

Picking Up Sticks

(England)

Originally titled "Picking of Sticks" and published in *The English Dancing Master* (1st Ed. 1650), the title was changed by Cecil Sharp to "Picking Up Sticks," and published in *The Country Dance Book, Part 4* (1916). He used the tune from another dance, "Lavena." Elsie Whiteman of the Benacre Band introduced the tune of "Kitty Magee," which is sometimes played for the third figure of the dance. The dance notes and a summary of the research on this dance are presented in *The Playford Ball, 103 Early English Country Dances*, by Kate Van Winkle Keller and Genevieve Shimer (1990).

MUSIC: *Country Dance Tunes, Set VII* by Cecil J. Sharp has the tune "Lavena." "Kitty Magee" is in *Community Dances Manual 5* from EFDSS. *English Country Dance Tunes* by Peter Barnes gives both tunes.

RECORD: CDS-7 "Popular English Country Dances of the 17th and 18th Centuries" Side A/3; Country Dance Series #3 (45 rpm); Folkraft 1410X45; EFDSS PLA3 Side B/2. 6/8 meter

FORMATION: Longways for three couples, facing the head of the hall, inside hands joined.

STEPS and Skip* (2 to a meas): Step (cts 1-2); hop (ct 3); repeat (cts 4-6).

STYLING: Walk* or Run* (2 to a meas): Step on cts 1,4.

Forward a Double and Back: Move fwd with three light springy steps (usually R,L,R) and a close with L (2 meas); move bkwd three steps (L,R,L) and close with R (2 meas). Can also be danced with four steps fwd and four steps back, or with a small, light balance (three quick steps) instead of the last step and close.

Arm R: Ptrs move fwd, hook R elbows and turn once around CW with six light springy steps (meas 1-3). Without changing step or rhythm release arm hold and move back into original position with two more steps (meas 4).

Arm L: Repeat action, but hook L elbow and turn CCW.

Siding: A movement of courtesy keeping eye contact with ptr. Moving in a CCW arc dance Forward a Double, exchanging places with partner (2 meas). Retrace pattern, moving in a CW arc to return to orig pos (2 meas).

Slipping: Move sideward by springing to side on the leading ft (cts 1-2); step on the trailing ft next to the leading ft (ct 3); repeat (cts 4-6).

Steps are light and springy, posture erect, movements flowing. Make eye contact with other dancers whenever possible. Free hands are relaxed at sides.

* Described in *Steps and Styling*, published by the Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc.

MUSIC	6/8 meter	PATTERN
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Measures

INTRODUCTION. No action. Introduction varies with recording.

I. FORWARD A DOUBLE AND BACK; DIAGONAL CHANGE.

1-8 Joining inside hands, all lead Forward a Double and Back. Repeat.

- 9-12 M1 change places with middle dancer on the opposite side passing R shldr (4 running steps), then with the last dancer on his own side (again passing R shldr with 4 running steps).
- 13-16 Joining inside hands, all lead Forward a Double and Back.
- 17-20 W1 change places with middle dancer on the opposite side passing R shldr, then with the last dancer on her own side (again passing R shldr).
- 21-24 Joining inside hands, all lead Forward a Double and Back.
- 25-32 Repeat meas 9-16 with W2, now at the top on M's side, changing places.
- 33-40 Repeat meas 17-24 with M2, now at the top on W's side, changing places.
- 41-48 Repeat meas 9-16 with M3, now at the top on M's side, changing places.
- 49-56 Repeat meas 17-24 with W3, now at the top on W's side, changing places.

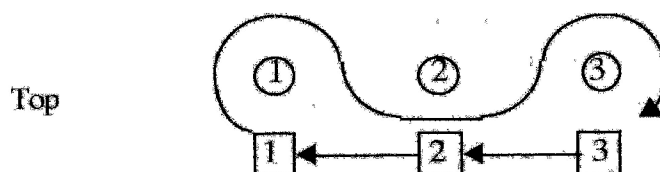
II. SIDING; SLIPPING AND SKIPPING.

- 1-8 Siding with ptr twice.
- 9-10 Cpl 1 join both hands and Slip down the ctr four steps between Cpl 2 *while* Cpl 2, facing across the set, Slips up four steps on the outside into Cpl 1's place.
- 11-12 Repeat meas 9-10 with Cpl 2 joining hands and Slipping down the ctr *while* Cpl 1 Slips up the outside.
- 13-16 Repeat meas 9-12.
- (9-16) **Meanwhile**, Cpl 3, cross passing R shldr and skip around the outside of the set, crossing again at the top passing R shldr, and returning to place.
- 17-24 Repeat meas 9-16 with Cpl 3 beginning by Slipping up the ctr, then down the outside *while* Cpl 2 Slips down the outside, then up the ctr and Cpl 1 skips around the outside of the set.

III. ARMING; SHEEPSKIN HEY.

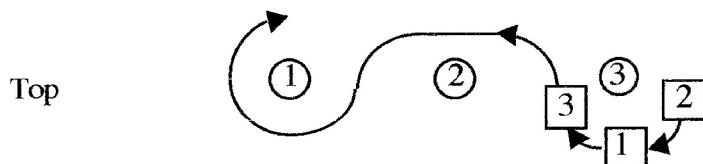
- 1-8 Ptrs Arm R, then Arm L.
- 9-12 W remain in place while M dance the Sheepskin Hey.

M Sheepskin Hey (skipping): M 1, followed by M 2 and 3, dance across top of set and pass behind W 1, between W 1 and 2, in front of W 2 and between W 2 and 3. M 1 and 2, upon reaching W 3 pass CW around her.

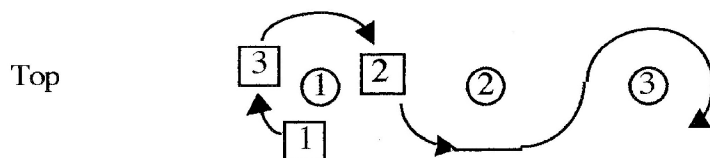


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M 3, instead of following M 2, passes CCW completely around W 2 and faces up, thus becoming the leader.



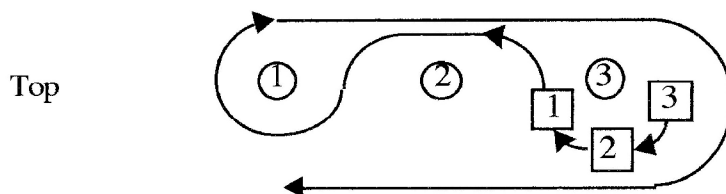
- 13-16 M 3, followed by M 1 and 2, continues weaving to the top, and M 2, who is last in line, instead of following M 1 around W 1, passes CCW around W 2 and faces down, thus becoming the leader.



- 17-20 M 2, followed by M 3 and 1, continues weaving to the bottom, and M 1, who is last in line, instead of following M 3 around W 2, passes CCW completely around W 2 and faces up, thus becoming the leader.

- 21-24 M 1, followed by M 2 and 3, continues weaving to the top of the W line.

- 25-32 M dance CW around W 1, dance down the outside of W line, across the bottom of set and up to original places.



- 33-56 W repeat Sheepskin Hey (mirror image) while M line remains in place.
On final chord acknowledge ptr.

Description written October 1993.

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