

VIRGINIA REEL (America)

Probably the most popular of the "contra" or "longway" dances, the Virginia Reel is most often done in "family style," with all participants active throughout. It is done to many tunes; this recording uses a medley of familiar tunes to encourage group singing in PART 3.

OPENING FORMATION: A "longways" set of six couples—two parallel, facing lines, "ladies" on the left and "gent" on the right (from the head couple).

PART 1: "Forward and back"—both lines take 4 steps to center, bow (or curtsy) to partner and 4 steps back to place.

"Right hand around"—partners meet, join right hands, swing once around, clockwise, and return to place.

"Left hand around"—repeat, using left hand and swinging counter-clockwise.

"Both hands around"—repeat, using both hands and turning clockwise.

"Do-si-do"—lines walk forward, pass partners by the right shoulder, slide back-to-back and return to place, passing left shoulders.

PART 2: "Head couple down and back"—head couple joins both hands and "sashays" down the set and back to head position. ("Sashay" with quick—but smooth—sliding side-steps.)

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"Reel the set"—head couple hooks right elbows, turns once and a half around, then separates and goes to opposite line. Head gent turns second lady once around with a left elbow turn, as head lady does the same with the second gent.

Head couple meets in center for a right elbow turn and continues to the third lady and gent for a left elbow turn.

Head couple continues down the set in this fashion—left elbow turns to the set, right elbow turns in the center—until it has "reeled" the entire set.

At the foot of the set, head couple swings half-way around so that gent and lady are on correct side, joins hands, and "sashays" back to places.

PART 3: "Cast off to the foot"—at the change of music, head couple leads to the outside (gent to his left, lady to her right) and, followed by the lines, marches to the foot of the set.

"Form the arch"—upon reaching the foot of the set, head couple joins hands to form an arch. The others, now led by the second couple, join hands and "sashay" through the arch. Second couple leads to the head of the set where it now stands as head couple for the next figure.

When all couples have gone through the

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arch, head couple drops hands and steps back to become the foot couple.

In this manner, after six changes, each couple will have had its turn as head couple.

NOTE: Playing this record through once will provide music for three changes. Replaying the record will complete the Reel for all six couples.