

VIRGINIA REEL



Count: 32 **Wall:** 0 **Level:**

Choreographer: Unknown

Music: Choose lively old time reel music such as 'Durang's Hornpipe' or 'Old Zip Coon' or you may wish to use newer music such as a selection from the Atlanta Pops album, Hooked on Country.

Position: Two lines of couples, partners facing each other with 5-7 feet between the lines. The lines have a head and a foot with the head couple being the nearest the band or music source and the foot couple at the other end of the line. This dance is best executed with not more than six couples in each set.

One of the oldest dances enjoyed in the New World by the colonists (and it just might be the oldest) is the 'Virginia Reel'. The dance was first published in England in 1685 by Sir Roger De Coverly, and was named after the state of Virginia. Now whether it originated here or in England, we are not sure and it really doesn't matter. What matters is that it had been enjoyed since colonial times both here in the US and around the world.

Movie makers have chosen the Virginal Reel more than any other dance when the script called for a dance to be portrayed. Versions of the Virginal Reel can be seen in scores of movies depicting the colonial period in American history on through the great movement to settle the west and even movies depicting today's country settings.

There are many variations of the dance, some are very simple and some are more complicated; however, all are enjoyable. Several versions of this dance have been performed in Great Britain and here at home. As country/western dancing many times sets a hoe-down atmosphere, dancers of this caliber are enjoying a new popularity. This version has been submitted by Dick & Geneva Matteis-they would love to have other versions of this dance.

The step is a light walk on the toes or balls of the feet.

The following numbered calls are given by the leader for beginners, or where there are several sets, in order that all may keep together.

THE TURN

- 1 Head lady and foot gentleman forward and back. (honor your partner.) The head lady and the foot man advance diagonally toward each other four steps, curtsy and bow, and retire four steps backward into place. The head man and foot lady do likewise immediately.
- 2 Forward and turn with the right hand round. The head lady and the foot man advance, join left hands (shoulder high), make one complete turn and return to places. The head man and foot lady do the same.
- 3 Forward again with the left hand round. The head lady and foot man advance, join both hands straight across and make one complete turn, then return to places. The head man and foot lady do the same.
- 4 Do-si-do (pronounced dough-see-dough) the head lady and foot man advance, pass each other right shoulder to right shoulder, and without turning, go around each other back to back and retire backwards to places. The head man and foot lady do the same. Repeat the do-si-do by left shoulder.
- 5 Head couple down the center and back. The head couple join both hands and chasse (side slip and close) down inside of the lines four steps and return to the head position.

THE REEL

- 6 Right arm to partner and reel. (right to center, left to the side.) The head couple link arms and turn one and a half around. (this leaves the lady backing the men's line and the man facing the ladies line). The head lady turns the second man in line around in his place with left arms linked, while the head man does likewise with the second lady in line. Head couple then return to the middle and turn to each other again with right arms linked. To teach the reel, it is sometimes helpful for the leader to call, "right to the center, left to the side'). This is continued, each swinging the next in line until they reach the foot of the lines, where they swing each other half way around with right arms linked, so that the lady finished on her own side and the man on the men's side. The head couple then join hands across and chasse (side slip and close) with side steps back to the head position of the set. They drop hands and turn out ready for the march.

THE MARCH

- 7 The head couple separate. The man turning out and marching toward the foot directly behind the men's line, followed by the men in single file, and the head lady at the same time marching down the outside of the lady's line followed by all the ladies in single file. Then the head couple meet at the head of the set, followed by the other couples. When all have reached their original places, all the partners, except the head couple, join hands and hold them high to form a long archway under which the head couple, with hands joined, side step quickly to the foot, where they remain. The original second couple now become head couple and the whole pattern is repeated until all have been head couple.

REPEAT

VARIATIONS:

When the head couple reach the foot of the set, they stop, join both hands to form an arch while the couples who are behind them join hands and go under the arch and up the center toward the head position. This leaves the original head couple at the foot and the second couple now becomes the head couple.
