

# America Dances!

## A Kaleidoscope of American Folk Dances for Grades 3-12 & Adults

By Rosemary Hallum and Henry "Buzz" Glass

### INTRODUCTION

This kaleidoscope of American folk dances reflects the spirit, variety, and multicultural makeup of our great country.

Why another collection of folk dances? Because this one has been especially prepared for YOUNG AMERICA

- Each dance is of a different type, thus offering IN ONE PACKAGE a broad sampling of different strands of the American folk dance heritage –
  - Square, round, and line dances
  - Cowboy, Indian, and Hawaiian dances
  - Mixers, play party, and soul dances
- The dances have AUTHENTICITY and also are fun to do, making them suitable not only for school or recreation use but also for PATRIOTIC OR BROTHERHOOD PROGRAMS. Since the dances are of different types, this ONE source can be used in presenting a varied, balanced program.
- The dances have all been thoroughly FIELD TESTED in hundreds of classrooms ranging from inner-city to suburban areas. They are relevant for today's students.
- The music represents a wide range of styles and is suitable for a variety of uses.
- Directions are concise and easy to follow. They may be ADAPTED to the maturity of the class.

### ABBREVIATIONS

Bwd	Backward	LH	Left hand
CCW	Counterclockwise	LOD	Line of direction (CCW)
Cpls	Couples	Opp	Opposite
CW	Clockwise	R	Right
Ft	Foot	RH	Right hand
Fwd	Forward	Swd	Sideward
L	Left		

### 1. TENNESSEE WIG-WALK (Round Dance)

Originated in the Southwest in the 1940's, this dance has "gone all over the world."

**Formation:** Cpls facing each other in single circle, R hands joined in star hold. Boys face CCW.

#### Dance Description

#### Measures

- 1-4**      **1. Point and Side, Vine - 2 - 3**  
Both partners point L in front of R and then to side. Do grapevine moving swd R (step L in back of R, step swd R, step L crossed in front of R and hold). Reverse all, changing to L star hold. Point R to front and side, followed by grapevine L, stepping RLR and hold.
- 5-8**      **2. Circle and Progress**  
In R star position, circle once CW stepping LRL and hold, then RLR and hold. Boy then progresses

fwd CCW with a LRL hold, RLR hold to pass the first girl and meet the second girl as a new partner. Girl does same action, moving CW to meet the second boy as her new partner. (If desired, substitute LRL, brush R for LRL hold, and RLR, brush L for RLR hold.)

Repeat whole dance.

### 2. HUKILAU (Hawaiian Dance)

The Hukilau is one of the happiest, most popular Hawaiian dances. It is done by children and adults of both sexes. The words and motions tell the story of a fishing party.

#### Hawaiian words:

Hukilau = fishing party  
Huki = pull (i.e., pull in the net)  
Lau lau = beef cooked in a taro leaf, a small bundle of food  
Kau kau = food  
Luau = party  
Ama ama = type of fish

**Basic step:** Step together step tap (With small steps, step R swd R, step L beside R, step R swd R, tap ball of L ft on floor beside R. Reverse when going L). Bend knees slightly and relax body.

**Formation:** Parallel lines or informally scattered.

#### Dance Description

**CHORUS** (do basic step throughout, starting R, while arms do motions described below)

OH WE'RE GOING TO A HUKILAU

LH on hip, R thumb points to chest, then to R. "Pull" with both hands 2 times on R side of body.

A HUKI HUKI HUKI HUKI HUKILAU

"Pulling" motion once on L side, once R side, twice L side.

EVERYBODY LOVES A HUKILAU

Extend hands fwd, palms up, and move hands to sides. Do "pulling" motion twice on L side.

WHERE THE LAU LAU IS THE KAU KAU AT THE LUAU

"Stir and eat" (RH fingers "stir" in palm of LH and bring up to mouth as if eating). Then hands turn palms down and move to sides ("luau").

OH WE THROW OUR NETS OUT INTO THE SEA

Throw both arms fwd, then move hands up and down (palms down).

AND ALL THE AMA AMA COME A-SWIMMING TO ME

Placing R palm over back of LH, extend thumbs and wiggle or circle them while hands move up and down ("swimming").

OH WE'RE GOING TO A HUKILAU

Same motion as in first line of song.

A HUKI HUKI HUKI HUKILAU

"Pulling" motion once to L, R, L, and R sides.

**VERSE**

### WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR FISHING

Hands on L side, turn palms up and move RH to R side.

Do "pulling" motion twice on R side.

### THE OLD HAWAIIAN WAY

LH on hip, RH reaches to touch L shoulder.

Repeat to opp side.

