought and move: The first has been an intense desire for truth and accuracy. The second has been a flair for showmanship that has insisted that these dances be given the full advantage of proper presentation, lest their beauty and artistry be needlessly lost. Only the necessity of transporting the dances in time and space, from one culture to another, has brought the two pressures into conflict, and when this has happened, the former has been too potent to permit needless meddling.

The barriers to learning the full truth of any dance are often such that no one can scale them completely, the difficulties such that any recording of it is apt to be only an approximation. Literature throwing needed light is often scanty, in some cases non-existent. No more has been possible than to record the dances as they are understood and conceived, so altered as to adapt them for acceptable re-enactment. These dances are presented with a full awareness of their inadequacy as precise recordings but with full confidence in their usefulness for the purpose for which they are intended.

In approaching these dances, therefore, we are putting ancient moccasins on modern feet. We are true to the gloriously artistic and dramatically beautiful tradition of these moccasins, true to the conventional movements that the ages have established as appropriate for them, but the very fact that they are on modern feet imposes certain limitations and demands that certain liberties be taken with them.

To what extent are these modern feet of non-Indian dancers capable of filling these ancient moccasins? That is to ask, "Will not the inability of our dancers to perform the typical movements result in an obviously unauthentic performance?" Much has been said on the point that there is an indefinable something about the dancing Indian that no other seems able quite to duplicate, an intangible element in style that is distinctively, inimitably Indian. Some have thought that this arises from postural characteristics of the Indian, from straight shoulders, flat back, etc., but, to the extent that it exists at all, it is more apt to be the result of long-established differences in attitude and in concept of dance movements. This margin of the supposedly unattainable is narrow and fleeting, and may doubtless be more a matter of individual differences than of racial ones. It is no more possible for a non-Indian to duplicate exactly the style of a certain Indian than it is for one Indian to duplicate that of another. Many a sincere and thorough interpreter of the Indian way has entered the Redman's dance arena and blended with the dancing Indians so harmoniously that even the practiced eye could not label one as Indian and another as not.

In one word: The steps and movements can be learned with reasonable exactness, and the rituals or routines can be reproduced. Many of these are suitable in their original form and others need adaptation. When this





has been necessary the right of dramatic license has been invoked. Those few numbers that have been included that are Indian in theme and spirit, yet not based on authentic originals, are so labeled.

### Dance Without Song

In the scheme of dancing set forth in this book no songs are used. The dances are accompanied by percussion only.

This break with dance tradition is one that an Indian would scarcely be able to comprehend, for to him dance movement and song are merely different phases of the same thing. Moreover, most of the adaptations of Indian dances that have appeared in the past have made much of the songs, often to the point where the songs seem to become the primary consideration... with complete song arrangements and very sketchy directions for the dances.

Why, then, this departure? The reason is, first of all, one of expediency. To insist on the use of songs would mean to prohibit dancing in many situations where otherwise it might be used. Indian songs are very difficult for non-Indian vocalists to sing with anything approaching a true native quality. The difficulty in finding a drum-singer would, more often than not, erect an insurmountable barrier. Even if one were found capable of singing the songs properly, his efforts could not be heard above the ringing of many bells in the vigorous group dances—a *chorus* of drum-singers would be needed as in the Indian's dances. Viewed practically, this could seldom, if ever, be achieved.

Concern over the songs might be justified were it not for the fact that the dances do not need them. Whether or not they are used, the interest centers primarily in the dancing. Whatever symbolic meaning the Indian may attach to the song, or however important it may be considered in accomplishing the religious or other purpose of the dance as he sees it, the fact still remains that the spectator is usually only vaguely aware of the song because of the consummate appeal of the dance.

The present-day tendency to use orchestra music as accompaniment to Indian dances is still more to be discouraged. However beautiful it may be in itself, it seems wholly incongruous in the Indian setting, a foreign element that robs the dance of its true Indian flavor.

*Good dancing, whether Indian or other, is capable of standing on its own without symphonic or vocal accompaniment. Percussion is essential, and in this case is all that is desirable.*

The drum is indispensable. It is to the dance as the bow to the arrow. It is the spring to action. And in the scheme of dancing here presented, the man behind the drum is of greatest importance. His is the task not only of beating the rhythm, but of directing the dance, of commanding all movements. He is at once rhythm-maker and dance director, and to repeat—he alone rules the scene.



### Scope of the Dances

Out of the maze of countless dances from the many tribes, the task of selecting has presented itself. Four principles have guided this selection: The *first* is the ever-present one of usefulness, preference being given to those that lend themselves best to reproduction. Every dance in this volume has been danced many times, and found to be practical and within the capacity of the average group, and to possess adequate dramatic quality and audience appeal. Dances that have not met these standards have been omitted.

*Second*, the dances selected are confined largely to those with which I have had personal experience. Most of them have been witnessed first hand and recorded as seen; many have been actually danced with the Indians. Some have come from the notes of other observers, and still others, particularly the ancient ones, have been taken from the literature and checked with the present-day dance customs of the tribes that used them.

*Third*, effort has been made to represent the various main cultural areas, with a few dances from each. The one conspicuous omission is the Pacific Northwest, with the dances of which area I have not had sufficient personal experience.

*Fourth*, effort has been made to include as many of the themes, motifs and types of dances as possible. These types are many. There are religious dances and secular dances; there are dances for the accomplishment of serious life-purposes and others for sheer fun. There are comic dances and tragic dances, social dances and mourning dances. There are dances built on the war theme, on the hunting theme, and on the agricultural theme. There are dances of mimicry, some in imitation of spirit bodies and others in imitation of nature, as in the animal and bird dances. There are dances in which masks and other disguising costumes are worn to aid in this mimicry and others that rely only on the art of pantomime without special costuming. There are dances that tell stories, some with obvious overt dramatics and others with conventionalized symbolic movements, understandable only to the informed. There are dances for men only, others for women only, and still others for mixed groups. There are solo dances, some that can be done by any dancer and others that are personal property of a single individual. There are dances limited to certain societies which own them, and there are dances open to everybody.

### The Indian Style

In the light of tribal variations in dances the question arises, is there a basic Indian dance style? In all Indian dancing, regardless of tribe, there is a certain similarity of movement that identifies it unmistakably as Indian and that can rightly be called a basic Indian style. There are several fundamental steps or movements, such as, for example, toe-heel dancing, flat-





heel dancing, stomp dancing, trot dancing, etc. These appear in practically all areas, although some tribes may make greater use of some types than others, and may accent the movements in slightly different fashion and use variations of them that are not universal. The shade of difference between these various basic steps and movements is slight and all are done with much the same characteristic style. The basic steps and movements are therefore presented as Indian rather than tribal.

### Dancing for Men

Both psychologically and physically, the dancing of the Indian is peculiarly adapted for American young men. They like it. Its appeal is deep-rooted. They accept it with enthusiasm. A contributing factor may be the glamour that surrounds the Indian himself, but more basic is the inherent masculinity of the dancing. In historic background it is man's dancing; in its typical movements it is an expression of masculine qualities. The type of vigorous muscular action involved is accepted by men as the sphere of men alone. The dramatic themes it employs are of the type that challenge the male mind. It reflects life with a man's slant.

This whole-hearted acceptance plus this intrinsic appropriateness lifts it far and away above other available types of dancing as ideally suited for young men.

American boys need dancing. Their craving for rhythmic expression is seen in the eager response and the solid joy they manifest once they find a type in which they can engage whole-heartedly, without laying themselves open to the charge of possessing a fondness for that which is sissified. Along with the many priceless contributions the Indian has made to American youth, he has given boys and young men that type of dancing.

Many of the dances in this book are, therefore, designed primarily for men and boys. As in all athletic effort some will possess more talent than others. The very vigorousness of the movements, the need for perfect co-ordination and for muscular power, will limit full attainment to those youth who are mature, and will give advantage to those with athletic talent. But joy will be found by all.

### Dances for Women

The dances in which women will find their greatest joy are those which were actually danced by Indian women. For the most part these are the group dances of the chorus type. Four chapters of group dances are included in this book, not all of which were engaged in by Indian women, but all suitable for use by women. The dancing commonly thought of as man's dancing is the go-as-you-please type, the "powwow" dancing with its robust action and its mannish movements. This may be imitated by women, as is often done in interpreting the story dances, but a full approxi-



mation of it as done by Indian men, is not to be expected. Aside from occasional use of it for dramatic purposes, it is recommended that women use the delightful and appropriate group or chorus routines.

### Stage or Council Ring

An atmospheric something is lost in transplanting the Redman's dances from their native setting to the modern stage. The dances in this book are therefore described for the outdoor dancing arena or council ring, the nearest approximation to their original setting, with the hope that such a location will be sought out whenever possible. When necessity demands the use of a stage, the routines are still applicable as described. Only in rare instances have separate directions been necessary for stage and council ring. In all other cases the director of the dances will have no difficulty in adjusting the council-ring directions to the stage.





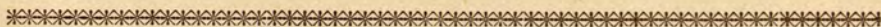
## PART II

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### DANCE STEPS AND MOVEMENTS







## Chapter I

### INDIAN DANCE STEPS

---

IN THE DANCING of the American Indian there are three characteristic foot movements or steps. These appear to greater or less degree in all areas, although one of them may find more frequent use in any given area than the others. These steps are the *toe-heel*, the *flat-heel* and the *flat-foot*. These three steps are here regarded as basic movements.

An analysis of the three will indicate that they are very similar, seeming to differ one from another more in accent than in the use of widely different movements. Yet each is sufficiently different as to form the basis for a distinctive style of dancing.

Each of these steps is also done with a sort of double foot action, with both feet participating on each step, which immediately results in a different movement and one which has a different aesthetic effect on the observer. The double movements also constitute basic dance styles.

In this chapter these three steps, the *toe-heel*, the *flat-heel*, and the *flat-foot*, together with the double form of each, are described as fundamental movements. Each has many variations, and there are many related steps that are employed with each for the sake of variety. After the descriptions of the fundamental steps themselves, these other movements suited for use with them are discussed.

These steps are characteristic of go-as-you-please dancing in which each individual is permitted to dance in any way he chooses, unregulated by specific ritual. There is another very prevalent dancing style, called *stomp dancing*, that finds its greatest use in ceremonial dances. This and other such steps are described at the end of the chapter. Many ceremonial dances require specific steps and movements that cannot be called general and do not find use in other dances. In such cases the steps are described in connection with the discussion of the dances in question, rather than in this chapter.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS USED

The terms used in describing dance steps are words which are used in everyday conversation with various shades of meaning, and so it is necessary that we understand the meaning of these words as this book uses them. These are as follows:





*Toe*—the ball of the foot—not the toe itself. For example, the expression “Place the toe down, with the heel raised” means to place the ball of the foot down with the heel raised off the floor.

*Step*—a step as in walking, the stepping foot touching the ground before the other foot is raised. (In running the advancing foot is still in the air when the other foot is raised.)

*Trot*—a short spring from one foot to the other as in relaxed running, in which the advancing foot is still in the air when the other foot is raised.

*Hop*—a short spring on one foot. A hop is made by standing on one foot, making a short spring and landing on the same foot.

*Jump*—(1) a spring from one foot to the other; (2) a spring on both feet at the same time.

*Skip*—a low, short spring on one foot in which the foot is barely raised off the ground—a sort of push or scrape in which the ball of the foot “brushes” the ground.

*Tap*—(1) a pat on the ground with the ball of the foot, the foot being immediately raised again; (2) a pat on the ground with the heel, the heel being immediately raised again.

*Beat*—one beat of the drum.

*Count*—a unit of drumming that would be expressed as one count. In unaccented drumming it is one beat of the drum. In two-time drumming, accented *loud-soft*, it is the unit of loud and soft beat, counted *one-and*, etc.

*Powwow dancing*—dancing in which each dancer is free to dance as he chooses, using whatever appropriate movements he desires, without following a fixed routine.

*Group dance*—a dance with a fixed routine, in which each dancer performs essentially the same movements at the same time.

*Story dance*—a dance depicting a story.

*“I Saw” dance*—a story dance re-enacting an exploit or happening, presumably one that the dancer saw or experienced.

### Fundamental Steps

The basic steps of the three common dance styles are here described, first in their simple form and then with the two-foot action.





## THE TOE-HEEL STEP

- (soft beat) & Place left toe down, heel raised  
 (loud beat) 1 Drop left heel, simultaneously raising right foot  
 (soft beat) & Place right toe down, heel raised  
 (loud beat) 2 Drop right heel, simultaneously raising left foot

This universal movement is particularly characteristic of the dancing of the northern Woodlands and northern Plains. It is the best foundation for the other dancing styles and is recommended as the first step to be learned.

To achieve the proper movement the feet must be kept under the body at all times. Figure 1 illustrates both the right and the wrong positions of the feet. When the foot is extended far forward as in B the heel cannot be brought down gracefully and naturally, and the step will seem awkward and strained.

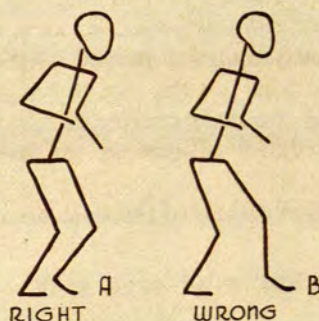


Figure 1. Toe-heel Step

With the feet in the proper position, lower the body a little by bending the knees to the angle shown in A. The knees remain bent at approximately this angle at all times in doing the step. They are never straightened out.

With the weight on the right foot, place the ball of the left foot down about six inches forward, keeping the heel elevated at a natural height. Drop the left heel down, and simultaneously lift the right foot for the next step. As the left heel is brought down, *the left knee bends or gives a little*—to use the dancing term, the knee is *soft*. The heel is not forced down by the leg muscles but by dropping the weight of the body on it. In placing the left toe forward the weight is on the right foot; then it is suddenly transferred to the left, thus dropping the heel down hard, the knee flexing to take up the jar. To the extent that the legs are kept relaxed and the knee soft the step becomes easy, natural and fluid. The movement is thus more of an up-and-down one than a forward or gliding one. Relaxed as it should be, the whole body shakes up and down a little on each step.

The step is done to two-time drumming, accented loud-soft. *The toe is*





placed down on the soft beat and the heel dropped on the loud beat. The accent of the loud beat is an aid to bringing the heel down emphatically. The step is counted "and-one, and-two."

Here, then, are the pitfalls of the beginner:

1. Long straddling steps
2. Stiff knees
3. A tendency to drop the heel stiffly, using ankle and leg muscles only

And conversely, the correct movement involves the following:

1. Feet under the body with the knees slightly bent always
2. Steps short enough so that the knees can be kept bent at approximately the same angle constantly
3. Soft knee, flexing when the weight is placed on it
4. Heel lowered by dropping weight of body on leg

Once the step has been learned certain liberties may be taken with it. It is not necessary, and indeed not typical, to keep the toe in place after it is put down. It may be picked up and moved a little as desired, either forward, backward, or sideways, and the foot brought down *flat* on the hard beat. This shifting of the toe gives greater freedom and flexibility to the step, eliminates all probability of getting off balance, and facilitates a natural, flowing style.

The variations and amplifications of the steps are described on page 22.

#### THE FLAT-HEEL STEP

- |             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| (soft beat) | & | Step forward with left foot flat on floor  |
| (loud beat) | 1 | Raise left heel and drop it down on count  |
| (soft beat) | & | Step forward with right foot flat on floor |
| (loud beat) | 2 | Raise right heel and drop it down on count |

The difference between this step and the toe-heel is largely one of emphasis, but the effect it produces is different. The feet hug the ground. They are raised no higher than necessary in stepping and are brought down flat; the heel is raised but very little in making the heel tap. The weight stays on the heels all the time. It is the step used in the *close-to-ground dancing* so characteristic of the Indians.

As in the toe-heel step, the knees are kept a trifle bent constantly, thus keeping the feet directly under the body, and the steps are short so as not to straighten out the legs.

The heel is raised for the heel tap, not by the ankle alone, but by an upward movement of the whole body, and is lowered by dropping the weight of the body on it. There is an up-and-down motion from head to foot, including the shoulders which are kept relaxed and are bobbed up and down a bit. To get the idea, stand with the feet side by side and shake the body up and down by flexing the knees a little. When this movement is



accentuated it lifts and lowers the heels. This is the movement that raises and lowers the heel for the heel tap, and that raises the foot in stepping forward. The knee is soft and flexes with each impact.

If the toes are turned up so that they touch the top of the shoe or moccasin it is easier to put the foot down absolutely flat. Many experienced dancers make a habit of this whenever they step flat.

To repeat the essential points to watch:

1. Feet flat, hugging the ground
2. Knees bent to keep feet under the body
3. Soft knee, flexing when weight is placed on it
4. Heel raised by an upward lift of the body
5. Heel lowered by dropping weight on it

The flat-heel is a favorite step of older men who in their youth may have danced on their toes in springing style but now have settled down on their heels. It must not be dismissed as the resort of old men only, however, for this close-to-ground dancing with the whole body pulsing and aquiver is a good and favored dance style. Often a dashing youthful dancer will drop down from the high-springing double toe-heel to a moment of earthy accent with the flat-heel and its variations and thereby achieve the most brilliant moments of his dance.

The variations are described on page 34.

#### THE FLAT-FOOT STEP

- |             |   |                         |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|
| (loud beat) | 1 | Step on left foot flat  |
| (soft beat) | & | Skip on left foot flat  |
| (loud beat) | 2 | Step on right foot flat |
| (soft beat) | & | Skip on right foot flat |

A step and a skip with each foot suggests the skipping of children, but as the Indians do it the accent is not the same, and the appearance and the feeling produced are widely different. The feet are flat at all times; they are brought down flat on both the step and the skip, and when raised the sole of the foot is flat or parallel to the floor. The knees are kept slightly bent so as not to permit the advancing leg to straighten out in front.

Keeping the feet flat, step forward on the left, raising the right, skip forward on the left as the right advances, then repeat with the right. On the skip the foot is barely raised off the floor, brushing the floor as it goes forward, but on the step the foot is raised to a height of perhaps six inches. At all stages, however, it is flat to the floor. The body is erect and sways from side to side naturally with the step.

This movement differs widely from that of the flat-heel step. There is no heel action, no pounding of the floor, no hugging the floor with the feet. Although the foot is flat it does not give the close-to-ground feeling.





Although the body is relaxed there is less of the up-and-down shaking that characterizes the heel steps. The step is light, the accent forward.

The flat-foot is a much used and very characteristic Indian dance movement. On the southern Plains and among the Southwest tribes it finds greater favor than does the toe-heel.

The variations of the step are found on page 35.

#### THE DOUBLE TOE-HEEL STEP

This sparkling step is an amplification of the toe-heel step and is one of the most brilliant of Indian movements. It enjoys widespread use by accomplished dancers. It is found wherever toe-heel dancing is used. Old men from whose legs the spring of youth has departed may confine themselves to the simple toe-heel but men in their vigor find their best expression here. It is particularly characteristic of the Indians of the Great Lakes area and the northern Plains.

As quickly as possible a dancer should shift over from the toe-heel to the double toe-heel as his basic step.

Place the left foot in natural walking distance in front:

- (soft beat) & Jump on both toes, heels raised
- (loud beat) 1 Drop left heel and raise right foot forward
- (soft beat) & Jump on both toes, heels raised
- (loud beat) 2 Drop right heel and raise left foot forward

The step is best learned by approaching it in four stages:

1. Do it first with both feet side by side: Jump with both feet, landing on balls of feet. Drop left heel and raise right foot; then jump on both feet again, drop right heel and raise left foot. Do this on the spot, without making progress.

2. When this can be done, put the left foot at normal walking distance in front and perform the same motions in this position, dancing forward, first with one foot leading, then the other (Figure 2).

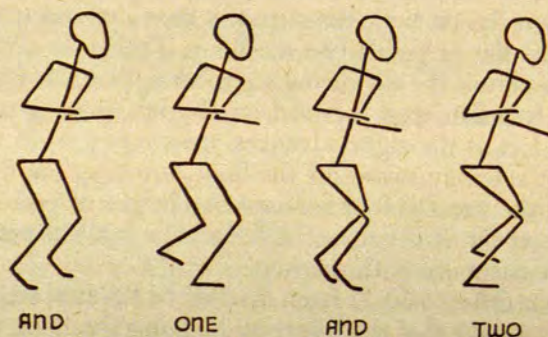


Figure 2. Foundation of the Double Toe-heel Step





3. This simplified version now evolves into the actual movement: Jump forward on both feet as usual, but instead of dropping the left heel, hop up with the left foot and bring it down flat. As the left springs up for this hop the right foot is raised and carried forward for the next step. This hop is just high enough to get the foot off the ground and the foot comes down on the same spot.

4. When this can be done, jump forward on both feet as before, hop on the left but instead of bringing it down absolutely flat, allow the ball of the foot to hit a split-second before the heel. The ball of the foot thus comes down just before the drumbeat and the heel on the beat. This really constitutes a little toe-heel step on one beat of the drum. If the feet are kept flexible and springy it is more natural to do it this way than otherwise. When the third stage has been learned one finds himself drifting into this movement unconsciously.

As in the toe-heel step the knees are slightly bent, keeping the feet directly under the body (Figure 2).

The accent is up and away from the ground, the feet springing up with exceeding lightness. It differs from the toe-heel in this respect. The advancing foot rises to a height of perhaps a foot off the ground, cutting a semi-circle in the air as it goes forward. The feet rebound, as if they touched the ground for the purpose of springing away from it. They spring up on *every* step. However, it is only the *advancing foot* that goes high, the hops lifting the feet only two or three inches. But they do add sparkle.

The steps and movements best-suited for use with the double toe-heel are described on page 31.

#### THE DOUBLE FLAT-HEEL STEP

Stand with left foot in advance of right:

(soft beat) & Jump on both feet flat

(loud beat) 1 Raise and lower left heel, simultaneously raising right foot forward

(soft beat) & Jump on both feet flat

(loud beat) 2 Raise and lower right heel, simultaneously raising left foot forward

It is the same general motion as the double toe-heel except for accent and style. Once the double toe-heel has been learned it can be given the flat-heel accent without difficulty.

The steps are very short and the feet are brought down flat. The weight is on the heels. The feet are raised with the up-and-down motion of the body characteristic of the flat-heel step. Having jumped on both feet, an upward bob of the body raises the heel of the forward foot for the heel tap and also raises the back foot which advances while the heel tap is being made.

It must be remembered that this is close-to-ground dancing, with none





of the high springs and the light rebounds that characterize the double toe-heel. The one dance is up and away from the ground, the feet touching the earth for the purpose of springing away from it; the other is down and onto the ground, the soles of the feet hugging the earth and leaving it reluctantly.

#### THE DOUBLE FLAT-FOOT STEP

Stand with the left foot in advance of the right:

- (loud beat) 1 Jump on both feet flat
- (soft beat) & Skip on left foot flat, simultaneously raising right forward
- (loud beat) 2 Jump on both feet flat
- (soft beat) & Skip on right foot flat, simultaneously raising left forward

The double flat-foot is to the flat-foot as the double toe-heel is to the toe-heel. It represents the movement at its most appealing level. If anything it is easier and less fatiguing than the flat-foot itself.

The movement is essentially as in the double toe-heel except for the flat-foot accent: Jump forward on both feet, bringing them down flat, then skip forward with the advanced foot and raise the back foot, carrying it forward while the skip is being made.

As soon as the feet hit the floor they rebound, but coming down flat as they do, they do not spring to any such height as in the double toe-heel. It is nevertheless an upward and forward motion with none of the hugging of the floor seen in the double flat-heel.

#### Toe-Heel Variations

The following are the steps and movements appropriate for use in toe-heel dancing. They are employed to add variety and color to the toe-heel step, not to replace it. Using the toe-heel step as the basic pattern, such steps as these are introduced on occasion. The toe-heel is a favorite step in go-as-you-please dancing when each individual is free to dance as he chooses, without following any ritual or routine. In such situations these variations may be inserted at will.

In all cases the drumming should be in two-time, accented *loud-soft*. The toe is always placed down on the soft beat, the heel on the loud beat.

#### CROSSED TOE-HEEL

- & Cross left foot over right and place toe on floor
- 1 Drop left heel and at the same time swing right foot to the right
- & Cross right foot over left and place toe on floor
- 2 Drop right heel and at the same time swing left foot to the left







*Photograph by Paul Boris*

JAMES C. STONE





*Photograph by Paul Boris*



This is the regular toe-heel step except that the feet are crossed on each step. This gives an interesting zigzag appearance to the leg motion (Figure 3). If the knees are bent a little more than usual it permits the legs to

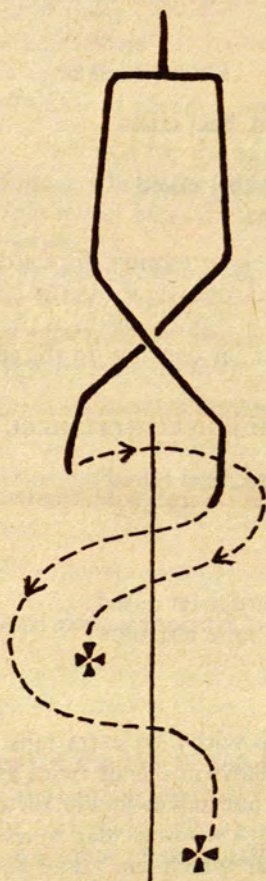


Figure 3. Crossed Toe-heel Step

cross more easily. The step lends itself admirably to a swaggering body style with the shoulders swaying from side to side in harmony with the leg motion. Indeed it is difficult to do it without a sidewise sway of the shoulders.

#### TOE-HEEL DRAG BACK

- & Place left toe down in front
- 1 Drag back to position and drop heel
- & Place right toe down in front
- 2 Drag back to position and drop heel





The toe is placed down about six inches farther forward than normal, then dragged back to place in contact with the floor and the heel dropped. It is best adapted for dancing on the spot although slow, inch-by-inch progress may be made with it. Its favorite use is as a rest step.

#### ROCKING STEP

- & Place left toe forward, heel raised
- 1 Drop left heel down
- & Place right toe back, heel raised
- 2 Drop right heel down

This step results in a rocking motion, forward and backward, with the body called into action to accentuate it. As the left steps forward the body is bent forward slightly, to straighten again as the right steps back.

It is a common maneuver for dancing on the spot and makes a good rest step.

#### TOE-HEEL-HEEL-HEEL

- & Place left toe forward, heel raised
- 1 Drop left heel and raise right foot
- & Tap left heel
- 2 Tap left heel
- & Place right toe forward, heel raised
- 3 Drop right heel and raise left foot
- & Tap right heel
- 4 Tap right heel

This is the toe-heel step with two extra taps of the heel thrown in. It means that the raised foot stays in the air twice as long as usual. This raised foot is not held stationary but moves slowly forward so as to be in position for the next step, following a semi-circular course as it does so. This results in a change in the speed at which the raised foot moves forward, taking twice the usual time in making the step. As a variation for the toe-heel step, it is this very change in speed that adds interest. Usually only one of these steps is thrown in at a time, to be repeated by another a little later. Again four such steps are used in succession.

The toe-heel-heel-heel is a much-used step in hoop dancing (Chapter XII).

This step is sometimes carried to double its length, that is, the heel is tapped *seven* times instead of three, which means that the raised foot is in the air for seven beats of the drum. In this case the treatment is entirely different: the raised foot is kicked straight forward on the first heel tap, its knee straight, its foot about 10 inches from the floor; the dancer bends well forward at the waist and remains in this position until the taps are completed. Then the step is repeated with the other foot.





## HEEL TAPS

Stand with left foot slightly in advance of right:

8 beats—Tap left heel eight times

8 beats—Tap right heel eight times

8 beats—Tap both heels eight times

About-face, putting right foot in advance, and repeat.

Such heel taps are often employed for the sake of a rest. Again they are much used in the story dances where the acting demands that a stop be made. As a general principle it can be said that whenever a stop is made, one heel must be kept in motion.

These taps are made by an up-and-down motion of the entire body, not by leg action alone. There is much animation of the body from head to foot. Often the number of taps by each foot is doubled to 16; indeed the number depends entirely upon the fancy of the dancer.

## TOE-TAP-TAP-HEEL

& Tap left foot forward and raise parallel to floor

1 Tap right heel down

& Tap right heel down

2 Drop left foot flat

& Tap right foot forward and raise parallel to floor

3 Tap left heel down

& Tap left heel down

4 Drop right foot flat

In tapping the foot forward the ball of the foot is tapped down, then the foot is raised three or four inches and held parallel to the floor. The steps are short, keeping the feet under the body. The heel taps are done with the usual up-and-down motion of the entire body.

## THREE-COUNT TAP

& Tap left toe

1 Tap left toe

& Place left toe down

2 Drop left heel down

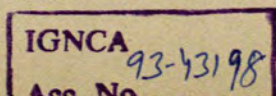
& Tap right toe

3 Tap right toe

& Place right toe down

4 Drop right toe down

The only difference between this and the regular toe-heel step is that the toe makes two preliminary taps before being placed down for the toe-heel



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step. These taps do not need to be made on the same spot but the foot may move a little on each, either forward or to one side. A favorite way of doing it is to turn the body to the left, tap the left foot to the left side, then tap it farther front, then place it down in front for the usual toe-heel step; then repeat to the right (Figure 4).

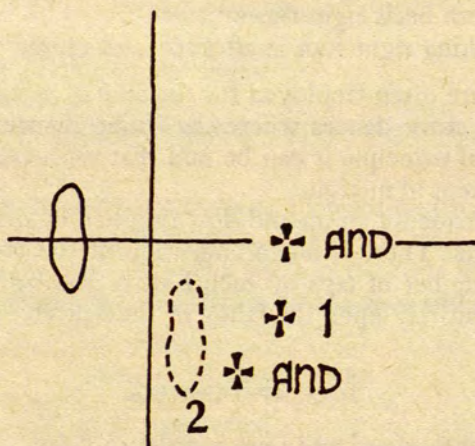


Figure 4. Three-count Tap

This step is sometimes amplified by making four preliminary taps instead of two (Figure 5).

