7-1-1996

An examination of English speaking rhythmic games and plays of African American children

Dawn L. Wright
Clark Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations

Part of the African American Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. For more information, please contact cwiseman@auctr.edu.
This study examines the oral traditions of African American children through their games and play activities. It is comprised of a thorough analysis of the historical literature on African American folk song and dance for a solid background into contemporary African American expressions of music and movement.

The thesis is based on the assumption that African Americans' oral traditions, although definitely affected by experiences of acculturation and enslavement, are still rich with their African heritage and are uniquely theirs.

The bulk of the thesis is dedicated to examining the collected games and plays of African Americans, both from printed and recorded sources and from field research. Plays dating from slavery to the present are included and provide
for excellent comparison between the two.

The conclusions after detailed examination show that many of the games have survived generations of cultural transmission and are still popular today.
AN EXAMINATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING RHYTHMIC GAMES
AND PLAYS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
DAWN L. WRIGHT

DEPARTMENT OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JULY 1996
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is dedicated to Mrs. Bessie Jones for realizing the necessity of preserving this part of our culture, to my great grandmother who taught me her games, songs and ways, my grandmother and mother who helped make me who I am, and to Tricie (smile) who re-taught me the games of my childhood.

Honor and Praise to my Creator, my ancestors and all of my family. A sincere "Thank You" goes out to the following: Dr. Mary Twining for her guidance, wisdom and patience; Dr. Osinubi for critiquing my work; Dr. Carolyn Fowler, Dr. Keith Baird, Dr. David Dorsey, Margaret Fogum, LaDonna Simmons and all my friends in African and African American Studies; the faculty, staff and my fellow librarians from the School of Library and Information Studies; Dr. Alexa B. Henderson and the Office of General Education; Mr. Wilson Flemister and my co-workers in Archives at Woodruff Library; My mentor, Ms. Barbara Woods; Rhonda for supporting me throughout my academic career; to Shawn, a heartfelt "thanks," you've touched me in ways you'll never know (smile); thanks to Mrs. Diana Baird N'Diaye and the Office of Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution; to my little one on the way: Much Love!
Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.................................................. ii

Chapters

I. INTRODUCTION................................................. 1
   Objectives
   Call-and-Response
   Body Percussion
   Dance
   Lyrical Significance/Songs
   Methodology

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE................................. 10
   Background Literature
   Primary Sources

III. AFRICAN AMERICAN SONG AND DANCE............. 22
   Classification scheme of folk songs
   Use of antiphony, percussion and dance
   Recording of sacred versus secular songs

IV. GAMES AND PLAYS FROM SLAVERY TO 1950's...... 35
   Parrish; 1917
   Talley; 1922
   Fox; 1951
V. GAMES AND PLAYS FROM 1960's TO PRESENT......64
   Hawes; 1969
   Jones; 1972
   Various literature; 1978-1994

VI. CONCLUSION........................................95
   Necessity for continued research
   and collecting

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY.................................100
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this research project is to conduct a general examination of English speaking games of African Americans while engaging in a beginning process of recording modern games. This thesis will examine the various literature published relating to children's games, African American folk music and dance for documentation of the games and plays that have survived within African American communities. This research attempts to illustrate the significance and relevance of oral tradition to African Americans' expression of music and dance. Games and other play activities are excellent examples of the oral traditions within the African American community, since they combine both music and dance, have societal importance in the African American community and have elements of musical expression distinct from other American ethnic groups. Various elements of movement and oral expression will be examined such as the use of antiphony and body percussion to show the Africanity in African Americans' plays despite the often European background.

The issue of African survivals in African American culture has produced much debate between scholars and other
specialists in the discipline of Africana studies. Since Africans were forcibly brought to the United States and enslaved, it has been strongly believed that there was no retention of their African past. As one scholar notes, "The Negro, when he landed in the U.S., left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament."\(^1\) This theory went for the most part unchallenged until noted scholars such as W.E.B. DuBois and Melville Herskovits boldly presented materials and documentation that refuted prior beliefs and instead demonstrated that Africanisms existed in African American culture.\(^2\) Through their research and writings these scholars, along with others, have expanded on existing similarities between Africans and African Americans in various components of culture and lifestyle. They have suggested that Africans brought with them some practices and beliefs of their diverse cultures and, although many of these traits have been molded and changed through the process of acculturation, it is still necessary to acknowledge that there are obvious Africanisms in elements of African American culture.\(^3\) A prime example is seen in the rituals of call and response, body percussion and dance illustrated commonly as elements of folk music, folk culture and specifically, games.

