

Choctaw Raccoon Game Song

Informant/Performer:
Louis W. Ballard

Source:
Louis W. Ballard
American Indian Music for the Classroom
Canyon Records 4143

♩ = 120 Introduction
Tremolo on sticks

Shoy - dah dah - de - um, shoy - dah dah - de - um

Shoy dah - dah - de - um - uh shoy dah - de - um

Shoy dah dah - de - um, shoy - dah dah - de - um - uh

shoy dah - - de - - um

Game Directions

After the children have learned the song and two boys have been selected as head singers, let the entire class form a huge circle, preferably outside on the grass or in the gymnasium since this is a running game with much vigorous activity. Select one boy to be a hound dog and one girl to be a raccoon for the first round. As the song starts the girl "raccoon" leaves the circle of joined hands and walks or skips around the circle which is moving counter-clockwise to the time of the song which everyone is singing. When the interlude appears and the sticks execute a tremolo, the "raccoon" girl runs in the opposite direction of the hound dog, trying to elude him by running around or into the entire circle, without cutting across, and back to her place in line while the hound dog chases madly in and out of the "trees" (students) which block his passage. If the hound dog touches the raccoon before she resumes her place, then he gets to select another hound dog for the next chase; but if the raccoon returns to her place before the hound dog touches her then she gets to choose a new raccoon for the next chase.

Background Information

The Choctaws were originally located in what is now the state of Mississippi. Today Choctaws of Mississippi, comprising about 6,000 in population, are located near Philadelphia, Pearl River, Conehatta and Bogue Chitto; while their brothers, the Oklahoma Choctaws are located in southeastern Oklahoma. Cultural habits and customs of the Choctaw traditionally include blow guns for hunting, poison darts, swamp fishing, stick ball games (similar to lacrosse), and many activities related to hunting. This song, the Choctaw Raccoon Game Song, represents a hunting activity in which the hound dog is chasing the raccoon through the swamps and trees of the forests in Mississippi.