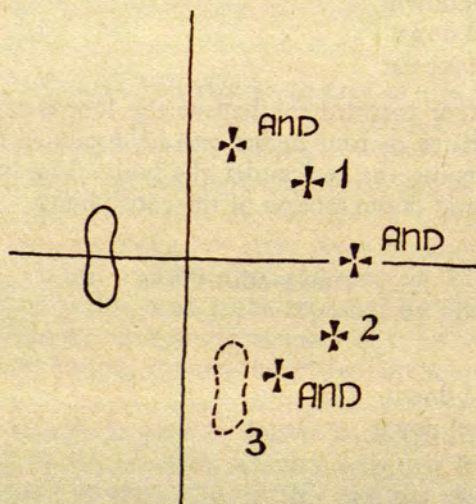


Figure 5. Five-count Tap





## GLIDES

& Cross right foot in front of left and place toe on floor—skip back on both toes

1-&-2 Skip back, back, back on both toes

This constitutes a backward gliding motion and should be done as smoothly and evenly as possible. The number of backward skips can vary depending upon the space and the mood of the dancer, four to six being the usual number. The legs are straight and are held in contact with each other above the knees; the body is bent forward at the hips as necessary to relieve all strain.

A very effective variation of this glide is as follows:

& Cross right foot in front of left and place toe on floor, skip back on both feet

1 Skip back on both feet

& Skip back on right foot and swing left forward

2 Skip back on right foot and swing left foot across in front of right

& Place left toe on floor and skip back on both left

3 Skip back on both feet

& Skip back on left foot and swing right leg forward

4 Skip back on left foot and swing right foot across in front of left  
Repeat all

The leg is kept straight with knee unbent as it is swung forward and across in front of the other leg. This is accomplished by swinging it out to the side in carrying it forward.

**FORWARD GLIDES.**—The forward glides are done with the feet in the same position as for the backward glides.

**LEAPS.**—A forward glide is often terminated with a long leap forward. Having glided four to six counts, raise the right leg with the knee high in front, skip twice on the left foot to gain momentum, then leap forward with the right leg straight as in jumping the hurdles. As soon as the right foot hits the floor go into toe-heel dancing again. The most difficult part of this leap is to time it so that the foot hits the floor on the drumbeat.

## PIVOTS

The quickest method of turning around is by doing an about-face, as a soldier would in drilling. This turns the dancer instantly and starts him off in the opposite direction.

There are three pivot turns or spin-arounds, however, which are much more colorful. Of these, the *tap pivots* are good, the *push pivots* are better and the *kick pivots* best of all.





TAP PIVOTS.—Stand on ball of left foot, right foot raised:

- & Tap right toe
- 1 Tap right toe
- & Tap right toe
- 2 Drop left heel down

While doing this, spin the body around to the left, pivoting on the ball of the left foot. By the time the three taps are completed the dancer should be facing in the opposite direction.

To turn completely around, tap *five times* instead of three.

In turning to the right the directions for the feet are reversed.

PUSH PIVOTS.—Stand on ball of left foot, right foot raised:

- & Tap right toe
- 1 Tap left heel
- & Tap right toe
- 2 Tap left heel
- & Tap right toe
- 3 Tap left heel

All the time that this is being done the body is being turned to the left, pivoting on the ball of the left foot. The impression given by the tapping of the right foot is that the body is being pushed around by it. When the step is completed the dancer should be facing in the opposite direction.

To turn completely around continue the movement for *five counts* instead of three.

To turn to the right, reverse the instructions.

KICK PIVOTS.—The kick pivot is the most spectacular of all. It is done exactly like the push pivot except that the right foot is *raised high and is stamped down hard*, like a horse pawing the ground. Raise the knee high in front, pull the foot up under the leg until the heel almost touches the thigh, point the toe down—from this position stamp the toe down on the floor to the count and immediately pull it up again, all the time spinning to the left, pivoting on the ball of the left foot. Lean well to the left, drop the head, and pivot fast and with abandon. This is one of the most colorful flourishes in toe-heel dancing.

Three kicks should spin the dancer completely around and five kicks should take him around twice.

#### TOE-HEEL-TAP-HEEL

- & Place left toe down
- 1 Drop left heel down, lifting right foot
- & Tap right toe behind





- 2 Tap left heel down
- & Place right toe down
- 3 Drop right heel down, lifting left foot
- & Tap left toe behind
- 4 Tap right heel down

This is a valuable step which finds its best use in a spectacular moment of dancing in a low crouch. Bend far forward at the hips, place the left toe down as in the toe-heel, drop the left heel and extend the right leg out behind as far as it will go conveniently, strike the right toe down hard, then lift and drop the left heel as the right leg is brought back under the body. Then repeat with the right foot stepping. All motions are emphatic, with the feet striking the floor hard. Four to six steps are made without progress, then the body straightens for the regular toe-heel step again.

#### TOE-HOP STEP

- & Step on left toe, raising right
- 1 Hop on left toe
- & Step on right toe, raising left
- 2 Hop on right toe

In this step the heel is not dropped down but a little hop is made with the toe instead. The weight is taken on the advancing foot as soon as it is placed down. This step is not as graceful and appealing as the toe-heel, and is more fatiguing.

#### TAP-TAP-HEEL

This is an advanced step of interest to mature performers:

1. Jump on left foot flat, and simultaneously tap right toe in back oblique position
2. Tap right foot at side with a forward scuffing motion
3. Bring right heel down in front with foot turned sharply up, knee straight
4. Jump on right foot flat, and simultaneously tap left toe in back oblique position
5. Tap left foot at side with a forward scuffing motion
6. Bring left heel down in front with foot turned sharply up, knee straight

This step is interesting and the movement not difficult for an experienced dancer. On Number 1 the body must be turned to the right to permit tapping the right foot at the back oblique position. On Number 2 the right foot is tapped to right side as it swings forward, scuffing or brushing the floor without stopping. On Number 3 the right heel strikes the floor in front with the foot turned up so as to form a right angle to the leg, the





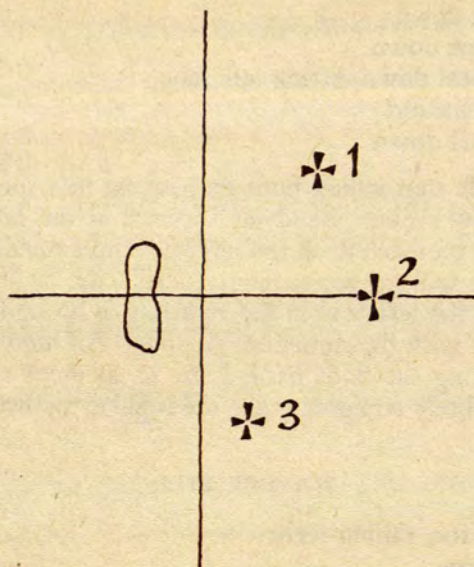


Figure 6. Diagram of Foot Positions in the Tap-tap-heel

right leg fully extended and the knee straight (Figure 7)—this position is made possible by bending the left knee to lower the body and bending forward at the hips. The effect of the step is created by the Number 3 position and so there is a slight pause here, holding the position, then a quick jump to make the next step on time. The body sways naturally to the side as the side taps are made and bends forward at the waist when the heel is brought down. The arms are relaxed and the hands joined in front of the chest.



Figure 7. Tap-tap-heel Step

The drumming is in 3-4 time, with the accent of the drum on one, counted *one-two-three*. When the step is thrown into a toe-heel routine with its two-time drumming, it is better to use a variation of the step, called the tap-tap-tap-heel. This is done in exactly the same way except that the foot is scuffed twice at the side as it goes forward instead of once.



## TAPPING FIGURES

This series of tapping figures will be of interest primarily to advanced dancers.

To start, stand on right foot with left raised:

& Hop on right, crossing left over right

1 Tap left at right oblique

& Hop on right, swinging left to left, uncrossing

2 Tap left to left oblique

& Hop on right, crossing left over right

3 Tap left at right oblique

& Hop on right, swinging left to left, uncrossing

4 Tap left at left oblique

& Hop on right, kicking left back toward right shin

5 Jerk right back and step on left (left now becomes supporting foot)

Repeat with right foot now tapping

The trick in performing the step comes on the Number 5 count—the left leg is kicked back toward the right shin as if to kick the right foot out from under the body. Just before the left hits the shin, the right leg is jerked back as if it were kicked out, and is then swung forward to start the figure over, in which case the right foot does the tapping.

A series of three related figures are used in succession. The first is as described. The second is done in the same way except that the taps are made to the rear. With the left foot doing the tapping, tap back right oblique, then back left oblique, etc. Having completed the taps the left foot is kicked forward against the right calf, as if to kick the foot out of place.

In the third the taps are done at the side. With the left foot tapping, tap first to the left front, then to the left back, etc., then swing the foot forward and kick it back against the right shin as before.

The complete series is danced in the following sequence:

(1) front taps, first left foot, then right foot; (2) back taps, first left foot, then right foot; (3) side taps, first left foot, then right foot.

## Double Toe-heel Variations

One and all, and without exception, the toe-heel variations as already given can be used with the double toe-heel, the only difference being that they are done with the double toe-heel movement.

The following movements are also particularly suited to double toe-heel dancing.

## ZIGZAG

This is not a step in itself but rather a maneuver in which the double toe-heel is danced along a zigzag course. With the left foot advancing,





dance two steps in a left oblique direction, then turn sharply to the right and dance two steps in a right oblique direction, then two to the left oblique, and so on.

Such zigzag dancing is popular among the Chippewas, and when done with dash and zest, creates a striking picture with true primitive flavor.

#### FLAT-FOOT TROT

One of the favorite means of adding variety in dancing the double toe-heel is the use of the flat-foot trot (page 37). The Chippewas use it much in this connection. While dancing the double toe-heel, go into the trot for four steps, then immediately go back to the original step again. In the trot the foot is brought down flat, thus making strong contrast to the toe springs of the step itself.

#### SKIPS FORWARD

Let us suppose that the right foot is advancing in dancing the double toe-heel: Bring the toe down as usual, then lift it immediately and hold it in the air while skipping forward for four skips on the left foot. Then drop the right toe and continue dancing as usual.

Again, with the right foot advancing: Bring the toe down as usual but instead of dropping the heel, hold it there at a point, toe touching the floor, and heel up. In this position skip forward on *both* feet for four counts, then drop the right heel and proceed as usual.

The third form is a combination of these two: Bring the right forward as before and tap it down, raise it and skip forward with the left for one count, tap the right down on the next skip, raise it on the next, etc., continuing thus for six skips. The left foot thus skips forward for six skips and the right toe taps down on every other count.

These steps can be done with either foot leading.

#### STI-YU

This is perhaps the most spectacular of all Indian steps. It is an advanced movement that will be of particular interest to those who dance the double toe-heel well. The following directions assume a mastery of the double toe-heel step.

One will catch on quicker if it is approached in stages:

1. Do the double toe-heel on the spot, without making progress. Note that in each step the advanced foot is pulled back under the body.
2. Repeat the double toe-heel on the spot but swing the leg *out to the side* in carrying it forward. It is the lower leg only that is swung out; the thigh and the knee remain in close—see C in Figure 8. Lift the feet up high and swing them out wide. Kick the foot up behind sharply as in B to get it high off the floor at the start. Note, however, that the knee is not raised



forward on this kick but remains beside the other knee. This stage is the foundation of the step and should be practiced long.

3. Lean forward at the hips and swing the advancing foot *far forward* as in D—the knee straight and the foot flat to the floor. To get the leg out in this position the knee of the supporting leg must be bent to lower the body and the body must bend well-forward at the hips.

4. In swinging the leg forward let it straighten out with the knee flat with the foot parallel to the floor and about three inches above it. Then the foot is allowed to drop flat to the floor. The leg is thus kicked to its farthest extent in front and as it jerks on reaching its extremity, it is relaxed and allowed to drop limp to the floor, the foot falling flat.

5. As soon as the advancing foot hits the floor it bounces up and is drawn back under the body as in E for the next step.

This whole movement is based on the double toe-heel step. It begins with that step, and differs from it in (1) the high kick behind as in B, (2) the wide leg swing out to the side, as in C, (3) the kick far forward as in D, (4) the bringing of the foot down flat to the floor, and (5) the stooped position of the body.

The hands are held in front of the chest, lightly joined, with elbows pointing out to the sides, and the arms fully relaxed.

While this step is strenuous it is done in a completely relaxed manner with the body limp and flowing. In fact, it could not be done if the body were not limp. There is no hard banging on the floor, the advancing foot expending its force as it reaches its limit of motion while still in the air and before it touches the floor. It is this lightness that is one of the chief characteristics of the dance.

The effect created by the dance is one of strong, free action, with the legs thrown to their fullest extent and with complete abandon, yet with the body limp and fluid, giving that feeling of reserve, in spite of full-bodied action, so characteristic of good Indian dancing. When done without bells, the feet touch the floor so lightly that they scarcely can be heard, this in spite of unreserved leg effort. Were the arms permitted to swing with the same freedom as the legs, the step would have the atmosphere of wild exertion, but with the hands in front of the chest and the elbows held in, the feeling of reserve and unexpended power results.

The tempo of the drumming must be slower than for the double toe-heel to give time for the movements—a medium-fast, accented two-time.

The name of the step, *Sti-yu* (pronounced Stī'-you'), is the Cherokee word for "Are you strong" and is used as a dance call by these Indians to mean "Dance hard." The step was characteristic of good Cherokee dancers of the Smoky Mountains whenever the *Sti-yu* call was heard. However, it turns up now and then with slight variations and individual interpretations by good, youthful dancers among the Chippewa of the Northwoods, and again, movements resembling it are seen on the Plains.





**STI-YU VARIATION.**—An interesting variation results if the forward foot is not dropped to the floor flat but is brought down on the heel with the toe pointed sharply upward. The toe is turned up as the foot is carried forward and is kept in this position as the heel is dropped to the floor.

Another valuable use of the Sti-yu is to do it in *flat-foot style*, bringing the feet down heavily, flat to the floor but with the accent on the heels. In this case the leading foot contacts the floor as soon as it straightens out instead of expending its energy in the air. There is emphatic pounding of the floor on every step. It is done with a deep bend at the waist, and finds its greatest use as a spectacular moment of low dancing.

### Flat-Heel Variations

All of the toe-heel variations as already described are at once applicable to the flat-heel also, the only difference being that they are done with the flat-heel accent. Whenever the instructions state to place the toe down, the foot is placed down flat instead.

In addition to these, the following two steps are particularly useful with the flat-heel.

#### HEEL-TOE STEP

- & Place left heel down, toe pointed up
- 1 Drop left toe flat
- & Place right heel down, toe pointing up
- 2 Drop right toe flat

This is the direct opposite of the toe-heel. The heel is brought down first, with the toe pointing up and then the toe is dropped. To do this step comfortably the body must be bent forward a little at the hips. The knees are very soft and bend deeply when the toe is dropped.

This emphatic use of the heel fits in admirably with the heel accent of the flat-heel step.

#### HEEL BRUSH

- & Turn left toe up and brush left heel forward
- 1 Drop left foot flat
- & Turn right toe up and brush right heel forward
- 2 Drop right foot flat

The heel does not stop as it brushes the floor, but merely strikes the floor with a scuffing motion and goes right on forward. It hits the floor on the beat, then is raised and the foot brought down flat farther forward.

This is an excellent step. It gives ample opportunity for strutting body



style. Stand straight up, lean the shoulders back and sway them from side to side with style.

### Flat-Foot Variations

The following are the movements most characteristic of and best-suited to the flat-foot style of dancing. These are used both with the flat-foot or the double flat-foot.

#### FLAT-FOOT WITH BACKWARD SKIP

- 1 Step on left foot flat
- & Skip backward on left foot
- 2 Step on right foot flat
- & Skip backward on right foot

This differs from the standard flat-foot step in that the skip is backward instead of forward. The skip is only three or four inches in length. Progress is made possible because the step forward is longer than the backward skip. This is a much-used form of the flat-foot, although lacking the widespread favor for brilliant dancing enjoyed by the forward skip.

This backward skip is a useful step for dancing on the spot or marking time: standing with the feet side by side, step forward on the left, skip backward with the left bringing it back to position, then repeat with the right.

#### CROSSED FLAT-FOOT

- 1 Cross left foot over right and step flat
- & Skip forward on left foot flat and swing right foot to right, uncrossing
- 2 Cross right foot over left and step flat
- & Skip forward on right foot flat and swing left foot to left, uncrossing

This is the standard flat-foot step except that the feet are crossed on each step. It is a very typical movement.

This step is also used with a backward skip instead of a forward one.

#### FLAT-FOOT KICK

- 1 Step on left foot flat
- & Skip on left foot and kick right across in front of left shin
- 2 Step on right foot flat
- & Skip on right foot and kick left across in front of right shin

The foot is kicked across close in front of the other leg by a twist of the thigh, the knee remaining bent to keep the foot in close. It is never carried





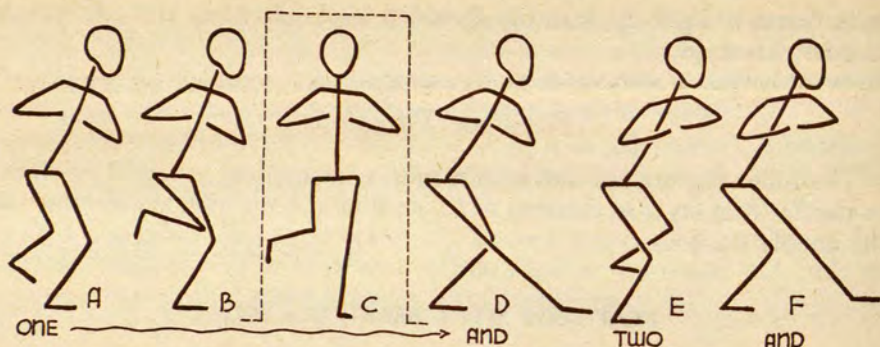


Figure 8. The Sti-yu Step

higher than the knee of the other leg. The toe of the kicking foot is not pointed.

This step appears often in the powwow dancing of the Chippewas and the Sioux, even when dancing in the toe-heel style.

#### FLAT-FOOT SKIPS

Step with left foot and skip, skip, skip forward, holding the right foot in the air, sole parallel to the floor and ready to step. In this very characteristic movement eight or ten skips are frequently made before the right foot is dropped to repeat the skips on that foot. Very little progress is made with the skips; often they are no more than flat hops on the spot, and again inch-by-inch forward progress is made. The body bends forward slightly at the hips and the knee of the skipping leg is hard. To fast tempo skips are effective and typical.

#### FLAT-FOOT SKIP AND KICK

- 1 Step on left foot flat
- & Skip on left foot flat and kick the right foot across in front of the left shin
- 2 Skip on left foot and bring right foot back to side of left
- & Skip on left foot and kick the right foot across in front of the left shin

This is a combination of the last two steps. Any number of skips are made in succession with the right foot kicking across on every other skip; then the step is repeated with the right foot skipping. The kick is made as in the flat-foot kick.

An equally attractive variation of this much-used step is done by kicking first in front of the leg and then *in back* of it. The front kick is across in front of the shin and the back one across behind the calf. Several of these are repeated in succession.





## Trots and Stomps

Stomp dancing is a style of dancing all its own. Similar to it are the various trots. These movements find widespread use and are fundamental to many of the dance routines in this book, particularly the ceremonial dances.

## FLAT-FOOT TROT

- 1 Trot on left foot flat
- & Trot on right foot flat

It is a trotting or easy running motion, altered as necessary to bring the feet down flat. The steps are shorter than in ordinary walking. There is no play in the ankles as would be the case in normal running; the ankles remain stiff and the foot flat even when it is in the air. (It is easier to keep the feet flat if the toes are curled up against the top of the moccasin.) The knees do not bend to lift the feet behind as in ordinary running but the feet are kept under the body constantly. The knees are very soft, however, flexing to take up the jar as the foot hits the floor. Indeed the step is done *very lightly*, there being no perceptible jar or sound. The body is thoroughly relaxed, bent forward naturally at the hips.

This step has many uses and appears frequently as a variation for the toe-heel and the double toe-heel.

Typical of this, and all other trots, as the Indians do them, are the occasional pauses for one step, holding one foot in the air for an extra count before bringing it down. These little pauses make an interesting and effective break in the dance.

**SLOW TROT.**—This is the flat-foot trot done in slow motion, bringing the feet down on every other beat of the drum. Changing from the fast trot to this slow motion is effective. It is often used as a variation in double toe-heel dancing. It should never be continued longer than four steps. The body should be bent well-forward and the feet raised high.

## STOMP STEP

This is an important and widely used step, particularly in ceremonial dances. It is the basis of all the Cherokee dances in Chapter VIII. The style of dancing in which it is used is spoken of as stomp dancing.

It is precisely the same as the flat-foot trot except for accent. It is done with a definite stomp, accomplished by stamping the feet down, not with the legs, but by dropping the weight of the body on them. The steps are short, the feet are directly under the body. It is an up-and-down motion rather than a forward one. The body shakes and the shoulders bob a little with each impact. The knees are soft the body fully relaxed, so that there





is absolutely no annoying body jar. While the flat-foot trot is a forward motion, this is an up-and-down one; while that step is light and silent, this is noisy.

As done in the stomp dances, it starts slowly and with gentle stamping, gains in speed and emphasis, and culminates in the double stomp step.

To repeat:

1. Body erect, feet directly underneath
2. Very short steps, feet brought down flat
3. Drop weight of body on feet, taking it on heels
4. Knees soft, legs relaxed, no stamping by means of legs
5. Accent up-and-down, shoulders bobbing for increased emphasis
6. Body fully relaxed, arms hanging naturally

#### DOUBLE STOMP

The feet are brought down flat on each step:

- 1 Jump forward on both feet, side by side
- & Jump forward on both feet, left foot slightly in advance
- 2 Jump forward on both feet, side by side
- & Jump forward on both feet, right foot slightly in advance

This step is included among the trots because it is a natural outgrowth of the stomp step and is often used as a climax for it. It is most effective when a group of dancers do it in unison, creating an interesting up-and-down effect with strong ringing of the ankle bells.

Progress is made slowly, the forward jumps being not more than six inches in length—the movement is an up-and-down one rather than a forward one, with the weight coming down on the heels. The body is completely relaxed and the knees are soft, flexing each time the feet come down. The body is erect except for a relaxed and natural give at the hips when the feet strike. The trunk and shoulders turn naturally to right or left, depending upon which foot is leading.

#### BACK TROT

- 1 Trot forward on left foot, raising right foot high in back
- & Trot forward on right foot, raising left foot high behind

This step is especially typical of the Southwest Indians and is often referred to as the Southwest Trot. It is a running motion with the feet raised high behind, but *the steps are short*, only a few inches of progress being made on each step. The feet are brought down flat, the ball of the foot hitting just a split second before the heel. The knees are kept soft, the body is erect with arms relaxed and hanging naturally.

As in all trots, there are frequent pauses with the foot kept on the floor



for two counts rather than one, and the raised foot held high behind for the extra count.

## FRONT TROT

- 1 Trot forward with left foot, raising right knee high in front
- & Trot forward with right foot, raising left knee high in front

This gives a prancing effect, up and away from the ground, like running in place. The weight is taken on the ball of the foot, both ankles and knees are soft, and all movements light and springy. The steps are very short. The body is kept erect and the arms hang naturally. Pauses should be employed occasionally, keeping the raised knee up for an extra count.

## CROSSED TROT

- 1 Cross left over right, step on ball of left foot, and at the same time swing right foot to right
- & Cross right over left, step on ball of right foot, and at the same time swing left foot to left

Commonplace as it may seem, this step is spectacular. Its chief usefulness is in connection with toe-heel and flat-foot dancing, as a variation, and when so used it adds much flash. The step is done rapidly, the feet crossing on every beat of the drum. There is little forward motion but *much side-ward motion of the legs*. The legs are swung as far across as possible on each step. The knees are hard and stiff, the legs are swung at the hips. The shoulders sway, or rather jerk, from side to side, in keeping with the side-ward leg motion.

The result is a quick sidewise flutter of the legs and a corresponding sidewise jerking of the shoulders. When tossed into the forward, flowing motion of the toe-heel or the free springing of the double toe-heel, these jerky sidewise motions appear accentuated. Four to six steps of it in a series are enough.

## Fear Steps

In the picturesque story dances these scare steps are much employed to show fear and retreat. There are three, often used interchangeably.

## FEAR STEP NO. 1

- 1 Step to left with left toe
- & Step to left with right toe
- 2 Step left with left toe
- & Step to left with right toe

The movement is thus a sidestepping to the left; the steps are reversed if progress to the right is desired. The knees are well-bent throughout.





Since this a fear step used in running away from danger, the dancer keeps the corner of his eye on the object from which he is retreating and holds his hands over his face, palms out, to protect himself from it. The steps are short and fast.

#### FEAR STEP NO. 2

- 1 Cross right over left and step on right toe
- & Step left toe to left, right still crossed
- 2 Step right toe to left
- & Step left toe to left, right still crossed

#### FEAR STEP NO. 3

- 1 Cross right in front of left and step on toe
- & Step to left on left toe, uncrossing
- 2 Cross right in front of left and step on toe
- & Step to left on left toe, uncrossing

#### SQUAW STEP

Stand with the weight on the left foot, the right leg hanging limply and resting gently on the toe.

1. Step forward on the right toe
2. Step flat on the left foot taking the weight on it heavily, at the same time allowing the knee to bend a little so that the body is lowered with a snap

The motion is much like one would make if he had a sore right foot. He limps with the right foot, taking as little weight on it as possible, and stepping heavily on the left.

By stepping on the right toe the body is raised, and then, as the left foot comes down flat, it is lowered suddenly. The left knee bends a little in the process to lower it still farther. The result is a very definite up-and-down shaking motion which quivers the body and rattles the tin-tinkles with which the Chippewa woman's dress is decorated, or the bone beads with which the Sioux woman's dress is adorned.

Progress is made forward with the step as described. If the dance calls for sidewise movement, as is so often the case, it is performed in the same way but with the left foot sidestepping to the left, thus making progress to the left.

This is the step used by the women of the Woodland and northern Plains tribes. It is also sometimes used by the men, particularly in the Give-away Dances (Chapter XIV) and in Everybody's Dance (page 225).

Another woman's step is merely to trot forward flat-footed, or in its sidewise version, merely to sidestep to the left. This is usually done by old women who are unable to use the regular step as described.







## Chapter II

### BODY MOVEMENTS AND THE INDIAN MOOD

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COME WITH ME to a little adobe-walled patio in the heart of some ancient Southwest village and sit entranced as fluid bodies flow effortlessly through figure after figure of unfolding dance-drama. Behold the consummate seriousness, yet the utter relaxation; the expressionless faces, yet the vividly expressive bodies. . . .

Come sit with me in some rickety roundhouse on the northern Plains, historic with memories of a glory that was, and absorb from stalwart figures a fresh vitality as they pulsate with full masculine power. Witness the unrestrained freedom, yet the dignified reserve; the conventionalized movements, yet the complete naturalness of motion. . . .

Come join me in some roundhouse tottering with age under Northwoods pines, reverberating with the jingling of a thousand dress-tinkles as women vibrate to the booming drum. Witness their passive calmness, yet their utter seriousness; their sedate footsteps, yet their quivering bodies. . . .

What of the steps these dancers are using over this wide frontier? The steps?—one glance at these pulsating forms reveals that more than “steps” is involved, for no mere movement of feet could create this mood. It is a projection of the entire body—ah, no, for flesh alone could not do it—a projection of the entire being, spirit as well as flesh.

It becomes clear that behind the visible dancing movements is a depth of meaning, a seriousness of purpose, a sense of responsibility, often a reverence, that comes only from deep concern for the purpose for which the ceremony is danced. Those of us who are foreign to Indian culture and possess no such understanding, find it difficult to cope with those intangibles of feeling and mood in our dancing, but the bodily movements are capable of analysis and reproduction. And in the study of these movements something of the feeling should evolve.

#### The Angular Characteristic

The dancing movements of the Indian are characterized by angles. Seldom is the arm thrown out to its full extent, or the fingers fully extended to flatten the hand, as is often seen in some forms of our present-day dancing. Neither is the leg kicked out straight with pointed toe. When on oc-





casation the leg is fully extended the foot usually remains turned up at an angle. Should the body rise fully erect so as to straighten the hips, the arms remain bent at distinct angles, and should the arm be thrown overhead it is with a crook at the elbow. Thus it is with all parts of the body. Herein rests the explanation of the feeling of reserve, of unreleased power, that one gets in watching an Indian dance, even when exerting himself fully. Angles seem to hold the power in. To extend the arm and hand fully is as if to let all force escape.

This angular characteristic of the extremities must be maintained if a true Indian movement is to be achieved. The angles need not be sharp or extreme but their presence is essential. One of the extremities may be extended fully when occasion demands, but such is compensated for elsewhere, so that the general aspect of the body is angular.

### Handling the Arms

The function of the arms is to move in harmony with the general body movement to bring it out more fully; they are never relied upon to create the dance by themselves. If the arm motions are appropriate and nicely done they accentuate, point up, and illuminate the body movement, whatever its nature.

**ARMS AT SIDES.**—The commonest use of the arms among the Indians is merely to allow them to hang naturally at the sides, fully relaxed. The only movements they make are the reflex motions that follow naturally upon the foot and body action. The hands, too, are kept open and hang naturally. When allowed to hang in this way the arms contribute to the feeling of complete relaxation one often gets in watching some Indians dance. This is always a safe use of the arms, and is better than deliberate but poorly executed flourishes with them. If the arms are inclined to flop about or pump up and down when held at the sides the hands should be lifted in front of the chest as next described.

**HANDS IN FRONT OF CHEST.**—Next to holding the arms at the sides, this is the commonest arm position among the Indians of the northern Woodlands and Plains. It is effective, pleasing and most useful. It is shown at A in Figure 9, with the hands in front of the chest, perhaps separated a few inches and moving in reflex fashion, perhaps with the fingers loosely joined, or perhaps with both hands fingering some small object that is being carried. The elbows hang close to the sides, the arms and hands completely relaxed. Should they be allowed to become tense the muscles of the back will bulge out in strain, the shoulders stiffen and motions become jerky and forced.