While the terms 'play' and 'games' can be interchanged with one another, when employed carefully they each have
distinct meanings. Games are categorized, for the most part, with activities of a competitive nature while plays cover a broad spectrum of activities such as activities with a dramatic element. Nonetheless, both terms describe activities that involve action and are performed for amusement. That is the main reasoning behind the interchangeability of the terms 'plays' and 'games.'

The games of African Americans served a purpose of preserving oral history as well as telling their stories and sharing experiences of lifetimes past. These games, played by adults and often imitated by children, expressed the trials and rewards of everyday life as well as the situational confrontations between master and slave and within their own communities. The older games are ones such as ring plays like "Little Sally Walker," one that is still played, and clapping plays that utilize the elements of body percussion like the popular "Hambone."4 African Americans' games are a direct result of the merging of European originated games (Irish, Scottish and English specifically for this project) with the rhythmic influences and styles of African music and movement. Because enslaved Africans were unable to retain their distinct spoken languages and could not openly practice their religions or perform their musical tradition and dances, they were forced to use the expressions and rituals of their European owners as a cover that would allow them the ability to secretly
express their own messages in their own ways. This syncretism is illustrated in the lyrics of many songs and the dances that contained double meanings: one for the master and the other for themselves.

The more modern games of similar styles, played predominantly by African American girls, have retained some remnants of their older counterparts. Since living situations and the typical age of players have changed from previous eras, the modern games do not have the lyrical significance of the older games. It seems as though these games, although generally taking on the same form as the older ones, are played by children for more enjoyment and fun. It is even quite possible that the linkage between the old and new is unknown to the average child or, even the adult who did not have the experiences of those of the older generations. That is not to say, however, that these games are any less significant than those of the past. Modern African American games are examples of the abilities to retain information orally while illustrating the skills of "cooperation and mutual support" that greatly assisted in survival of their ancestors' and elders' culture and community.⁵

There are four permanent characteristics so common to African American games and play that they receive recurrent attention throughout this study. They are: the structural pattern of participation called 'call and response'; the use
of the body as a percussive instrument; the preeminence of
dance; and significance of lyrics specifically associated
with African American cultural experience.

**Call-and-Response:** The element of call and response in
African American games is one that has its roots not only in
the African tradition but, in the African American tradition
as well. Whether expressed through games such as ring plays
and play/work songs and religious ring shouts, call-and-
response functioned as a prominent communication style and
still is a dominant part of African American style of
communication.⁶

Call-and-response in ring shouts is a spiritual meeting
where dancing comes together with singing to create a
"leader to chorus repetitive form with focus on rhythm
rather than melody to enforce cooperative group activity."⁷
This interaction between leader to group also exists in ring
plays, secular circle games where there often exists a lead
vocalist as well as a center player. Obviously, since the
majority of the plays uses singing and songs as a main
element, song plays often are comprised of call-and-
response.

**Body Percussion:** These movements often function as the
musical accompaniment and sometimes as a substitute for
instruments, mainly drums. By clapping the hands, chest,
thighs, face and stomping the feet, African Americans have
re-created percussion to replace the drums that were once
forbidden on the plantations during slavery. This exhibition of body percussion can be performed as a solo act or with one or more partners as is often seen in the modern clapping games played by African American girls. The use of body percussion within a group can create multi-rhythmic patterns that are a comparable feature of traditional African music.  

**Dance:** Dance is a dominant force in African American games, plays and musical expression. It is dance that supplies the various body movements that illustrate the meaning of the games. While some dances in games have specific names (some with the "double meaning" for master and slave), other forms of dances in games are simply the swaying of hips and "weight shift" to underline and add color to the lyrical meanings and musical beats. 

Dancing existed both in the secular and the sacred worlds of African Americans just as it did in the African communities they left behind, "In traditional African dances there was little separation of sacred and secular performances." Because of the Christian teachings of the American planters, secular and sacred dancing became separate. The distinction created specific guidelines such as rules governing the crossing of the feet when dancing for proper religious dancing. 

