

CHEROKEE ANT DANCE

Two lines of dancers, representing trails of ants, circle in opposite directions in a shuffling trot. The leaders carry gourd rattles and each is followed by a woman wearing tortoise shell leg-rattles. The singing is done by the men. When the leaders meet they bow, retreat a few steps, then advance and pass on, leading their respective parties.

This dance, which lasts about ten minutes, belongs to the folk-dance category. It is popular because the song is simple and all the men engage in the singing. Its only function is social relaxation and friendship.



Figure 1

Dancers dance at a trot step in two lines behind the leaders. The two files then circle away from each other.

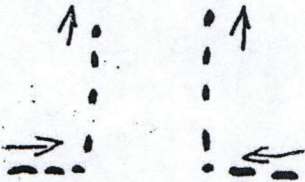


Figure 2

The two dance leaders bring the files to face each other. They meet and wiggle their antennas held at the head, using their finger. They back up, and then proceed to dance back up facing each other. When all the dancers have met and proceeded sideways, the files once again face forward and process repeats.

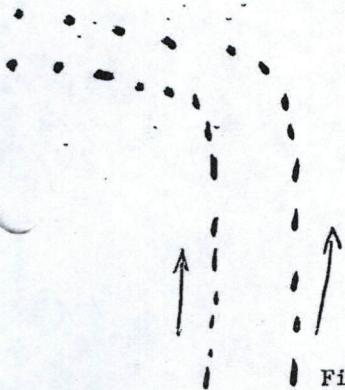


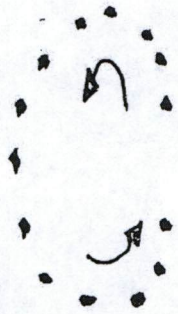
Figure 3

At the end of the dance, the two files exit the dance grounds behind the leaders for each file, and the dance ends.

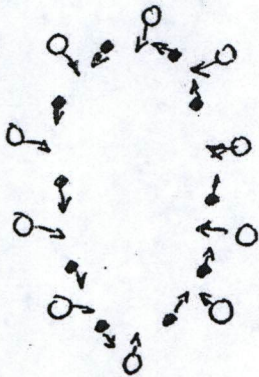
CHEROKEE BEAR DANCE

yona' dαdα'iski:sī:', "bear dance"

The dancers circle counterclockwise around the mortar in the center of the room or, if outdoors, around a fire. At one side of the circle is a singer with a drum, who may be aided by another with a gourd rattle.

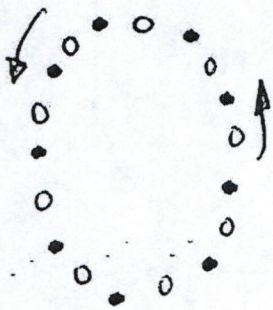


First movement.—The men shuffle and sway their bodies, imitating the leader, who growls like a bear. The dancers respond with grunting when the leader raises the tone of the song and shakes the rattle in tremolo.



Second movement.—The women enter the line ahead of the men as partners, face partners and dance backward several turns, then reverse. The men put their hands on the women's shoulders.