While the most characteristic position is that shown at A, the elbows



may be raised so as to stick out at the sides a little farther as in B, or again the hands may be raised near the chin with the elbows extending straight out to the sides as in C. The effect of this latter is seen in the photograph facing page 230. The positions at B and C find only sparing use in certain showy moods; the standard position is that at A.

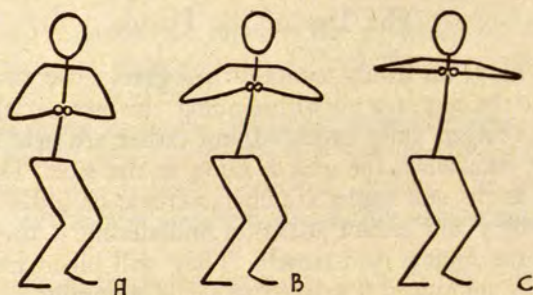


Figure 9. Arm Positions in Front of Chest

This use of the arms gives increased height to the dancer, making him appear taller than he is. Its upward accent is excellent for use with the springing, up-and-away-from-the-ground foot action of the double toe-heel step. Moreover, it is without equal in facilitating a relaxed style. It leads to graceful movement, and serves to cover up arms that otherwise might appear ungainly and to keep under control arms that are inclined to flop about.

**HANDS ON HIPS.**—Place the hands on the flat of the back just in back of the hip bone. The *knuckles* rest against the back with the hand so placed that the fingers point downward. The hands and arms are kept relaxed. One or both hands may be so placed.

This position is more important to the non-Indian dancer than to the Indian: The average Indian keeps his back straight while dancing, even when bending far forward in a low crouch, a feat that seems difficult for others to do, but when the hands are placed on the hips, the effect is to flatten the back and make it appear straighter than it is.

**STRUTTING ARM MOTION.**—This is not a common, and scarcely a typical arm style among the Indians but when it does appear in the story dances and “powwows” it is stunning in its effectiveness. It involves a forward swing of the arms that results from a swaggering shoulder style.

Assume a fully upright position with head high, shoulders back and chest out. In dancing forward swing the shoulders naturally as in walking but exaggerate the motion, swaying them backward and forward with emphasis and with style. This shoulder action throws the arms forward. The arms are held naturally at the sides and then made rigid so as not to flop about, and from this position are swung as far forward as the shoulder





action carries them. The motion originates entirely in the shoulders and not in the arms themselves.

**FLOWING ARM STYLE.**—This motion is related to the weaving body style and will be described later in connection with body movements.

### The Use of the Hands

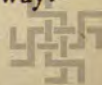
The Indian holds his hands naturally and gives little thought to them. Popular ideas to the contrary notwithstanding, the fists are seldom clenched. Neither are the fingers fully extended, but rather are held in the position they normally take when the arm is hung at the side. The fingers thus create a slight angle, and angles are characteristic of Indian dancing. The hands will be ugly and attract attention undesirably if they are stiff and strained, with the fingers held tensely. They will blend into the dancing movements fully unnoticed if relaxed and held naturally.

There is one hand position, not necessarily Indian, that assists greatly in keeping the hands relaxed and in proper form. This is to bend the middle finger in until it almost touches the palm near the base of the thumb, allowing the other fingers to take the position they naturally fall into when the middle finger is thus bent. If this is learned so that it becomes habitual, a graceful hand will result that is thoroughly in accord with the general Indian tradition, that tradition being a naturally open, relaxed and flexible hand.

**OBJECTS HELD IN THE HANDS.**—It is a great help in dancing to have some small object in the hands—indeed, many Indians do not like to dance unless they are holding something. It gives them something to manipulate and seems to help them to relax. Moreover, an object in the hands often serves to emphasize and give increased spectacle to the arm motion. Eagle-wing fans are commonly used for this purpose, seen in the hands of the dancer in photos facing pages 6 and 23. Other appropriate objects are feathers and dance rattles.

### Body Styles

Let us pick out the most colorful of the feather-bedecked dancers in the ring and see how he handles himself. He dances erect, not at all like the doubled-up, crouching figures we have always seen in the pictures; his body is relaxed, his arms hang quietly with his hands in front of his chest. But wait, now he is bending forward—just a little, not way down, a sort of semi-crouch, his back flat—but only for a few steps when up he comes again, stretching tall. Now he goes down once more, this time way down, the full crouch at last—he stops on the spot and bends way forward, his back parallel to the floor, shaking hard from head to foot. But before we get a good look he straightens again, tall, erect as before and dances on his way.





While he did use the crouch after all, it was only for a quick flourish.

These three body styles, the upright, the semi-crouch and the crouch, together with a fourth called the "weave," require careful attention.

#### THE UPRIGHT POSITION

The mood of the dance does much to determine the details of body style. The upright position changes as the mood changes from the quiet and passive to the dashing and bold.

The relaxed mood in the upright position is the most commonly seen basic style in Indian dancing. This is true not only in the quiet ceremonial dances but also in the dashing "powwow" dances. The brilliant flourishes in the "powwow" dances are used periodically against the background of the relaxed style.

Stand naturally with the upper body in about the same position taken in relaxed walking. Relaxed as they are, the shoulders may droop a little, the head may hang slightly forward, and the body may bend a trifle forward at the waist. The arms may hang at the sides, although the most effective arm position is with the hands in front of the chest (A in Figure 9). All muscles are kept relaxed so as to achieve fluid action. The body pulsates and vibrates to the rhythm of the feet.

As the mood changes to the boastful and challenging, the body style changes accordingly: Stand straight up, shoulders back, head high, chin up, chest thrown out. Dance forward proudly, swaying the body from side to side on each step, and swaggering the shoulders back and forth a little. Throw all of the personality of the body into play, as if to say "Is there a more striking figure present than I am?—if so, let him prove it."

The arms may be placed on the hips so as to throw the chest out farther, or may be held high in front of the chest to give increased emphasis to the shoulder play; again, the strutting arm motion may be used. The swaggering shoulder style described later in the chapter finds its greatest use in this mood, and is the basis of the arm action.

Often the change in the mood from the relaxed style to the boastful and showy is abrupt and startling.

#### THE FULL CROUCH

The full crouch is the climax or extreme of close-to-ground dancing. It is not used as a fundamental movement for all-the-time dancing but as a brief moment of spectacle, a splash of color, most effective when suddenly dropped into from the upright position. The abrupt contrast from way up to way down is much used by the dancing Indian.

No progress is made with the crouch—it is dancing on the spot, involving nothing more in the way of foot work than raising the heels and jarring them down. Go into the full crouch, bending the trunk forward parallel to





the ground, spread the legs well apart, the knees sticking outward a little, as shown in Figure 10. Drop the arms between the legs, with the hands close to the ground, fists closed. Keep the back flat and the shoulders straight.

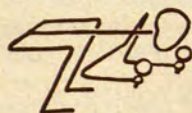


Figure 10. The Full Crouch

In this position shake hard up and down to the drumming, raising the heels and jarring them down. The heels are not raised by the feet alone, but more by an up-and-down motion of the entire body. When done strenuously the whole foot may be lifted off the ground and brought down flat. This action may cause the dancer to move sidewise a little, or more typically around himself in a small circle, but no effort should be made to cover ground.

As the body shakes, the arms join in the motion, the closed fists striking downward on each drumbeat as though pounding at the ground, yet not quite touching it. It is a great help in this dance to hold a rattle in each hand, shaking them down as though striking at the ground with them, going lower and lower, harder and harder, and nearer and nearer the ground. The rattles or fists may be shoved under the knees and out to the side, or one hand may be raised overhead for a few beats by turning the shoulders while the other is kept low.

#### THE SEMI-CROUCH

This very characteristic style of dancing is often found to be a little more difficult than either the upright style or the full crouch because of the position in which it is done.

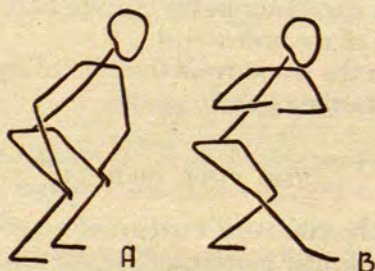


Figure 11. The Semi-crouch

To get into the proper position, squat part way down and put the hands on the knees, assuming the pose of a backfield man in football, as shown in A, Figure 11. When in this position note that the knees are well-bent and that the back is straight and the shoulders back. Take the hands off the



knees and you are in position to dance. The natural thing to do, once the hands are off the knees, is to bend the back and allow the shoulders to droop, thereby getting into a more comfortable position and one that permits the legs to move more easily, but *the back must be kept flat* . . . otherwise the dance loses its character and its Indian style. To accomplish this with less strain, the hands may either be placed on the hips or held high in front of the chest as shown in B, Figure 11, both of which positions shove the shoulders back and make the back appear flat.

In dancing in this position it may be found that a strain is placed on the thighs and back which makes the position uncomfortable and tiring. This may be relieved by swinging the leg out to the side a little as it is carried forward and stepping a little farther forward than usual. It is the *lower leg* only that is swung out . . . the knee is pulled in close to the other leg, and the foot thrown out by a twist of the thigh. The knee is not lifted up as the step is made and the foot is raised no higher than necessary.

There are three factors that contribute to the characteristic style: *First*, is the side swing of the legs, a movement that is distinctive and different. *Second*, is a sinewy, weaving motion of the back, achieved by keeping the back flexible and allowing the rump to swing from side to side, a natural movement arising from throwing the lower leg out to the side. *Third*, is a rolling of the shoulders in keeping with the willowy movement of the body, accomplished by grasping the hands firmly together in front of the chest and rolling first one shoulder and then the other, a movement that again seems to arise naturally from the foot and hip action. The protruding elbows accentuate this shoulder roll.

### THE WEAVE

This movement consists of a graceful forward dip of the body in which the trunk moves around in a circular course. It is a recommended body style for advanced dancers.

To get the idea, do it while standing still in four counts:

- and 1 Shove hips to left and lean shoulders to right and back, chest out
- and 2 Shove hips to right and lean shoulders to left and back, chest out
- and 3 Bend forward to left
- and 4 Bend forward to right

The body flows along evenly and smoothly from one position to another. When this can be done add the foot action with the toe-heel step by stepping forward with the left foot on 1, the right foot on 2, etc. The body thus completes the circular movement on four steps.

The arm motions must now be coordinated with the body action. Hold the hands loosely in front of the stomach with the elbows close into the





sides. As the shoulders lean to the right on 1 turn the right forearm forward with the palm up, keeping elbow and upper arm stationary. As the shoulders lean to the left on 2 the left arm makes a corresponding motion, while the right is pulled back to position. On 3 the right arm is extended forward from the shoulder with the palm of the hand up, the shoulder moving forward also; the arm is not extended fully but remains with a slight bend at the elbow. The elbow is not projected out to the side but moves forward in the same plane. On 4 the left arm makes the corresponding motion as the right is withdrawn. Throughout, the hand remains in a naturally relaxed position. The tempo of the arm motion is determined by that of the body movement with which it is blended as an integral and wholly natural part.

The chief characteristic of this body style is its graceful flowing movement, around and around, with the arms moving in complete harmony with the trunk. There are no jerks, no sudden movements to disturb the even, fluid, weaving motion. It is best achieved by practicing the trunk and arm movements in front of a mirror while standing still.

### Shoulder Movements

One of the chief sources of dancing style is in the handling of the shoulders. There are several movements, each producing a different aesthetic effect upon the observer.

**SWAGGERING THE SHOULDERS.**—In normal walking the shoulders sway backwards and forwards a little. It is this movement when exaggerated that makes the shoulder swagger. The left shoulder is swung forward as the left foot advances and the right shoulder as the right foot steps. The action of the toe-heel step facilitates this movement. Stand erect with head high and chest out. As the left toe is placed forward swing the left shoulder far forward so that the chest faces to the right oblique, then as the heel is dropped snap the left shoulder back and the right forward, twisting the body correspondingly and carrying the right leg forward. It is a twist of the spine, of course, that moves the shoulders back and forth, rotating the entire upper part of the body. If done with zest and spirit the shoulders swagger so as to give to the toe-heel movement an entirely different appearance than when relaxed shoulders are used.

There are several ways this is used in the proud, boastful, challenging moods of the story dances and powwows. *First*, is to swing the shoulders on *every step* as described, with the hands either on the hips or held high in front of the chest (B or C in Figure 9). *Second*, is to hold the left shoulder forward for *two steps*, then the right forward for two steps. This produces a different effect. *Third*, is to hold each shoulder forward for *several steps*, before changing. To accomplish this, turn the left shoulder forward, place the hands on the hips, or in front of the chest with the elbows extending out in the same plane as the shoulders, hold the head



high and turn it to the left in line with the shoulders, and look down at the ground behind the left shoulder with the eyes. The position of the head and arms is seen in the photograph facing page 230. In this dramatic pose keep the left shoulder forward for six to eight steps, then reverse the directions with the right leading.

**DIPPING THE SHOULDERS.**—In this the shoulders are dipped *sideways* instead of being swung backward and forward. They are dipped to the left as the left foot advances and to the right as the right foot steps, accomplished by bending the body from side to side so as to tilt the shoulders. At the same time the neck is relaxed and the head thrown from side to side. The accent of the toe-heel step facilitates the movements, the shoulders and head going down with a snap as the heel is dropped. This is a simple yet very pleasing maneuver.

**ROLLING THE SHOULDERS.**—This movement is similar to the swagger except that the shoulders are rolled instead of jerked back and forth. Each shoulder makes a little circular motion, moving forward as the corresponding foot advances and backward as the other foot steps. It takes a limber, willowy dancer to do it well. Between this and the swagger, the movement should be selected that best fits the particular dancer.

**SHAKING THE SHOULDERS.**—The shaking of the shoulders is a most spectacular gesture and is used by many dancers as a finale. To exit from the dance arena or the stage with shoulders rippling and aquiver is to say farewell to the audience in the most glamorous of Indian fashions. It is purely a shoulder action and should not be confused with muscle dancing.

There are two movements—shaking the shoulders up and down, and shaking them back and forth. The first is the easier: Stand in front of a mirror and practice the shoulder part only, shaking the shoulders up and down, up on the soft beat of the drum, and down on the hard beat. Hold the hands relaxed at the sides. When this can be done easily, try it while dancing, shaking the shoulders up and down once on each toe-heel step. The shoulder shaking should be emphatic and conspicuous, and in perfect rhythm with the feet.

Having accomplished this, double the tempo with the shoulders and make *two* shakes to each step, that is, one on *each beat* of the drum. This calls for fast shaking and is a trick that is not bought cheaply if done in good dancing form.

The forward-and-backward shaking should be practiced in the same way. Shake the shoulders back and forth once on each step, and when this can be done, twice on each step. This is a *shaking* of the shoulders and not an emphatic twist of the whole spine. A limber body is required to do it well.

These two shoulder-shaking methods are often used in the same dance,





employing the up-and-down motion first and finishing with the back-and-forth one.

### Head Action

In informal, go-as-you-please dancing, there is much nodding of the head to the rhythm. This is not done on every step but employed occasionally, perhaps on every fourth step—a sudden, quick nod of the head, often accompanied by a flash of the eyes. It is remarkably effective, attracting attention to the dancer and seeming to make his personality radiate.

Another use of the head is in connection with the shoulder shaking just described, a movement of the head that synchronizes with the shoulder action. In shaking the shoulders up and down the head also nods up and down, and in shaking the shoulders back and forward the head shakes sideways. A good dancer can mix his head and shoulder movements, shaking his head up and down when his shoulders go back and forth, and his head sideways when his shoulders go up and down. Three separate rhythmic motions are thus achieved, one with feet, one with shoulders, and one with head.

### Facial Expression

Immobile and expressionless—such is the typical face in the Indian way of dancing. There are exceptions to all rules, and the exceptions will be noted, but by and large, the dancer's disinterested face shows no sign of emotion within or distraction without. He is seemingly oblivious to his surroundings and unaware of his audience. Relying on his body action to portray his mood, his face remains wholly natural, without scowl or smile, neither stern nor pleasant—immobile, composed, relaxed, natural.

More often than not, the eyes look downward toward the ground. Even when the head is held high and the chin up, the eyes turn downward, displaying the eyelids rather than the eyes themselves. This is effective and dramatic—especially so in those head-high, proud poses. We see it in the pictures of the dancers, facing pages 22, 70 and 86. The eyes are not closed in these pictures but are turned downward as if to look at the ground near the dancer's feet. To repeat, more often than not the eyes are used in this way, but again they look up, round and full and large, perhaps even flashing, but they do not look at anything in particular, seeming to focus in the distance.

The mouth is closed and expressionless, not turned downward in a scowl nor upward in a smile, not drawn nor twisted out of shape by the physical efforts of dancing. Hardest for the inexperienced to do is not to reflect his feelings in his face, be he frightened or worried, or tired or winded, and not to allow his face to become distorted as he makes the strenuous full-bodied effort of the dance.

Exceptions there are as already stated: Sometimes the dancer smiles, as



for example in the "powwow" dancing of the jovial, good-natured Chipewas, or of their neighbors to the westward, the Sioux. But it is not the smile of the vaudeville actor, playing for favor and applause; the mouth opens a little, its corners turn up, the eyes sparkle, and the face takes on a pleasant expression, all of which is held throughout the dance and does not change or vary in degree. But, more often than not, these same people dance with an immobile face. Again, they may look directly at the crowd, or at someone in the crowd, playing upon him with all of the business described under "Playing on an Object"... nodding the head, waving the hand, flashing the eyes, smiling. But again, and more typically, these same dancers do not do this.

Story acting in the story dances involves a different situation. Here the dancer's eyes are employed as the plot dictates, looking for tracks, following the enemy, etc., but his face does not reflect his emotion except for an occasional startled look. The story is told primarily by body action.

### The Looking Pose

Perhaps the commonest pose in which Indians are depicted in pictures is with the hand stiffly placed across the eyes to shade them from the sun. Suffice it to say this is not the way the dancing Indian does it! He puts his *forearm* across his forehead with the hand hanging down at the side of his head, relaxed and natural, as indicated in Figure 12. He holds it there for three or four steps, then drops it, later to raise it again; he raises one arm thus and then the other. He may hold his arm up for about ten or twelve steps, jerking his body from side to side to change the angle at which he looks, or jerking his arm back and forth to shade his eyes from different angles.

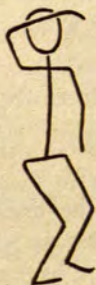


Figure 12. The Looking Pose

Were he to hold his *hand* over his eyes, the position would be stiff and the effect would not carry. The arm position is bold and obvious, and it harmonizes with general body action. It allows the hand to hang down at an angle, and as said before, angles are characteristic of Indian dancing.

This is one of the most frequently used of all dance gestures. It is employed constantly in story dances.





### Playing on an Object

Let us suppose that the object in question is a spear stuck in the ground and that the routine calls for the dancer to discover it and pick it up. It could well be any other object. The dancer stops suddenly as he sees the spear, one heel only tapping to the drumming. He fixes his eyes on it as if to make sure of its identity, he leans down a little and looks, then rises up and looks again. He jerks his head from side to side, as if to get a better view. Then he turns sidewise to it and dances back and forth, going about six feet in each direction, always with his eyes focused on it, shading his eyes with his arm. He makes perhaps three such sidewise trips, then swoops up to it, makes a pass at it as if to pick it up, turns and runs away from it with the fear step (page 39), looking back at it over his shoulder. He repeats this twice, picking up the spear on the third time.

On these approaches to the object there is important arm action: He raises his right hand to his right shoulder, palm toward the shoulder, hand relaxed. As he starts forward he throws his arm forward full-length toward the object, palm up. He follows this with a similar motion with the left arm, continuing thus, first one arm and then the other, throwing once on each step. The motion of the arm is bold and strong, but the hand stays relaxed, the fingers bent naturally.

PLAYING ON THE CROWD.—Not often does our Indian dancer take notice of his audience for dancing effect, but when he does he is dramatic, sending creepy feelings up the spine, conjuring up memories of childhood story days "when the Indians were after you." The procedure is exactly as in playing on an object—the sudden stop, the long look, the sidewise dancing, with much shading of the eyes with the arm, and finally a swoop forward terminated by fear-stepping away again.

### Moments of Spectacle

Reference has already been made to the tendency of the Indian to alternate periods of quiet movement with spasms of dashing vigor and brilliant action. This protects him from the exertion of long-continued extreme effort and at the same time makes his colorful flourishes seem still more spectacular by contrast to the quiet background.

In planning a dance routine the steps should be so arranged that the dance will take on ever-increasing interest, gaining force and momentum, building up to higher and higher pitches of dramatic appeal. This crescendo, however, is not constant and unrelenting, but rather develops in waves, with a lull or drop down between, each wave reaching a higher level than the proceeding. The dancer accepts a basic step or movement which he carries on throughout the dance, and intermittently inserts moments of spectacle in which dramatic interest wells up to a higher level.





These moments of spectacle, for the most part, are achieved by *changes in movement*, by *changes in tempo*, and by the use of *contrasting positions*.

#### THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF CHANGES IN MOVEMENT

A dance should move along in the same mood and with the same foot movement and body style until the audience is fully in the swing of it and has absorbed its aesthetic feel. Then the movement should change momentarily to a different but related one. That is the purpose of the variations of the basic steps. If the basic step is the toe-heel, for example, it is pointed up with one of its many amplifications—with the heel taps, the glides or the kick pivots, for example,—after which the original step is employed again, later to be enlivened by other variations. While these changes in movement come suddenly the transitions must be smooth and unforced, and each new movement must seem somehow to belong.

#### THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF CHANGES IN TEMPO

A sudden change in tempo is always dramatically effective. A favorite device is to start the dance with slow tempo, stepping on every other beat of the drum, then suddenly and without warning, to burst into double time, stepping on every beat of the drum. This explosion of power and speed is startling and often breath-taking. But if its full dramatic value is to be brought out, there must also be a corresponding contrast in *mood*. During the slow time the dancer flows gracefully along without a semblance of concern, in disinterested mood and wholly relaxed, and then with the sudden change of tempo he abruptly bursts into strong action, aggressive, alert, dashing.

If it is a solo, the drummer sets his time to that desired by the dancer, beating very slowly on the start and changing suddenly to fast time on a prearranged signal. The booming drum voice suddenly increasing in volume and tempo, also adds to the startling effect of the contrast.

#### THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF CONTRASTING POSITIONS

Second only to "power explosiveness," and usually affiliated with it, is a sudden change in body position. There are several types of these contrasts. Some typical ones follow.

**FROM THE UPRIGHT POSITION TO THE CROUCH.**—Dancing preferably with the double toe-heel step and fully relaxed in the upright position, the dancer drops abruptly into the full crouch with his hands reaching for the earth, shaking his whole body and jarring his heels, as described on page 46. A moment of this and he suddenly straightens to full height again, later to renew the crouch. The utter contrast between the leaping, skyward, aspir-





ing mood of the upright style, and the downward, earthy accent of the full crouch, is arresting and has all of the qualities of elemental appeal.

**WITH ONE LEG IN AIR.**—In the playful mood of “powwow” dancing, the Plains Indians often bend abruptly forward and place the left hand on the ground, raise the right leg out behind and kick it backward to ring the ankle bells to the rhythm. About eight kicks is the usual number before rising to full height again.

**WITH ONE KNEE ON THE GROUND.**—Another popular Indian maneuver of the same type is suddenly to drop to one knee. From the upright position drop to a semi-crouch for a moment of shaking and heel jarring, then drop to the right knee, hitting it on the ground on the drumbeat and coming up immediately, taking three counts to rise, shaking the body hard on each count. Then continue to dance in the upright position.

**PARALLEL TO THE GROUND.**—Still more dramatic is this “prostrate” position, in which the leg is stretched far out behind, with the body as near to the ground as it can get, as shown in Figure 13. The weight is on the left leg and the left shoulder on the left knee. If on the stage turn the right side to the

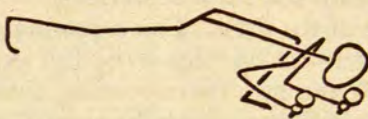


Figure 13. Parallel-to-ground Position

audience. Drop abruptly into this position, jar the left heel to the rhythm for four counts, then shake the whole body up and down for four counts with much action of arms and shoulders. Stop suddenly and turn the head to the right as if something attracted attention there, freeze and look for eight counts; then slowly rise on the left leg, taking four counts to it, scurry to the left with the fear step for a few steps, eyes still on the same spot, then break into the dance as usual.

**USING THE TOE-HEEL-TAP-HEEL.**—From the upright position bend far forward into a crouch and dance the toe-heel-tap-heel (page 28) with its kicking of the leg far out behind. After about six steps of it done strenuously, straighten up again. Sometimes this is terminated by dropping the knee to the ground as the leg is extended out behind.

**USING THE FLAT-FOOT STI-YU.**—From the upright position drop into a crouch and dance the Sti-yu in the flat-foot style (page 35), bringing the feet down emphatically with earthy accent and much pounding. A brief flash only, then straightened again.



### Personalized Finales

Some Indians have an individual and distinctive way of ending a dance, a sort of personalized sign, a rhythmic signature. Knowing when the dance will end, they stop precisely on the final drumbeat, each with his own little flourish. With no song to indicate the ending, a louder beat of the drum can be used as a signal that in eight counts the drumming will stop. Each dancer then starts to write his signature in rhythm.

Typical movements are to drop to a crouch and rise suddenly on the last beat with one hand held in front of the face; to kick the right leg across in front of the left knee on the last beat and hold it there; to use a backward glide and stop with an emphatic stomp on the last beat. But since it is a personal sign, each must originate his own. The final position is always held for a moment after the drumming ceases.

### Acting the Story Dances

The dancing Indian relates his story in a wholly natural and realistic manner within the limitations of his style of dancing, a forthright re-enactment of the exploit in rhythmic movement. The action of the story, its moods and its emotions are portrayed primarily by *body action*, with little if any support from facial expression. The face is animated, the eyes follow the action, sharp and alert, occasionally a startled look may come over the face momentarily, but to place reliance on the face for the portrayal of emotion, be it fear, anger or grief, is not in the Indian manner.

Much is told by changes in tempo. As mood changes the tempo of action changes, often abruptly. Discouraged, the dancer moves slowly; seeking the enemy, he creeps stealthily; full of the lust of battle, he dashes swiftly. The drumming for a solo may thus change in tempo and volume many times.

Most of the story dances have to do with fighting and hunting. The fighter on the warpath looks intently as he dances along, pushing the bushes aside with his hands, shading his eyes with his arm. Spotting the enemy he drops to the ground and freezes, then stealthily creeps up on him, rises cautiously, lifts his bow and shoots. The hunter seeking the deer studies the ground for tracks, pointing to them, pausing and studying them. Be it the buffalo he is seeking, he studies the distance, searching the plains for the herds, shading his eyes as he looks.

So goes the story dance. Here are the methods of depicting the various situations that arise:

**PUSHING ASIDE THE BUSHES.**—Hold the arms out in front at shoulder height, not fully extended but with a slightly bent elbow, palms of the hands turned outward. Dance forward, shoving first one hand out as if to push the bushes aside, then the other, continuing thus, alternating with one arm





motion to each step. The hand moves out to the side about a foot and stops abruptly on the drumbeat.

**LOOKING INTO THE DISTANCE.**—Use the looking pose, with the arm over the eyes as described on page 51.

**POINTING.**—If moving toward the object at which you are pointing, extend the arm and point toward it, moving the hand back and forward, back and forward, pointing and pointing, emphatically. Make one forward motion of the pointing hand on each step.

If pointing toward an object that would be frightened by any movement, such as an animal or an enemy, freeze and point with the arm fully extended, holding it motionless.

**FREEZING.**—Drop to the ground in a full squat on the left leg, the buttocks sitting on the left heel, and extend the right leg full-length in front, pointing it toward the object that has startled you, sole of the right foot flat to the ground. Drop the left hand to the ground to steady yourself if necessary, and point the right arm full-length toward the object. The head and eyes are fixed on the object. Remain motionless in this position.

**SHOOTING.**—In many dances a freeze is followed by a shot. Hold the freeze just described long enough to create the dramatic effect (usually it is not held long enough), then move slowly forward, transferring the weight to the right foot, and rise cautiously to full height, placing the feet in a staunch stance. Raise the left hand with its imaginary bow, reach the right hand over the right shoulder and pull an imaginary arrow out of the quiver, place it in the bow and slowly pull the string. As you release the arrow, zip the right hand forward and clap it against the palm of the left as it passes. The shooting must be carefully timed so as to provide the necessary pauses for dramatic effect. The count is as follows, each count representing a loud and soft beat (1-&, 2-&, etc.):

4 counts—raise bow with left hand

4 counts—pull arrow from quiver

4 counts—put arrow in bowstring

8 counts—pull bowstring and aim

1 count—shoot, throwing right hand forward and clapping it against left

In shooting on the run, as in charging an enemy, dance forward with the left hand extended to hold the bow up in shooting position and keep pulling the bowstring with the right hand, shooting and shooting as rapidly as possible as you advance. On each shot the right hand is thrown forward, and clapped against the left.

**CREEPING UP ON THE ENEMY.**—Drop to the ground and freeze first, then creep forward on all fours in natural fashion, placing the hands on the



ground for support. It is not necessary nor wise to try to jar the heel down on every beat of the drum when moving on all fours.

RETREATING.—In retreating use the fear steps described on page 39.

LOOKING FOR TRACKS.—Dance along with the eyes fixed on the ground, slowing up when the tracks get hot, now and then holding the hand out flat with the palm down to indicate caution; stop and bend forward to look, keeping the heel tapping to the drumming, and pointing to the tracks with the hand. Stop and squat down at times to study the track . . . feel of it with the fingers . . . pick up a leaf and toss it aside . . . look ahead to see where the track goes and point in the direction. Toss an imaginary leaf in the air to estimate the wind.





