From the collection of Richard Powers

### CHARLESTON CCHARLESTON



By-BEMIS WALKER

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Georgia Snow from Atlanta, Ga., internationally known dancer, who has taught the Charleston from coast to coast.

### **PREFACE**

The dance is one of the oldest forms of human expression, and is said to have germinated under the skies of the Pharaohs. It manifested itself first in sacred sciences, severe and heratic, yet even then it babbled brokenly of joy and grief in the procession of Apis. Later it became interwoven with all the manifestations of popular life, reflecting the passions of man, and translating the moods of the soul into physical action. As a portrayal of mood, the Charleston is truly an American dance, exemplifying the characteristics of our people who demand speed, action, something unusual, whether it be in business or in recreation, and it is these outstanding features found in the Charleston that have made it so overwhelmingly popular.

The question is often asked—who started the fad that has spread like an epidemic over the entire United States and Canada? David Bennett is credited with having brought this popular dance to Broadway, New York, and it is said that his idea of the dance orginated while on a trip through Alabama, where he ran across a crowd of little colored urchins dancing and chanting a rhythmic strain. He stopped to watch and listen, and there conceived the idea of moulding these steps, suggested by these playing children, into a new dance. Shortly after Bennett staged a revue for the "Club Alabam" in New York City, at which time he introduced the Charleston, making a tremendous hit. It later developed into a ball room dance, spreading from east to west like wild fire, gaining in popularity as it went, and is now a national fad.

There are no doubt, many people to whom the word dance only suggests thoughts of a frivolous form of pastime, or they may consider it an accomplishment cultivated only by experts for the entertainment of others. But the idea of dancing as a form of exercise and physical culture, to be practiced by young and old, is less likely to enter the average person's mind. The Charleston as we shall endeavor to teach it in this booklet, if danced properly as a daily exercise, is a wonderful health and muscle builder, and people, both old and young, who desire a pleasant physical exercise, will find this dance excellent for preserving youth, and acquiring grace, elegance and beauty.

Morally this dance should be considered more favorably than many of the modern dances, which allow the dancing couples to remain in close bodily contact during the dance. The Charleston demands that the couples shall not have close bodily contact in executing the dance. It also requires considerable mental action to guide the feet through the various steps, making it necessary to concentrate on the performance of the dance only.

In arranging this study we have sought to show by words and pictures, in the simplest manner possible, a number of the correct steps of the Ballroom Charleston used today, and we know that our efforts will be appreciated by those who desire to learn the correct form of this popular dance.

THE PUBLISHERS.

### General Instructions

Before turning to the first lesson in the Charleston, read the following carefully:

First. Do not attempt to learn any of the exercises or steps until you have mastered the first basic step outlined on page eight correctly.

Second. While learning do not attempt to do any of the steps faster than one-half time. In other words, if a phonograh is used for music, turn down the control regulator to one-half normal speed.

Third. Do not attempt to dance the Charleston with a partner until you have thoroughly mastered all the steps and routine and can do them up to time.

Fourth. If phonograph is not available simply count as you dance, "One," "Two," "Three," "Four." Keep time with your counts to acquire rhythm to your movements.

Fifth. Do not attempt to learn the first movements by radio music as you will be unable to keep up to time, and you will not acquire the proper control and balance that you would by learning it slower.

Sixth. Study your poise and balance in changing from one foot to the other which will require considerable practice to get it smoothly and gracefully.

If the instructions are followed carefully, no one should have any difficulty in executing the Charleston.

First Position



Front



Side



Feet

### POSITION 1

Observe the photographs on the margin of this page for correct position, showing a front view, a side view and a down view of Position 1. All lower pictures of feet are shown moving from left to right or "forward," which are simply reversed when dancing the other direction or "backward." Assume a natural standing position, body erect, heels together, toes out, at an angle slightly less than 90 degrees.

