

THE SAINT JOHN RIVER
(Strathspey)

This dance was the winning dance in the competition to select a Scottish Country Dance to commemorate Canada's Centennial in 1967. Composed by Prudence Edwards, Fredericton, NB.

BARS

- 1-8 1st lady casts off one place, crosses and casts behind 3rd man, crosses and casts behind 4th lady and crosses to finish below 4th man on opposite side of the dance; 1st man follows his partner to finish below 4th lady on opposite side of the dance.
- 9-16 1st couple, nearer hands joined, dance up under arch formed by 4th couple, turn each other one and a half times with two hands, then dance up under arch formed by 2nd couple, finishing in 1st place on own side of the dance.
- 17-24 1st couple lead down the middle and up, followed by 2nd, 3rd and 4th couples; 2nd couple dance up for 2 bars, lead down for 2 bars, up for 2 bars and dance down to place for 2 bars; 3rd couple dance up for 3 bars, lead down for 1 bar and dance down to place for 3 bars; 4th couple dance up for 4 bars to meet at the top of the dance but do not join hands, then cast out and dance down to place for 4 bars.
- 25-28 All four couples dance back to back (dos-a-dos).
- 29-32 1st couple wend their way down own sides of the dance (Grand R & L), changing place with 2nd couple with right hands, 3rd couple with left and 4th couple with right to finish in 4th place, 1st man and 4th lady making polite turns.

Suggested Tunes: The Bonnie Lass o' Bon Accord
(Scott Skinner)
The Singing Bird

Explanation of the figures:

"The Chase" (bars 1-8) describes the meandering course of the River.

"The Bridges and Pools" (bars 9-16) is explained by its title.

"The Reversing Falls" (bars 17-24) describes the reversing falls at Saint John; when the tide is ebbing, the River runs downstream over a shallow waterfall, and when the tide comes in, it forces the River to flow upstream up the falls.

"The River Meets the SEA" (bars 25-32) is described in the wave-like back-to-back movement of all four couples, and the 1st couple wending their way down to 4th place describes the River disappearing into the sea.

Presented by C. Stewart Smith at Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc.
Statewide Institute, Oakland, California, May 31, 1968