**Lyrical Significance/Songs:** The songs that accompany African American games have a unique background as well as a
unique function in the scope of the games. Many songs and lyrics of older games are adaptations of European originated games played in the United States by the children of European planters. African Americans took these versions and adapted them to fit their language patterns, skills and rhythmic styles. Often lyrics were changed or created to have "double meanings" to satisfy the master while secretly ridiculing and imitating him.

The modern singing plays and lyrics, although still containing remnants of their older games, seem to focus specifically on topics and language skills adequate for children.

**Methodology**

The basis for analyzing print recorded games will consist of an examination of primary and secondary materials. Concentration will be on, specifically, games as well as literature on African American folk songs, folk culture and its influences from African, American and European expressive and oral cultures. Relevant literature on African music and dance will be consulted for any similarities to African Americans' musical expression.

It will be demonstrated that, while there have been some publications in the area of modern games of African American children, the scope is not as comprehensive as the literature on older games. Therefore, for an adequate examination that will complement this research project, it
will be necessary to engage in field research to record modern games played by African American children. The information will be obtained from both obtrusive and unobtrusive observation of children at play. This approach is most effective because it allows documentation of both the games children know and the ones they tend to enjoy the most. Again, the games will be analyzed for the elements of music and movement and for any similarities with the older games of African Americans.

It is anticipated that this research can serve as an originating point for further exploration into the histories of games of African Americans and the elements that illustrate survivals from their African backgrounds. More importantly, this project will, hopefully, add relevant information to the works of others who research to illustrate the unique, still existing culture of African Americans. A successful project will prove to the reader that through the process acculturation, a culture was created that borrowed rituals from both African and European cultures. The indigenous people of America undoubtedly contributed to this process as well. The resulting culture expressed many elements of these cultures in a way unique to the situations and lifestyles of African Americans.
Notes


2. See Melville Herskovits' *The Myth of the Negro Past* for discussion of Africanisms throughout the African diaspora.

3. Ibid.


5. Ibid.


7. Fox, Grace. *Ring Games and Other Games of the Florida Negro*. (Ph.d diss., Indiana University, 1951).


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

At an originating point of research, it may seem that there has not been much literature published that deals specifically with games and plays of African American children and document older games. Primary research often leads to literature focusing on late 1880's documentation of play activities of European children such as Alice Gomme, *Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland*. Unfortunately during the period of African enslavement in the United States there was not much documentation of the games and oral traditions of enslaved Africans. Therefore it is difficult to distinguish and document games, songs and dances that are authentically African from those that were created within the confines of slavery and were a result of acculturation. Nonetheless, material began to be collected shortly after emancipation and some of the games were preserved through memory. With careful research, substantial literature can be discovered on the play activities of African Americans dating from slavery to the 1990's. This review of literature then is designed to give a general overview of the major publications giving
background and primary information on the subject of African
With careful research, substantial literature can be
discovered on the play activities of African Americans
dating from slavery to the 1990's. This review of
literature then is designed to give a general overview of
the major publications giving background and primary
information on the subject of African American children's
games.

**Background Literature**

The folk culture of African Americans is one rich with
memories and traditions of their African heritage merged
with the ritual and culture acquired from the European
presence in the United States. This merging or transmission
of cultural traits is no doubt the result of enslavement
where some believe Africans in the United States lost all of
their "Africanness." This theory has been refuted most
effectively by Herskovits through his research on African
people throughout the diaspora. The *Myth of the Negro Past*
investigates African continuities in the cultures of African
people outside of the African continent who have been
affected by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Within the
United States, Herskovits focuses on the Sea Islands and the
Gullah people for an example of direct African survivals.
While much of the historical material on African American
games is documented from the Sea Islands, and although other
African American communities have not demonstrated the
distinct African continuities like the Gullah people, the musical traditions and expressions of music are common to a vast majority of African Americans.

Relevant background information into the lives and existence of African Americans during slavery is discussed in several noteworthy sources. The Slave Community by John Blassingame and Black Culture and Black Consciousness by Lawrence LeVine are two books that offer insight into the construction of the communities of enslaved Africans and the impact of the changing from their pre-existing communal/societal structures in Africa to their forced arrangement in the United States. Both authors point out that even though slavery left deep rooted scars on the culture of African Americans, they were able to transform their culture into something unique and distinctly theirs. Margaret Butcher's work The Negro in American Culture traces folk and formal contributions to American culture. She focuses on the impact of one culture on another through an examination of both, and reveals the obvious gifts of folk music, poetry, dance and decoration and design as contributions from African cultures.