### AND THE HUKILAU NETS ARE SWISHING

"Pulling" motion once on L side, once on R. Both hands move fwd and go up and down ("swishing").

### DOWN IN OLD LAIE BAY

Hands describe circle in front of body ("Bay").

### ENDING

#### A HUKI HUKI HUKI

Do "pulling" motion twice on R side.

#### A HUKI HUKI HUKI

Do "pulling" motion twice on L side.

#### A HUKI HUKI HUKI HUKILAU

Point R ft swd R and place hands out to sides.

Point R ft fwd and extend arms fwd, palms down, RH on top of L, head inclined downward.

## 3. OLD DAN TUCKER (Cowboy Dance)

This rollicking dance was a favorite of cowboys during America's frontier days. There are probably more versions of the song than of any other American folk song.

**Formation:** Cpls in a single circle (boy to L of girl), hands joined, facing center. One boy without a partner is in the center he is OLD DAN TUCKER. He is going to "steal" someone's partner.

### Dance Description

#### Measures

#### 1. All Fwd and Back, Couples Slide

1-4 Boy beginning L and girl R, take 4 walking steps fwd and 4 walking steps bwd.

5-8 Partners face, join both hands, and take 4 slides in and 4 slides out.

9-12 Repeat walking steps fwd and bwd as in measures 1-4.

13-16 Repeat slides in and out as in measures 5-8.

#### 2. Partners Face, Grand R and L

1-8 Partners face and do grand R and L with walking steps. Partners hold R hands, then move fwd in the direction they are facing (boy CCW, girl CW) to give L hand to next person. Continue to move fwd in the same way each giving RH and then LH in turn, to each succeeding person. TUCKER moves fwd around the ring, placing himself advantageously so he will get a partner in the next figure.

#### 3. Couples Swing

9-16 On the call "Swing," each boy takes the nearest girl and they swing together. TUCKER makes sure he has a girl. The boy now without a partner goes to the center of the circle to be the new DAN TUCKER.

#### 4. Couples Promenade

1-8 On the call "Promenade," cpls promenade fwd together in LOD (CCW) around the circle. Boy is at girl's L side, her LH in his LH, RH in his RH. End facing center. Repeat all.

## 4. SOUL STYLE (Soul Dance)

The most important recent development in American dance started in the late 1950's and has been called by various names – rock and roll, discotheque, fad, and soul. Soul dance came from the Black culture and is an important part of present-day life. It is characterized by individual body styling and movement of all the body.

**Music:** Superstition

**Formation:** Circle, lines, or scattered informally

### Dance Description

#### Measures

1-4 **Introduction-** Wait during first four measures. Snap fingers in time to the music.

1-4 **1. Four Laterals (step together step touch)**  
Step L swd L, step R together by L, step L swd L, touch R ft beside L and clap.

Reverse.

Repeat all.

#### 2. Fwd, Back, and Circle

1-2 Walk fwd LRL with small steps (as if strutting), touch R ft beside L and snap fingers.

Walk bwd RLR, touch L ft beside R and snap.

3-4 Go L (CCW) in place in small circle walking LRL touch R beside L and clap and completing the circle by walking RLR, touch L beside R and clap, ending in original position.

5-8 Repeat all. making a circle R (CW) the second time.

#### 3. Step Touch and Kick

1-2 Step L swd, touch R ft beside L and snap. Step R swd R, touch L ft beside R and snap. Repeat all.

3-4 Kick L ft ( a small kick, close to floor, toe pointed down), step L fwd, step R together by L (cts 1 & 2). Kick L ft, step L bwd, step R together by L (cts 3 & 4).

Kick L ft, step L in place, step R in place, hold and clap.

Repeat whole dance, using individual body styling throughout

**Note:** After students learn the dance, add a 1/4 turn R (90° CW) at the end of step 3 as follows:

Kick L ft, then step on L ft and R ft while turning 90° CW (1/4 turn R), hold and clap. Repeat dance in this position. On each repeat make a 1/4 turn R. thereby returning to original starting position after 4 repetitions.

## 5. OH JOHNNY (Square Dance)

This enjoyable version of OH JOHNNY has been a part of the American square dance scene for many years, both in schools and recreational circles.

**Formation:** Four couples form a square. Boy is to L of girl.

### Dance Description

1. ALL JOIN HANDS AND YOU CIRCLE THE RING

All circle L with walking steps.

2. STOP WHERE YOU ARE AND YOU GIVE HER A SWING

Boys face partners and each cpl swings, using a walking step or "buzz" step. May use elbow swing, 2-hand swing, or regular square dance swing (in social dance position, with R hips adjacent).

