

St. John River

Origin: Canada

Source: Jessie Bryden

Choreography: Prudence Edwards This dance was the winner of the multicultural dance competition held in 1966 to find a dance that would be Canada's Centennial Dance. It represents the flowing of the St. John River across the countryside of New Brunswick.

Step: Strathspey

Formation: 4 couples in a longways set

Measures:

Pattern:

Introduction: 1 chord

- 1 – 8 1st Woman, followed by her partner, casts off (R) behind 2nd W, crosses the set and casts behind 3rd M, crosses the set and casts behind 4th W to finish below 4th couple. Couple 1 will finish improper facing up the set. This figure represents the meandering of the river across the countryside. When 1st couple begin the cast around 4th W, the 4th couple will raise their arms to represent a drawbridge on the river.
- 9 – 16 1st couple with nearer hands joined at shoulder height dance up under the arch formed by the 4th couple. While between the 3rd couple they face each other, join both hands and turn 1 ½ CW. This turn represents the whirlpools. At the beginning of this turn, the 4th couple lower their raised hands. At the end of the turn, the 2nd couple raise their arms to form an arch to represent another bridge. 1st couple dances up to place.
- 17 – 24 2nd, 3rd and 4th couples turn to face couple 1. Lead by couple 1 they all dance up to 1st couple's position and dance down the middle of the set. (4 strathspey steps.) The 4th couple will not dance down the centre but when they reach the top of the set will acknowledge their partner and then cast off to dance down to return to place, other couples turning and leading up the set following 4th couple until all couples are back in place. This figure represents the reversing falls.
- 25 – 28 All four couples dance back-to-back (dos-a-dos). This represents the agitation of the water as it comes over the falls.

St. John River – cont'd

29 – 32 1st couple faces down their own side of the set and dances a chain down the set. Change with 2nd couple by R hands, with 3rd couple by L hands and with 4th couple by R hands. Each couple has now moved up one position and the 1st couple end in 4th position. This figure represents the river wending its way to the sea.

Repeat with new couple.

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