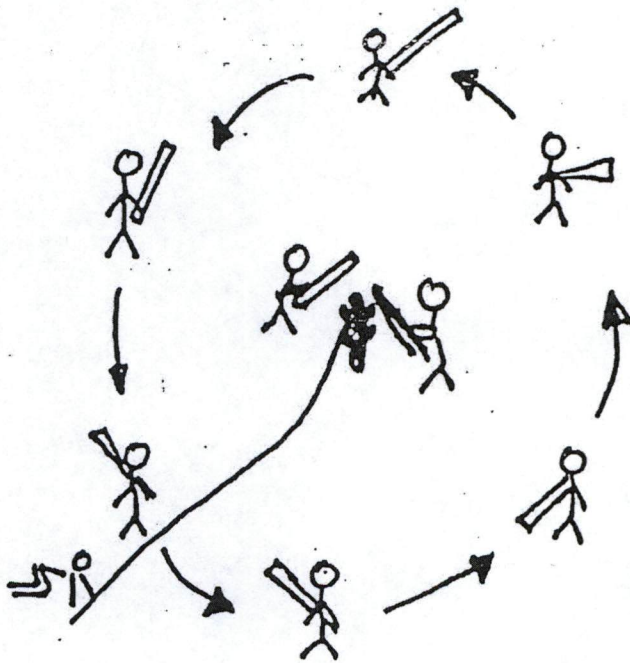
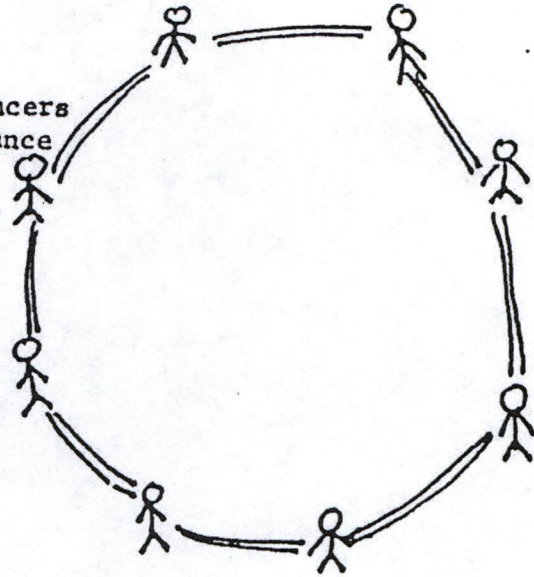
The representation of the dancers as bears, potentially as mates, has of course a certain sexual significance. At one point in the dance the actors raise their heads and tear the air over their shoulders in imitation of the dance presumed to be performed by bears. It is believed that old bears have a dance in which they circle around a big hemlock tree, leaving tooth marks on the bark at head height. West Long himself saw such a marked Bear-Dance tree when he was a boy.



○
EN WOMEN

THE BEAVER DANCE

First Movement: The dancers shuffle in behind the dance leader carrying sticks in left hand. On signal they form a cordon on the inside with the sticks. On signal, they switch the sticks to the right hand and form the cordon on the outside. This is repeated as they move around the circle.



Second Movement: The dancers are called into the center of the circle while the remaining dancers carry the sticks on their shoulder like a beaver. On signal, "toyí, toyí" (Beaver, beaver), they attempt to strike the beaver while the man who jerks the beaver pulls it when it is in the center of the dancers. The first movement is then repeated.

About the Beaver Dance Song

I could explain in English, interpret that it sort of gave them luck to do this dance before they went beaver hunting to catch beaver, kill the beaver. I don't know, I guess they might have just used the hides for clothing or for bed, for laying on when they sleep or for cover.

Beaver Dance Song:

Yo ha he yo ha he yo ha he yo ha he

He yo he yo he yo ni tu wa yo ha he yo ha e

(Repeat last 2 lines)

Hi ya ti ga na wi gi na (Repeat 3 times)

Yo ha Yo ha

Hi ya ti ga na wi ga na (Repeat 3 times)

Yo Ha Yo Ha

Hi ya ti ga na wi ga na (Repeat 3 times)

Ho he yo wa hi ye wa hi ye

To yi to yi he no he ya

Hi ye hi ye hi no way

(Repeat last 2 lines until dance is finished)

SOURCE: Walker Calhoun

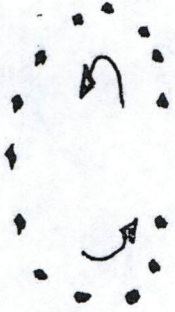
DRUM USED BY SINGER

The Beaver Dance, Payi'pona'tski: si'; is a pantomime of a beaver hunting expedition by the hunters, the sticks representing beaver clubs (or guns). If the dancers hit the beaver effigy, it was a sign of good luck.