3. **NOW SWING THAT CORNER GIRL**  
Boys face corner girl (girl to boy's L) and swing with her.
4. **NOW GO BACK HOME AND SWING, SWING, SWING YOUR OWN**  
Swing again with original partners.
5. **IT'S ALLEMANDE LEFT WITH YOUR CORNER GIRL**  
Boys turn corner girl with LH and go back to place.
6. **DO-SA ROUND YOUR OWN**  
Boys face original partners. With walking steps, pass by R shoulders, move back to back, then go back into original place.
7. **THEN YOU ALL PROMENADE WITH YOUR SWEET CORNER MAID**  
Boys take corner girl (girl to boy's L) for new partner and promenade CCW around the square .
8. **SINGING OH JOHNNY, OH JOHNNY, OH**  
Continue to promenade CCW, boy bringing his new partner to his original position.  
Repeat dance with new partner. On the final 4 measures, partners bow to each other.

*Note:* This may also be done as a circle dance, with cpls joining hands in a single circle, all facing center. At the end of the promenade cpls face the center to form a large single circle again.

## 6. CIRCLE VIRGINIA REEL (Virginia Reel)

The Virginia Reel is probably the most famous American folk dance. It can be done not only in longways formation but also in a circle. In this mixer version all the dancers are active.

*Music:* Sherbrooke

*Formation:* Cpls in a double circle, dancers about 4 ft apart. Boy faces girl with his back to the center of the circle

### Dance Description

#### Measures

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>1-8</b>  | <b>1. Fwd and Bwd</b><br>Boy beginning L and girl R, walk fwd 4 steps, then bwd 4 steps. Repeat   |
| <b>9-16</b> | <b>2. RH Star, LH Star</b><br>Partners join R hands (with bent elbows) head high, and circle around once CW back to place in 8 steps.<br>Reverse: partners join L hands (with bent elbows) head high, and circle around once CCW back to place in 8 steps.                                      |
| <b>1-4</b>  | <b>3. Two Hands Round</b><br>Partners join both hands with bent elbows held chest high and circle once around CW back to place in 8 steps.  |
| <b>5-8</b>  | <b>4. Dos-a-Dos and Veer R</b><br>Boy and girl advance in a dos-a-dos, passing R shoulders and stepping to the R when passing back to back. Each moves <b>DIAGONALLY R BWD</b> to <b>HIS OWN R (VEER)</b> to end in front of a new partner. Boys have progressed 1 place CW, girls 1 place CCW. |
| <b>9-16</b> | <b>5. Heel-Toe</b><br>Facing new partner and joining hands shoulder high, boy begins L and girl R. Do a heel-toe, heel-toe, slide 4 times in LOD. Reverse.  |
| <b>1-8</b>  | <b>6. Swing New Partners</b><br>Partners do a R elbow swing in place for 12 cts,  |

using a walking step (a 2-hand swing or regular square dance swing position could also be used). End in promenade position with girl standing to boy's R. Joined hands are crossed (boy's RH on top) and held in front, RH in RH, LH in LH.

**9-16**

## 7. Promenade Two by Two

Using a square dance walk, cpls move fwd CCW in promenade position 16 steps. End facing each other. Repeat dance from beginning.

## 7. FOLLOW MY LEADER (Omaha Indian)

Omaha Indian boys and girls have enjoyed this singing game for generations.

*Formation:* Standing in a circle (younger children may sit or kneel), with a LEADER in the middle .

### Dance Description

All follow the Leader's actions, moving their arms, hands, bodies, and feet as he does. Try to keep in time with the music.

The Leader may improvise different body motions or foot patterns, or else do some standard Indian steps, such as:

Side step, as in a Round Dance (step L swd L, step R beside L, with body relaxed and moving up and down in time with the drumbeats)

Touch step (touch R ft flat on floor slightly fwd, step R beside L, reverse)

Toe heel (do in place, turning, or moving fwd)

Step hop (do in place, turning, or moving fwd)

When the Leader finishes his turn he points to someone to take his place. Continue.

## 8. ALLIGATOR STOMP (Fad Line Dance)

New American dances keep springing up. This one has been very popular with square dance and round dance groups during the 70's. It is "down-home" country style, with the flavor of rock

*Music:* Amos Moses

*Formation:* Stand in columns facing fwd (each student in back of the other, rather than side by side). Scatter formation may also be used.