One important piece of literature that deals with elements of African cultures that have survived in the United States and North America is Africanism in American Culture, edited by Joseph E. Holloway. This piece of literature offers a wealth of information on Africanisms
within African American culture and builds on earlier research of Dr. Herskovits. Essays focusing on a range of categories such as artistic and linguistic expression are presented. A historical analysis of the music of African Americans includes the outgrowth of games and play songs.

For a complete listing of references and sources relating to people of African descent and their folk cultures up until the late 1970's, Afro American Folk Culture: An Annotated Bibliography of Material from North, Central and South America and the West Indies is a valuable source. It is a necessary tool for the researcher in the beginning process of locating primary information on the folk cultures of African people throughout the diaspora. Subject headings span from games and folk songs to traditional medicinal practices and folklore.

Several sources that deal specifically with music and movement of African Americans are The Music of Black Americans: A History by Eileen Southern, African Musicology by Jacqueline Dje Dje, Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War by Dena J. Epstein and Black Dance From 1619 to Today by Lynn F. Emery. This group of literature lays the ground work for the growth of games and play out of both sacred and secular music and dance and various other oral traditions and expressions of music peculiar to African Americans.
Eileen Southern's *The Music of Black Americans: A History* covers the musical activity of African Americans from their arrival in the colonies of the United States to the early 1980's. A section dedicated to the music in West Africa and the African diaspora offers valuable information for validation and comparison to African American musical style. The intensity of Dr. Southern's research into several facets of antebellum life, both rural and urban, as it relates to music makes this a valuable piece on the emergence of play songs and games.

The relationship between Africa and African American musical styles is one of the major topics discussed in *African Musicology* by Jacqueline Dje Dje. The author realizes that despite the difficulties in relating African Americans to African music there are links that can be seen between the two, such as the way both groups conceptualize music and their behavior in music making situations. Dje Dje states that both music styles share a type of "cultural kinship" that binds rather than both sharing apparent characteristics.

Epstein's *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* is one of the few sources that supplies information on secular music during slavery. While secular music was considered sinful as a result of imposition of Christianity into African Americans' beliefs, it still played a tremendous role in supplying the music for games,
plays and dances.

Lynn Emery's *Black Dance from 1619 to Today* is another book like Southern's that traces the historical roots of dance and movement here in the United States. Emery's research covers several of the dances that are closely related to many of the games and plays from slavery and strives to document their origins. There are brief excerpts by former enslaved Africans included in her book as to their remembrances of the dances that played a role in their everyday lives and communities.

After emancipation some European Americans and even fewer African Americans began the task of collecting the music and dances of African Americans. While much more collecting and research was done on sacred music or spirituals than on secular music, the information that was preserved dealing with secular musical forms proved to be invaluable. These forms included work songs, cries and hollers, play and dance songs and fiddle songs. Often, African songs and dances that were transmitted along with the Africans themselves had been forgotten or undetectable, except for the Gullah culture whose Africanisms were quite obvious. Yet, some form of African musical and musical traditions were evident.

Many publications on the folk music and slave songs of African Americans were produced after reconstruction. One of the earliest pieces of literature is *Slave Songs of the
United States by Allen, Ware and Garrison. Similar to other books and articles during this period the focus was mainly on the spirituals only including a few secular plantation songs. Later in 1928 Newman White's American Negro Folk Songs sets the course for other literature focusing on African American folk music. Jumping to the 1960's, several books were re-published such as Afro American Folk Songs; A Study in Racial and National Music (Henry Krenbiel), On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs (Dorothy Scarborough), Negro Folk Music U.S.A. (Harold Courlander) and Folk Songs of the American Negro by John W.Work, each supplying a scholarly investigation of the subject. All authors reviewed the historical songs and music of African Americans noting their significance to the American culture as a whole.