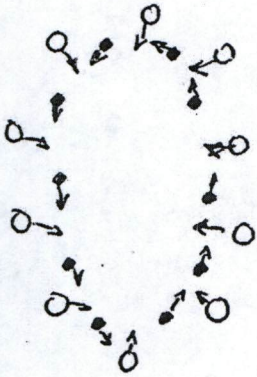
CHEROKEE BEAR DANCE

yona' dāda'iski:sī: 'bear dance'

The dancers circle counterclockwise around the mortar in the center of the room or, if outdoors, around a fire. At one side of the circle is a singer with a drum, who may be aided by another with a gourd rattle.

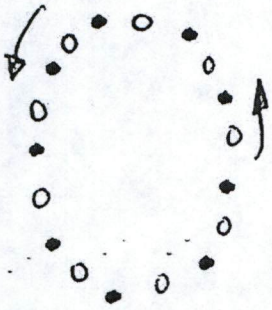


First movement.—The men shuffle and sway their bodies, imitating the leader, who growls like a bear. The dancers respond with grunting when the leader raises the tone of the song and shakes the rattle in tremolo.



Second movement.—The women enter the line ahead of the men as partners, face partners and dance backward several turns, then reverse. The men put their hands on the women's shoulders.

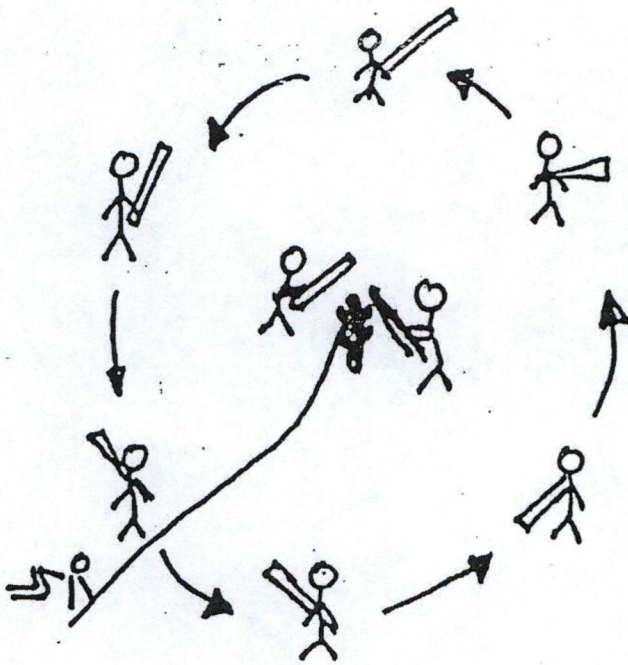
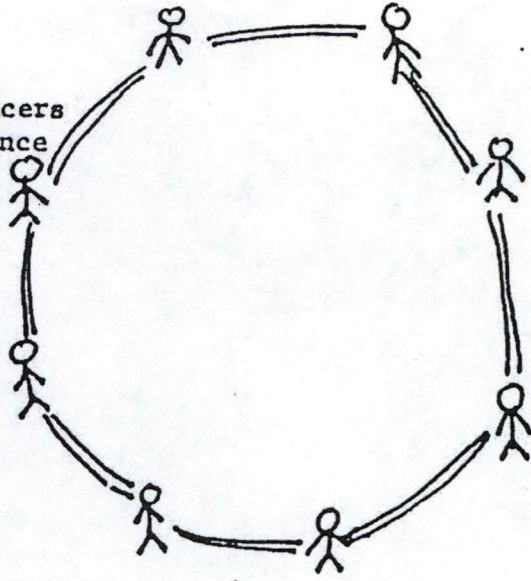
The representation of the dancers as bears, potentially as mates, has of course a certain sexual significance. At one point in the dance the actors raise their heads and tear the air over their shoulders in imitation of the dance presumed to be performed by bears. It is believed that old bears have a dance in which they circle around a big hemlock tree, leaving tooth marks on the bark at head height. West Long himself saw such a marked Bear-Dance tree when he was a boy.