### Second Position



Front



Side

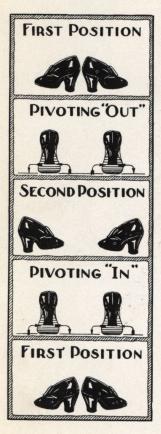


Feet

### POSITION 2

Study the accompanying photographs showing a front view, a side view and a down view of Position 2. Note the position of the knees. (In and slightly bended.) Turn to Exercise Chart on Page 8 and study it carefully. Read the chart instructions on same page, and begin to execute the movements slowly. You will find that this exercise will call into action. muscles that you have probably never used before, and you may experience a slight lameness, which however, will disappear. This movement soon should be practiced at least for three hours, at intervals, before proceeding with the next movements. Remember! This is the basic movement of the Charleston, and it is very important that you master it thoroughly before attempting others.

### Exercise Chart



### Instructions

From the accompanying chart you will note that this movement begins with the heels together and toes out as in Position 1. Transfer your weight to the balls of your feet, making a pivot. Raise your heels at least one-half an inch from the floor, pivot the heels OUT, toes in, and knees together (slightly bended), lower the heels to the floor in the OUT position with accent. Do this all in one movement and it represents one count of music, technically the second or fourth beat. Reverse the movement by raising the heels in the out position one-half inch and pivoting IN, heels together and toes out, lowering the feet in position with accent which will be another counteither the first or third beat. Start again and repeat the movements slowly, accenting the heel beats, and count 4 (out) 1 (in)-2 (out)-3 (in). Do not forget to bend the knees down with each OUT movement of the heels, but the knees must be kept close together. Accent the heel beats, but especially the out down beats of the heels. This is very important, and is the secret of the correct dancing of the Charleston as these second position "out and down" heel beats are the time keepers of the dance, and you must learn to accent them at the beginning. Every step of the Charleston is simply an elaboration on this basic step or movement, which must be learned thoroughly at this time. The important things to remember in this movement are -accent your heel heats. Keep the knees together, and bend the knees down with each "out" movement of the heels.

(See Exercise "A," Page 23)



This pose is known as the Charleston Scarecrow Kick, commonly used on the stage.

Left Foot Up



Front



Side



Feet

### POSITION 3

Study the photographs of the three views of this movement. Shift your weight to the ball of your RIGHT foot, lift the left foot, turn the knees together (right knee slightly bended down) and the right heel out. Do this all in one movement. Return the left foot to the floor as in Position 1. Don't forget to accent the heel beat on the out movement of the right heel, which is exactly like the movement of the right heel in the Chart Exercise. Left foot is, however, up and out. Practice thoroughly.

Right Foot Up



Front



Side



Feet

### POSITION 4

From the accompanying photographs you will note that this movement is the same as Position 3. excepting the right foot is raised. Shift your weight to the ball of the LEFT foot, lift your right foot, knees together, left heel out, accenting the down beat, all in one movement, returning the right foot to the floor as in Position 1. Practice this thoroughly. When you have acquired perfect control execute movements 3 and 4 alternately. Go slow, practice control and balance in changing from one foot to the other. Shift your weight in each change of movement by decided leaning of the body to the right when the left foot is up, and to the left when the right foot is up. When the heel of either foot is in the raised position they should be slightly behind the line of the heel on the floor.

(See Exercise "C," Page 23, for right foot up movement, and Exercise "D," Page 24, for alternate movement.)



### Ballroom Charleston

The photograph on the opposite page shows the correct position for the ballroom Charleston. When properly danced the Charleston is not an act of contortion but a graceful rythmic dance and one which can be indulged in for an entire evening without becoming more tiresome than any other ordinary ballroom dance. We call your attention to the position of the gentleman's right hand on the ladies back, which is correct. Also note the way the hands are held. The palm of the gentleman's hand being on top of the ladies hand grasping her fingers in his hand. A couple dancing the Charleston should dance almost directly in front of each other. The arm should retain a horizontal position about straight out from the shoulder and should not be stiff or cramped nor should it be raised and lowered to keep time with the music.