# PART III

## DANCES





## Chapter III

### DANCES OF THE POWWOW TYPE

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AS THE TERM is here used, a powwow is a dance of celebration, a festive dance of solid fun participated in for the pure joy of dancing.

It has two characteristics: first, the movements are bold, strong, vigorous; and second, each dancer is a law unto himself, dancing as he chooses and following no hampering ritual, and with no story to tell. To dance in powwow fashion is to dance vigorously, lustily, usually with the characteristic toe-heel and flat-foot movements.

This use of the term is far from universal. Many present-day Indian tribes regarded the word as foreign to them and do not use it in connection with their dancing. On the southern Plains, for example, this type of dance is called a war dance. That term, however, is not sufficiently descriptive for a generalized type of dancing such as this which was not always used in celebration of war. In the popular parlance of today, of course, any Indian dance or gathering is apt to be called a powwow. The word itself is of Algonquian origin and in its ancient meaning referred specifically to certain medicine-men ceremonies accompanied by noisy dancing. But in recent years the Woodland Indians, especially of the Great Lakes area, have referred to the type of dance here described as a powwow, and to the style of dancing employed as powwow dancing; moreover an evening of such dances is spoken of collectively as a powwow. Of the various terms that might be used in this connection, that of *powwow* has been selected as the most expressive.

Powwows are of particular interest and importance. They are among the most useful of dances in building programs for the entertainment of audiences. Dashing and noisy, they make the best of climaxes or peaks of action.

In this chapter are found not only the true powwows but other dances of the powwow type. From our standpoint, dances are best classified as to the *use* that can be made of them in dance programs. Here, therefore, are the dances that serve the powwow purpose of spectacular climaxes of color—rousing numbers all, replete with full-bodied action, loud in the ringing of bells, in which the interest centers in the dancing itself instead of in any ritual or story. In Chapter V are equally vigorous and colorful dances that serve the same purpose but which depict a story.

In the parlance of dancers these dances are often referred to as “dancing





numbers," so called because they permit full, unreserved expression and the use of the vigorous steps, as contrasted to the ritualistic numbers with their routinized and restricted movements.

One and all, the dances in this chapter are masculine in movement, spirit and mood. They are better suited for men than women. In later chapters are those more appropriate for women.

## The Powwow

This is the standard powwow, a dance in itself and the foundation of the other dances in this chapter. Given a group of dancers well-schooled in toe-heel or flat-foot dancing, it is the simplest of all dances to stage, and yet is unexcelled in the wild, free, primitive atmosphere it creates.

By whatever name it may be called, and with minor variations, the dance is well-nigh universal. The particular form here described is adopted from the Lake Superior Chippewas. In Chapter XIV, "The Give-Away Dance," the original setting and routine of the dance is described.

### THE DANCE

The drumming is in two-time, accented *loud-soft*, counted *one-and, two-and*, etc. The tempo is medium-fast to fast. The steps are the toe-heel and the double toe-heel, or if preferred, the flat-foot. All of the variations, glides, kicks and pivots are in order.

At the first beat of the drum the dancers dash in and break into the dance. Each dances independently, going in any direction he chooses. They dance boldly, vigorously, employing their most brilliant style, filling the ring with leaping bodies. The drum voice booms, the bells ring loudly, brown limbs lift and fall, willowy bodies leap and weave—the place becomes filled with primitive abandon. With no song to terminate it, the ending is left to the judgment of the drummer. With a sharply accented beat he indicates that in eight counts the drumming will cease. The dancers stop on the final beat, each with his own little flourish, turn toward the exit and start walking out, shouting "Ho, ho" or "Hey, hey," loudly. The drum starts again and instantly they whirl back into the dance for a brief moment of "encore." The drum stops as before and they walk out the exit shouting.

This little "encore" on the end is an interesting flourish. As the Chippewas do it it is short, from 16 to 32 drumbeats (see Chapter XIV, "The Give-Away Dance"). When the powwow is used in a dancing entertainment two such "encores" are usually indicated, sometimes three, depending on the judgment of the director at the drum, and each continues as long as the drummer sees fit. The dancers never know if an "encore" is coming, and so start walking out with deep-voiced shouts when the drum stops, ready to whirl back should it strike up again.





The stimulation of the Powwow sometimes causes beginning dancers to become overzealous and lacking in restraint, exceeding the point of graceful movement. This may be forestalled by dividing the dancers into two groups depending upon ability, limiting those of the lesser group to specified steps and movements within their ability, while the better dancers are instructed to dance with full abandon, adding the color and spectacle that is the Powwow.

An interesting variation in line with good showmanship is to have the lesser dancers only enter at the beginning and dance for a moment or two in conservative style, occupying the spotlight all by themselves, then at a prearranged signal, to have the better dancers dash in with a whoop and join the dancing.

### Spot Powwow

A glorified form of the powwow, this dance has the unique advantage of presenting all dancers together, yet featuring outstanding performers in solo.

If an Indian powwow is studied carefully with a view to determining what is going on, it will be found that two or three of the dancers are dancing brilliantly and with all spectacle, while the remainder are dancing very quietly, perhaps doing little more than marking time or jarring their heels to the drumming. Presently two or three of the latter leap forward in dashing style while the first ones join the ranks of those moving quietly. Later still others replace these. This serves two useful purposes—it gives each a chance to feature his dancing at its most colorful best, and it gives everyone a rest, protecting against the exertion of constant full-bodied dancing.

The following dance is therefore true to the Indian pattern, departing from it only in the formality with which the leading dancers are presented, a device necessary for adequately staging the dance.

These spot powwows are often called *challenge* powwows, since the dancers attempt to outdance each other.

### THE DANCE

The drumming is in accented two-time, medium-fast to fast. The style of dancing is as in the Powwow.

The four best dancers are selected for the solos or "spots." These are referred to as lead dancers or spot dancers.

As the drumming starts, all dancers except the four leads enter and dance the powwow as already described. A moment of this and the drum hits four accented beats, at which the dancers fade back to the edge of the ring as indicated in Figure 14, and mark time. Instantly the drum picks up its rhythm again and in come the *four lead dancers*, prancing and strutting. They dance around the ring and take the four positions marked in Figure





14. These dancers are arranged in order of ability, Number 4 being the best, Number 3 the next best, etc.

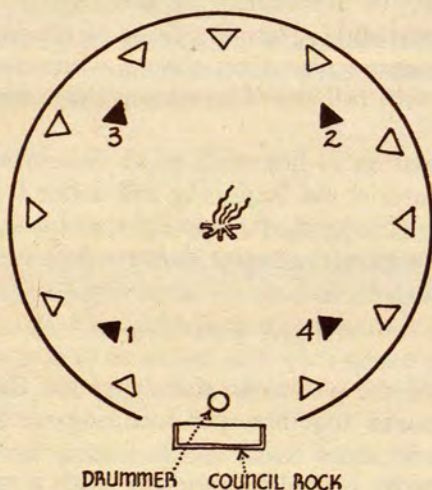


Figure 14. Diagram for the Spot Powwow

As they pull into position the drum hits four accented beats and *Number 1* dances in *solo*, the other three leads marking time by jarring their heels to ring their bells. Number 1 circles the ring with his best dancing skill, bringing into play his fanciest steps in competition with the other three who will follow him. His circuit completed, he glides back into his position, the drum signalling as he does so, and *Number 2* leaps forth in *solo*, circling the ring. As he returns to position the drum signals again and *Numbers 1 and 2* dance in *duet*: each dances on his own side of the ring, his attention fixed on the other, looking at him, shading his eyes at times, each doing his best to outdance the other.

At the drum signal they return to position and *Number 3* dances in *solo*, then *Number 4* in *solo*. Then *Numbers 3 and 4* dance in *duet*.

As they finish, *all four* of the lead dancers unite in a brilliant display, which continues until the drummer sees fit to terminate it with four accented beats, whereupon *everyone* in the ring breaks into a vigorous finale, those standing around the edges joining with the leads, filling the ring with leaping bodies. The dance is terminated with the usual powwow "encores" and shouting as already described.

Following is a simple outline:

1. Group dancers enter in powwow and at signal withdraw to edge, marking time.
2. Four lead dancers enter, circle ring and take positions
3. No. 1 in solo
4. No. 2 in solo





5. Nos. 1 and 2 in duet
6. No. 3 in solo
7. No. 4 in solo
8. Nos. 3 and 4 in duet
9. Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 in powwow
10. Entire ensemble in powwow

SPOT POWWOW VARIATIONS.—An interesting variation of the Spot Powwow introduces the lead dancers in a different way: When the main group of dancers draw back to the edge of the ring, Number 1 enters and circles the ring in his solo, taking his usual position when he has finished. Then Number 2 enters in solo, then 3, and 4. After Number 4 has finished and is in place Numbers 1 and 2 dance in duet, then 3 and 4 in duet, then all four dance together, and the dance finishes as usual.

If there are *eight* lead dancers available, an excellent arrangement is to use the regular Spot Powwow as described with the four *lesser* lead dancers taking the spots. When they finish their routines of solos and duets, all four of them dance together. Then the remaining four lead dancers are brought in *one at a time* in solo, taking positions in between the first four. When all four are in position the usual *duet* routine follows, then all four of them dance together. This finished, all eight of the lead dancers dance, and then the entire group joins in the finale.

### Burning Torch Powwow

The use of fire is potent elemental stagecraft. The truth of it was learned by those earliest Atlantic settlers who saw the dance “rattles” in the hands of red-brown dancers suddenly turn into flaming torches, setting the woods ablaze with a brilliance that transformed graceful dancers into leaping demons. They learned it anew when, unbelievably, they saw the hoop in which a willowy form was dancing burst into flame and yet he danced within it still. Far across the country, desert travelers also learned the truth of it as Navajo Fire Dancers leaped in and on the fire as though no flame were there.

The Torch Powwow is still a breath-taking spectacle. The passing of the centuries since first the white man saw it among the Iroquois has not dimmed its brilliance.

### PROPERTIES

Four torches are needed. These are made on green sticks 15 inches long and slightly thicker than a broomstick, from which the bark has been peeled. Around the ends wrap strips of burlap of varying widths, starting with wide strips and then using progressively narrower ones until a round ball has been created four inches in diameter. Drive a nail through the burlap into the stick so that there is no possibility of the ball coming off.





Then wrap a piece of white cloth over the ball and wire it. Do not use string—it burns. Four hours before the dance the torches should be set upright in a pan containing enough kerosene so that the ball of cloth is half-submerged. Leave in the kerosene until a half-hour before the time for the dance, then remove and set on the ground with the handles of the torches extending up. The excess kerosene will drip off so that the torches can be held in the hand without danger of kerosene running down the handle.

The torches are made to appear as much like dance rattles as possible in order that the spectators will not recognize them as torches, or will not be aware that there is any probability of their being used as such.

The dance is, of course, suitable only for the outdoor dancing ring. A bucket of water should be placed outside the exit to extinguish the torches at the end.

#### THE DANCE

The dance follows the routine of the Spot Powwow just described—is, indeed, the Spot Powwow with the added use of burning torches in the finale.

The main group of dancers enter in powwow and draw off to the edge of the ring, then the four lead dancers enter, each carrying his torch. They perform their routines of solos and duets as described. When the last two have completed their duet, all four dance together, each remaining near his own position. At a signal from the drum they swoop up to the fire and throw their arms holding the torches high above it in dramatic pose. This is accomplished in 12 steps after the drum signal, the dancers drawing back near the edge of the ring for 8 counts, then dashing up to the fire, reaching it and stopping on the 12th count. The drumming gains in volume throughout and stops with an explosive boom on the 12th count. They stand dramatically, chest out and head up, looking up at the torches held together at full arm's length. This position is held for the equivalent of four counts, when the drumming starts again and they break into another dance. At the next signal given in the same way, they repeat the advance to the fire but this time *hold their torches down and into the flame*.

The torches ablaze, the drum picks up in rapid tempo and *all dancers* in the ring leap forth in powwow. The torchbearers dance near the fire with torches high overhead, whirling them about in small circles. The flaming torches set the ring ablaze, the brilliance seeming more intense against the black background of the night. The dance continues in fullest vigor until the drum signals the finale, at which the torchbearers move over to the side of the ring opposite the Council Rock and form in line facing the exit, the other dancers massing behind them. They dance in place until everyone is in position, then break suddenly and prance swiftly across and exit, war-whooping as they go. Immediately after exiting the torchbearers douse their torches in the bucket of water, thus cutting off the light instantly.





In the hands of mature dancers with good judgment, an added feature of tossing the torches in the air may be used. Practice with unlighted torches will indicate that they can be thrown three or four feet up and caught with safety. The Burning Torch Powwow is replete with beauty and pleasing spectacle without the use of such stunts as this, however.

**BURNING HOOP DANCE.**—If a hoop dancer is available, the Burning Hoop Dance as described on page 214 will make an excellent addition to the Torch Powwow. After the four torchbearers light their torches they dance for a moment, then at a signal drop back to their original positions holding their torches overhead. At this point the hoop dancer enters, dances in his unlighted hoop for a moment, holds the hoop in the fire to light it, then dances in the blazing hoop. He then holds the blazing hoop overhead and circles the ring, whereupon the entire group break into the powwow and the dance is concluded as described.

### Chippewa Pipe Dance

The Pipe Dance is a challenge dance. It is such among the far-flung tribes of both the Woodlands and the northern Plains. To confront one with a pipe during a dance is to invite him to dance—more, to *challenge* him to outdance the others.

Many are the ways in which a man can be challenged to dance: to step on his feet as he sits there watching, or to kick his leg as you dance past him is a time-honored Chippewa method of requesting him to take the floor. To grab him by the arm and pull him up is to challenge him, as will be seen presently in the Assiniboin Pipe Dance. But actually to hand him a pipestem or a pipe-tomahawk is the most emphatic of all. The first method can be disregarded if one chooses, but the last two permit no wavering or loss of courage.

### COMEDY IN THE OLDEN DAYS

The cobwebs of time shut out from view those early days when first the Manitou gave the Pipe Dance to man and taught him how to do it. But through the haze one clear fact stands out: it was the happiest of dances, the most joyous of a fun-loving people. So it was when first the white man came among the Chippewas, and even to this day, the time-wrinkled old men smile in pleasant memory when the Pipe Dance is mentioned.

Only one person danced at a time. With a pipestem in one hand and a rattle in the other, he danced with body bent far forward in effort to represent the shape of the pipe bowl. Then he swooped up to another dancer and presented him the pipe and rattle. This challenge no one could refuse and the recipient danced forth and did his level best the better to represent the pipe. A supple body and much dancing skill were needed to dance





well in the low crouch required to simulate the pipe, and the ungainly antics of many an awkward or overfat brave provided high comedy. To add to his difficulties the drummers repeatedly changed the rhythm and the tempo without warning, and often skipped a few beats at a time when least expected. To fail to dance in harmony with the changing rhythm and the tempo, or to ring one's bells by stepping when the drumming stopped, was high cause for ridicule. Only by sitting in the rear row could a person be sure of not receiving the pipe and to do that was proof of lack of courage.

To this day the Pipe Dance is often staged in its original form but more often the comedy angle of representing the pipe by body actions has given way to plain competition to outdance the others. The young dancing men love this sort of dancing competition. The changing rhythm and tempo still continues, providing added test of dancing ability. And it is no lack of good taste to laugh openly at those who fail to detect the change of time and thus blunder aloud with their bells when they should be silent.

#### THE DANCE

A pipe-tomahawk, or peace pipe, such as that shown in Figure 15 is best for the purpose. In another book, *Woodcraft*, I have described how these can be whittled out of wood so as to answer for show purposes. As a second choice a long pipestem will do, or a scout ax may be used in lieu of the pipe-tomahawk if the handle is wrapped with fur, or a feather or two and some ribbons attached to it as trailers.

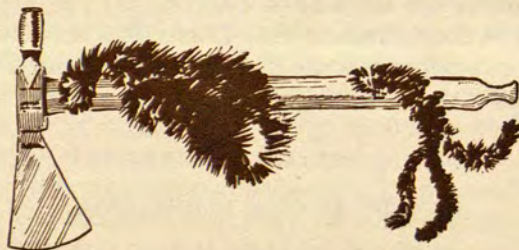


Figure 15. Pipe-tomahawk or Peace Pipe

When used in a public presentation of dances the irregular drumming as done by the Indians is unwise and, indeed, may be wholly devastating in the eyes of those who do not understand its purpose. It would take highly skilled dancers of long experience to do it well, and even they would be placed at an unwarranted disadvantage. The drumming should be steady, medium-fast to fast, in two-time, accented *loud-soft*. Moreover, no effort is made to assume the low crouch in imitation of a pipe, but rather the modern version is used with the dancers free to dance in any style and with any steps they choose.





Six to eight good solo dancers should be selected for the challenge parts. As the drumming starts all other dancers enter and dance in powwow, continuing until a drum signal tells them to back off to the edge of the ring, their eyes fixed on the entrance. Onto the scene come the lead dancers, circling the ring, and taking positions around the edge, just in front of the outer circle of dancers, spaced equidistant from each other as in Figure 16. The pipe is in the hands of the head dancer who takes his position with the others and then immediately dances across the ring and without ceremony sticks it in the ground in front of one of the dancers or, if it is a pipestem, hands it to him, then returns to his position.

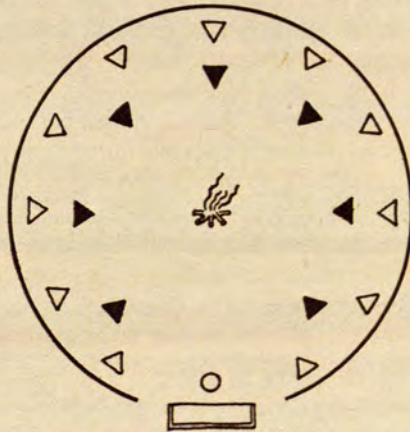


Figure 16. Diagram for the Chippewa Pipe Dance

The recipient of the tomahawk grabs it and begins dancing at his most spectacular best, circling the ring with all style, calling into play the steps best suited to him. The others merely stand and mark time. Having made the circuit he dances up to another and pretends to stick the tomahawk in the ground in front of him but darts away still holding it. He feints giving it to others in this way and finally sticks it in the ground in front of one. This dancer then takes up the dance and in turn gives the tomahawk to a third, etc., until all have danced.

When the last man has finished the tomahawk is stuck in the ground near the fire in front of the Council Rock and all of the lead dancers break into powwow. After a few moments of this the drum hits four louder beats and the outer circle of dancers join in, the entire assemblage dancing in powwow. The dance closes with the usual powwow exit.

**THE USE OF CHANGING RHYTHM.**—Although not recommended for use before an audience, dancing to the changing rhythm and tempo of the Pipe Dance as done by the Chippewas is excellent experience and is much loved by dancers in practice periods. It is good practice in rhythm, good training





in following the drum. It has a competitive angle that is enjoyed. Often a contest is made of it, in which the dancers are eliminated when they miss the rhythm.

### Assiniboin Pipe Dance

Westward on the northern Plains we find the Pipe Dance of the Assiniboin, similar in principle to that of the Chippewas, yet different enough in detail to make it useful as another dance.

Back in the 1830's George Catlin witnessed this dance and described it in the tale of his travels. The dancers gathered around the edges of the dancing area, each sitting on a buffalo robe. By the fire in the center sat the head man of the dance, his long pipe in his hand, smoking. The drumming started and one of the dancers leaped to his feet and began dancing "in the most violent manner imaginable." He went around the circle several times, brandishing his fists in the faces of the seated dancers and making passes at them, at last grabbing one by the hand and pulling him to his feet. The two danced together for a moment, then the first one left the other to dance alone and took his place beside the head man near the fire. The second dancer pulled up a third, and so on until all had danced and were standing around the fire. Then all broke into a dance together, with shouts and yells "that seemed almost to make the earth quake under our feet." \*

No pipe was passed from dancer to dancer as in most Pipe Dances, but the challenge aspect was there nevertheless.

### THE DANCE

The general routine is the same as for the Chippewa Pipe Dance just described.

Select six to eight of the best dancers for the solo parts. All others enter dancing in powwow and at the drum signal draw off to the edge of the ring and sit down. Then the eight solo dancers enter, circle the ring, take positions around the edge just in front of the others and sit down (Figure 16). One of them leaps to his feet and dances around the ring in solo, then prances up to another and shakes his fist in his face and feints at grabbing his arm. He makes such feints at others and finally grabs a dancer's hand and pulls him to his feet. They hook arms and dance together for a moment, then the first leaves and takes his place near the fire, facing out, standing there and marking time by jarring his heels. The second dancer then performs in solo and finally pulls the third up. This continues until all have danced.

When the last man is through, the eight men dance together in vigorous powwow and, at a drum signal, are joined by the entire assembly in finale. The exit is as in the Powwow.

\* George Catlin, *The North American Indians*, Vol. I, p. 55. London: The Author, 1841.







*Photograph by Paul Boris*

**JAMES C. STONE**

Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts





*Photograph by Paul Boris*



**JAMES C. STONE** National  
Centre for the Arts



## Whip Powwow

Of all the invitations to participate in the dancing, that used by the Crow Indians is the strangest—and the most convincing! No subtle stepping on one's foot as among the Chippewas, no pulling one up by his arm, no confronting him with a pipe . . . the Crows got to the point bluntly—they *whipped* the dancers into action. And herein rests the clue to as spectacular and dashing a dance as is to be found in these pages.

## AS IT USED TO BE

Important in the preparations for a dance among the Crows was the appointment of one or two whippers. When the dancers were reluctant to dance, the whippers applied the lash. To hold back long was a sign of courage, for the whippers worked with increasing vehemence. However, should a whipper become overzealous and draw blood he owed his victim a pony. Once in action, if a dancer loafed at the task the stinging bite of the whip inspired him to better effort. In some dances the dancers were required to keep on dancing until a whipper touched them with the whip, thus permitting them to sit down. Should a dancer fail to leave the ring promptly when a dance was over, the whippers took him in hand. As proof of his courage a dancer would sometimes remain dancing after the drumming had ceased and cause the whippers to make repeated efforts of increasing violence to dislodge him.

Such was the pattern of many of the Crow dances. For the whip was characteristic of most of their secular dances, regardless of their nature. It was so in social dances such as the Owl Dance, in the dances of the Hot Dancers, and of other clubs.\*

The dance here described and recommended is a powwow involving the use of the whip.

## THE DANCE

A slender green switch about six feet long is recommended. To its tip and at intervals of every foot throughout its length, colored ribbons should be tied with ends extending about three inches. For the role of the whipper, an animated person of striking appearance and with good dramatic judgment should be selected. The six best dancers are chosen for the leading parts.

All dancers except the six leads enter, scatter across the ring, and begin dancing as in the Powwow. A drum signal sounds, a scream is heard behind the Council Rock, and the six lead dancers dash in, looking back over their shoulders, for they are being driven by the whipper. They scurry to the far side of the ring, the whipper following them. As the

\* Robert H. Lowie, *The Crow Indian*, pages 93, 174, 196, 210. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1935.





whipper moves across the ring the lesser dancers fade away from him and exit, leaving the scene to the six lead dancers and the whipper.

The dancers move swiftly around the ring and take positions at equal intervals near the edge, and the whipper takes position directly in front of the drummer by the Council Rock. The whipper runs up to one of the dancers with threatening motions of his whip. Trying to escape, the dancer dashes away about six feet and is stopped by the end of the whip, he darts a similar distance in the opposite direction and is met by the whip again, then he breaks into a dance and starts around the ring, the whipper encouraging him with a tap of the whip as he leaves. The whipper returns to his position and the dancer circles the ring in solo, displaying his best talent, after which he returns to his position.

The whipper then trots around looking over the dancers, feints with threatening motions at one or two, singles out the proper one and approaches him with whip in air. The dancer repeats the running away motions and then breaks into his dance. This continues until all six have danced in solo.

As the last man finishes the whipper starts around the ring clockwise, driving all the dancers to the far side of the ring, then runs back and starts around counterclockwise driving back the dancers on that side. When all are in a cluster on the far side, the whipper approaches them with sweeping swings of the whip and they break into a powwow, scattering around the ring, the whipper returning to his post. After a few minutes of this the whipper turns toward the drummer and makes threatening motions, whereupon the drummer increases his tempo and volume, and the dancers go into a frenzy of dancing.

A louder boom of the drum signals the exit whereupon the dancers gravitate to the far side of the ring, line up facing the Council Rock, prance across the ring in a spectacular finale of dash and flourish, headed for the exit. As they approach, the whipper makes wild swings with the whip in their faces and drives them back across the ring where they stand marking time, uncertain. With the whip high in the air and arm extended straight up, the whipper trots directly across the ring and through the line of dancers. Once past them he whirls and swings at them in the rear—they scream, dash across the ring, and exit, the whipper following them with menacing swings.

The dance is full of dash and spirit . . . there isn't a lull throughout. The animation is more than acting, for the whip adds incentive.

ON THE STAGE.—The drum is placed at the back of the stage midway from the sides. The whipper's position is directly in front of the drum. The dance proceeds as described and can easily be adjusted to existing stage conditions. At the exit the dancers gather at one side of the stage and the whipper stands at the other. They approach him to exit and are driven back, he crosses and passes through the line, then drives them out.





## Kiowa Squat Dance

Reminiscent of the Pipe Dances with their changing rhythm is the Squat Dance of the Kiowas. But in this case, instead of dancing to the changes in rhythm, the dancers merely squat down and wait until it is back to normal again.

The general procedure is as in the Powwow. After a moment of fast drumming, the drummer abruptly changes to a slow beat, whereupon all dancers squat, place their elbows on their knees and wait motionless. When the drumming returns to the original tempo they leap up in strenuous dance again. Several such changes in rhythm take place in the course of the dance.

Good form demands that the dancers squat instantly when the drumming changes, and again that they leap up instantly when it returns to normal. To fail to detect the change and continue to dance for a step or two, or to remain squatted overlong, is cause for ridicule, just as is the missing of a rhythm in the Chippewa Pipe Dance.

This is not only an interesting dance of the powwow type but is excellent practice in rhythm.

## Chippewa Bean Dance

What it means I know not, nor do I know why it should be called the Bean Dance. My Chippewa friends are silent on the matter, as if they, too, do not know, save for the fact that, like all dances, the Manito gave it to man, and since then it has been theirs to do. But that was long, long ago. . . .

Scarcely a true powwow, yet for us it serves the powwow purpose, and is useful in its combination of solo dances and group dancing, giving all a chance to dance individually and collectively.

## THE DANCE

Not more than ten to twelve dancers should be used, lest the dance become too long, selected for good solo ability. They walk in and form in two lines facing each other, as indicated by the numbers in Figure 17. They are arranged in pairs, 1 and 2 constituting a pair, 3 and 4, etc. The pairs are arranged in order of dancing ability, the two best dancers being Numbers 1 and 2, the next best 3 and 4, etc.

Only one dances at a time, the others standing and watching. As the drumming starts Number 10 dances across toward Number 9, displaying his best in a challenge to Number 9 to outdance him. He comes up in front of Number 9 with a flourish and stops, whereupon Number 9 leaps forth to take up the challenge and Number 10 steps into his position. Number 9 then dances across to Number 8 in similar fashion, Number 8 to Number 7, etc. This continues until all have crossed the ring and are





on the opposite sides from their original positions. The entire group then breaks into a dance, moving about as in the Powwow but *each line remaining on its own side of the ring.*

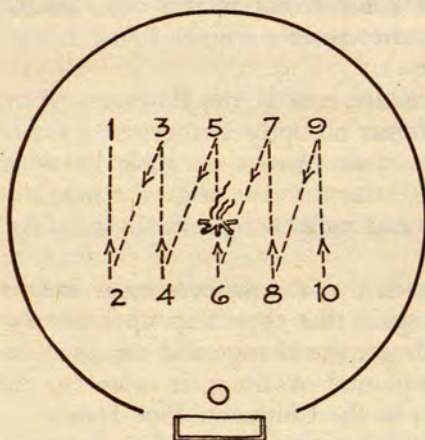


Figure 17. Diagram for the Chippewa Bean Dance

At a prearranged drum signal the two lines cross over to their original positions again and stop dancing. The entire routine of crossing over is then repeated, but this time each man dances longer, prancing up and down between the lines in brief solo before going to position in the opposite line. When all have danced the entire group breaks into a vigorous powwow, scattering around the ring.

This continues until the drummer signals the finale by a louder beat, at which all dance over to the side of the ring opposite the Council Rock where the lines form again one behind the other, both facing the exit. In this formation they dance across the ring toward the exit, heads high, strutting and swaggering, but just before reaching it they turn abruptly and dance back for a 16-count encore, in which they dance toward the fire for eight counts, then whirl, crouch, and trot out the exit with a flat-foot trot on the remaining eight counts.

### Kansa Brave Man's Dance

The game of fighting carries us to the peaks of ecstasy at one moment and hurls us into the depths of heartbreak in the next. In its mingling of joy and sorrow it is like life itself. Sooner or later the shout of triumph must be followed by the heart-rending wail of grief. Both find expression in rhythmic movement, for the shout of victory terminates in dancing and the wail of heartbreak cannot end without it.

Here is the pattern of the Pipe Dance again, not in festive mood this time, but in mourning for a brave one lost in battle. But it is none the





less a rousing number, combining the brilliance of solo with the zest of powwow, its interest heightened by the dramatic background of the mourners.

#### MEANING OF THE DANCE

For days after the death of a warrior of importance the village was filled with that most heart-rending of sounds, the wailing of Indian women. It lasted four days as a rule, longer or shorter if the relatives desired, before the Brave Man's Dance was called to end it. For the dance was the last token of love and esteem, the final gesture of honor, before village life returned to normal again.

Six were chosen by the mourners to serve as rhythm-makers. These sat on a blanket near the mourners, with drums or pans on which to beat the rhythm. Onto the scene came the dancers, fellow warriors of the departed one, bedecked in their finest regalia, the leader with a tomahawk in his hand. First the leader danced, counting his coups in honor of the departed one, dancing his heart out for his glory—and when finished, received a gift from the mourners in appreciation of his sympathy. Whereupon he gave the tomahawk to a second who danced and received his gift, and so on until all had danced.