○
EN WOMEN

THE BEAVER DANCE

First Movement: The dancers shuffle in behind the dance leader carrying sticks in left hand. On signal they form a cordon on the inside with the sticks. On signal, they switch the sticks to the right hand and form the cordon on the outside. This is repeated as they move around the circle.



Second Movement: The dancers are called into the center of the circle while the remaining dancers carry the sticks on their shoulder like a beaver. On signal, "toyí, toyí" (Beaver, beaver), they attempt to strike the beaver while the man who jerks the beaver pulls it when it is over the dancers. The first movement is then repeated.

About the Beaver Dance Song

I could explain in English, interpret that it sort of gave them luck to do this dance before they went beaver hunting to catch beaver, kill the beaver. I don't know, I guess they might have just used the hides for clothing or for bed, for laying on when they sleep or for cover.

Beaver Dance Song:

Yo ha he yo ha he yo ha he yo ha he

He yo he yo he yo ni tu wa yo ha he yo ha e
(Repeat last 2 lines)

Hi ya ti ga na wi gi na (Repeat 3 times)

Yo ha Yo ha

Hi ya ti ga na wi ga na (Repeat 3 times)

Yo Ha Yo Ha

Hi ya ti ga na wi ga na (Repeat 3 times)

Ho he yo wa hi ye wa hi ye

To yi to yi he no he ya

Hi ye hi ye hi no way

(Repeat last 2 lines until dance is finished)

SOURCE: Walker Calhoun

DRUM USED BY SINGER

The Beaver Dance, Payi'pona'tski: si'; is a pantomime of a beaver hunting expedition by the hunters, the sticks representing beaver clubs (or guns). If the dancers hit the beaver effigy, it was a sign of good luck.

CHEROKEE EAGLE DANCE

1st Song: Hane Huwa Hane Walking Introduction
 Hane Huwa Hane
 Hane Huwa Hane Form Circle
 Hane Huwa Hane
 Hane Huwa Hane
 Hane Huwa Hane

Hanee! (Yell) Huwa Hane Fast Ruffle Beat/then reg. stomp beat
 Hane Huwa Hane Shake Dance Wands
 Hane Huwa Hane
 Hane Huwa Hane Repeat as needed

2nd Song: Wo Hiye Wo He Yeh Wo Hiye-e-e Slower Beat
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye

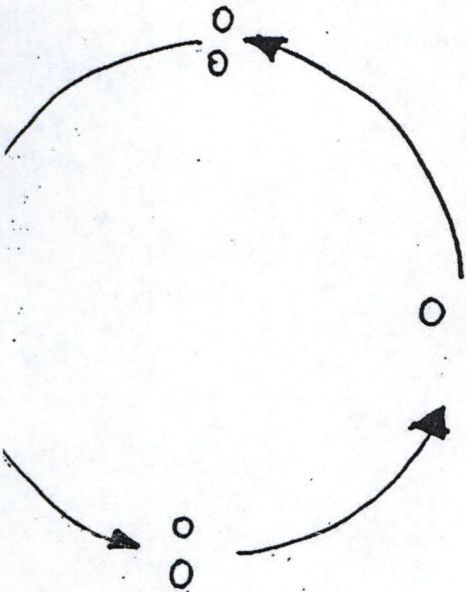
Wo Hi Yeh(Yell) Wo he yeh wo he yeh-e-e Ruffle beat/ Fly as Eagles
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye Slower Beat
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye Repeat
 Wo Hiye Wo Hiye

Ending: He Yeh Yoim (Yell)!