Left Foot Forward Right Foot Backward



Front



Side



Feet

### DOUBLE CHARLESTON

The illustrations on pages 14 and 15 show the correct position of both feet, forward and backward, and unless these positions are observed and carefully practiced, it will be impossible for you to do your Charleston neatly and correctly. These positions are used in doing the "Double Charleston," forward and backward. In fact, at least half of the steps in the regular Charleston routine brings your feet into these positions.

If you have devoted sufficient time to the preceding steps it will be easier for you to do what is known as the Double Charleston which starts out as follows: First, start with left foot backward and the right foot forward as pictured on Page 15. Raise the heel of the left foot as illustrated on Page 10, pivoting the right heel out and down with accent (this is count 4) with left foot raised. Second, instead of bringing the left foot down as pictured on Page 6, bring it "forward and down" so that the left heel is nearly even with the right toe, forming a right angle, as illustrated at bottom of this page (this is count 1). Next,

Right Foot Forward Left Foot Backward



Front



Side



Feet

you will again raise the left heel as pictured on Page 10 with right heel out and down (this is count 2). Third, bring left heel back to the starting position with the left toe directly behind the right heel, forming another right angle, as illustrated on this page (this is count 3). Repeat this several times with the left foot, which is the double Charleston on the left foot. Practice this exercise with the left foot only for at least one-half hour at different intervals before you attempt to do it on the right foot. A reverse of the same action and position of the feet is the double Charleston on the right foot. Practice the same way following the same instructions, starting with the right foot forward and the left foot back, pivoting the left heel out and the right foot up, bringing the right toe back behind the left heel. Same count and accent.

After you have learned to Doubie Charleston on each foot separately you may combine the exercise in the following routine: Left foot up, left foot forward, left foot up, left foot backward; right foot up, right foot backward, right foot up, right foot forward.

(See Exercises "E," "F" and "G," Pages 24 and 25.



### Children Dance the Charleston

Even children enjoy the healthful exercise of dancing the Charleston which teaches them grace and poise. Many of the public schools who have classes in dancing instruction are teaching the Charleston, which is not only a muscle builder but a mind builder as well. Many gymnasiums throughout the country are using the Charleston as an exercise in place of the ordinary routine of calisthenics, as it has been proven that the Charleston is in no way injurious to one of normal physical health unless danced in extreme ways other than described in this book. For one of abnormal weight it is the best weight reducing exercise known and yet it will not reduce one of normal weight. Thousands of people throughout the country are going through the Charleston routine every morning to the music of the Victrola as a morning exercise.

### Left Foot For'd Crossed



Front



Side



Feet

### CROSS STEP

The illustrations on this page and also Page 19, feature the Charleston cross step. It is a very clever and important step in the Charleston Dance as it enables the dancer to travel sideways either to the right or left. Note carefully the position of the feet illustrated at the bottom of the pages and don't become confused, and assume that the right foot should be in the position of the left foot, or vice versa. When the left foot is crossed, the right heel should be "out and down," the heel of the left foot being in line with the toe of the right foot. The position is simply reversed when the right foot is crossed over the left foot.

We will start out first by giving you a little step routine where you will travel to the left by crossing the right foot over the left on the last count of the following exercise:

Right Foot For'd Crossed



Front



Side



Feet

Left Foot Up, Left Foot Forward, Left Foot Up, Left Foot Back, Right Foot Up, Right Foot Back, Right Foot Up, Right Foot Crossed Forward.

It is important to note that the last count of this exercise leaves the right foot crossed over the left, and in continuing these cross steps, instead of raising the right foot, your next position is to raise the left foot, and proceed through the exercise again, which you will note will again travel you to the left.

A reverse of this movement will travel you to the right which is as follows:

Right Foot Up, Right Foot Forward, Right Foot Up, Right Foot Back, Left Foot Up, Left Foot Back, Left Foot Up, Left Foot Crossed Forward. In repeating this exercise, be sure that your next step is Right Foot Up.