Primary Sources

Upon evaluation of the literature covering the topic of games and plays of African American children, there are several sources that must be considered and included. Games and Songs of American Children by William Newell (1883) is a source that offers extensive documentation of play activities of American children and the origins of the plays. Although it does not focus primarily on African American children, it does include several games that have been documented in African American sources, which shows cultural sharing and transmission. "Games of Washington
Children" published in *American Anthropologist* by W.H. Babcock (1888) is an article that serves the same purpose as Newell's book by being one of the earliest publications documenting games of American children.

Games and dances collected around 1917 were the focus of one chapter in Lydia Parrish's book *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*. Her material was collected on St. Simon's Island from the descendants of enslaved Africans. She included brief descriptions of the plays and managed to document some of the more popular plays of African Americans.

Professor Thomas Talley of Fisk University broadened his scholarship from his discipline of chemistry to include a vast collection of African American folk rhymes, play songs and dance songs. *Negro Folk Rhymes, Wise and Otherwise* (1922) is one of the few pieces of literature that document the song and plays of African Americans that were collected and edited by another African American. Like *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, Talley collected many of the classics along with numerous amounts of rhymes and songs that probably have not been documented elsewhere. He wrote an extensive study of the nature of African American folk rhymes that discusses their relevance to and illustration of everyday life and social structures.

*Ring Games and Other Games of the Florida Negro* (Grace Fox, 1951) is a doctoral dissertation that reports the
findings of Dr. Fox's field research going through the state of Florida collecting games. Her findings introduce many new games that had not been documented in major sources such as *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands* and *Negro Folk Rhymes*.

A large number of plays and games have been preserved through published articles in the *Journal of American Folklore*. From as early as 1890 with the publishing of "Song Games of Negro Children in Virginia" (Mary O. Clark) to the 1961 article "Sixty Years of Historical Change in Game Preference of American Children" (Brian Sutton Smith), the *Journal of American Folklore* had dedicated sufficient space for documentation of children's games. Some of the articles most relevant to African American plays are "Florida Game Songs" (Inglis Fletcher, 1902); "Ring Games from Georgia" (Loraine Darby 1917); "Songs and Rhymes from the South" (E.C. Perrow); "Ring Games from Raleigh, North Carolina" (Susan D. Spenny, 1921); and "Three Generations of Children's singing Games in St. Louis" (Rachel C.Y. Leah, 1947).

In the 1970's a large amount of materials on the children's games emerged with, Bessie Jones, former Georgia Sea Island Singer, as a key collector. Along with Bess Lomax Hawes, former director of the Folk Arts Program for the National Endowment for the Arts and producer of a short film on African American children's game, "Pizza Pizza Daddy
0" (1964), Mrs. Jones compiled *Step It Down*, a premier book that is a repository for the games, plays, songs and stories, the majority of which Mrs. Jones remembered from her childhood. *Step It Down* is extensive, including most of the classics documented earlier in Parrish's book. Along with discussion as to any historical meaning of the plays, there are directions on the performance of the plays and even musical notation allowing for instrument accompaniment and accurate sound of the plays.

The Smithsonian Institutions' Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies produced several videotapes and study manuals on children's games from several ethnic backgrounds. Three of the most relevant record the events at the Children's Area of the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife (1976). *Six Children's Games and a Folktale from the African Tradition* by festival instructor Paul Ofori-Ansah illustrates the similarity of cultures where the games he teaches are related in style to those performed by African American children. There is an example of this relation in the videotape where the games "Kyekule," a communal ring game similar to one played by African American girls, "Punchinello," is taught to a group of African American girls. Later, the girls are videotaped performing the play. In their performance they have adapted the play, using words that sound as close to the African words they do not comprehend. The girls, however, did not
change the play from the way the Ghanian instructor taught it to them.

"All Things Shall Be Remembered" is a set of three video tapes that was also a result of the Festival of American Folklife in 1976. Performed by Bessie Jones, the tapes illustrate many of the games from Step It Down while introducing a few new games from Mrs. Jones' repertoire. In some of the games Mr. Ofori-Ansah participated with Mrs. Jones in creating an interesting and insightful interchange of cultures.

The final portion of the Children's Area was dedicated to games from the Anglo American tradition. Seventeen Play Parties from Anglo American Tradition taught by Stu Jamieson introduced games that either grew out of or were adapted into American culture. There are games that both African and Anglo American cultures share and can be found in both in Jamieson and Jones' presentations.