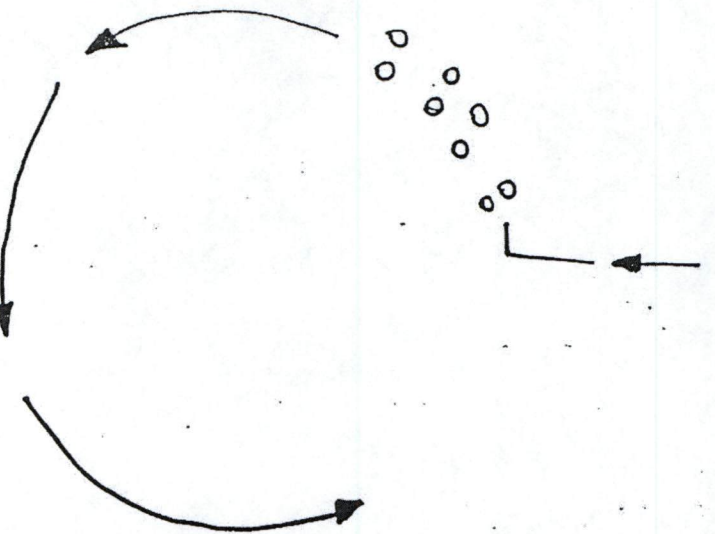
The Eagle Dance, *Tsu'gi:dali'*, is one of the winter dances of the Cherokee, and is symbolic of Victory or Peace. The Dancers carry Eagle Feather Wands, with eagle feathers attached in an arch. An even number of dancers approach the arena, and circle to the right, counterclockwise, shaking the wands with quick, short motions up and down, while utilizing the shuffle-trot step. Dancers then stoop, bending one knee almost to the ground, while in a circle.

CHEROKEE EAGLE DANCE

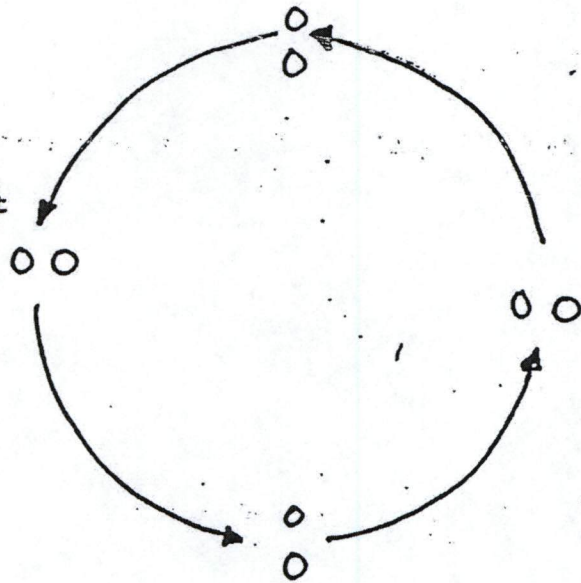
1st Movement: Dancers enter in pairs, with huffle stomp step, holding wands with Eagle feathers. They turn to the right and circle counterclockwise, spreading out in four directions on the circle.



2nd Movement: Dancers walk about the circle, shaking Eagle wands up and down in time with the beat of the drum. Each pair is spaced around the circle in four directions.



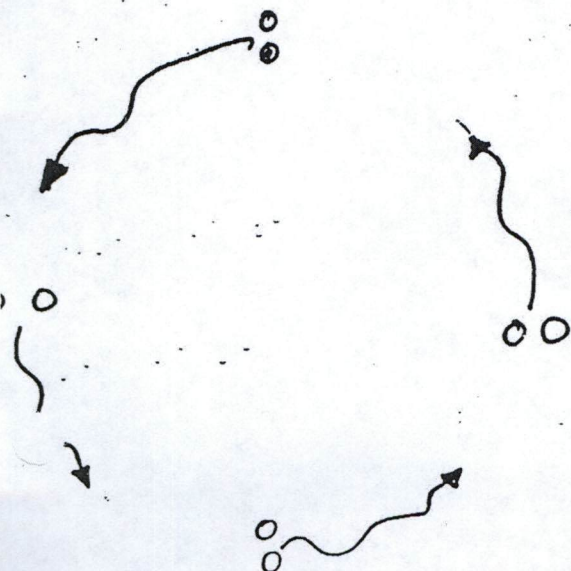
3rd Movement: Song changes, and dancers advance a single step at a time, moving Eagle wands first out and then down between their legs, in time with music. Knee is bent low to the ground, stepping out first on right foot.