(See Exercise "J" and "K," Page 26)



Side view of Ballroom Charleston showing extreme elevation of heels from the floor.

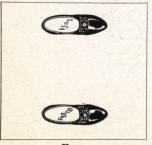
### Open Position



Front



Side



Feet

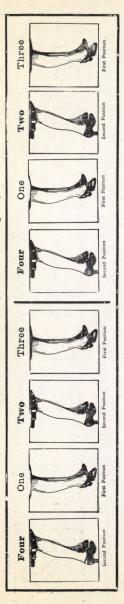
### OPEN POSITION

This is a very easy position to assume and one that is used a great deal in the Charleston dance, same being used to go in a sideways movement. The correct distance that the heels should be apart in this position is about the length of the average foot. This is the same open position which you have undoubtedly used hundreds of times in dancing the ordinary Fox Trot, Waltz and other dances and is a very pretty step when worked into the Charleston routine as illustrated in the different formations described on the following pages.

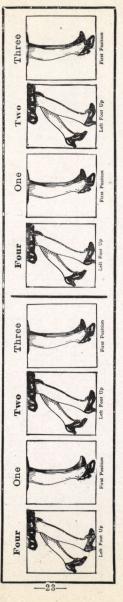
(See Exercise "M" and "O," Page 27)

### Exercise Instructions

The following pictures illustrate in proper music time, the various ballroom Charleston steps. There are many others which you will develop after you have learned these and they will come to you very easily. We particularly call your attention to the counts of "four," "one," "two," three," which are above each line of pictures and at first this may be a little confusing to you because of starting on count Four. In starting out, all of these exercises (excepting Nos. 1 and 2) you will assume the positions illustrated on either Page 14 or 15 and your first count, or "four," will be with one foot or the other raised accenting your beat on the opposite heel which should "click" the floor the same time that the opposite heel reaches its extreme elevation. This is your "down-beat" and to make it plain, you will note that the counts "two" and "four" are printed in black faced type while the counts "one" and "three" are printed in lightfaced type. The black faced type means the "down-beat" or the beats on which your heel should make the greatest accent.



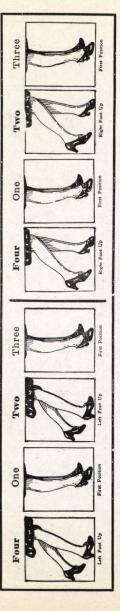
EXERCISE "B" (See Pos. 3, Page 10)



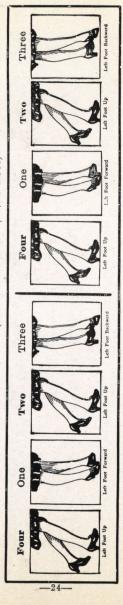
EXERICE "C" (See Pos. 4, Page 11)



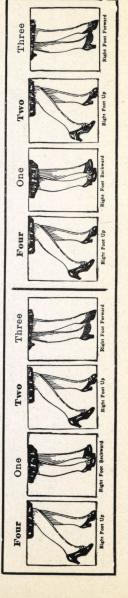
### EXERCISE "D" (Charleston on Each Side)



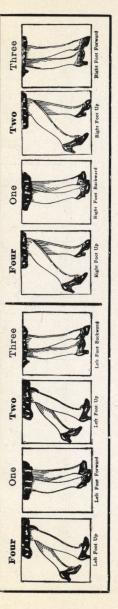
### EXERCISE "E" (Double Charleston, Left Foot)



# EXERCISE "F" (Double Charleston, Right Foot)



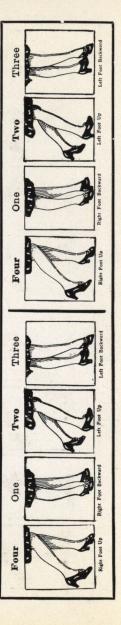
# EXERCISE "G" (Double Charleston, Both Feet)



EXERCISE "H" (Single Charleston Forward)