### Dance Description

#### Measures

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1-2</b> | <b>1. Heel Step, Heel Step</b><br>Touch R heel on floor obliquely fwd<br>Step on R beside L<br>Touch L heel on floor obliquely fwd<br>Step on L beside R  |
| <b>3-4</b> | <b>2. Grapevine</b><br>Turning so body faces 1/4 turn (90°) L, step swd R (LEADING WITH R SHOULDER), step L in back of R, step swd R and pivot 1/2 turn (180°) CW to face opp LOD, step L beside R and clap hands.<br>Repeat whole sequence, each time <i>facing a new wall</i> . Students should add their own body styling. |

## 9. SOMEBODY WAITING (Play-Party Game)

Play-party games were done by American pioneers both children and adults. While dancing was often frowned upon as sinful and fiddle-playing regarded as "music of the devil" play-party games (which were originally done only with singing, clapping, and foot-stomping as accompaniment) were accepted as wholesome amusement.

**Formation:** Single circle with hands joined, all facing center. No partners are necessary. One person is IT in the center. (After the class knows the dance, have 2, 3, or even several ITS for more activity.)

### Dance Description

1. AS I LOOKED INTO HER EYES, I BEHELD WITH GLAD SURPRISE THAT THERE'S SOMEBODY WAITING FOR ME  
All join hands, sing, and circle L with walking steps. At the same time, IT circles R in the center, looking over the dancers.
2. OH THERE'S SOMEBODY WAITING, OH THERE'S SOMEBODY WAITING, OH THERE'S SOMEBODY WAITING FOR ME  
Continue circling L. End facing center and drop hands.
3. CHOOSE TWO LEAVE THE OTHERS, CHOOSE TWO LEAVE THE OTHERS, CHOOSE TWO LEAVE THE OTHERS FOR ME  
IT, if a boy, immediately chooses two girls to join him in the center. The THREE circle L in a small circle with skipping or walking steps. All others in the outside ring clap hands and sing.
4. SWING ONE LEAVE THE OTHER, SWING ONE LEAVE THE OTHER, SWING ONE LEAVE THE OTHER FOR ME  
IT selects one of the two girls, and they swing in place with an elbow swing or two-hand swing, using skipping or walking steps. IT and his partner join the circle. The remaining girl is the new IT, and she will choose 2 boys when it is time. The dance continues in this way, each IT choosing 2 dancers of the opposite sex.

Repeat all.

## 10. OKLAHOMA MIXER (Mixer Dance)

Originally called the Texas Schottische, this dance was later named the Oklahoma Mixer. It has been done all over the world by children and grownups.

**Music:** Shepherd Schottische

**Formation:** Cpls in double circle facing LOD (CCW) in Varsouviana position—girl standing in front of boy and slightly to his R, with her arms held upraised about shoulder high. Boy holds girl's hands, L in his L, R in his R.

Or, a semi-Varsouviana or Skater's position may be used. It is preferable when there is a height difference. Girl is in front and to R of boy. Girl extends LH swd in front of boy's chest and places RH in back at hip level. Boy holds girl's LH in his LH and places his RH over girl's RH.

### Dance Description

#### Measures

- 1-2 **1. Two-Step and Walk**  
In Varsouviana position, cpls take a two-step diagonally fwd L (step fwd on L close R to L, step fwd on L and hold).  
Take a two-step diagonally fwd R (step fwd R, close L to R, step fwd R and hold).
- 3-4  
Take 4 slow walking steps LRLR directly fwd with a swagger or strut.
- 5-6 **2. Heel-Toe and Walking Steps**  
Still in Varsouviana position, place L heel diagonally fwd L and then touch L toe beside R ft. Cpls retain L hands but drop R as girl crosses in front of boy with 3 steps, LRL, to end on the inside of the circle facing opp LOD (CW). While girl crosses in front of him, boy steps in place LRL hold.

- 7 Beginning with R ft, cpl repeats heel-toe pattern.
- 8 Girl walks 3 steps, LRL hold, diagonally fwd L in CW direction to meet a new partner. On the hold she makes a half-turn L (180° CW) to end with new partner in Varsouviana position. Boy walks 3 steps fwd, RLR hold, extending RH to new girl and leading her into position.

Repeat whole dance.

## About the Authors

**Rosemary Hallum, M.A.**, is an elementary teacher and early childhood consultant with teaching experience from preschool through college. She has done professional work in music and dance and gives local, state, and national workshops in music, movement, and language development. Her other publications include eight, recordings, three films, and seven books.

**Henry "Buzz" Glass** — For thirty years a dance specialist in Oakland Public Schools, Buzz Glass is now supervisor of physical education, there. He constantly works with children in the classroom. He studied with Jose Limon, Katherine Dunham, Rivka Sturman and many others, received a Ford Foundation fellowship for dance study and research in Mexico and has learned the ethnic dances of many other countries under native teachers. He has taught dance at San Francisco State, Mills College extension, University of Southern California, University of the Pacific Dance Camp, etc. The founder and past president of the Folk Dance Federation of California, he has written for many educational publications and is the author of "Movment Exploration."

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