So ended the days of mourning among the Kansa.\*

#### PROPERTIES

Spread a blanket near the edge of the ring just to the right of the Council Rock on which the rhythm-makers sit (see Figure 18). To expedite matters these also represent the mourners and have a basket at hand containing a gift for each dancer. Appropriate Indian items should be used for gifts, such as beaded bands, feather ornaments, etc. Since the dancing is best controlled by the central drum, these rhythm-makers are given rattles instead of drums which they shake in rhythm with the drumming. A pipe-tomahawk or hatchet bedecked with fur and feathers is needed.

#### THE DANCE

Six to eight of the best dancers should be selected, capable of dancing in solo.

The mourners enter, walking slowly, and seat themselves on the blanket. They hang their heads with their hands to their faces, quietly weeping. The drumming starts and the mourners shake their rattles quietly to the rhythm.

Into the ring come the dancers, bold and strong, symbolizing life, on-going, eternal. With the full lust of the powwow they circle the ring,

\* This dance is referred to in *Anthropological Papers of The American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XI, part VII, p. 775. Washington: Government Printing Office.





counterclockwise, until they are directly across from the mourners, where they draw up in line and stand facing the mourners, as shown in Figure 18.

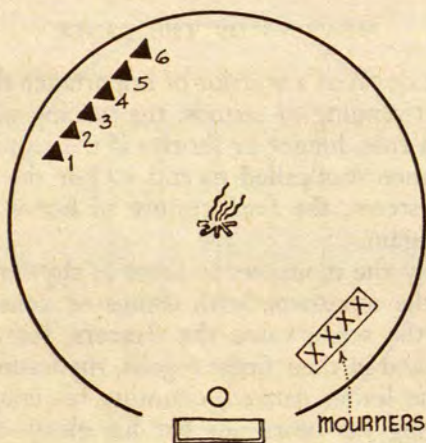


Figure 18. Diagram for the Kansa Brave Man's Dance

Once in line, the first dancer, tomahawk in hand, leaps forward in brilliant solo, honoring the departed one with his finest talent. He makes a complete circle of the ring, then swiftly dances straight across and pulls up with a flourish in front of the mourners, throwing his arm with the tomahawk overhead as he stops. The drumming crescendos as he crosses and stops with him. The leading mourner, showing deep emotion, lifts a gift from the basket and hands it to him. The dancer leaps back as he takes it and shouts, pauses for a moment, then turns and trots across to the dancers and gives the tomahawk to the next in line who repeats. This continues until all have danced.

When the last dancer returns to line the entire group breaks into a strenuous powwow which continues with increasing vigor until terminated by a drum signal, at which they dance back into their original line again, then sweep across the ring in eight counts and come up in front of the mourners with a flourish and shout, each throwing his hand overhead, the drum stopping explosively with the shout. They hold this dramatic gesture for a moment, then whirl and run out. The mourners rise and quietly walk out after them.

### Medicine of the Brave

The Medicine of the Brave is a dance of the Salk and Fox Indians which, like the Kansa Brave Man's Dance, honors the spirit of a departed warrior and brings comfort to the dear ones left behind. Unlike that dance, however, the dancers give gifts to the mourning ones, rather than receive gifts from them.





## MEANING OF THE DANCE

George Catlin describes it as he saw it among the Salk and Fox people in the 1830's.\* When a warrior was killed in battle the returning braves would dance in front of his lodge for fifteen days in succession, an hour a day. The heart-broken widow would sit weeping in the doorway of the lodge, the departed one's medicine bag hanging over her head from a green branch attached to the top of the door. The warriors danced vigorously, recounting the exploits of the dead warrior and portraying his bravery, each throwing gifts to the weeping widow to lessen her grief.

## THE DANCE

Erect a tripod at the edge of the ring to the left of the Council Rock to symbolize the doorway of the dead warrior's lodge, and on the top of it hang a medicine bag or object resembling one. Select six or eight of the best dancers for the solo parts, representing the returning warriors. Each carries a small article of Indian craft as a gift.

The widow walks in weeping and sits under the medicine bag (o in Figure 19).



Figure 19. Diagram for the Medicine of the Brave

All dancers except the six or eight warriors enter the ring and dance in powwow until a drum signal causes them to withdraw to the edge of the ring where they sit on the ground (Figure 19). In dash the warriors dancing vigorously, circle the ring in a group, then take positions equally spaced from each other just in front of the sitting dancers (Figure 19), where they stand marking time. The first warrior dances forward in solo, circling

\* George Catlin, *The North American Indians*, Volume II, page 215. London: The Author, 1841.





the ring with his best performance, after which he swoops toward the weeping widow and tosses a gift to her, then pulls up in dramatic pose in front of her, throwing his arm overhead and shouting. This he holds for a moment, then dances back to position, whereupon another dancer takes up the dance and repeats. This continues until all have danced. Then all of the warriors dance together in powwow; a drum signal of four louder beats is given and the outer circle of dancers leap to their feet and join the warriors in a dashing finale. The exit is as in the Powwow, the widow rising and following the dancers out.

### Striking the Post

Echoing from centuries long past, this lusty dance is mentioned again and yet again in the letters of those earliest French adventurers who braved the perils of the unexplored Great Lakes. It seems to have thrived wherever Algonquian peoples were found. Of the same type as the Discovery Dance (page 94) it adds the dramatic gesture of striking the post.

### AS IT USED TO BE

Nothing did the Indian of the fighting tribes love more than to recite his exploits. The best-loved means was to dance them. In the dance arena a pole was erected, around which the men of fighting honors danced in turn, each a rhythmic re-enactment of his exploits on the battlefield. His dance ended, he dashed up and struck the pole, whereupon he received the acclaim of the assembly, or if he chose, demanded silence and added a verbal account, the better to impress his admirers. No sooner had he finished than another took his place, and so on until all had danced.

Should anyone detect that a dancer was boasting or overstating the facts, he stopped the dance and smeared the offender's face with dirt and ashes to cover up his shame. Says Charlevoix, "Thus it seems to be a received maxim amongst all nations that the surest mark of a coward is boasting. . . . The greatest Chief has no privilege above the common in this respect and must take all without murmuring." \*

Thus it used to be, and could well be re-enacted today just as it was, were it not for the doubtful wisdom of presenting in succession too many story dances depicting exploits, with the sameness that unavoidably characterizes them. A better dance will result if the story feature is eliminated and the solo dancers permitted to dance as they choose, each displaying his dancing skill as best he may. Inherent in the pattern of this dance is a lusty, resounding number full of dash and zest, better achieved without the story feature. Thus it is here described among the dances of the powwow type rather than among the story or discovery dances.

\* Charlevoix, Pierre Francois Xavier de, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*. Edited by Louise Phelps Kellogg. Volume II, page 67. Chicago: Caxton Club, 1923.





The feature of blackening the face may or may not be used, depending on circumstances. In most situations that place the emphasis on nice dancing rather than dramatics it is a doubtful contribution.

#### THE DANCE

Erect a pole about eight feet tall in the ring in front of the Council Rock, as near to the fire as possible. Six to eight strong dancers are needed, each carrying a sturdy club about two feet long.

The tempo is fast, the spirit dashing:

They swoop into the ring and start around counterclockwise, immediately focusing attention on the pole, looking at it, shading their eyes with their arms, etc. The circuit completed, one dashes up and hits the pole a resounding blow with his club, whereupon the others withdraw to the edge of the ring and mark time, spaced equidistant as in Figure 20.

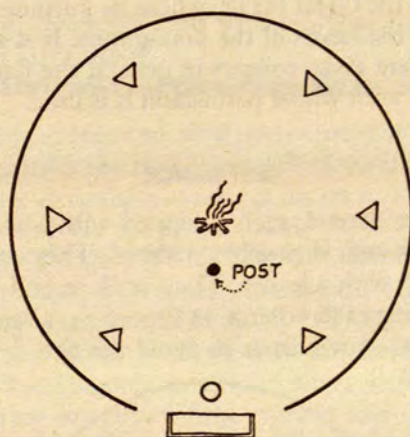


Figure 20. Diagram for Striking the Post

The ring to himself, the dancer circles it with his most brilliant and dashing solo style, then swoops up and strikes the pole again, leaping back as he does so into a dramatic pose and stands there for a moment, as if waiting for applause. The drum crescendos with the swoop and stops explosively with the strike. A moment of silence and the drumming begins again, the dancer trots to his position and the others leap into action, dancing in their positions, their sticks raised menacingly. Another dancer dashes up as if to hit the pole, turns and trots back from it with the fear step (page 39). A second repeats, swinging at the post but missing and fear-stepping away. The third hits it and takes up the solo. This continues until each have danced in solo. As in all series of solos, the dancers perform in order of ability, the better ones appearing last.

The last man having finished, the *entire group* breaks into a powwow,





scattering across the ring, dancing colorfully. The powwow continues with ever-increasing vigor until the drummer, using his judgment as to time, indicates the finale with a prearranged drum signal, at which the dancers draw back near the edge of the ring for eight counts, then dash up in four counts and all strike the post together with a shout. They hit it high overhead and keep their clubs on it after striking, their heads turned upward with eyes on the clubs. For a moment of silence they stand there dramatically, then turn as the drumming starts and dance for the exit with the flat-foot trot. Eight steps and they whirl back as one man, repeat the swoop and strike the pole again, shouting as before. A long pause with arms overhead and clubs on the pole, the drum rolls and they trot out.

### Plains War Dance

This rousing dance, so robust and virile in its war play, is after the manner of the Indians of the Great Plains, where its purpose was to keep aflame the zest for battle in the hearts of the young men. It is a powerful number.

The description here given follows in general the dance as described by Julian H. Salomon,\* with whose permission it is used.

#### THE DANCE

Sixteen dancers are needed, each equipped with a war club, tomahawk, or other war weapon and, if possible, a shield. They are divided into two groups of eight, each with a leader. They walk in and line up on opposite sides of the ring, facing each other as in Figure 21, a space being left in the middle of each line as shown so as to avoid the fire.

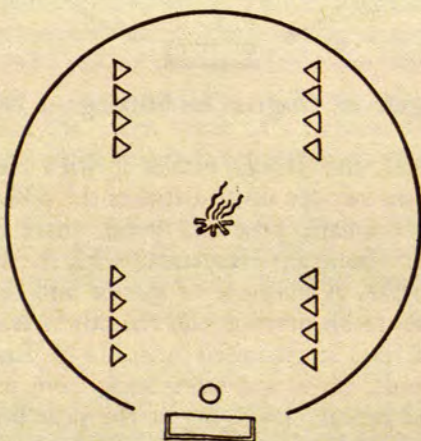


Figure 21. Diagram for the Opening of the Plains War Dance

\* Julian H. Salomon, *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore*, page 351. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928.





1. The drumming is in fast, accented two-time, the step the toe-heel and the double toe-heel. The two lines advance to meet each other in attack, following this routine:

- A. 16 counts—They dance in position, eyes on opponents, shading eyes with arms, raising and lowering weapons threateningly, etc.
- B. 8 counts—With weapons raised the two lines dance swiftly forward to meet.
- C. 8 counts—Just before meeting they turn and retreat with the fear step (page 000), looking back over their shoulders.
- D. 16 counts—Repeat A
- E. 8 counts—Repeat B
- F. 8 counts—Repeat C
- G. 16 counts—Repeat A
- H. 8 counts—The lines dash forward and meet, stopping face to face, all throwing arms with weapons overhead and emitting a lusty shout.
- I. 8 counts—They hold the pose, drum silent.

2. The drumming changes to slow two-time; the step is the toe-heel. The dancers start around the ring counterclockwise, all going in the same direction but moving irregularly, each on his own, looking for signs, following tracks, searching for the enemy, alert, stealthy, all of which movements are described on page 56. This continues for one circuit of the ring and is ended by four sharply accented drumbeats.

3. The drumming changes suddenly to fast two-time; the step is the double toe-heel. They break abruptly into strenuous dancing, depicting the charge and the battle, going in all directions, each on his own, raising weapons and charging imaginary foes, turning and retreating, crouching and rising, etc. Using his judgment as to time the drummer terminates this by four accented beats.

4. The drumming changes to medium-fast two-time; the step is the toe-heel and the double toe-heel. They dance into their original groups, each group moving to its own side of the ring and lining up as in Figure 22 with its leader in front and facing it as shown. With weapons raised each group attacks its leader, who swings his weapon at them and drives them back, then returns to his position. This is repeated three times but on the third time the leader drives them on around to the other side of the ring. Here the drummer signals a change by four accented beats.

5. The drumming changes to *very fast* two-time; the step is the double toe-heel. All break formation and scatter in a colorful powwow, each using his best performance. The fight-acting is forgotten, all concentrating on a finale of high-powered, dashing dancing. When the drummer deems wise he signals by one louder beat at which all dance back to the edge of the ring in eight counts, then on four counts dash to the center and stop with a





loud-voiced shout, their right arms with the weapons thrown high over the fire. They hold the pose for a moment, the drum rolls, they turn and trot out to exit.

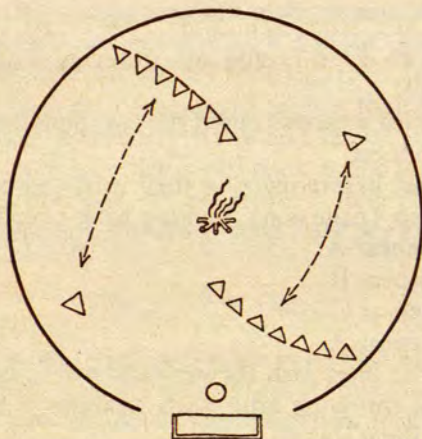


Figure 22. Diagram for the Plains War Dance

### Minataree Green Corn Dance

In brilliant contrast to the sedate rituals of the corn dances of many tribes, the Green Corn Dance of the Minatarees \* is a rousing drama replete with arresting dance spectacle. No hopeful prayer as seeds are planted, no hush-voiced supplication as roots begin to sprout, this is a full-lunged shout of exaltation when, at long last, the luscious ears are ripe for eating. It is a dance for seasoned men whose moccasined feet are versatile and whose athletic bodies toughened for the test. Here is dancing—strong, full-bodied dancing... here is drama—stark stagecraft of primitive men... here is ritual, bold and dashing....

From a long yesterday this dance has come. George Catlin saw it in the 1830's ere yet the last awful scourge of smallpox fell upon the Missouri River Indians in 1837 to unmake a nation and all but obliterate a culture. A brief description is given in the memorable chronicle of his travels.\*\*

The season at hand for the ripening of the corn, a group of old women were selected by the Medicine Men to go to the fields each morning and bring in samples that the Medicine Men might inspect them. When at last it appeared that they would do, a crier was sent about the village to announce the day of the feast and dance. The Green Corn Dance accompanied the cooking of the corn. The description here given follows in the main the Indian ritual with certain departures made necessary to permit effective staging.

\* Gros Ventre or Hidatsa.

\*\* George Catlin, *The North American Indians*. Vol. I, page 189. London: The Author, 1841.





## PROPERTIES

A *kettle rack*—four sticks arranged over the fire or in the center of the stage, as shown in Figure 23, six to seven feet high at the apex. If the sticks are forked at the top, the rack can be set up by property men just before the dance starts. From the apex a pothook is hung.

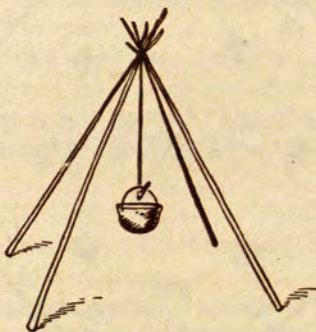


Figure 23. Kettle Rack for the Green Corn Dance

*Kettle*—preferably a black iron kettle, hung from the pothook, containing a little water.

*Six ears of corn*—preferably green corn, otherwise dry field corn.

*Cornstalks*—one for each dancer. If out of season the dance can be done without them.

*Pottery or bark*—six small bowls of Indian pottery or six pieces of bark a foot square on which to place the corn.

*Fork*—a two-foot stick with nails driven in the end and sharpened to serve as a fork with which to spear corn.

*Rattles*—six gourd dance rattles.

Prior to the dance the kettle rack is set up and the kettle put on the pothook. The fork is hung on the rack. The six bowls or pieces of bark are placed on the ground around the rack as indicated by the six small circles in Figure 24.

If on the stage the rack and kettle may be eliminated and a pile of sticks placed in the center to represent the fire. The corn is then laid in among the sticks.

## THE DANCE

A medicine man is needed, for which a mature person with striking appearance and good dramatic judgment should be selected. He is not a dancer and should be dressed in dignified fashion in contrast to the breech-clothed dancers. Four to six lead dancers are needed, depending upon the number of talented solo performers at hand. The following directions assume that there are six. Six to twelve other dancers are also needed.





1. The Medicine Man walks in unaccompanied by the drum, carrying six ears of corn. He is dignified, serious, and gives careful attention to his business. He inspects the pot, places the corn in it and then walks back and takes position directly in front of the drummer. See Figure 24.

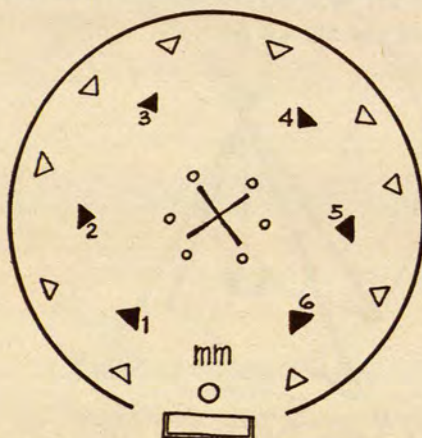


Figure 24. Diagram for the Minataree Green Corn Dance

2. The drum strikes up a fast two-time and all of the dancers except the six lead performers dance in, each carrying a cornstalk held upright in his right hand. They scatter about the ring dancing as in the Powwow, being careful to keep their cornstalks upright. A moment or two of this and the drummer strikes four louder beats whereupon the dancers fade back to the edge of the ring and stand there marking time, holding their cornstalks upright in front of them.

3. The six lead dancers swoop into the ring with a whoop, each has a rattle in his right hand and a cornstalk in his left. With all their interest centered on the pot they dance around the ring counterclockwise and take positions as indicated by the numbers in Figure 24. These dancers are not required to hold their cornstalks upright but use them as hand ornaments as an aid to dancing.

4. For 16 counts they dance back and forth in their positions with their eyes glued on the pot, shading their eyes the better to see it at times. (By a count is meant a unit of loud and soft beat.) The following routine then starts, each advance to the fire being signalled by a louder beat:

- A. 8 counts—Dance forward to fire, throwing arms toward it (page 52)
- B. 8 counts—Trot back to position with the flat-foot trot, looking back at pot
- C. 8 counts—Dance in position, looking at pot
- D. 8 counts—Repeat A





- E. 8 counts—Repeat B
- F. 8 counts—Repeat C
- G. 8 counts—Swoop up to fire and stop on 8th count in dramatic pose, head high and chest out. The drum stops explosively on 8th count.

The picture at the top of the illustration facing page 262 shows the position of the dancers at this point.

The Medicine Man trots up, bends over the pot and inspects the corn. He looks up, his face grave, his mouth turned down, and shakes his head, indicating that the corn is not cooked. The drumming begins again, the dancers whirl back to their positions and the Medicine Man trots back to his.

5. Repeat 4.

6. Repeat 4, except that when the Medicine Man inspects the corn he finds that it is cooked. He straightens up with a yip or short, high-pitched shout. The drumming strikes up with increased tempo and volume. The six dancers whirl into a strenuous dance of celebration. They go into *full crouch* (page 45) shaking their rattles down to the ground, hard and loud. There is just a moment of this and then a drum signal sends them swooping up to the fire again in eight counts, each posed dramatically in his original position.

7. The drum is silent. The Medicine Man reaches into the kettle with his long fork, spears an ear of corn with it, straightens up holding it high in front and yips, then trots to the dancer nearest at his left and puts the corn in the bowl in front of him or lays it on the piece of bark. Immediately, this dancer leaps back, throws his right hand with his rattle high in front of him and yips, holding this pose. The Medicine Man then repeats this routine for each of the six dancers.

8. As soon as the last dancer shouts, the drum booms fast and strong. Each dancer throws his cornstalk into the fire, transfers his rattle to his left hand, picks up the ear of corn, puts it in his mouth, grasping it firmly with his teeth, and whirls into a strenuous dance in the *upright position*. After a moment or two of this a drum cue is given and they go down into the *Sti-yu* step (page 32). If the dancers cannot do this step they may repeat the low crouch as in No. 6 above. Using his judgment as to the time, the drummer signals with four louder beats whereupon the six dancers rise to the upright position and all the other dancers standing around the edges join them in powwow fashion.

9. The finale is signaled by four loud beats: The six lead dancers move to the side of the ring opposite the Council Rock and line up facing it, the corn still in their mouths. The other dancers fall in behind them and hold their cornstalks forward over the heads of the six leads. With heads high and strutting with all style the six lead performers prance across the ring and out the exit, the others following.





ON THE STAGE.—This dance is ideally suited for stage use. The routine as described can easily be adapted. The exit is accomplished by the six lead dancers lining up near the back of the stage with the others behind them, then dancing down stage to the footlights, prancing there for a moment, then turning and exiting, half to the right and half to the left.

### Banda Noqai

From the pastime dance of the Shoshoni, called the Banda Noqai, comes perhaps the most spectacular and inspiring routine of the celebration type this book presents. It combines delightfully solo dances, group dancing, and spectacular routine. With good dancing talent it results in a thrilling performance. It is not recommended for beginning dancers.

Certain liberties are taken with the original Indian routine, the better to adapt the dance for use before an audience.

### AS IT USED TO BE

The women prepared the Banda Noqai sticks by splitting a stick and inserting a bead or other object in the opening. These they placed before the dancers who were painted with black dots from head to foot and wore black and white painted breechcloths. The dancers danced up to the sticks, trotted away as though in fear of them, and continued thus until at last they grabbed them up. At times between their approaches to the stick they would charge the spectators and pretend to shoot them with the bows and blunt-headed arrows they carried. After they had picked up the sticks, some men standing by would sometimes approach them and throw water at them so as to get some of them wet. The dancers would then retreat a short distance where they danced and tapped their bows or sticks together overhead. As a pastime dance it was all in the spirit of fun.\*

### PROPERTIES

In place of the split sticks with a bead or other object in the cleft, a more ornamental stick should be made as follows: Cut green sticks a little over an inch in diameter and two feet long, removing the bark so that the white wood shows. To one end of the stick attach inch-wide ribbons so that they hang down one foot as shown in Figure 25. Contrasting colors of ribbons should be used, such as black and yellow on some sticks, red and white on others, etc. The ribbons are attached by driving a one-inch nail in the end of the stick just far enough to hold the ribbons and allowing it

\* A reference to this dance may be found in *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XI, Part 7, page 818. Washington: Government Printing Office.







*Photograph by Paul Boris*

JAMES C. STONE

Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts





*Photograph by Arthur C. Allen*

LAWRENCE RATLIFF

Indira Gandhi National  
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to extend up. To this nail white fluffies are tied as illustrated. The other end of the stick should be sharpened. Ribbons are also wrapped around the stick at intervals of six inches as shown. Four to six sticks will be needed, depending upon the number of lead dancers used.



Figure 25. Banda Noqai Stick

#### THE DANCE

Four to six lead dancers are needed depending upon the number of sufficiently talented solo performers available. The following instructions assume that six will be used.

If two women dancers are to be had they should be used in the opening scene to put the sticks in place. If not, the opening scene can be eliminated and the sticks placed before the dance starts by a property man. The position of the sticks is indicated by the dots near the fire in Figure 26.

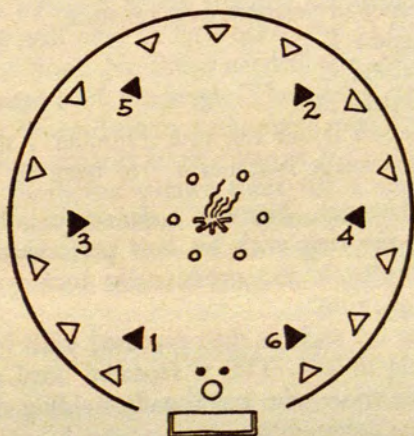


Figure 26. Diagram for the Banda Noqai





1. The two women enter on either side of the Council Rock, each carrying three Banda Noqai sticks laid in the crook of her left arm. They use the Women's Step described on page 40. One moves clockwise around the ring and the other counterclockwise until they pass at the far side. Then they approach the fire and stick the first two sticks in the ground as indicated (those opposite positions 2 and 5). They continue around placing the other sticks, then take positions one either side of the drummer and just in front of him as indicated by the two black dots in Figure 26.

2. All dancers except the six leading performers enter and start dancing as in the Powwow. A few moments of this and the drum hits four louder beats, at which they fade off to the edge of the ring and squat down so as not to block the view.

3. Into the ring come the six lead dancers, prancing with the double toe-heel step, their eyes fixed on the sticks. They move around the ring counterclockwise, shading their eyes with their arms at times as they look, then dance to positions as indicated by the numbers in Figure 26. The dancers are arranged in pairs, 1 and 2 constituting a pair, 3 and 4, etc. They are arranged in order of dancing ability, Numbers 1 and 2 being the poorer dancers and 5 and 6 the best.

4. They dance the following routine, each advance to the sticks being signalled by a louder beat of the drum. By a count is meant a unit of loud and soft beats.

- A. 16 counts—Dance back and forth near positions, each with eyes glued on the stick in front of him and focusing attention on it
- B. 8 counts—Dance forward to the sticks, throwing arms forward toward it (see page 52)
- C. 8 counts—Whirl and trot back to position with the fear step (page 39)
- D. 8 counts—Dance in position, eyes on stick
- E. 8 counts—Repeat B
- F. 8 counts—Repeat C
- G. 8 counts—Repeat D
- H. 8 counts—Repeat B but this time Number 1 snatches up his stick
- I. 8 counts—All except Number 1 trot back to position

Having grabbed his stick, Number 1 dances in solo, while the others mark time, circling the ring with his best performance, holding up his stick at times to display it and occasionally tossing it in the air, then gliding back to his position.

The entire routine (A to I) is then repeated with Number 2 snatching his stick and dancing in solo. This is repeated until all have danced. In executing the routine those who are already holding their sticks continue to advance to the fire nevertheless.

5. Number 6 having returned to position, Numbers 1 and 2 break forth





in *duet*, dancing on their own sides of the ring, playing on each other and attempting to outdance the other. At a drum signal of a louder beat they sweep up to the fire in eight steps, stop, throw their right arms overhead and cross their sticks above the fire. It is necessary that they gauge their time and distance so that both stop in position on the eighth count. They hold this dramatic pose for eight beats of the drum, whirl and trot back to position. Immediately as they do so, Numbers 3 and 4 break into duet, to be followed in turn by 5 and 6.

6. As soon as 5 and 6 break away from the fire all six dancers begin dancing together vigorously, each staying more or less in his own territory. They dance as brilliantly as possible but in the *upright position*. At a drum cue they drop down into the *Sti-yu* step (page 32) or, if unable to do this step, each does the most spectacular step at his command, preferably in a low position such as the full crouch.

7. This continues until in the drummer's judgment it should be terminated, when he hits four louder beats and all of the dancers seated around the edge of the ring leap to their feet and the entire ensemble dances in strenuous powwow.

8. The finale is signalled by four loud beats: All dancers move to the side of the ring opposite the Council Rock, where the six lead dancers line up in a row facing the exit and the others fall in informally behind them. With heads high and Banda Noqai sticks in the air in front of them, the lead dancers prance across to the exit with the others following. Reaching the Council Rock the lead dancers turn right and left, three in one direction and three in the other, and start dancing around the ring again, while the others exit, including the two women. When the two lines meet opposite the Council Rock they form the line again and prance across the ring and out.

ON THE STAGE.—No dance is better adapted for stage use than the Banda Noqai. Some device will need to be worked out to hold the Banda Noqai sticks upright on the floor. No fire is needed—the sticks are merely set up in a circle in the center of the stage. The entire routine is followed as described, with the lesser dancers gathering across the rear of the stage. For the finale the lead dancers form a line at the back of the stage, dance down stage to the footlights, prance there for a moment, then head for the wings, three in one direction and three in the other. Reaching the wings they swing toward the back of the stage allowing the lesser dancers to exit, form the line at the rear and come down stage again and then exit.

### Pueblo Comanche Dance

Once in long years past the war-like Comanches raided deep into the land of sun, silence and adobe, and attacked the peace-loving Pueblos. Makers of silver and tillers of desert soil, these quiet village folk had no





special talent for war and fell easy prey. Many were taken captive and carried back to Comanche-land, where they lived as did their masters and learned to dance the Comanche way. Upon being released, they taught this way to their homelands. Since that time the Pueblos have danced "The Comanche."

The dance is a contrast in tempo from very slow to very fast. Opening very slowly with limp, flowing motion, the tempo suddenly is quadrupled with fast, dashing movement, terminating in a frenzy of action, after which the dancers freeze motionless. The secret of its appeal is in these sudden contrasts.

#### THE DANCE

About eight good dancers are needed. They walk into the ring and stand informally, each by himself, awaiting the drum.

The drumming starts with a very slow, accented two-time, counted *one-and, two-and*, etc. By a count is meant the unit of a loud and soft beat, that is, "*one-and*" is one count. The step is the toe-heel, one step being taken to each count.

1. 24 counts—tempo very slow. Slow, graceful toe-heel movement, body limp and flowing, using body weave, arms hanging limp, every effort made to move smoothly and gracefully.

2. 24 counts—tempo quadrupled. Break into very fast toe-heel dancing, mood changing accordingly, dashing, spirited, spectacular. On the 20th count go into a flurry of motion for remaining four counts, a frenzy that contrasts with the fast time as much as does the fast time with the slow, sidestepping on toes rapidly, bending body low, hands out to the sides and fluttering, head shaking. Then freeze in position and hold motionless for equivalent of eight fast beats, drum silent.

