

Arts and Crafts Activity

Native American History

Cornhusk Dolls (For Boys and Girls)

Materials Needed: Cornhusks, Scissors, Thread, Water

How to Make: Dampen the cornhusks, but do not get them too wet or they will shrink. Stack several cornhusks and fold them in half. Tie thread around the husks about one inch below the fold to form the head. Tightly roll one small husk and tie the ends to prevent it from unrolling. Center the husk directly under the neck so the ends stick out on either side of the body to form the arms. Tie thread under the arms to form the torso. For a girl doll trim the bottom of the husks to make a skirt. For a boy doll, divide the husks below the waist in half and tie each to form pants. To embellish the doll you can add hair and accessories out of corn silks or more husks. (Agrifair corn husk handout, 2000)

Types of Dances

(19th century instructions precede modern instructions when modern ones are necessary)

THE BROOM DANCE

A bench is set at the head of the dance area. Boys line on the left of the bench in a single file line that runs perpendicular to the bench. The girls line up on the right in the same manner. One boy sits in the middle of the bench and holds a broom. A girl sits on each side of the boy. When the music starts the boy gives the broom to one of the girls. The girl who does not get the broom becomes the boy's partner. They hold hands and sashay down the dance floor until they reach the end of the lines of boys and girls. They then stand at the end of their respective lines and the girl with the broom moves to the middle of the bench. Two boys join her, one on either side, and she chooses a partner by handing the broom to the one with whom she does not want to dance. The dance continues until everyone has danced at least once.

TWINE THE GARLAND, GIRLS!

This is a simple kind of dance. A line of young ladies take hold of each other's hands: one stands perfectly still, while the others dance around her, winding and stopping - winding and stopping - until they are all formed into a knot. Then they gradually untwist in the same manner, as they form the knot they sing, "Twine the garland, girls!" and when they unwind, they sing, "Untwine the garland, girls!" (Child, 54)

Girls should line up and hold each other's hands. The girl in the middle of the line should stand still, while the rest of the line should dance around her, still holding hands. The girls can go in opposite directions and under each other's arms, until all are in a tangled knot. Then everyone must reverse their steps and try to form a straight line again. Throughout the dance, the girls must continue to hold each other's hands.

THREAD THE NEEDLE

Thread the needle may be played by a considerable number of boys, who all join hands, and the game commences with the following dialogue between the two outside players at each end of the line: "How many miles to Babylon?" "Threescore and ten." "Can I get there by candlelight?" "Yes, and back again." "Then open the gates without more ado, and let the king and his men pass through." In obedience to this mandate, the player who stands at the opposite end of the line and the one next to him, lift their joined hands as high as possible; the other outside player then approaches, runs under the hands elevated, and the whole line follows him if possible, without disuniting. This is threading the needle. The same dialogue is repeated, the respondent now becoming the inquirer, and running between the two players at the other end with the whole line after him. The first then has his turn again. (Clarke, 34-5)

This game works best with a large number of children. While it is not specifically a dance in itself, threading the needle is a dance step in some contra dances. All players form a line, and begin by the two outside players reciting the poem quoted above. After the last line, the person who said, "Yes, and back again," and the child next to him should hold up their joined hands as high as they can, forming an arch for the children to pass under. The child at the other end who asked the questions, should run toward the arch, with all of the others following behind him and all try to go through the arch with their hands joined. When this is done, the game begins again with the arch being made at the other end. While playing this game, take turns being on the ends, so everyone gets a chance to be the leader. Try to get through the gate as fast as possible without letting go of each other's hands.

THE VIRGINIA REEL

There are many variations to this dance. It requires lively music and one person to call the steps. The head of the line is closest to the caller, the foot is the other end. The head couple is at the head of the line, and couples are numbered two, three, etc. as they move from head to foot. The participants form two lines facing each other; girls in one line, boys in the other. This is called "home." There should be equal numbers in each line and the lines should be far enough apart that a couple can walk between them. To begin the dance, all dancers take two steps toward their partner and bow or curtsy and then step back. This is repeated. Partners join right hands and turn in a circle once and return home. Repeat with left hands, then both hands. Everyone folds their arms over their chests. They walk toward their partner and circle to the right and return home. This is called Do-si-do. Do-si-do to the left. Partners hook right elbows together, turn once, and return home. Repeat with the left elbow. Partners hook right elbows together and make a half turn, then switch elbows and go the opposite direction to return home. Head couple links right arms, do a half turn and release arms, then head boy links left arms with girl number two and head girl links left arms with boy number two. They each do a half turn boy and girl number two return home and the head boy and girl repeat the turns with each other and the rest of the people in line. When the head couple gets to the foot, they sashay up the center, holding hands. At the head of the line, the head couple drops hands and walks to the outside of their respective lines. The rest of the people in each line follow the head couple. When the head couple gets to the foot of the line they join hands and makes an arch for

all of the couples to go under. The head couple stays at the end of the line, and all couples move one space forward, so that couple number two is now the new head couple. Repeat the dance until everyone has gotten to be the head couple. (Hughes)

Games for the Kids from the 19th Century

Animal Relay- The players form two lines with equal numbers on each team. The first animal on each team is an animal, the second a different animal. On the word “go”, the first person acts like the animal they represent, run, hop, or crawl to given place and back. The next person then acts like their animals and so on until one team is finished and sitting down. Use animals such as kangaroos, bunnies, dogs, cats, etc....

Bean Bag Relays- Walk/run/hop with bag on head/between knees/between feet.

Hot Potato- Equipment: Potato or something to pass. The potato is passed from person to person until the leader gives a signal. The person left holding the potato is eliminated.

Musical Chairs- Use 19th Century Music

Graces or La Grace

Equipment

Solid wooden hoop, such as an embroidery hoop

Four sticks about 1 inch in diameter

(19th century instructions precede modern instructions)

It derives its name from the graceful attitudes which it occasions. Two sticks are held in the hands, across each other, like open scissors: the object is to throw and catch a small hoop upon these sticks. The hoop is to be bound with silk, or ribbon, according to fancy. The game is played by two persons. The sticks are held straight about four inches apart, when trying to catch the hoop; and when the hoop is thrown, they are crossed like a pair of scissors. In this country it is called The Graces, or The Flying Circle. (Child, 105-6)

Two people play this game. Each girl holds one stick in each hand. One girl crosses her sticks so they look like an open pair of scissors, and she put the hoop over the sticks. This girl flings the hoop toward her partner, and the partner tries to catch the hoop with her sticks. Play continues back and forth. The object of the game is to toss the hoop back and forth without letting it fall to the ground. This game is designed to teach young ladies graceful movements.