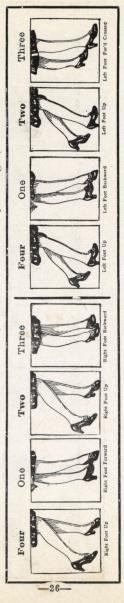


EXERCISE "I" (Single Charleston Backward)





EXERCISE "K" (Charleston Cross Step to Right)



EXERCISE "L" (Combination Double Charleston, Forward, Backward, Side)

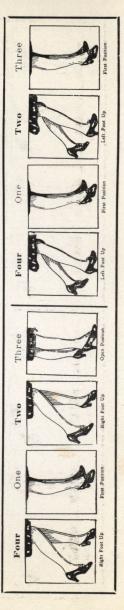




EXERCISE "M" (Charleston Side Step, Travelling to Left)



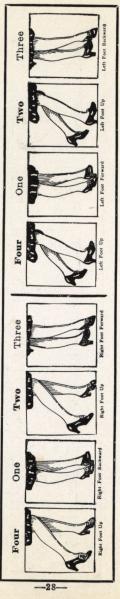
EXERCISE "O" (Charleston Side Step, Travelling to Right)



EXERCISE "P" (Double Charleston, Travelling Forward)



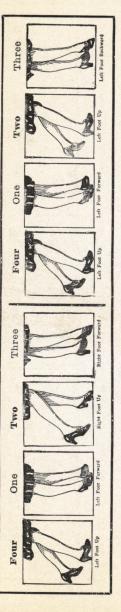
Exercise "P"-Continued



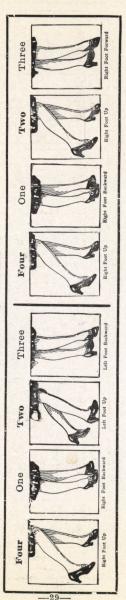
Exercise "P"-Continued



EXERCISE "R" (Single Charleston, Forward and Backward)



Exercise "R"-Continued



In the preceding exercises we have detailed sixteen different and complete exercise steps. In practhese we ticing these, repeat each exercise as often as necessary to learn it thoroughly, as in each of have shown only one complete round of steps.

### Charleston Ball Room Routine

There are various routines that may be worked out in the Charleston Ballroom Dance; however, the following is accepted as the most practical as it may be danced in a crowded ballroom or places where there are restrictions against "extreme" dancing. We wish to point out the fact that this routine may be modified by following each exercise or set of Charleston steps by 8 or 16 counts of ordinary two steps or fox trot steps, forward or backward, to which can be added a slight heel click or Charleston form. This makes the dance less strenuous.

It is not absolutely necessary that you follow through this routine exactly as it is written. In fact, it would be impossible on the crowded ballroom floor on account of making turns or guiding your partner to prevent coming in contact with other couples and obstructions. Though like any dance routine it should be followed as closely as practicable.

You will find right or left turns are made easier while doing the double Charleston (Exercise "G," page 25) or while doing Charleston on each side (Exercise "D," page 24).

### SUGGESTED ROUTINE

Charleston, on each side (Exercise "D," page 24)16	Counts
Single Charleston Backwards (Exercise "I," page 25)16	Counts
Double Charleston (Exercise "G," page 25)	Counts
Double Charleston, Travelling Forward (Exercise "P," page 28)24	Counts
Double Charleston, Forward, Backward and Side (Ex. "L," p. 26) 32	Counts
Double Charleston, Travelling Backward (Ex. "P," p. 28—reverse 24	Counts
Charleston Side Step, Travelling to Left (Exercise "M," page 27) 32	Counts
Charleston Side Step, Travelling to Right (Exercise "O" page 27) 32	Counts
Single Charleston Forward (Exercise "H," page 25)	Counts
Charleston Cross Step to Left (Exercise "J," page 26)32	Counts
Charleston Cross Step to Right (Exercise "K," page 26)32	Counts
(Repeat entire routine.)	