3. Repeat 1

4. Repeat 2

5. Repeat 1

6. Repeat 2

7. 24 counts—slow time. Exit with slow motion as in 1.

Each dancer must do his own counting. The 24 counts are best counted in three units of eight. It will facilitate uniform movement if the drum accents the 20th count of the fast series by striking a little louder, indicating that the frenzy is to start.

Two departures from the authentic version may make the dance more acceptable: *First*, if the 24 slow steps are changed to 16, there will be no danger of the dance dragging. 16 slow counts as against 24 fast ones seems just the right balance. *Second*, if the slow exit is eliminated a better climax is achieved. When the dancers are freezing after the last frenzy, a roll of the drum may terminate the dance, whereupon they arise and walk out.

It takes good dancing ability to make extra slow motions pleasing to





the eye. Moreover, extra fast dancing is difficult for all but experienced dancers. With average talent, it may be well to change the tempo at the start from extra slow to slow, then double it instead of quadrupling it for the fast series. This eliminates both the extra slow and the extra fast movements, but still provides enough contrast for an interesting dance. In time the two extremes will be mastered.

### Oto Rabbit Dance

Always an interesting and entertaining little number, the Rabbit Dance of the Otos fills well a spot where fast dancing is desired.

#### THE DANCE

Eight to twelve dancers may be used. They enter the ring and stroll along in disinterested fashion awaiting the drumming. When the drumming starts they drop instantly to the right knee and shake the body up and down for 16 counts. Then they arise and dance strenuously for 32 counts.

The drumming is counted *one-and*, *two-and*, each unit of two beats being regarded as one count—that is, “*one-and*” is counted as one count.

1. 16 counts—drumming fast, soft, unaccented. Each dancer drops to his right knee and shakes up and down with much shoulder motion, once to each beat.

2. 32 counts—drumming changes to loud, accented two-time. The dancers leap to their feet and dance strenuously, using the toe-heel or the double toe-heel step, employing brilliant body action but each staying near his original spot.

3. 16 counts—repeat 1

4. 32 counts—repeat 2

5. 16 counts—repeat 1

6. Exit by arising and trotting out

The drumming is fast and the tempo remains constant throughout, although changing in accent and volume from one figure to the next. For the shaking figure it is soft and steady and unaccented, while for the dancing figure it becomes loud and accented in two-time. This indicates the change from one figure to the next, the dancers reacting immediately to the change.





## Chapter IV

### "I SAW" DANCES AND OTHER SOLOS

SOMETHING THAT one saw, something that he did, some experience he had, re-enacted in a dance—such is the nature of the "I Saw" dance. It is a story dance, a means of telling a tale, of relating an experience. In the old fighting days it was a favorite way of "counting coups," of retelling again the exploits that won honors. Such dances are variously called "*I Sarw*" dances, *story dances*, *coup dances* and *discovery dances*, the latter name resulting from the fact that most of them are based on the themes of hunting and fighting which involved searching and final discovery.

Any event or story could be used as the basis of an "I Saw" dance, and the dancer was free to interpret it any way he desired within certain conventional limitations. This gives a flexibility to the story dances that is not found in other dances. There is no set routine which tradition demands must be followed each time, since the routine depends of necessity on the story being told. The dancer is thus afforded an opportunity for originality and creativeness in developing the dance. This was true of the dancing Indian in the old days and it is also true of the present-day interpreter of Indian dancing. With the full endorsement of Indian tradition, it permits us to use any suitable story as a basis for an "I Saw" dance, whether or not there is record of its being so used by the Indians, and to interpret it as we choose as long as we confine ourselves to authentic Indian movements and mood.

In some of the dances in this chapter the privilege of the story dancer is assumed in creating dances from Indian stories with no knowledge of their having been so used by the Indians. In other cases the dances are exact descriptions of dances done by Indians. In all cases they are true to type and in full harmony with Indian story-dance tradition.

Here are the solo dances—the group story dances are in the next chapter.

#### Chippewa Deer Hunter Dance

From my Chippewa friends in the Lake Superior country I learned this attractive dance. A favorite "I Saw" dance of these northern Woodland folk, I have heard it referred to by Indians from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan across to Minnesota and north into Canada.





### THE STORY

Long the hunter had roamed the woods, looking, waiting, listening, but all for naught—no sign of deer could he find, no sign at all. Discouraged, tired and thirsty, he came at last to a little stream of cold, refreshing water. He stooped down to drink and as he put his face to the water he drew up in surprise—there in the sand on the bottom of the brook were tracks—deer tracks—clear and distinct, leading upstream. Quickly he drank, and followed upstream with his eyes fixed on the telltale tracks. They left the water and, as he had expected, led up to the hardwood thicket. Stealthily he followed, but only for a few yards—for there in a little opening stood the buck in plain view, his antlered head erect and stately. Long the hunter froze, then cautiously, oh so cautiously, raised his bow and shot. . . . With joy in his heart and the deer on his back he headed homeward, for now there would be meat in the lodge and hide for many moccasins.

### THE DANCE

The drumming is in two-time, medium fast, accented *loud-soft*. The step is the toe-heel or the double toe-heel.

*1st Circuit*—Dancing in, the hunter starts around the ring counterclockwise. He is hunting and shows it in his actions—he shades his eyes with his arm as he looks in the distance, he fixes his gaze on the ground, he stops and studies the earth, he shoves the leaves and sticks away with his foot, he pushes the bushes aside as he advances. (For the techniques of this various business see page 55.)

*2nd Circuit*—Finding no signs of the deer he becomes discouraged—the drumming slows down, he stops, shakes his head and lets his shoulders droop; with head hanging and shoulders sagging he advances slowly, uninterested, with no further heart for the hunting. He continues thus until he reaches X in Figure 28. Nearing this point he spreads the bushes aside and looks ahead to discover a stream, advances to it forthwith, drops to his knees, lowers his face to the water and drinks, his hands cupped either side of his mouth. Suddenly his head and shoulders jerk up, his hands out to the sides, in surprise—there in the sandy bottom of the stream are the deer tracks! His hand points to them and his eyes turn upstream following them.

He rises and follows the edge of the stream, his eyes on the ground to his right, his hand pointing to the tracks in the stream bed. A few feet and the tracks leave the water. He follows them with increased stealth, crouching low, he tosses a leaf in the air to ascertain the wind, he stoops and feels of the tracks. Thus he completes the circuit.

*3rd Circuit*—The tracks get hotter and he continues with ever-increasing alertness. Reaching X he suddenly drops to the ground and freezes, for there, standing at Y, is the deer. The drumming becomes soft, steady, unaccented. For 16 counts he freezes, then with great cautiousness rises to his





feet, pulls his bow and shoots. He holds for four counts, then dashes to the fallen deer at Y. (For the detail of the business of freezing and shooting, see page 56.)

Reaching the deer he stoops, examines it for a brief moment, rises and stands in exultation for a second or two, then breaks into a strong dance of celebration, using the double toe-heel step. Twice he circuits the ring in ever-increasing ecstasy and exits.

### Discovery Dance

More than any other, the Discovery Dance is referred to repeatedly in the memoirs of those courageous French explorers who invaded the vast wilderness of America from 1600 to 1800. It is mentioned in anthropological writings for tribes all the way across to the Rocky Mountains, Woodland and Plains alike. And more than any other, it is described with enthusiasm growing out of happy memories of delightful entertainment.

As danced in those ancient, dramatic days when fighting was the sport of men and the theme of much of their dancing, the Discovery Dance was a long series of solos, one dancer after another leaping forward to enact his recent exploits as soon as his predecessor relinquished the floor. It is here described as a single solo, the routine developed from descriptions by men who saw it among the Woodland Indians in the 17th Century.\* The stealthy entrance is added for dramatic effect.

Striking the Post, described in Chapter III, is really a form of the Discovery Dance, a series of stories told by dancing.

### THE DANCE

The dancer carries a tomahawk, or hand ax bedecked with feathers or ribbons.

*The Entrance*—The drumming is medium-slow and very soft. On hands and feet the dancer creeps into the entrance, sticks his head into view, looks for a moment, then creeps stealthily to the center (X in Figure 27), where he pauses motionless, looking, his eyes scanning the situation. For a long moment he freezes thus, then arises and moves stealthily in crouched position a few feet to his right, where he drops and looks again.

*1st Circuit*—Searching for the enemy: Satisfied there is no immediate danger, he arises and begins dancing with the double toe-heel step, the drum picking up in speed and volume. Without stops he circles the ring, dancing erect, scanning the distance with his eyes, weaving from side to side at times to look from different angles. Thus he moves counterclockwise around the ring.

\* For references to this dance and a list of these early writings, see W. B. Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes—1615-1760*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940.





*2nd Circuit*—Signs of the enemy: He moves as before but with increased alertness, stopping occasionally to look, shading his eyes with his arm and keeping time by jarring his heel on the ground. Now and then his eyes drop to the ground for tracks but in the main his attention is fixed on the distance, looking in this direction and that, watching for every sound and movement. When halfway around he discovers tracks that forebode danger. He stops, bends down and points to them; he looks up to make sure the enemy is not lurking, he tosses a leaf in the air to estimate the volume and direction of the wind. Continuing, he kicks a stick aside with his foot, he pushes the bushes aside with his arms. (For details of this business see page 55.)

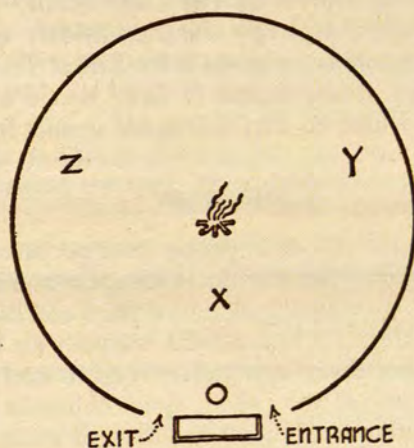


Figure 27. Diagram for the Discovery Dance

*3rd Circuit*—Discovering the enemy: Fresh tracks warn of immediate danger—his attitude changes, he becomes very intense, alert, ever looking and listening. The drumming becomes softer. He squats and examines the tracks, he takes a few quick, stealthy steps forward and drops again, continuing thus to Y. Here he discovers the enemy located at Z: He drops abruptly to the ground and freezes, his weight on his left foot, his buttocks resting on his left heel, his right leg extending full length toward Z, his eyes fixed on the spot. The drumming is scarcely audible. For 16 counts he holds the freeze, then stealthily shifts his weight forward and creeps up near the fire, sets himself for the leap by crouching as before, this time with his left leg in advance. He raises his tomahawk, lowers it, raises it again and lowers it, raises it a third time and simultaneously lifts his whole body, measuring the distance. He leaps forward and brings his tomahawk down on Z. Throughout the period of measuring the drum crescendos, then stops explosively as he strikes. He drops to his knees, scalps the enemy, stands erect and throws his right arm with the imaginary scalp over his





head. For a brief moment he holds this pose, the drumming begins and he breaks into the finale.

*Finale*—From Z he makes two complete circuits of the ring, dancing with complete ecstasy and unreserved exuberation, calling upon his most spectacular style, dashing forward with leaping, full-bodied vigor, throwing his arm with the scalp up over his head at times. Near the end of his second circuit, when directly across the fire from the Council Rock, he whirls toward the fire, leaps over the top of it spectacularly and exits running.

### The Lone Scout

This dance, variously known as The Lone Scout, The Lone Hunter, and The Lone Warrior is probably the most widely used of Indian solo dances because of the popularity given it by Ernest Thompson Seton who published it years ago. It is a typical "I Saw" dance and one of the best of its type. I am indebted to Mr. Seton for it and for the privilege of describing it here.\*

#### THE STORY

Hungry for the honors of war, a young scout prepared to go forth alone to test his cunning against the enemy. With spear and shield he displayed himself in the village, proclaiming aloud his plans and boastfully prophesying great deeds for himself. Once on the warpath his loudness gave way to caution as he studied every sign and listened to every sound. Suddenly he spied one lone sentry of the enemy, quite oblivious to the presence of lurking danger. He crept up with all stealth until within striking distance. He set himself for the kill, raised his spear to leap—when suddenly a sound attracted his attention to the rear. He turned to find he had been tricked into a trap and was surrounded on all sides by the enemy. He darted about seeking a way to freedom, at last discovered an opening and darted through it. As he did so he stopped, turned back and hurled one last defiant war-whoop at the enemy, as much as to say, "Come and get me if you can."

#### THE DANCE

The dancer carries a spear and shield, as illustrated in Figure 32 and described on page 106.

*The Entrance*—To a long roll of the drum the dancer leaps into the ring, shield in left hand and spear held high in right: he dashes through the entrance and, once in the ring, makes a long leap and lands near the fire in crouched position, his weight on his right foot and his left extending out in front. As he hits the ground the roll of the drum stops with an explosive boom. There is a moment of dramatic pause—the dancer looks to

\* Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Birch Bark Role of the Woodcraft League of America*, page 82. New York: Brieger Press, Inc., 1925.





the right and left, surveying the situation, then slowly rises, transfers his spear to his left hand, raises his right to his mouth and hurls forth a war-whoop. The drum starts a fast two-time, the dancer spins around by turning to his left and then starts out around the ring counterclockwise.

*1st Circuit*—The show-off in the village: He sweeps around the ring swiftly, head high and confident, boastful and strutting. The emphasis here is on a sweeping circuit, without pauses. The step is the double toe-heel.

*2nd Circuit*—Continuation of the show-off: He weaves back and forth, zigzagging from the fire to the edge of the ring. He swings the spear in the air, makes playful passes at the crowd with it. He struts and prances, and in general displays himself.

*3rd Circuit*—On the warpath: He has left the village now and is in the danger country. The drumming slows down to medium fast. He crouches a little and moves more cautiously, stopping now and then and shading his eyes with his shield, the better to penetrate the distance. His gaze follows the ground for tracks. He peers in this direction and that. He sticks his spear into things and picks them up for examination.

*4th Circuit*—Following the trail: He discovers the enemy trail—he drops suddenly to the ground pointing to it, he looks ahead to see where it goes. He picks up a leaf and tosses it in the air to discover the direction of the wind. He moves ahead with great caution and alertness. He continues thus to X in Figure 28, at which point he discovers the enemy who is located at Y. He drops to the ground and freezes, facing Y, his right leg extending full length toward Y, and his weight on his left foot.

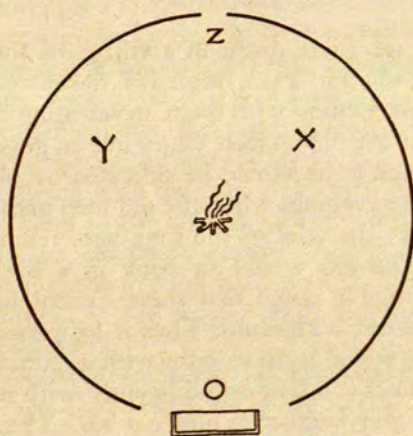


Figure 28. Diagram for The Lone Scout and The Chippewa Deer Hunter Dances

*The Charge*—The drumming becomes soft, lest the enemy hear, changing from a two-time to a steady unaccented fast beat. He holds the freeze in dramatic pause for 16 beats, then very cautiously advances so as to take





his weight on his right foot, and extends his left in front, thus assuming a charging position. He raises his spear as if to hurl it, lowers it, raises it again and lowers it. For the third time he raises it—the drumming increases in volume—he rises slowly and is about to leap when the drum booms explosively and grows silent. He whirls and looks behind to discover the enemy. Startled he looks in all directions, finding himself trapped in ambush. The drum beats rapidly, he scurries quickly across to Y with a short, sidestepping foot motion, then back to X, looking in all directions for an exit. He repeats the scurrying across and back twice, then suddenly spots the exit at Z, turns and darts through it. He stops in the exit, turns back into the ring, pauses and hurls a war-whoop, then whirls around and dashes out the exit.

If the council ring does not have an exit at Z, the Council Rock exit may be used.

### Ish-i-buz-zhi

This powerful dance was developed from the Omaha story of Ish-i-buz-zhi as recorded by Alice C. Fletcher in 1900.\* So far as I knew the story was never used by the Indians as an "I Saw" dance, but it might well have been, for it is type-perfect for such use.

As here given the story follows the original in the main but with certain minor alterations to facilitate the dance.

### THE STORY

Once in the long ago there dwelt in a village of the Omaha Indians a boy named Ish-i-buz-zhi. He was a queer lad, never associating with other boys, never playing or hunting with them, never using the bow and arrow. His only friends were the old women who came to gossip with his mother. Little wonder that such as he should be ridiculed by old and young alike.

In those long winter evenings when the old men gathered by his father's fireside to relate again the tales of the long ago, telling of the heroes of bygone years, Ish-i-buz-zhi would sit back in a dark corner listening, absorbing every word. He noted that these ancient heroes never fought with bow and arrow but with clubs. Thus it happened that Ish-i-buz-zhi resolved that he, too, would learn to fight with a club. Finding a club that suited his fancy he practiced long and diligently with it. When the village boys discovered him they laughed at him and hurled biting jabs of ridicule, but Ish-i-buz-zhi kept his own counsel.

Came the day when the village was at war. Excitement and much shouting filled the air as the young men prepared for the warpath. Ish-i-buz-zhi, too, was gripped with intense desire to fight for his people, but the dis-

\* Alice C. Fletcher, *Indian Story and Song from North America*, p. 14. Boston: Hale, Cushman and Flint, 1900.





heartening thought came that he could not—he did not know how—in this hour of need his club was useless to him. He threw it away, discouraged. But that night his secretive nature led him to creep up to the council of chiefs and listen to the plans for attack. Taking in every word, he resolved that even though he could only fight with a club he would fight nevertheless. He found his club again and, unbeknown to others, slipped away toward the enemy country, fortified by the reports of the scouts he had heard.

Catching sight of the enemy warriors with their famous chief to their fore, he awaited his chance and rushed upon the chief, overthrew him and killed him with his club. Just then his own war party came upon the scene and saw with amazement what he had done—how, alone and single-handed, armed only with a club, the might of his arm had killed the enemy chief and scattered the warriors.

Ish-i-buz-zhi lived to be a very old man, and he was always somewhat queer, but never again was he laughed at. Always his wisdom was sought in time of trouble.

#### THE DANCE

A strong, talented dancer is indicated. The properties consist of three clubs laid at different points in the dancing ring. The drumming is in two-time, the step the toe-heel or the double toe-heel.

The dance begins at the point where Ish-i-buz-zhi resolves to learn to fight with a club.

*1st Circuit*—Looking for a club: Ish-i-buz-zhi dances quietly into the ring and starts around counterclockwise. He seeks a club for himself and looks about the woods for it. He comes upon the first club, picks it up, weighs it and swings it, finds it not to his liking and discards it. He proceeds to the next club, finds it unsatisfactory and tosses it aside. The third club strikes his fancy—he grips it, tests it and finds it good.

*2nd Circuit*—Practicing with the club: He learns to use it well, swinging it vigorously in his hand to the rhythm of the dancing. He dashes to the left and swings it at an imaginary enemy, then repeats to the right. He dashes forward and hits the ground hard with it. He tosses it in the air a foot or two and catches it. He repeats these movements as fancy strikes him in making the circuit.

*3rd Circuit*—Ridiculed by the boys: He stops suddenly while practicing in the woods and looks back—the boys of the village have discovered him. He hides his club behind his back lest they see it, sneaks away a few feet with the fear step (page 39), stops, cringing, holding his hand over his face, palm out. Under the taunting and ridicule, he backs away farther and repeats, motioning the boys away with his hand. He changes hands, holding the club behind him with his other hand, and shoving them away again. He continues to retreat thus until halfway around the ring, at which point his tormentors leave him. He returns to the toe-heel step and dances





a short distance, pauses and looks back to make sure the boys are gone, then continues practicing with his club to complete the circuit.

*4th Circuit*—The news of war: War breaks out and the village is seething with excitement. Ish-i-buz-zhi hears the shouting, he stops and looks back, standing erect and head high. Gripped by the excitement he throws his arm overhead, whirls about and dances strenuously; he stops again, looking across the ring, puts his hand to his mouth as if to shout the news; he throws his hand overhead as if to motion to others to come along. But his dance of excitement is short-lived—as he reaches the point marked X in Figure 29, the depressing thought comes that he cannot fight... he does not know how—his club is useless to him. He stops at X, his head hanging and shoulders sagging, his arms limp at his sides, the club hanging in his right hand. For eight counts he stands there, then lets the club slip from his hand to the ground and dances slowly forward in the same dejected manner. Thus he continues to Y.

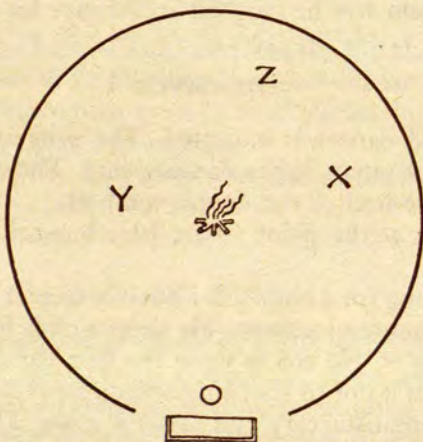


Figure 29. Diagram for Ish-i-buz-zhi

Here the idea comes to him that he can creep up to the war council of chiefs and listen to their plans. He raises his knuckle to his mouth, thinks for a moment, then turns and dances rapidly back toward Z, at which point the war council is in session. Nearing it he creeps cautiously, drops to all fours, raises his hand to his ear, and listens intently for 12 counts.\* He shakes his fist emphatically, resolving that, even though he can only fight with a club, he will fight nevertheless. He retraces his steps to X, picks up his club, turns and goes counterclockwise to complete the circuit, trying out his club as he does so.

*5th Circuit*—Meeting the enemy: He starts on the warpath, moving cautiously, looking for tracks, pushing bushes aside, etc., continuing thus until he gets to X. From this point he sees the enemy approaching in the direc-

\* By a count is meant a unit of loud and soft beat, such as "one-and."





tion of Y, their chief to the fore. He drops to the ground and freezes, his weight on his left foot and his right leg extending toward Y. For 16 counts he freezes, then slowly shifts his weight to his front leg and extends his left leg toward Y. He holds the club out behind him and gets set for the leap. Once set he holds for 12 beats, then leaps forward, dashes to Y and swings his club down hard. He drops to the ground, takes the scalp and holds it dramatically overhead for a moment, then breaks into a strong powwow to complete the circuit.

*6th Circuit*—The dance of celebration: Using the double toe-heel step he dances with all the power and brilliance at his command, throwing his right hand with the scalp overhead at times. The circuit completed he prepares for the dramatic finale: A loud beat of the drum gives him his cue, after which the drumming changes from two-time to four-time, counted *one-two-three-four*. The loud beat indicates that in 12 counts he must strike a dramatic pose before the fire: On 1 he drops his right hand with the scalp low and behind, then in 12 counts he prances up to the fire in front of the Council Rock, and, on 12, throws his hand with the scalp high in the air and stops, holding the pose for 8 counts. He drops his hand and makes a complete spin to the left, taking 12 counts to it, and then throws his hand up again on 12. Holding the pose for 8 counts, he drops his hand and throws it up again on 4 counts. This he repeats, and repeats again, coming up on 4 counts, rising higher on his toes each time. On the third time up the drum hits an explosive boom and becomes silent. There he stands in dramatic, triumphant pose for a moment. The drum rolls, he ducks down and darts out the exit beside the Council Rock.

## The Falling Eagle

He who has seen an eagle soaring gracefully against the high blue dome of heaven, he who knows the symbolism of this fighting chief of the sky, will understand this dance. Its mood will need no description.

It is not a typical "I Saw" dance of the fighting or hunting type, nor is it based on a dance as done by the Indians, but its harmony with the Indian spirit is obvious.

### THE STORY

On a lazy summer day a red-brown boy lay on a mesa top, his face turned up to the vastness of the blue above, his eyes on a slowly soaring eagle. Transfixed by the floating lightness, the effortless, soaring gracefulness, his mind drifted dreamily, far away from all reality . . . his spirit was high up yonder, soaring, floating. Abruptly a shot rang out—a shot from a white man's rifle. The eagle reared, staggered for a moment, his left wing drooping. Desperately he fought with his one remaining wing, then reeled earthward . . . he struck the ground with a sickening thud, quivered for a moment and then was still.





## THE DANCE

Much depends upon the dancer. Only an unusually sensitive spirit, a delicately graceful body can truly portray the mood. The dancer wears eagle wings and tail, the construction of which is clearly shown in Figure 30. The drumming is soft, steady, unaccented, medium fast. The step is a light graceful toe-trot, done without jar to create a feeling of soaring and gliding.

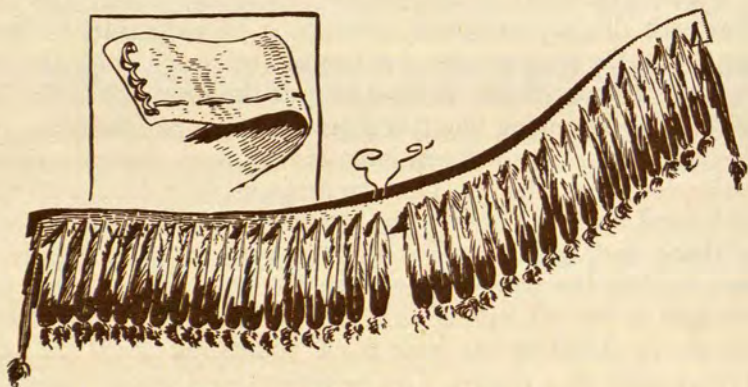


Figure 30. Wings for the Eagle

*1st Circuit*—The dancer sails in with wings outspread, moving counter-clockwise. He glides one-fourth of the way around the ring and then floats around in a small circle, about six feet in diameter, the floating effect being achieved by the light toe-trot and the spread wings. Completing this, he soars over to the halfway mark and repeats the circle, then to the three-quarter mark and repeats it again.

*2nd Circuit*—In front of the Council Rock he goes into a long figure-of-8, dipping his wings as he makes the turns and floating effortlessly. He repeats this figure-of-8 movement at each of the four winds as he makes the circuit of the ring.

*3rd Circuit*—He soars along as before with circles and figure-of-8's until halfway around, that is, across from the Council Rock. At this point he sees the hunter with the gun on the ground below. He stops abruptly, facing the fire, wings spread and looking downward, his eyes round and staring. The drumming becomes faster and increases in volume. For 16 counts he stands there looking. He begins trembling, rising higher and higher on his toes. He backs up two steps, raising his wings a few inches, stops and trembles for four counts, takes two more steps backward, raising his wings still higher, trembling more violently, his eyes growing larger. The drum hits with an explosive thud. He stretches to full length in the air, then his left wing collapses as his body bends forward, his right wing high in the air. For a moment he stands there staggering. The drum slows down. He



takes two faltering steps to the left and stops, his right wing fighting to keep him up. He continues thus to the left, staggering and stopping, until he has made three such stops. He drops to his knees, his right wing feebly in motion, then falls prostrate. His wing flaps twice, he trembles from head to foot for a moment and then all is still. For a long moment he lies there . . . the drum rolls and he arises and quietly slips out the exit.

### Chippewa Tomahawk Dance

This dance I witnessed several years ago, done by I-in-gi-ge-jig (Invisible Blue Sky), an elderly Chippewa of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in northern Wisconsin. It is not an "I Saw" dance. It does not tell a story, although it has much of story business in it. Rather it is a solo in which the chief interest centers around the handling of a tomahawk. In capable hands it becomes a memorable number.

#### THE DANCE

A tomahawk is needed. A scout ax may be made to look the part if strips of fur are wound around the handle and a small feather or two, or strips of ribbon attached to it.

*1st Circuit*—With tomahawk in hand, the dancer enters, using the toe-heel or double toe-heel step, and starts around the ring counterclockwise. He dances erect and proud but holds the tomahawk close into his side and makes no effort to display it. He continues thus until he reaches the point marked X in Figure 31, where he bends down and unobtrusively sticks the tomahawk in the ground. He does not stop to do this, merely stooping as he dances along; he does not look down at the spot nor look back at the tomahawk after placing it—there is no flourish about it at all, no effort to attract attention to the movement, and once placed, the tomahawk is forgotten and the dancer goes on his way.

*2nd Circuit*—He dances along, displaying himself with pleasing style until he reaches Y, from which point he sees the tomahawk at X and begins playing upon it: He stops abruptly as if startled, looks at the tomahawk for eight counts, then bends down and looks for four counts, rises and looks again from another angle. He raises his arm to shade his eyes, the better to see it. Then he starts dancing back and forth, going to the left for four steps, to the right for four steps, raising one hand and the other to shade his eyes. After four such sidewise trips he advances swiftly to the tomahawk, throwing his arms toward it as described on page 000. Reaching it he turns and runs away from it with the fear step (page 39), looking back over his shoulder. He repeats the whole affair with sidewise movements, approaching, and retreating. He repeats again but this time he advances with much greater speed, swoops down and quickly grabs the tomahawk.





*3rd Circuit*—Once the tomahawk is in his hands he becomes a different person—his dancing becomes more animated and spectacular. His whole interest is centered on the tomahawk and his whole purpose is to display it. He holds it high overhead and looks at it. He holds it in front at face level for a few steps, steady and without jerks so that it can be seen distinctly, then he reverses it, that is, twirls it in his hand so that the blade points in the other direction. He alternates such quick motions and steady pauses, the quick twirls attracting attention to the tomahawk and the pauses enabling the audience to see it clearly. He passes it from one hand to the other. He holds it high, low, and at all angles, all the time dancing with animation. Thus he makes the one full circuit.