4th Movement: Faster step and tempo of the drum and music, almost a fast ruffle. Dancers hold their Eagle wands out to the sides with outstretched arms, waving up and down like an Eagle in flight.

Dance can now continue by repeating the 3rd and 4th Movements a number of times, with the music.

When music stops, dancers walk off the dance area.



CHEROKEE HORSE DANCE

Part I

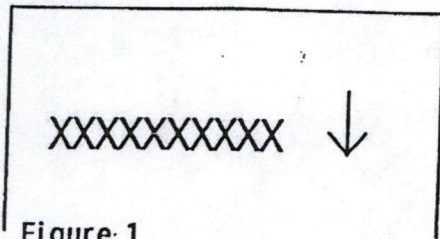


Figure 1

sagwili: "alski:sti", "horse dance"

The mortar, which usually occupies the center of the room when dances are indoors, is taken out for this dance, since it requires a cleared square space for the movements.

Sagwilli is the Cherokee word for horse. In his description, Speck indicated the Horse Dance contained two parts. The first part was performed only by men, arranged in one or two horizontal rows, abreast. Originally fifty to a hundred or more people may have participated in the dancing, necessitating the formation of more than one line to fit a large number of dancers in the available space. The dance began as the men, facing northward toward the fire, advanced slowly forward, in short steps mimicking the measured pace of the horse. The Driver or lead singer shouted, *ah wee*, to signal the end of the first phrase of the dance, thereby instructing the dancers to turn facing the opposite direction. Walking slowly forward in a horizontal line, shoulder to shoulder, the dancers returned to their beginning position. Once again the dancers turned at the Driver's signal to face forward. This motif, executed four times and accompanied by four songs, comprised Part I.³

Part II

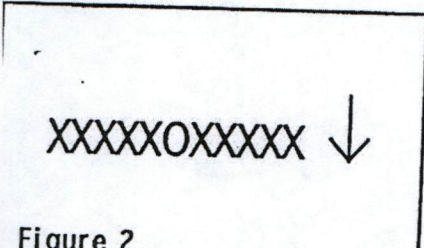


Figure 2

The second part of the dance began as the lead female dancer, wearing tortoise shell leg rattles, joined the line of men, taking her place in the center. The original motif of advancing, turning, and advancing in the opposite direction was repeated to a faster tempo. Imitating the horse's trot, shorter, quicker steps resembled a stomping quality as the whole foot contacted the floor in quick succession, as one unit. This part of the dance was also executed four times, to four songs. It was also common for the dancers to yell, *ye'hye*, each time they turned to face the opposite direction.

CHEROKEE PIGEON DANCE

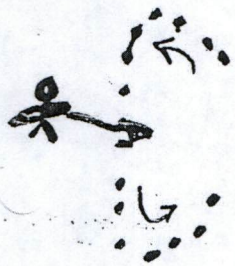
wəyi' dākiḡani', "pigeon going to roost," or ali: wot'adekī:', "jumping from one place to another"

Equipment.—A pile of hemlock twigs about 8 inches long, prepared by the leader, is at one side of the dance circle. The singer at the side of the circle has a gourd rattle and the two women behind the leader wear turtle leg-rattles.



First movement.—A close single file of men and women circle counterclockwise in a trot behind the leader.

Second movement.—Each dancer takes two hemlock twigs, waving them up and down like pigeons' wings.



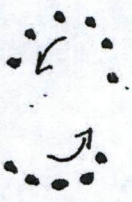
Third movement.—A man, naked to the waist, his body painted red and his arms brown to represent a pigeon hawk, rushes out from his hiding place at the side of the dance "yard" and charges the line of dancers, "pigeons," cutting it in two. The dancers separate, crying g', g', and shouting gū in alarm. The "pigeon hawk" may grab a dancer and carry him or her out of the dance line, as prey. (This event is timed to the utterance of syllables tēni:hawə.)



