


Dance Day Dances



Buxton Dances

The earliest slave dances were later influenced by the very different style of European dancing. European dancers were in a more upright position. Movement was made with arms and legs only. They most often danced as couples in lines and groups.

One of the dances created by slaves was the cake walk. It was the first dance created by the slaves that became popular in the white community. The cake walk was created initially to mimic and mock the slave masters and mistresses.

This dance began around 1850 on the plantations. In it dancers moved with a high-kneed strut walk. It was a mimic of the solemn way white masters promenaded, two by two, in the formal marches that opened their balls.

When the masters saw the new cake walk, they were delighted, and encouraged their slaves to hold competitions among neighbouring plantations. The slave masters soon took over the dance as their own.

Working in small groups, use lively music, and the instruments you created, and with this information as a guide, create a new dance that the early settlers in Buxton might have brought with them.

Perform your dance for the rest of the class.