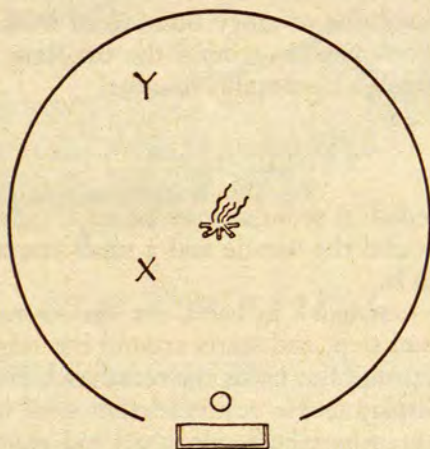


Figure 31. Diagram for the Tomahawk Dance

*4th Circuit*—He begins tossing the tomahawk in the air and catching it. He throws it across from one hand to the other, tosses it straight up a foot or two and catches it as it falls. After each toss he holds it steady for a moment so that it can be seen. Nearing the end of the circuit he tosses it higher and higher.

*Finale*—The circuit completed, he prances in front of the Council Rock for a moment in brilliant flourish before exiting. Back and forth he goes, looking at the crowd, shading his eyes with his tomahawk hand, holding the hatchet up and looking at it, shading his eyes again, bringing into play all the animation, body style and showmanship at his command. He turns as if to exit, whirls back and repeats, then darts off the scene.

Should the tomahawk be dropped in tossing it, the dancer must not admit the accident but make it appear to be part of the dance. As soon as he misses it he turns and trots away from the spot without looking at it, whirls toward it, stops and looks, then repeats the business of approaching and running away before picking it up.



## Rattle Dance

To the dancing Redman, rattles are ever-popular, carried whenever permissible. They add sound and emphasis to the already vigorous, virile movements of the dance. They spur the dancer to increased effort, their clean, sharp clicking producing clean, sharp movement. They intoxicate him with the will to dance. The same dance somehow looks different once the dancer has rattles in his hands.

This is not a story dance, rather a solo in which the unique feature and focus of interest is the handling of rattles.

Two Indian rattles are needed, preferably gourd rattles. These can be made easily, or purchased inexpensively from Indian craft shops (see Chapter XVIII).

### THE DANCE

*1st Circuit*—With a rattle in each hand and using the toe-heel and the double toe-heel steps, the dancer prances in and goes counterclockwise around the ring. From the start he dances strongly, in typical powwow style, but always in upright position, shaking the rattles with each beat of the drum but holding them close into the body and making no effort to display them. In this circuit the emphasis is on the dancing movements and not on the rattles.

*2nd Circuit*—The rattles come into play in pronounced fashion. The dancer becomes more vigorous, using more spectacular movements, but still remains upright. He shakes the rattles, flourishing them in all directions, to the sides, in front, high, low, always with graceful but emphatic motion, making them speak loudly. To the staccato click of the rattles the arms and body react with sharp, emphatic motions. With a kick-turn (page 28) he spins around, holding his outside arm high in the air as he pivots and *whirring* the rattle rapidly; he follows the pivot with a backward glide (page 27) in which the rattles are held in front at waist level and shaken. These motions are mingled at will in circling the ring.

*3rd Circuit*—From the upright position he drops abruptly into a semi-crouch, holding the rattles down toward the ground and shaking them vigorously. He shoves both rattles between his legs and out to the side behind him, he holds one arm overhead and looks up at it while keeping the other down, he reverses his hands and repeats. No progress is made while this is going on but the heels are jarred up and down to the drumming. A moment of this and he rises upright, prances forward a few feet, then drops to a semi-crouch and repeats. Four stops of this type are made in circling the ring.

*4th Circuit*—He goes into a *full crouch* (page 45), reaching way down to the ground with the rattles and shaking them hard at the ground as if to beat it. He jars his heels strenuously, ringing his bells loudly. All the emphasis is down, down, down onto the ground. A moment of this and he





rises full height and, with his rattles shaking at chest height, prances forward a few feet, then suddenly drops to the full crouch again and repeats. Four such crouches are used in making the circuit.

The circuit completed, he goes into a full crouch in front of the exit, in a finale of frenzy with the rattles. Coming out of it, he throws himself erect with his right arm high overhead and in front, strikes a dramatic pose and stops. During this final rally the drumming increases steadily in volume and as he stops it booms explosively and goes quiet. For a moment he stands there in dramatic pose, the drum rolls, and he whirls and darts out.

### Spear and Shield Dance

An age-old dancing theme, this—and for good reason! Is anything more deserving of respect than the spear, loved of old as symbol of the glad game of fighting? And is anything more colorful in the hands of a dancer? Of all things Indian, nothing that could be carried is so decorative, so ornamental, so potent in eye appeal. And nothing lends itself so exquisitely to picturesque handling, its plumes and feathers waving to augment its graceful flow. Little wonder that its popularity ranged from southwest Pueblo to northern Plains.

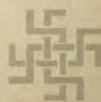
Not a story dance in the sense of telling a specific yarn, it is nevertheless made of the same sort of stuff, based as it is on the warrior's handling of his spear.

#### PROPERTIES

The spear and shield are illustrated in Figure 32. The shaft of the spear is six-and-one-half feet long, made of white cedar or other soft wood in order that it may be as light as possible to facilitate unstrained and graceful handling. A spear heavily feathered as indicated in the drawing is the type best suited for dancing. The shield may be made of canvas over a barrel hoop. The war shields of the Indians made of heavy rawhide were not used for dancing purposes but were replaced by a light ceremonial shield of similar appearance, made of buckskin over a slender hoop. In another book, *Woodcraft*, I have described the making of these items in detail.\*

A small tripod of poles is built to stand five feet high and is placed at the edge of the council ring at the point marked Y in Figure 34. The shield is hung and the spear leaned against it as shown in Figure 33.

\* Bernard S. Mason, *Woodcraft*, page 408. New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1939.





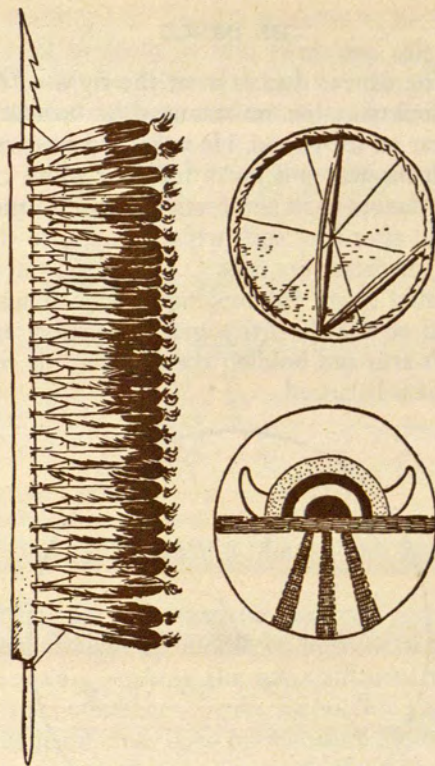


Figure 32. Spear and Shield

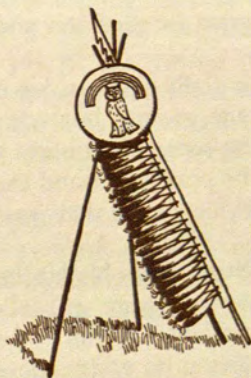


Figure 33. Tripod Support for Spear and Shield





with his dance, the dancer often unconsciously approaches so close as to cause the spectators concern less the spear hit them. This creates the situation in which it is impossible to enjoy the beauty of the dance.

If the dance proves too long for the endurance of the dancer, Circuit 2 may be eliminated.



Figure 36. Charging Position

ON THE STAGE.—When done on the stage each circuit of the ring as described should be regarded as a unit of the dance. Rather than circling the stage the dancer moves about at random, blending one unit after another into the dance. The dance concluded with the charging motions of Circuit 5, after which the spear is placed on the hip for a strutting exit.

### Pueblo Spear and Shield Dance

This is the picturesque Spear and Shield Dance of the Laguna Pueblo Indians from whom it was learned, presented with minor adaptations. Involving two spear-aimed warriors it is out of place in this chapter of solo dances, but is here included because of its close relationship to the Spear and Shield solo just described. It has long been a favorite because of the beauty of plume-bedecked spears gracefully waving in the air.

Two spears and two shields are needed made as illustrated in Figure 32. The spears should be well-plumed as shown. Should a plain unfeathered lance be used the dance would lose one of its chief appeals.

### THE DANCE

The step is an ordinary skip as in the skipping of children, done lightly and gracefully. The drumming is in medium tempo, accented in two-time. The dancers enter from opposite sides of the ring if there are two entrances, otherwise one enters and is followed shortly by the other.

Holding the spear at arm's length and waving it gracefully across in front of the body in a figure-of-8 motion, the dancers circle the ring and



maneuver until they are on opposite sides from each other as indicated by 1 and 2 in Figure 37. Here they discover each other and begin the war play on each other.

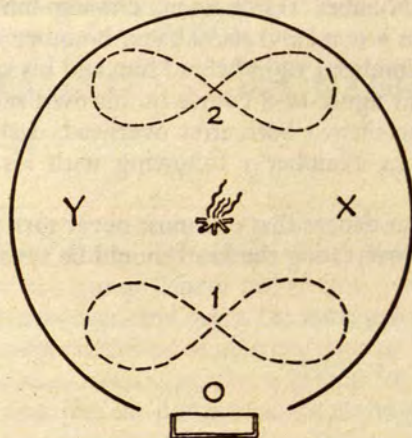


Figure 37. Diagram for the Spear and Shield Duet

1. With spear held at shoulder height in charging position (Figure 36) they skip along a figure-of-8 course as indicated by the lines in Figure 37, both going in the same direction and moving parallel to each other. Then they charge each other by sweeping up to X, with the spears in charging position overhead, but just before coming together they whirl and retreat, allowing the spear to flow gracefully through the air at arm's length on the turn.

2. They follow the figure-of-8 course again, then charge each other at Y in the same way.

3. They follow the figure-of-8 course and charge at X, this time dodging to one side and passing each other, changing sides of the ring.

4. Repeat 1

5. Repeat 2

6. Repeat 3, returning to their original sides of the ring again.

7. They follow the figure-of-8 course and charge each other at X, this time Number 2 whirling and retreating and Number 1 following, his spear overhead and thrusting it downward at him on each step. When Number 2 reaches his own side he whirls back as if to attack and Number 1 turns and dances back.

8. They follow the figure-of-8 course and charge at Y, repeating 7 with Number 1 retreating and Number 2 pursuing.

9. They follow the figure-of-8 course and charge each other at X, Number 2 turning and retreating and Number 1 pursuing with his spear at hip level and prodding at his rear, chasing him all the way around to Y, at which point Number 2 reverses his direction and chases Number 1 in





the same manner all the way back to his own side, where Number 1 whirls around and Number 2 retreats to his own side.

10. They follow the figure-of-8 and charge at X, Number 2 turning and retreating and Number 1 following, chasing him all around to Y. Here Number 2 turns around and starts back, Number 1 dodges him, turns and pursues. With Number 1 right behind him and his spear menacing him, Number 2 follows his figure-of-8 course on his own side twice with ever-increasing speed, then throws both arms overhead, dashes toward the fire, leaps over it and exits, Number 1 following with his spear overhead in charging position.

It is the rule in spear dances that one must never turn his face away from his enemy's spear. In retreating the head should be turned so as to face the spear constantly.





## Chapter V

### DRAMATIC STORY DANCES

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THESE DRAMATIC story dances differ from the "I Saw" dances of the last chapter in that they are group dances rather than solos. They are of the same type and kind, however, and grant the same privileges of freedom of interpretation that is characteristic of all story dances.

These are all vigorous, rousing numbers, calling for toe-heel dancing of the powwow type, and, like the powwows, are useful as climaxes of sound, motion and color.

#### Chippewa Brave Man's Dance

The Brave Man's Dance carries us back in spirit on the trail of the long ago to those wild romantic days of freedom and fighting. At the Lac du Flambeau reservation in northern Wisconsin I first saw it, danced by old Aniwabi (Sits Farther Along), and in later years by his son I-in-gi-ge-jig (Invisible Blue Sky). I have seen it in various places among the Wisconsin Chippewas.

True to story-dance tradition, the routine varied in detail from time to time, and place to place, depending on the whims of the dancers, but always it was the same story, and told in essentially the same way. The years have routinized this story dance to a greater degree than is typical.

The Brave Man's Dance has been unusually popular among our present-day dancers in the Redman's way. It is an extremely useful dance, for two reasons: first, its dramatic story is simple and easy to enact because it calls for *walking* and not dancing, and second, this story is preliminary to a vigorous powwow—is, in fact, a dramatic means of introducing a powwow. The dance thus combines the dramatic appeal of the story dance and the dashing spectacle of the powwow.

The version here given is as learned from I-in-gi-ge-jig. The directions follow exactly the dance as it was done.

#### THE STORY

Two warriors, acting as scouts in advance of a war party, cautiously move along in the danger country. They pick up the trail and follow it





stealthily until they discover a lone enemy warrior. Creeping up, they send the arrow that ends his days. The war party, arriving in time to see the kill, dash forward to celebrate the triumph.

#### THE DANCE

Stick a tomahawk in the ground directly opposite the Council Rock entrance to the dancing ring (see Figure 38). This symbolizes the enemy warrior. There is no drumming at the start of the dance.

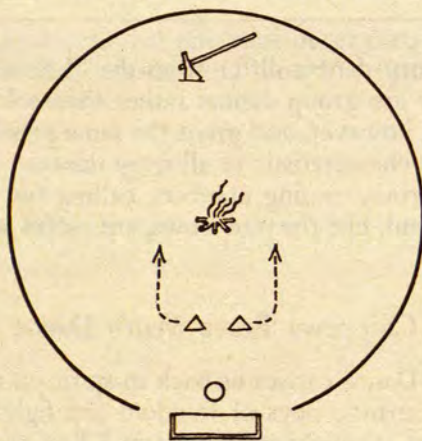


Figure 38. Diagram for the Chippewa Brave Man's Dance

Two dancers enter walking and start around the ring counterclockwise. Relaxed and at ease they move along leisurely but with their eyes on the ground in search of tracks and signs, pausing to push the leaves aside with their feet now and then. Passing the tomahawk without seeing it, they suddenly discover tracks—they stoop and examine the earth, look inquiringly at each other and then down to the tracks again. With frequent pauses to study the telltale signs they move along with increasing caution, their steps stealthy, their eyes ever-seeing, their ears ever-hearing. When directly in front of the Council Rock, they suddenly drop to the ground as one man and freeze, their eyes fixed on the tomahawk (Figure 38).

For six to eight seconds they hold the freeze. The leader of the two then raises his right hand very cautiously and motions his partner to the right. He himself creeps a little to the left, far enough so that he can see past the fire to the tomahawk, and his partner moves a corresponding distance to the right. Then both creep forward with all stealth until near the fire, where the leader rises slowly to his feet, his partner remaining crouched. The leader raises his imaginary bow with his left hand, pulls the string with his right, aims for five seconds in dramatic pause, then shoots (see page 56 for method). Simultaneously the drummer strikes the drum with an





explosive boom, the partner emits a war-whoop, leaps forward and grabs the tomahawk.

No sooner does the war-whoop ring out than a chorus of whoops sound behind the Council Rock and into the ring dash a dozen or more warriors. The drum strikes up in fast tempo and a strong dance of celebration is on, which follows the full course of the Powwow (page 62) and ends in the usual manner.

VARIATION.—Although usually done as described, the opening episode may be danced instead of walked. Using the toe-heel step the two dancers move through the routine with the same sort of interpretation used in the "I Saw" dances.

ON THE STAGE.—If the dance is on the stage instead of in the council ring, the tomahawk is placed near the front right. Two warriors enter from the left, circle the stage, and spot the enemy from the back left. They creep to the center to shoot. The main body of warriors then enter from the left.

### Chippewa Scalp Dance

Of true ancient vintage, this magnificent dance portrays again, and with unsurpassed brilliance, the oft-told tale of the hunting down of the enemy and the kill.

Boastful of their exploits, with the flush of victory still in their cheeks, the returning Chippewas danced lustily before their village folk, a rhythmic re-enactment of the high daring that brought the shout of victory.

In the Lake Superior country "dancing the scalp" involved three phases or episodes which together constituted the dance: \*

1. The pre-fight ceremony: with the warrior-dancers sitting in a circle, their chief smoked the pipe and offering it in usual fashion to the Four Winds, and then to each dancer for one puff, after which he addressed the war party, invoking the aid of the One Above, and calling upon his men for courage. Then followed the Chippewa War Dance (page 136).

2. The re-enactment of the fight, with the warriors dancing out the story of what happened.

3. Competition for the scalp, a sort of dancing game in which the scalp is placed upon a short stick in the ground, with the warriors dancing in a circle around it; when the drum stopped they made a dash for it, each trying to secure it.

In the old days of fighting the story part of the dance (section 2) was always different, depending on what happened in the fight that was being celebrated and re-enacted. But with the passing of those colorful days, it became more or less standardized and continued as a spectacle, although,

\* As learned from I-in-gi-ge-jig.





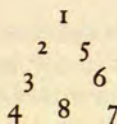
as in all story dances, liberties were given the imagination and ingenuity of the dancers in telling the story. It became the story of an historic fight, always the same in its major routine, but with the details left to the whim of the dancers.

Although the ceremony may be done in its entirety, it is the story part (section 2) that is most often seen—it is lifted out and done as a dance by itself. That is the dance described here. The competition for the scalp is often used as another dance and is described in this book on page 219 in Chapter XIII.

### THE DANCE

The splendor of the spectacle that is the Scalp Dance emanates largely from the fact that it is a group dance in which all dancers make precisely the same motions at the same time. It goes without saying that gifted dancers can lift it to a higher level of dramatic appeal than lesser ones. Its full beauty blooms when a group of accomplished performers develop a teamwork that enables them to move as one man. The following description varies from the authentic version in its uniformity of motion and in certain details of arrangements to facilitate such movement without undue rehearsal.

Eight dancers give the best results, arranged in the form of an arrow-head:



The leader who sets the style is in the Number 1 position and the others are in a compact group behind, so close they almost touch each other. The arrowhead arrangement is important because it enables everyone to see the leader, who gives certain cues and whose motions are copied by the others in follow-the-leader fashion. This permits uniform movement without the endless rehearsal that otherwise would be needed. A group with good teamwork can follow its leader's motions with such instantaneous precision that all motions seems to be simultaneous.

The group moves around the area counterclockwise. The step is the toe-heel or the double toe-heel. The drumming is moderately fast to fast, depending upon the capacity of the dancers, accented *loud-soft*.

The dance consists of five circuits of the dancing ring:

*1st Circuit*—Enter to right of the Council Rock (Figure 39). Dance with body upright, head high and shoulders back, looking into distance—proud and full of self-assurance. Make the circuit of the ring until opposite the entrance again.

*2nd Circuit*—Go into the body weave (page 47) looking ahead all the



time. The leader sets the weave and the others follow in unison. Make the full circuit in this way.

*3rd Circuit*—The searching for the enemy starts: Raise the hand and shade the eyes for four steps, then repeat with the other hand. Point at the ground with the right hand for four steps, then straighten and point in the distance. Hold the right hand forward, palm of hand flat to ground and look at the ground. Repeat any and all of these movements in making the circuit. Each motion is instigated by the leader and copied instantly.

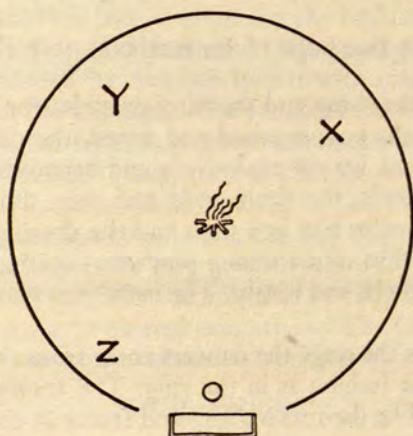


Figure 39. Diagram for the Chippewa Scalp Dance

*4th Circuit*—Repeat 3 until the point marked X in Figure 39 is reached. Eight steps before reaching this point the leader turns both right and left hands out a little in an inconspicuous signal to indicate that in eight steps a dramatic stop is to be made by all in unison. Stop suddenly by whirling toward the fire and stand in dramatic pose, right foot in advance, head high and shoulders back, looking across the fire into the distance as though something attracted attention there. Keep right heel tapping to drumming and hold pose for 16 taps, then swing into usual formation and complete circuit as in 3.

*5th Circuit*—Continue as in 3 with increased alertness until point Y is reached. It is here that the enemy is sighted, located at point Z. Eight steps before Y the cue is given as before. Suddenly all dancers drop to the ground in unison as follows: Squat with buttocks resting on right heel, shoving left leg full-length in front, pointing it toward Z, knee straight; drop right hand to the ground behind for support, and extend the left arm full-length in front pointing at Z. Freeze in this position.

As dancers drop the drumming changes from an accented *loud*-soft to a steady fast beat, accented on every *eighth* beat. In this cautious moment the drumming is soft lest the enemy hear.





16 *Counts*—Hold freeze

8 counts—Shift weight to front or left foot by moving body slowly forward and pulling right foot up beside left, still remaining crouched

8 counts—Rise slowly to erect standing position

8 counts—Hold motionless, looking at enemy

8 counts—Raise left hand with imaginary bow

8 counts—Raise right hand slowly and grip bow string

8 counts—Pull bow string back slowly

8 counts—Aim

1 count —Shoot (see page 56 for method)

The slowness of the rising and shooting provides the pause necessary for dramatic effect. As the bow is raised and aimed, the drumming crescendos and, as the shot is fired, booms explosively and becomes silent. The dancers pause for three seconds, the drum rolls and they dash to the imaginary enemy. The leader scalps him in a flash and the drum picks up a fast two-time. The dancers whirl into a strong powwow, scattering across the ring, each dancing by himself, and lustily. The usual powwow encore follows.

**ON THE STAGE.**—If on the stage the dancers enter from the back left, circling the stage in the same fashion as in the ring. The enemy is stationed at the front right corner. The dancers see him and freeze at the back right corner.

**COSTUMING.**—Best effect is produced if all dancers are dressed alike, with feather warbonnets on their heads, large bustles in the middle of their backs and smaller bustles on the arms between elbow and shoulder. If bustles are scarce, each dancer may wear one arm bustle only, on his outside arm, leaving the concealed inside arm bare.

## The Other Buffalo

There is importance in a man's name. That which is given him at birth is but a childhood name, to be discarded once his manhood has been established. One's name is earned by performing some deed. It serves to recall the deed and in a sense throws light on the kind of a person he is. More often than not it is complimentary, but then again it may not be.

So it is, or rather was, among the Redmen of the Plains. And the earning of a name is the basis of this delightful dance.

From Ernest Thompson Seton came the story, oft told by him in his inimitable way. The hearing of the story inspired the dance, which in due course of time, was created as here recorded and used with brilliant success.

I have no knowledge that this story was danced by the Indians although it might well have been, for the function of the story dance is to re-enact



important happenings. Its lack of historic background needs no apology, for any event may be used as the basis for a story dance.

#### THE STORY

The gist of it is this, based in the main upon the tale as told by Seton: Among the Crows who live up Montana way there was a boy overboastful of his power, overzealous to prove his manhood. At long last consent was given for him to accompany the buffalo hunters. When the party neared the herd the Chief told the boy to point out the buffalo he would kill. This he promptly did. He shot—and the buffalo fell. Racing forward to claim his prize, he was confronted by another Indian who claimed it was he who killed the buffalo. In the argument that followed the intruder told the boy to examine the arrow in the buffalo. He was amazed to discover that it was not his arrow . . . whereupon laughter and ridicule emanated from those in the hunting party. Then the Chief pointed to another buffalo dead upon the plains a short distance away, telling the boy that it was the buffalo he had killed. Full of unbelief, the boy nevertheless went to the other buffalo—and lo, his arrow was in it! *He had aimed at one buffalo and killed another buffalo.* Hence the name he carried ever after—"The Other Buffalo."

#### THE DANCE

It may be done as a solo although it lends itself better to a group dance with eight participating. The formation and general procedure is as in the Chippewa Scalp Dance just described. All motions are made in unison, the leader at the apex of the arrow formation starting the motions and the dancers picking them up instantly. The boy hunter is in position No. 3 (page 116).

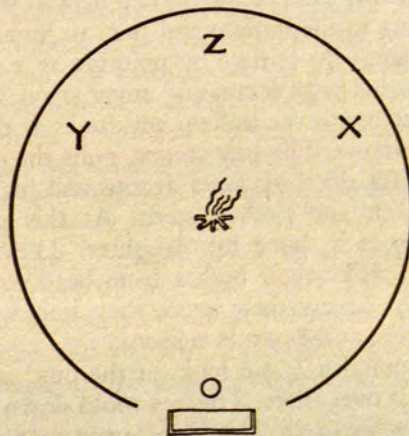


Figure 40. Diagram for The Other Buffalo





It consists of four circuits:

*1st Circuit*—Starting on the buffalo hunt: Enter at the right of the Council Rock (Figure 40), moving counterclockwise around the ring, with the toe-heel or double toe-heel step. Proud and full of confidence, dance with body erect and head high, using the strutting arm swing (page 43), lifting the arms high in front at each step and swaggering the shoulders correspondingly, all arms moving in unison.

*2nd Circuit*—Looking for the buffalo herd: Continuing in the upright position, shade the eyes with the right arm for four steps (see page 51 for method), then repeat with other arm. Push bushes and tall grass aside with the hands (page 55). Repeat this business at will throughout the circuit. The buffalo will be seen in the distance—there is no looking for tracks on the ground.

*3rd Circuit*—Continue as in 2. Stop occasionally and look in the distance, tapping one heel to the drumming and holding the pause for 12 taps. Near the end of the circuit the buffalo are sighted—stop and look, then point with right hand emphatically and repeatedly (page 56). Dance forward continuing the pointing for a few steps.

*4th Circuit*—Continue as in 3 until reaching the point marked X in Figure 40. On a prearranged arm signal by the leader, stop abruptly, whirl and face Y, with right foot in advance, striking a dramatic pose.

The leader steps forward two or three steps, points to the buffalo at Y, then points to the boy, and again at the buffalo. The boy steps out of the group of dancers and walks up beside the Chief. He studies the herd and dramatically points out the buffalo he will shoot. He raises his bow and shoots (see page 56 for method), then rushes forward to the buffalo at Y.

While this action is going on another Indian entered the scene: As the boy walks up beside the Chief to shoot, the intruder enters to the left of the Council Rock and stands there unnoticed. As the boy shoots he also shoots, and when the boy runs to the buffalo he also walks up to it.

The intruder points to the buffalo and then to himself, as if to say it is his. The boy then claims the buffalo by pointing at it and then to himself. This business is repeated with increasing anger upon the part of the boy. The intruder then points to the buffalo and looks at the boy, as if telling him to examine the arrow. The boy stoops, pulls the arrow and examines it—his arms drop to his sides, his head droops and his shoulders sag, portraying disappointment and broken spirit. At this point the group of hunters, still standing at X, burst into laughter: They open their mouths wide as in laughing, shake their bodies from head to foot, ringing their ankle bells loudly by jarring their heels; they lean way back, then way forward, then up again, and down in unison.

The Chief then points to Z and looks at the boy, as if to tell him that the buffalo he killed is over there. The boy looks down at the buffalo at Y, then at Z, and shakes his head. The Chief again points to Z and the boy walks slowly over to Z. He stoops, pulls the arrow, and his face brightens





with surprise and pride. Laughter again breaks forth from the dancers as before.

The tempo of the drumming increases: the boy leaps forward and dances around the ring in a solo of exultation and celebration, going counterclockwise. When he comes up to the group of dancers they all break into a vigorous powwow, scattering across the ring.

When the drummer feels the powwow has continued long enough he so indicates by a louder beat of the drum, at which the boy dances over to Z and the dancers gather around him, still dancing in powwow. With the boy leading the entire group prances across the ring and exits.

### Zon-zi-mon-de

The Omaha story of Zon-zi-mon-de recorded by Alice C. Fletcher is the basis of this dramatic dance. Reeking with blood and battle, yet its major theme is one of tenderness, of respect for the aged, of honor for the ancient ones. There is truth in its portrayal, for among the Redmen the lusty life and high-pulsed hope of fighting men are less worthy of esteem than are the wrinkles of many years.

The story is quoted from Alice C. Fletcher.\* The dance adaptation is original. There is no record that the participants re-enacted the exploit in story dance, but well they might have, and probably did, for such was the custom following battle, although more often as a solo than as a group dance.

### THE STORY

"Years ago the Omaha tribe and the Sioux met while searching for a buffalo herd; and, as was usual, a battle ensued, for each tribe was determined to drive the other from the region of the game. Although the Sioux outnumbered the Omaha, the latter remained victors of the field.

"An old Omaha, interested to observe how some of the tribe would conduct themselves in their first battle, made his way toward the scene of conflict. It chanced that just as a Sioux warrior had fallen, pierced by an arrow, and the Omaha men were rushing forward to secure their war honours, this old man was discovered coming up the hill, aided by his bow, which he used as a staff. One of the young warriors called to his companions:—

"'Hold! Yonder comes Zon-zi-mon-de, let us give him the honours.'

"Then, out of courtesy to the veteran, each young warrior paused and stepped aside, while the old man, all out of breath, hastened to the fallen foe. There he turned and thanked the young men for permitting him, whom age had brought to the edge of the grave, to count yet one more honour as a warrior."

\* Alice C. Fletcher, *Indian Story and Song from North America*, p. 45. Boston: Hale, Cushman and Flint, Inc., 1900.





## THE DANCE

The character of Zon-zi-mon-de calls for a non-dancing man made up to represent old age. He carries a bow. Eight to twelve dancers are needed, one of whom is designated as Chief.

The step is the toe-heel or double toe-heel. The drumming is medium-fast to fast, accented in two-time.

1. The dancers enter from the Council Rock and start around the ring counterclockwise. Behind them as they enter comes old Zon-zi-mon-de leaning on his bow as a walking stick. He stops just inside the ring (at X in Figure 41), and remains there watching the young warriors to whom he has taught the arts of battle.

