

13 Moons Turtle Clan

Types of Dance

THE TRADITIONAL NORTHERN STYLE DANCE represents a warrior scouting before a battle. Their regalia includes a single bustle, usually of eagle feathers, a porcupine roach with a single eagle feather, ribbon shirt, bone hair pipe choker and breast plate, breech cloth, leggings, short angora anklets with sheep bells above them, beaded cuffs, belts, arm bands and moccasins. The dancer carries a dance staff and a fan usually made from the wing of an eagle. Everyone should stand, and men should remove their head coverings unless it has an eagle feather, during this dance out of respect to the dancers and the eagle feathers they wear.

THE MEN'S FANCY DANCE originated in Oklahoma. These dancers are noted for their fast footwork, athletic ability and originality. The large double busties of brilliant colored feathers distinguish these dancers from other types. Their regalia includes angora anklets with sheep bells fastened above them, ribbon shirt, beaded yoke, belt, arm bands, cuffs and headband. The dancers also wear a porcupine roach on their heads which has one or two feathers attached to them in a spinner.

THE GRASS DANCE gradually evolved into the Powwow. As Indians began to live on reservations they had more time to devote to non-survival activities and dancing became increasingly important. These celebrations were strictly social events until the 1920's when "Contest" dancing became popular. Many local communities still hold social Powwows but, the majority of them now involve contest dancing where dancers compete for prizes.

THE JINGLE DANCE comes from the Ojibway Nation. It was popular from 1920 to 1950 and is currently experiencing a strong revival across the nation. The Jingle Dress is made from a fabric such as cotton or taffeta and numerous "jingles" attached to it. These jingles are made from snuff can lids. The distinctive sound they make represents waves of water or thunder and is good luck because it scares away the evil spirits. Moccasins, leggings, beaded or concho belts, neck scarf, band and an eagle tail or wing fan completes the regalia. Jingle Dancers are judged on their grace and traditional footwork.

WOMEN'S FANCY OR SHAWL DANCERS wear dresses made of a light weight shiny fabric such as taffeta. Their leggings are made from the same fabric or from buckskin. Beaded belt, barrettes and hair ties finish the apparel. Most important is the shawl which is worn over the shoulders and held out as the dancer steps and twirls. The legend behind the Shawl Dance is of a butterfly who lost her mate in battle. Grieving, she went into her cocoon (shawl) and traveled the world over stepping on each stone until she found beauty in one and was able to begin her life anew.

THE ROUND DANCE is a social dance that all dancers and spectators may participate in. It is done in a clockwise circle stepping to the left in time to the drum beat. Sometimes this is done as a Friendship Dance with two concentric circles moving in opposite directions with people shaking hands as they pass each other.

THE INTERTRIBAL DANCE is a non-contest song that all dancers may participate in. Everyone is welcome to dance, but women should wear dance shawls if not in regalia.

THE BLANKET DANCE is done for a specific purpose such as defraying travel expenses of a special performance group. Several of the Royalty dance around the edge of the Arbor with a blanket outstretched between them to collect monetary contributions.

