

COTTON-EYED JOE (America)



This dance is done in many versions throughout the southwestern part of the United States. It is a form of the "heel-and-toe polka," a dance performed the world over.

OPENING FORMATION: Couples, arranged in a circle, man's back to center, facing partner.

PART 1: (a) Ballroom position. Starting with man's left, lady's right foot, do a heel-and-toe . . . that is, touch heel to side, then touch same toe beside the other foot. Then do a "two-step," which is a step-together-step, starting on the man's left, lady's right foot, moving counterclockwise. (For youngsters, a two-hand hold may be substituted.)

Repeat the above by doing a heel-and-toe and step-together-step in the other direction (clockwise), starting on man's right, lady's left foot.

(b) Drop hands and turn away from each other (man to left, lady to right) with 4 "two-steps."

PART 2: (a) Face partner, do not hold hands. Move sideways, both to the right, taking 7 tiny side-steps. Repeat in other direction.

(b) Take ballroom position and do 4 two-steps turning around the circle.

VARIATIONS: **PART 1b:** In turning solo, instead of "two-steps," one can do lively jig or polka steps. Girls may swish skirts, as men use arms "cake-walk" style. Dancers may also toss hands overhead while shaking them, then dropping them behind back, alternating up and down with each step.

PART 2a: This is the section of the dance in which dancers may improvise and do a variety of individual solo steps, such as reel steps, buck and wing, tap, jig, etc. Almost anything in tempo is acceptable. It is not necessary that partners do the same step. They may improvise freely, so long as they return to each other in time for the ballroom position two-step at the end of the dance.

PART 2: Holding right hands, hop on left foot as you lock right ankles and hop around each other, left hand high. Change hands and feet and hop on the right foot, locking left ankles, 8 steps each way. Note that when you do this variation, you omit the 4 two-steps at the end.