Fourth movement.—The forward portion of the split dance ring continues onward; the rear portion turns and goes back until the two files meet and dance together as at the beginning.

Fifth movement.—The pigeon-hawk impersonator again cuts through the line of dancers, after which the dancers throw the hemlock twigs, "wings," on the ground.

In 1933 a Pigeon Dance was observed at Big Cove in which the pigeon-hawk actor carried an empty bag when he charged the dancers, slapping the bag on the ground among them. The "pigeons" did not use the hemlock twigs as wings. The "hawk" repeated his attack six times, circling around the dancers, threatening them before he rushed, and trying to capture any who were separated from the rest.



CHEROKEE QUAIL DANCE

Wo Ye-Hee · Wo Ye Hee · Wo Ye Hee

Wo Hiye Hiyo · Wo Hi Yeh Hi · Wo Hi Yeh Hi

Wo Hiye Hiyo · Wo Hi Yeh Hi · Wo Hi Yeh Hi

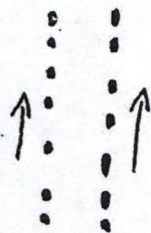
Wo Hiye Hiyo · Wo Hi Yeh Hi · Wo Hi Yeh Hi

Wo Hiye Hiyo · Wo Hi Yeh Hi · Wo Hi Yeh Hi

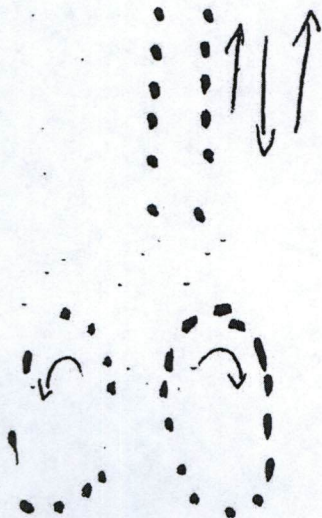
Repeat throughout the Dance



First movement.—Two single files, men and women, each with its leader, circle in opposite directions to the accompaniment of a singer at one side, who has a drum. No rattles are used. In a performance of this dance at Bird Town in 1937, it was observed that the tempo retarded as the song level rose. When the leaders meet they advance side by side, the lines following the leaders.



Second movement.—Upon the signal yo'hyo', the lines stop advancing and alternate, going forward and backward a few steps.



Third movement.—The lines separate and pass by each other, going in opposite directions again.

The imitative character of the dance is presumed to be based upon observation of the behavior of the birds by the ancients. West Long, in fantasy, projected himself into the tradition. He related that he had witnessed partridges dancing, like Indians, around a red oak on the

CHEROKEE WARRIOR OR BRAVE DANCE

Equipment.—Ceremonial war clubs colored red (symbolizing blood, "enemy hit on head") and black (symbolizing anger, "not afraid of anything"). There is a singer with a drum at one side of the platoon of warriors.



First movement.—The warriors stand abreast in a line facing east, with clubs in their right hands. Leaning forward they dance with a slow, low step forward and backward. At the signal he ha li, the dancers emit a prolonged war cry, <ye> <ye>.



Second movement.—The song changes to quick time and the dancers make motions to strike the enemy with their clubs.



Third movement.—The dancers mill about with a quickstep and conclude with four whoops.

The dance represents an advance against the enemy and anticipated combat. The last serious and dramatic performance of which there is record was in the time of Junaluska, a noted chief who fought the Creeks in support of General Jackson (1813-1814), and died in 1858.²⁷ The Warrior Dance has become a traditional stereotype. It is understood that originally the warriors underwent strenuous rites for the strengthening of their powers, physical and spiritual. We are told that for a class of consecrated warriors no weapon other than the club