

# CAKE WALKS

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BY

F. LESLIE CLENDENEN

ORIGINATOR OF  
STAGE NOVELTIES, PLAYS, DANCES, ETC.



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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
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## CAKE WALKS.

By F. Leslie Clendenen.

Over 50 years ago the negroes of Florida be-  
came interested in the war dances of the Seminole In-  
dians (now one of our nearly extinct Indian tribes).  
They borrowed and enlarged upon the solemn style of  
the Indians' walking movements—the fad became uni-  
versal and was called "The Cake Walk." Classes were  
formed, and largely attended, by those desiring to learn  
the new promenade movements, prizes, consisting of  
chocolates and ices, were given for the best walkers.  
Later large fancy cakes were given as prizes—the ones  
receiving it cut it up and treated their guests.

The evening's program concluded with a program  
of Barn Dances, Virginia Reels, etc.

The slang phrase "That takes the cake" came  
into vogue about this time.

The Florida negroes were first to conceive the  
idea of using a special dress for the "Cake Walk," the  
men dressed in long coats of gaudy colors, while the  
women dressed in fluffy dresses and big hats.

When the winter resorts opened in Florida the  
cake walkers found their new creation in great demand,  
as no affair was complete without the cake walk.

### CAKE WALKS AND MOVEMENTS.

For four couples and leader.

Music: "Georgia Camp Meeting" and many other  
old negro melodies.

**COSTUME:** For leader, short white coat, large  
red cuffs and revers, white pants, overgaiters of red. Red  
silk hat.

Leader also carries a cane tied at end with sev-  
eral colored ribbons.

**BOYS**—Black face, all wear long Prince Alberts  
to ankle, loud colors, silk hats of colors, loud vests, plain  
colored trousers, overgaiters, and all carry canes.

**GIRLS**—Large hats, fancy dresses, some long  
and fluffy, others to knees; some carry parasols, others  
large fans.

### Movements.

The movement referred to as "cake walk step" is made by leaning back, stepping on the balls of the feet; pick the feet high, or about on level with the knee.

**EXERCISE**—Stand on R. with the left raised about on a level with the knee; knee curved so foot hangs down.

Make a slight spring coming down on L., lifting R. up to knee.

Repeat from R. to L. until the muscles are very free, the foot coming up resembles the movement of a horse with the string halt.

### Entree (for Stage).

Leader comes on; cake walk mild around the stage, cane held out at side in L. hand. A large fancy cake in R. hand. Move around, set cake on stand on side. Cake walk around to back, face wing at L., where the four couples are stationed ready to come on.

Leader grasps cane in both hands, raising high over his head; cake walk backward 8 or 16 counts, turn cake walk forward. Repeat moving around the stage, followed by the four couples, who enter arm in arm or nearest hands joined, cane in outside hand and raised, parasols raised. Cake walk around the stage, using fancy figures, as they pass around at back.

All face partners and make deep bows and courtesies.

Ladies all take seats at back of stage. Men stand back of partners.

### Couple No. 1.

Leader makes a few fancy cake walk movements, salutes audience and announces:

"Our contest tonight is for this beautiful, gorgeously decorated cake.

"Our audience is to be the judge as to who gets the der cake. Ise gwine to call un de dancers by couples; at finish of each one's walk, the one receiving the largest applause from our appreciative audience will receive de whole cake—an suhr dat am some swell cake."

Leader then announces the first couple as "Alabama."

*James Buchanan 28 June 1941 (Quilled)*

BY

While they are dancing he moves around doing mild and grotesque movements; if on a floor, he picks up the coins thrown to him.

Couple No. 1 makes deep bow and courtsey to each other.

Man faces his partner, both catch cane, raising it high. He cake walks backward, while she moves forward. Move around the stage for 16 bars. Let go and move  $\frac{1}{2}$  around each other on 8 C. Bow and courtsey, 8 C.

Join R. hands; boy cake walk around the girl; at same time she turns under his arm in cake walk step, looking back over shoulder at him, 8 C.

Bow and courtsey, 8 C.

Girl now cake walk, zig-zag back and forth in front of partner, looking over R. and L. shoulder; at same time the man raises hat in R. hand at side, cane in L. out back. Point R. foot diagonally forward, leaning to R. C. 1. Raise R. to knee. C. 2.

Repeat with left. C. 3-4. Repeat, following partner around the stage. At back she turns, both bow and courtsey low. Cake walk around and around each other, moving to seat. Courtesy low, take seats, man back of chair.

#### Couple No. 2.

Leader repeats his movements around the stage, salutes couple No. 2, then announces "Kentucky."

Man from couple No. 2 circles around in front of partner, makes a deep bow; lady quickly rises, makes deep courtsey.

Both cake walk around each other, moving to front at finish, make low bow and courtsey.

Take man's arm, move around stage stepping high, leaning body back for 4 bars. Reverse, leaning the body forward, kicking the feet high up back, 4 bars. Repeat, moving around the stage—16 or 32 bars.

Man now stands in place, making a pivot turn, using the following movements: Point R. foot diagonally forward, C. 1; at same time throw body forward over knee, cane out in R. hand; jerk R. foot up to knee, making a raising on L. ball. C. 2. Hands brought up to chest on C. 2.

Repeat for 8 or 16 counts, turning slightly to L.

J V N

each time.

At same time, lady moves backward around partner in a circle, using the following movements:

Grasp over dress in R. hand, raising it in front, lean forward. Step down on R. C. 1. Hop on R., raising L. about on level with ankle. C. &. Repeat by stepping down on L., etc. Repeat, moving backward and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  way around.