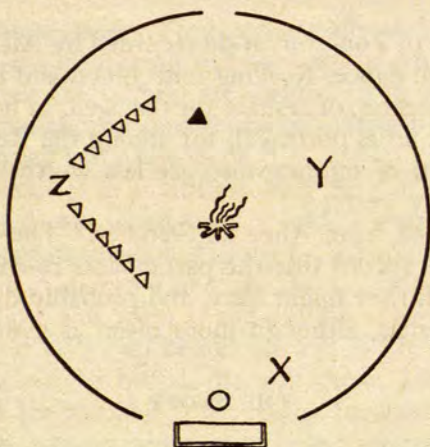


Figure 41. Diagram for Zon-zi-mon-de

2. Staying in a compact group with their Chief slightly in advance, the warriors dance erect with heads high and shoulders back, alert and looking for the enemy. Halfway around the ring, that is, when opposite the Council Rock, they discover the foe and begin shooting arrows (see page 56 for shooting technique). The shooting is done in unison, each pulling his bow at the same time, following the lead set by the Chief. It is done to a count of four steps (&-1, &-2, &-3, &-4), the bow pulled for three counts and the arrow shot on the fourth. The shooting is kept up constantly, dancing forward all the while, and is continued for a full circuit, that is, until opposite the Council Rock again.

3. This skirmish won, the dancers cease shooting and dance on, looking ahead for the enemy, shading their eyes with their hands at times (page 51), continuing thus until they reach the point marked Y in Figure 41, from which point they spot a lone enemy located at Z. Eight steps before reaching Y the Chief indicates by a prearranged *arm signal* that in eight steps a stop will be made—all stop in unison on the eighth step by whirling



to the left, their eyes fixed on Z. For 12 counts they hold the freeze, then the Chief steps forward a step or two, raises his bow and shoots (see page 56 for method).

4. Immediately as the arrow is shot, old Zon-zi-mon-de, still standing unnoticed at X, lets out a war-whoop. The warriors dash for the enemy's body at Z, but just before reaching it the Chief shouts "Ho" and points toward Zon-zi-mon-de. All stop, lining up in a "V" formation radiating from the fallen enemy at Z, as shown in Figure 41. The Chief points to the enemy and looks at Zon-zi-mon-de who hobbles forward, going to the right of the fire past Y and over to the Chief. The Chief points to him and then to the enemy. Old Zon-zi-mon-de nods his head, hobbles to Z and takes the scalp. He raises it high overhead and all break into a strong pow-wow dancing around him, Zon-zi-mon-de joining in as best his feeble legs will let him.

5. A moment of this and Zon-zi-mon-de sensing danger, stops dancing, war-whoops and points his bow toward the exit opposite the Council Rock (Figure 41). Startled, the dancers back away toward the Council Rock where they line up and start fighting their way toward the exit, shooting all the while as before. Almost reaching the exit they are driven back by the imaginary enemy; they approach again and retreat, but the third time force their way through and exit.

6. All the time the shooting is going on Zon-zi-mon-de stands behind his warriors, feebly motioning them forward. As the last successful attack is made he hobbles over to the Council Rock where he stops, looks across the ring and out the exit through which his fighting boys have gone, nods his head in satisfaction, and then hobbles out the exit.

Should there be only one exit in the ring, the directions can be altered accordingly.

If desired the dance may stop, as does the story, with Zon-zi-mon-de taking the scalp and the dance of celebration that follows, eliminating the final charge.

### Apache Devil Dance

Those gorgeously ornamented Devil Dancers of the Apaches, so much photographed and publicized, are quite impossible of imitation without great effort, their huge intricate head-rigs of wood and fabric defying all efforts at quick construction.

Using the Devil Dance of the Apaches as a springboard, however, Julia M. Buttrees has conceived a routine that has proved a powerful and compelling number, long used with certain alterations by our troupe of dancers.\* The following is a description of that dance.

\* Julia M. Buttrees, *Rhythm of the Redman*, page 130. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1930.





## THE STORY

A strong dancer commands the scene. A Black Spirit enters, filling the ring with a sinister power, evil and malign. The dancer weakens under the deadly spell, struggles futilely to shake it off, and finally falls to the ground, the victim of the Evil One. In the exotic manner of his kind, the Black Spirit dances his devilish delight over the triumph. A Medicine Man enters with a holy wand. The Evil One's step falters under a spell he cannot explain. He turns to see the wand of the Medicine Man, cringes back in fear . . . then gradually his anger wells up and he charges the Holy One. In the play that follows between the conflicting powers of good and evil, the Black One gradually gains ascendancy. The retreating Medicine Man motions in three other Medicine Men, each with a holy wand. The combined power of four wands overcome the Evil One and he runs off screaming loudly. The dancer rises and dances again with all his original power and glory.

## COSTUMING AND PROPERTIES

The black tights for the Devil are made from a suit of long underwear dyed black. While a breechcloth is not necessary, if two skunk skins are to be had they lend themselves admirably for the purpose, placed front and back. Strips of skunk skin wrapped around the wrists and ankles also add, but are not essential.

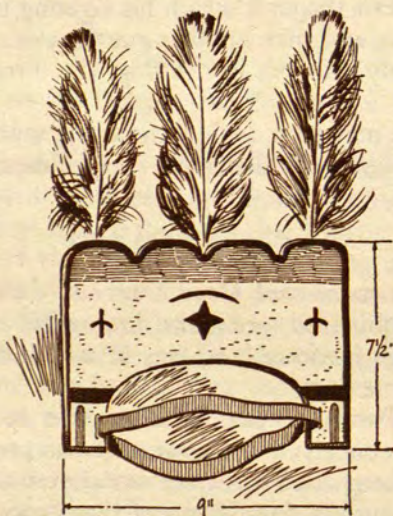


Figure 42. Medicine Man's Headdress

For his face a mask is needed made of papier-mâché. It should be made large to give a massive appearance, 8 by 12 inches in size, painted black



with white and red lines to bring out the features. It should take the form of the human face, but distorted with passion, its mouth open and deformed. To the top of the head long hair from a horse's tail is attached to hang down over one shoulder in front. Black cloth is attached to the back to cover the head. If no mask can be had the Devil's face can be painted black with white eyebrows and expression lines, with a black skull cap worn on his head.

The devil carries a double gourd rattle.

The four Medicine Men are most appropriate wearing Indian wigs over which the easily made head-rig shown in Figure 42 is placed. These are made from very heavy packing-box cardboard painted white and decorated with red and blue lines. They are held on by elastic bands as shown in the illustration. In the top of the Medicine Man's Headdress three fluffies are stuck.

Four wands are also needed, illustrated in Figure 43, made from thin wood strips about one inch wide and painted white. The upright piece is 16 inches long, the crosspieces 11 inches.

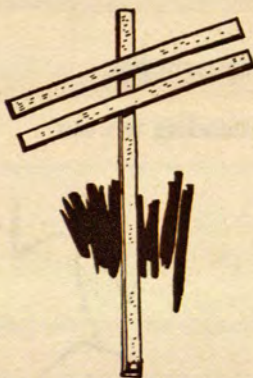


Figure 43. Medicine Man's Wand for the Apache Devil Dance

#### THE DEVIL'S STEP

When he enters he uses the flat-heel step. The following movements apply to his dance of triumph.

He crouches with knees widespread, assuming the position shown at 1 in Figure 44. At times he hops forward on both feet and again he follows the routine shown in Figure 44, as follows:

- 1 Jump on both feet
- & Jump on left foot raising right
- 2 Jump on both feet
- & Jump on right foot raising left





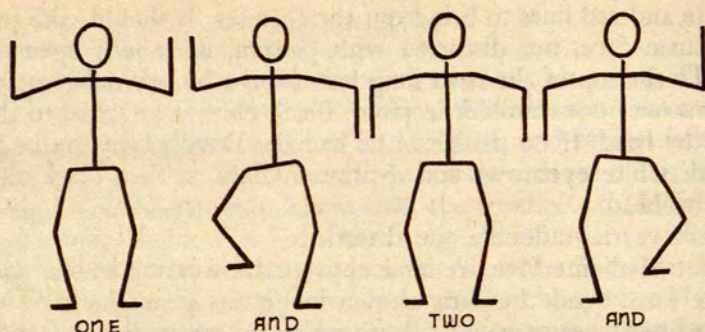


Figure 44.

These are his basic movements. Near the end of his dance he performs a movement shown in Figure 45, with one leg extended far out and twisted around so that the sole of the foot is up. He does this in the following routine:

- 1 Jump on both feet
- & Jump on left extending right out
- 2 Jump on both feet
- & Jump on right foot extending left out



Figure 45.

For his finale he extends the leg out *on every count*, first right, then left, continuing for four such movements only. This last maneuver is difficult and may be eliminated if it cannot be done.

Throughout all of his performance he holds his arms in the angular positions shown in Figure 44. It should not be assumed that the arms must take the positions shown on each step—the drawing merely shows various characteristic arm positions. He assumes one of these arm positions and holds it for three or four steps.





## THE DANCE

1. To medium fast two-time, the dancer enters and circles the ring counterclockwise in nice performance, strong and self-reliant.
2. As he passes the entrance in completing the circuit the Devil enters, crouched and slinking. He looks the dancer over and starts trailing him, using the flat-heel step. The dancer weaves and circles so as not to gain ground on the cumbersome Devil. The drumming slows down as the dancer begins to falter under the spell—he stops dancing for a moment and raises his hand to his face, shakes his head to free himself, continues a step or two, and falls to his knees at X (Figure 46). With the Devil prancing over him he gradually settles down on his face and lies prostrate. As the dancer falls lower and lower the Devil rises to greater and greater heights.

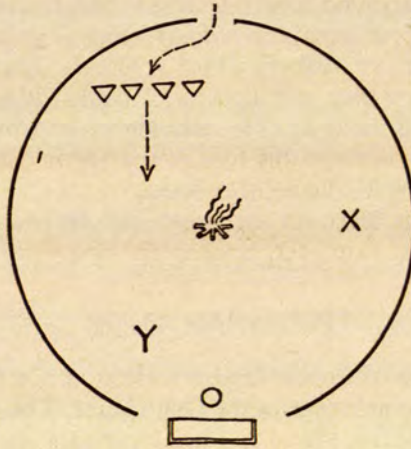


Figure 46. Diagram for the Apache Devil Dance

3. The Devil moves between the fallen dancer at X and the edge of the ring, thus facing the fire. He looks the dancer over, rises to full height and leaps over him toward the fire. Then using the basic step as described, he dances counterclockwise a quarter of the way around the ring, stops directly across from the Council Rock, faces the fire and dances in position, finishing by doing the side-kick step about four times. He advances a quarter of the ring, stops and repeats, then continues on.
4. Into the entrance opposite the Council Rock comes the Medicine Man (Figure 46) holding his wand in front, using the flat-foot step and shoving the wand forward on each step. He is calm and composed, his face expressionless. He stops just inside the ring as shown, marking time. The Devil continues around with faltering step, pauses as he nears the Council Rock and shakes his head to rid himself of the spell. He looks around and sees the Medicine Man, runs quickly back to Y and crouches there facing the Medicine Man. He takes his long hair in both fists as it hangs in front





of his chest and begins to twist it in his anger—he pants audibly with a hissing sound. A moment of this and he dashes toward the Medicine Man, his feet skidding as he puts on the brakes, his hands pawing the air overhead as he falls backward at the feet of the Medicine Man. As the Devil approaches the Medicine Man backs up a step or two. The Devil scrambles to his feet and scurries backward to Y, his anger increasing. The Medicine Man looks over his shoulder to the exit and motions with his left arm.

5. Three other Medicine Men enter and the four line up abreast as shown, calm and serene. The Devil repeats his charge and retreats again to Y. The Medicine Men advance very slowly, with the flat-foot step. Twice more the Devil charges but each time the Medicine Men keep coming. As they come abreast of the fire the left-hand Medicine Man cuts over to the other side of it and the Devil charges him there, but retreats again. At last the Medicine Men surround him in front of the Council Rock. He throws his arms overhead, spins around in a circle screaming, and dashes out. The Medicine Men about-face, calmly dance across the ring and exit.

6. As the Medicine Men gain control of the situation the dancer comes out of his trance and looks up. He rises higher and higher as the Devil's power declines and comes to his feet as the Devil dashes out. He stands there quietly until the Medicine Men leave.

7. The drumming increases in tempo and he breaks in a solo, more powerful and brilliant than ever, circling the ring three times and exits.

### Pueblo Dog Dance

Water-color artists of Pueblo-land who find in it a favorite theme have done much to give prominence to the Dog Dance. The gorgeously adorned "dogs" painted black from head to foot, wearing a dark feather headdress that trails to the ground behind and carrying a feathered stick in the hand, held on leash by women in exquisite colorful attire, are familiar enough to all who find delight in Pueblo paintings. Such gorgeous ornamentation is scarcely within the scope of easy imitation but happily, a delightful little dance can be achieved without it.

Two men representing the dogs advance and retreat from each other with combative but graceful gestures and in the end drop to their knees and fight over a loaf of bread. Evans and Evans describe the dance as seen at San Ildefonso and say that, oddly enough, it symbolizes *peace*, depicting a conflict in the ancient days when war was sometimes settled by single combat between the opposing chiefs.\*

Among the Sioux far to the northward is found a Dog Feast Dance that is similar in routine to the Pueblo dance. And the Dog Societies of other Plains tribes have dances with elements so similar that all seem to have stemmed from the same source.

\* Bessie and May G. Evans, *American Indian Dance Steps*, page 93. New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1931.





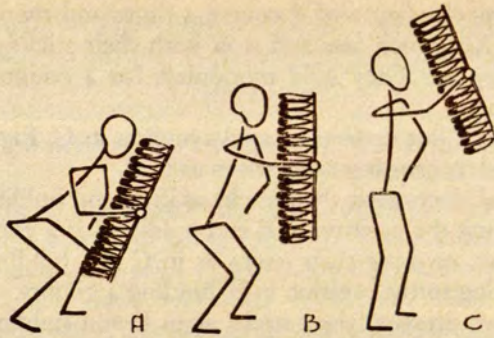


Figure 47. Dog Dance Positions

The following dance is based on the Pueblo version but of necessity takes certain liberties to adapt it to average conditions today.

The dance is effective enough in ordinary dancing costume but the two feathered sticks are necessary. These are about five feet long and made as shown in Figure 47. They are carried in the right hand and a rattle in the left.

#### THE DANCE

The step is an ordinary trot done on the ball of the foot, light and graceful, with knees and ankles soft so as to take up jar. The stick is held at its middle as in Figure 47.

In the possession of the drummer is half a loaf of stale bread, of such consistency that it can be picked up by the teeth and held in the mouth.

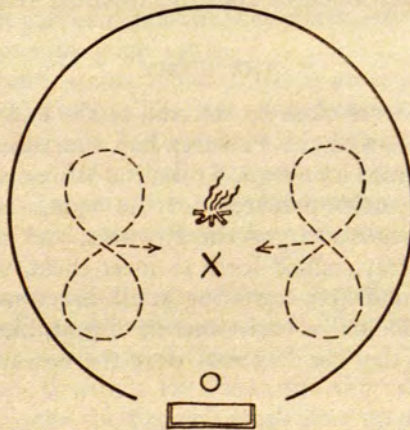


Figure 48. Diagram for the Pueblo Dog Dance

The dancers enter either side of the Council Rock and begin dancing around in a figure-of-8 course, each on his own side of the ring, as indicated in Figure 48. Their eyes are fixed on each other.





1. They follow the figure-of-8 course 4 times and then dance forward to meet at X, crouch low and stop with their sticks crossed, held as in A, Figure 47. They hold motionless for 4 counts then turn and dance back.
2. They repeat 1 but cross their sticks high as in C, Figure 47.
3. They repeat 1, crossing their sticks as in B.
4. They repeat 1, crossing their sticks as in A and holding for 4 counts, then changing the position to B and holding for 4 counts.
5. They repeat, crossing their sticks as in C and holding for 4 counts, then changing to the position in B, holding 4 counts.
6. They repeat, crossing their sticks as in B and holding for 4 counts, then change to the position in C for 4 counts, then change to the position in A for 4 counts.
7. They dance the figure-of-8 routine 4 times, after which the drummer tosses the loaf of bread down at X. The dancers dart forward, drop to their knees and fight to secure possession of the bread with their mouths. They grab for it with their teeth, feint and withdraw, eye each other, growl and snarl, and otherwise simulate fighting dogs. At last one gets hold of it solidly with his teeth, rises and trots swiftly around the ring and exits with the other following close on his heels.

### Winnebago War Dance

With the kind permission of Julia M. Buttree, this dance is taken from her *Rhythm of the Redman*,\* altered in detail, as is the right of the story dancer, so as to describe it as our dancers have developed it.

The dance possesses much of comedy, resulting from the riding of the stick "horses."

#### THE STORY

The Winnebagos were close on the trail of the Pawnees. Knowing that they were being followed the Pawnees had succeeded in slipping away each time a battle seemed imminent. At last the Winnebagos caught up with them and the two parties prepared for the fight, each dancing its war dance. The Winnebagos charged the Pawnees, and the Pawnees, apparently eager for the fray, sallied forth to meet them, when suddenly they whirled as one man and fled, scattering in all directions. The Winnebagos stopped in surprise, looked at each other in disgust, but accepted the affair as victory, as proof that the Pawnees were the cowards they had always held them to be.

#### PROPERTIES

A "horse" is needed for each dancer in the Winnebago group. This consists of a stick four feet long, of the thickness of a broomstick. At the head

\* Julia M. Buttree, *Rhythm of the Redman*, page 136. New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1930.





end a leather thong or light rope is attached, so arranged as to represent the horse's reins.

#### THE DANCE

Two groups are needed, the Pawnees and the Winnebagos, six to eight dancers in each.

1. The Pawnees enter with the toe-heel step, looking back at the entrance as though fearful of being followed. They dance a few steps, stop and shade their eyes (see page 51 for method), then continue around the ring, always looking back over their shoulders. When halfway around they stop and look again, but seeing no danger break into a reserved powwow on that side of the ring.

2. Suddenly they become alarmed and sneak back, using the fear step (page 39), stop and crouch with their bodies turned away from the entrance.

3. A war-whoop sounds behind the Council Rock and in come the Winnebagos, each riding a "horse" (astride a stick) using the flat-foot trot (page 37). They are alert and looking for the Pawnees. They dance counterclockwise one-fourth of the way around the ring, stop, shade their eyes and look. They turn and dance back toward the entrance and go one-fourth of the way around the ring in the opposite direction where they stop again as before. They spot the hiding Pawnees. They point at them and back up to the Council Rock.

4. The Pawnees, seeing themselves detected, arise and prepare for battle. They form a semicircle on their side of the ring, facing the Winnebagos, and the Winnebagos form a similar semicircle on their side in front of the Council Rock. Both parties dance the war dance (for convenience use the Chippewa War Dance on page 136).

5. This ended, both parties move to battle using the toe-heel step; the Winnebagos raise their war-clubs and go counterclockwise a quarter of the circuit, and the Pawnees do likewise, also going counterclockwise. The Winnebagos then whirl toward the Pawnees and start advancing directly across the ring toward them, their war-clubs menacing. The Pawnees advance a few feet to meet them, then suddenly break and scatter, all running for the nearest exit.

6. The Winnebagos lower their clubs in surprise, then put their hands on their hips and look at each other in disgust. They hold this for a moment and then burst into a powwow of victory.

7. The drum signals with a loud beat and they dance over to the far side of the ring, opposite the Council Rock, line up and prance across the ring on their "horses," and exit.

Throughout the whole dance the Winnebagos are riding their "horses."

It is from the handling of the "horses" that the dance achieves its unique character and its comedy. The dancers straddle the stick and hold it with both hands in front. As they dance they jerk the stick up and down in





imitation of the movements of a horse. In the final vigorous powwow of victory the horses become animated, with the dancers leaping in the air at times and shaking the stick vigorously.

### The Passing of White Dog

The Indian sings his way through life. He sings to the sunrise in the morning and to the sunset at night, when he plants the seeds and when he reaps the harvest, when the little one is born and when the dear one is taken from him. He writes his own death song, putting into it all the beauty at his command, hoping that when his time comes to cross the Great Divide he may do so standing on his two feet and singing.

This is the story of the last singing of White Dog's death song. It is not a dance in the Indian sense, it is not a reproduction of a dance as done by the Indians. Rather it is a brief pageant, a moment of history depicting the going yonder of the spirit of White Dog, Medicine Man of the Blackfeet. But it is a lofty moment, replete with true Indian values—respect for the aged, glorification of all events by song, death as the great experience of life, the meeting of it standing on one's feet and singing.

It is a perfect moment with which to close the program, perfect in its sadness and its beauty . . . after the climax of brilliance and vigor, the finale of sadness and death seems best to portray the Indian theme.

A brief reference to the story that inspired the dance can be found in *Long Lance* by Buffalo Child Long Lance.\*

#### THE STORY

Asleep was the village of the Blood Blackfeet, deep in sleep, for it was past the midnight hour. There came a noise, a weird sound . . . a tepee became astir, then another, and another as ever-restless warriors shook free from the spell of slumber. It was a strange sound—and yet a familiar one . . . a song . . . a *death* song. Something was happening—something terrible. Louder came the chanting, its familiar voice recognized—it was White Dog, Medicine Man of the Blackfeet! What awful hour was this that White Dog should be singing his death song? Moccasined feet of men were coming from all directions—gravitating to White Dog's lodge, forming in a semicircle at respectful distance. There could be no mistaking it—White Dog's face was painted to meet his fathers, his lips were chanting the tell-tale words. Once, twice, he sang it through—*his* death song. The third time he started it, but no mortal ears heard its end, for it was finished on the other side. The old man's legs crumbled beneath him and he joined his fathers as all men hope to join them, standing on his two feet and singing. Thus passed White Dog, Medicine Man of the Blackfeet.

\* Buffalo Child Long Lance, *Long Lance*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1928.



*The Last Song*


Let — it be beau — ti — ful when I sing the last song!

Let it be day! I would stand up — on my

two feet sing — ing, I would look up — ward with o — pen eyes

sing ing! I would have the winds to en — vel — ope my

bod — y, I would have the sun to shine up — on my

bod — y, the whole World I would have to make mu — sic with me!

Let — it be beau — ti — ful when thou would slay me, O Shin — ing

One — Let it be day — when I sing the last song!

From Hartley Alexander, *Manito Masks*, page 27. By permission of E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., publishers.





## THE DANCE

The central role is that of White Dog, to be played by a person with a good singing voice and an excellent dramatic sense. In addition thirteen to fifteen dancers are needed. All bells are removed. There is no drumming at the start but the drummer is standing at his drum.

For the death song, "The Last Song" by Hartley Alexander is used, words and music recorded in his *Manito Masks*.

The dancers enter quietly and sit down on the far side of the council ring opposite the Council Rock, as indicated by the numbers in Figure 49. The leading dancer sits in Number 1 position. Numbers 2 and 3, either side of him, are performers with good dramatic judgment each with a coup stick or feathered spear such as that shown in Figure 32. The other dancers are paired up as to size and ability, Numbers 4 and 5 being a pair, 6 and 7, etc., the larger ones near the center and fanning down to the smallest at the ends.

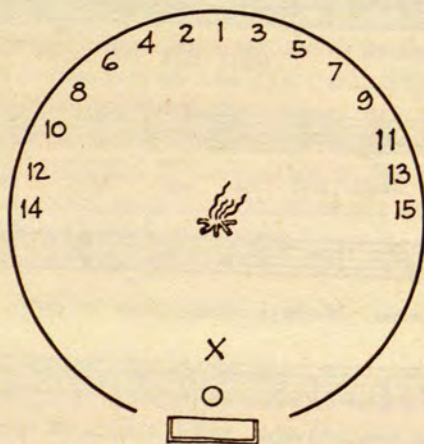


Figure 49. Diagram for The Passing of White Dog

When seated the dancers lie down and pretend to sleep. There is a long moment of silence, then behind the Council Rock comes the voice of White Dog singing his death song, softly as if far away. It increases in volume and comes nearer. Number 5 of the sleeping Indians awakens and sits up, startled. He awakens those on either side of him, who in turn wake those next to them, and so on. All sit up startled and, with reserved action, portray on their faces the death meaning of the scene. Numbers 2 and 3 come up to their knees, and Number 1 arises to his knee and one foot so as to elevate him above the others. Although the rest remain seated they are alert, intense, awestruck. . . .

As the last words of his song die away behind the scenes, White Dog enters, walking slowly but with firm tread, to point X in Figure 49. Here





*Photograph by Ralph Haburton*





*Photograph by Ralph Haburton*

ROBERT RAYMOND AND JOHN LANDIS HOLDEN

## Finger Movement in the Ant Dance

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he stands for a moment, erect and stately, his eyes fixed on the distance, then begins singing his song again, his voice full of emotion, wavering and faltering a little near the end. He staggers a step or two, catches himself, sings the first line again—his legs crumble and he falls to the ground, lying face up, parallel to the Council Rock at X in Figure 49.

A long moment of silence and the drum begins beating very softly. Very quietly and with utmost reverence, without the slightest jar or sudden motion, Number 2 arises and, with the flat-heel step, moves slowly and with dignity across the ring and sticks his spear in the ground so that it stands erect at White Dog's head. He then takes off his warbonnet and spreads it over White Dog's face, and exits quietly. Then Number 3 repeats, placing his spear at White Dog's feet and his headdress on his chest. Next Numbers 14 and 15 arise together, move across and spread their warbonnets on the body, then 12 and 13, and so on until only Number 1 is left. He then arises, moves across the ring, leans his shield against the spear at the dead man's head, places his headdress on the body, and exits. The ring is empty—the dead one is left to sleep.

The dancers so place their warbonnets that the body is completely covered and no part of it can be seen. As it lies there completely enshrouded in gorgeous eagle feathers it looks strangely like a grave.

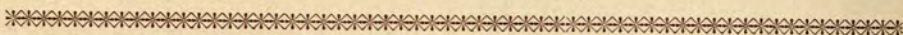
In the presence of death, all movements, dancing and otherwise, are reserved, subdued, quiet, reverent. The body remains on the ground until the closing ceremony of the council fire is reverently completed and the audience begins to leave, or if on the stage, until the curtain is slowly lowered.

The medicine of this dance is powerful and it pulls heavily at the heart-strings.

**COSTUMING.**—White Dog is an old man and must be dressed accordingly. His face is made up to show age. He wears clothes in contrast to the breechclothed dancers—leggings, shirt or vest, perhaps blanket. On his head is a medicine-man's headdress or a warbonnet.







## Chapter VI

### GROUP DANCES OF THE CHIPPEWAS

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UNDER NORTHLAND pines the booming dance-drum changes mood anon and yet again. Full of manly vigor, it shouts for virile powwows. Flush with success afield, it clamors for boastful story dances. Eager for the zest of battle, it demands restless war dances. Again, in friendly mood, it suggests pleasant, homey social dances.

Its noisy powwows and showy story dances have been described. And now the fancy changes, first to the war dance for a moment, then to the delightful pastime dances—chorus dances all.

In no respect difficult, demanding no intricate or over strenuous movements, these are within the reach of all, however inexperienced. The movements are wholly natural, simple and conservative.

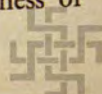
Scarcely in the brilliant category, these dances are nevertheless welcomed numbers always, especially sought after as lead-ups and breathers, before and in between the more rousing, spirited dances.

#### Chippewa War Dance

So simple is this dance, so easily mastered that a group of beginners can often learn it well enough to present in public in a half-hour of practice. Differing in type from any other dance in this volume, it nevertheless has a peculiar fascination, a charm all its own, an atmosphere unmistakably primitive, especially when done with the shifting shadows of the campfire as its background.

This is a true war dance—a preparation for the battle, not an aftermath of celebration for victories won. No idle pastime this, no mere showoff—it was the producer of fighting men. The rhythm of it, danced over and over, on and on, had a marked psychological effect, filling the warrior with ecstasy, with increased importance, causing him to feel himself stronger and more powerful than he was, more certain of success. The intoxication of the rhythm with everyone doing it together developed a solidarity, a oneness of purpose, a harmony, each with all. For these reasons war dances were widespread, if not universal, not only among the Indian tribes but among all primitive folk.

With the passing of the glad fighting days the original usefulness of





the war dance of the Chippewas was no more. But it has continued on to the present to brighten up a drab today with memories of an exciting and glorious yesterday, and to unite the village the better to solve the problems of peace.

#### DRUM RHYTHM

The rhythm of the War Dance differs from that of any other dance here recorded and, for best results, must receive careful attention by the drummer. Instead of the usual two-time, the accented beat is held—



The held beat is the loud beat. Characteristic rhythm and sound is achieved by leaving the beater on the drum after the loud beat is struck until necessary to remove it for the next beat. This, of course, differs from most drumming in which the beater is allowed to rebound from its impact with the drum. It is allowed to rebound from the soft or fast beat but is held on the drum for the loud beat. It is possible to do the War Dance to a regular two-time rhythm but the dancers will swing into the characteristic movement better if correct drumming is used. A little practice on the part of the drummer will perfect it. The tempo is medium-fast to fast.

The drum best suited is a hoop-drum, or hand-drum, such as is illustrated in Figure 109. Among the Chippewas this is called a *war-drum* or *chief's drum* because its size and lightness permitted it to be taken along on war parties by the Chief for use in war dances. A hard beater should be used (see page 248).

#### BODY MOVEMENT

There is no movement of the feet but rather an up-and-down motion of the body with the feet stationary. Stand with the feet side by side, normal distance apart. Flex the knees to lower the body on the loud beat and raise it on the soft beat, as indicated in Figure 50. It is not an *even* up-and-down motion but rather conforms to the accent of the drumming. The emphasis is downward, which is natural since the downward motion is on the accented beat of the drum. The body remains down longer, going up only long enough to come down again. The body is held down for the full length of the held beat and goes up only for the length of the short one. In other words, the dancer does not stand erect and go down and up, but rather takes the down position as shown in B, and goes up and down from it. The downward motion is quick and emphatic—the muscles of the legs are relaxed and the body dropped to be caught as the loud beat hits. The legs are raised to their full height on the up beat, however, the knees being jerked back straight on the count.

The body is bent slightly forward at the hips, the head is erect and the