She grasps the man's hat, holds it out at side, turns  $\frac{1}{2}$  around, cake walks forward, leaning back, moving around partner—8 or 16 counts.

She stands in place, alternately touching R. and L. toe forward, holding hat forward coquettishly. He makes bow on 4 counts, bends body forward, mild cake walk forward, runs his head in his hat, continues cake walking around her.

Both bow and courtesy low, moving away from each other.

He places his R. arm around lady, facing opposite direction; she leans back in his arm, and both cake walk to place. Bow and courtesy, take seat.

### Couple No. 3.

Leader repeats as before, announces "Virginia."

Couple rise, bow and courtesy—very free.

Take man's arm, both lean well forward; move around stage, making pushing movements backward. The movement is made by pushing first one foot, then the other as far back as possible, cane held out in front, both holding it. Repeat for 4 or 8 bars.

Man lays hat on L. arm, both face, cake walk around each other, 8 or 16 counts.

She leads out around stage, flirting handkerchief back over R., then L. shoulder at man, who follows her. Make a long step forward on R. C. 1. Lean forward, raise and lower on ball of R., feet still separated, cane held forward in R. hand. As she flirts over L. shoulder, he steps forward on L., etc. Repeat 4 or 8 steps. He catches handkerchief on cane, both face, cake walk half around, bow and courtesy. As he rises, he notices dust on her shoe, points at it and makes motion with handkerchief.

She hops on L. foot, swings R. up front. C. 1.

At same time he hops on R., raising L. up back, leaning forward, making a flip or shake of handkerchief over shoe, as if dusting shoe. He steps back on L., leaning back, shaking handkerchief up at side and hopping on L., raising R. front. Same time lady steps down on R. Hop on R., raising R. up front, as she hops back raising foot front he reverses, dusting shoe. As he shakes cloth, she leans forward, etc.

Repeat for 4 times. He notices her shoe untied, kneels on L. knee, spreads handkerchief on R. knee. She puts R. foot on his knee. He makes motions as if tying shoe, shows surprise by raising both hands up front. She is indignant, turns away from him. He rises, cake walks half around in front of her, then moves backward, she following zig-zag around to place. Bow and courtesy and take seats.

#### Couple No. 4.

Leader repeats as before, announces "Mississippi."

Couple No. 4. Bow and courtesy.

Both move around the stage, using cork screw steps, as follows:

Raise R. foot about on level with knee and step across over left. Step L. across in front of R., repeat jerking the foot high. As the foot is raised, make a slight twist on the L. Repeat for 16 counts.

At center both face. Cake walk around, bow and courtesy.

She moves back 8 counts on a prolonged two-step, keeping the L. foot well back; at no time are the feet brought together. As the R. comes up, push left back, make motions of the hands as if pleading of him to follow.

At same time he walks forward by pointing R. diagonally forward, heel well up. C. 1.

Twist R. foot into first position and step down on R. foot. C. 2. R. Right hand, holding cane at side. Left back. Repeat by pointing L. and twist. C. 3.

Repeat, following lady around for 16 counts.

Circle. Bow and courtesy.

Both face, join hands, cane in both hands, he moves back, she forward, using "Hop change" movements, as follows:

He hops on L., at same time circle R. around back close to L. leg. C. 1.

Repeat by hopping on R. Circle L. around back and down across. Repeat, he back, lady forward, crossing in front.

The movement is made very free. She cake walks around him, grabbing his hat as she passes him. He catches her hat string and pulls it off, both place hats on their heads, bow and courtesy. She catches his tie strings; he turns quickly, crossing strings. She then drives him off the stage, using cake walk steps.

The leader then announces the couple receiving the greatest applause would receive the cake. He then picks up cake, moves around, holding it high, calls the couples by name as before. They come forward, bow and courtesy grotesquely, retire.

This is continued until all are on.

The cake is then awarded to the ones that received the largest applause.

They then do one or two steps and all exit, led out by the leader, each couple doing a fancy walk promenade.

## FANCY CAKE WALK STEPS.

Below we give a number of more complicated movements, which can be introduced as desired. Any eccentric dance step may be added.

### Step One.

After a tour of cake walk, girl turns side to boy and use falling step to back of stage. He follows with cake walk, stepping down across, throwing body side to side.

EXPLANATION: Raise R. foot at side, level with knee, step down on R. across back of L., at same time raise L. across in front of R. C. 1:

Step down on L., raising R. at side. C. 3. Step down on R. across in front of L., raising L. up back and at side on level with R. knee. C. 4. Repeat, leaning in direction you are going.

### Step Two.

Girl forward, holding skirt up front in R. hand,



parasol in L. hand.

Step on L., hop on L., crossing R. over. C. 1. Step down on R. in front of L., picking up L. C. &. Repeat with R., making hop on R. on C. 1. Repeat the "Hop Change" for 16 to 32 counts, at same time boy moves backward, using Texas Tommy steps, or slide R. out and hop on R. three times sideways. Repeat to L.

### Step Three.

Boy forward, L. hand raised over head, palm up. R. out at side.

Step forward on L., bending knees. C. 1. Make a jerk back on L. about 3 or 4 times, at same time raise R. up from floor. C. &. Step forward on R. and repeat.

Girl uses grapevine step backward, or turn both toes in. C. 1. Twist L. toe out to L., bringing R. toe to left heel. C. &.

Repeat, turning both toes in, and bringing L. back of R.

NOTE—The number of steps that can be used are unlimited. Yet the author has grouped the steps most in use and suitable for beginners. The grapevine, scissors, and many others of our ball room steps used a year ago would make good cake walk movements.



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