While there have not been many publications that examine the meanings and significance of current play activities, there are several books that document the plays themselves. Apples on a Stick, The Folklore of Black Children by Barbara Michels and Bettye White (1983) contributes a vast majority of the games played by African American children during 1980's along with the classics from earlier times. Along with Apples on a Stick other publications include: Jump, Clap and Sing collected from
children from the Washington, D.C, school districts by Jean Alexander; *The Griot Sings. Songs from the Black World* by Edna Edet and *Did You Feed My Cow? Street Games, Chants and Rhymes* by Margaret Burroughs. These sources show the continuity of play games from one generation to the next although adaptations occur.

The material reviewed for this thesis covers a broad publication span ranging from shortly after emancipation to the present era. The scope is relevant because the literature displays the changes and constants in African American play activities and allows for comparison between the documented games of various time periods.
CHAPTER III

AFRICAN AMERICAN SONG AND DANCE

The earliest recordings of African American games and play activities were classified by authorities within the field of African American folk culture as an extension of folk songs and dances. This classification is valid since the play activities of African American children were often adaptations and reconfiguration of songs and dances performed by their adult communities. Some of those same songs are European in origin, which indicates that the same adult community learned or imitated the games and songs from the Anglo American community. Just as often, Anglo American children would pass their play activities to their African American counterparts either through imitation or mutual interaction and participation in the games and plays.

The arrangement of games have been grappled with by folklorists and scholars across the board because of the difficulties of classification. Regardless of context, locale or group representation it seems as though the process of analysis and categorizing play activities produce the same results.

The problem of classifying plays and games into appropriate categories has presented serious difficulties
because games are complex group behaviors deriving their nature from many sources.

Therefore, whether a classification system be based on the psychological, historical, educational, or structural characteristics of the games, there is bound to be a certain arbitrariness in any approach, as well as a great deal of overlapping between categories.²

Thomas Talley, pioneer African American scholar in the recording of "Negro Folk Rhymes," validates this point in his discussion of his process of classifying these "rhymes" (games, songs, etc.). Talley tackled classifying the Negro folk rhymes in an effort to simplify the task of comparison of African American folk rhymes to the folk songs and games of other ethnic groups. His conclusion, "I was much disappointed when I found that the Negro folk rhymes, when invited, refused to take their place whole heartedly in the ordinary classification," furthers the complexity of constraining play activities and games to set standards.³

All of this is to show the fluidity and changeability of categories not only between African American folk songs/dances and games, but the sharing of forms among differing play activities as well.

Talley, offering one of the earliest accounts of recorded "Negro rhymes," created a classification and categorizing system that he felt "lends itself more easily to a discussion of the origin and evolution of Negro Rhyme."⁴ He listed three major divisions that cover the origins of various types of rhymes and place them within
classes in relation to the divisions:

Divisions
I. Social Instinct Rhymes
II. Homing Instinct Rhymes
III. Psycho-composite Rhymes

Talley explained that divisions I and II originated out of basic instincts while division III contained elements of instinct along with "intelligent thinking processes." While Talley deals with rhymes in general, his overview takes a broader scope than specifically games and play activities. For example he separates dance rhymes from the dance rhyme songs, which are the dance rhymes that are transformed into songs. Naturally, the same analysis and divisions can be given for games and play songs where older rhymes, popular sayings and other song forms are taken by children and turned into their play and recreational activities. Therefore, it is necessary to cross the divisions and classes presented by Talley and recognize the sharing of rhymes between the various forms of rhymes and songs.

The games of African Americans, historically, like their African ancestors', were a significant part of African American daily livelihood and experiences. Their play activities were a form of exclusive communication that allowed them to relay messages meant only for themselves; ones that probably only they understood anyway. They informed others of danger and possible hazardous situations with a type of doubletalk masked by music and dance, seen in
the song "Run Nigger Run." Here, within plantations, enslaved Africans informed their comrades of the "paterol's" presence and urged them to take precautions. Rhythmic games and play activities expressed the sentiment of the people and reflected all aspects of community life. They were used to teach children value and life experiences. Of course, they functioned as recreational releases and forms of amusement as well. This precedence of musical and rhythmic activities seems to have accompanied the Africans in the United States when they were transported from their African homeland. Africans' use of music and movement, while diverse within itself, is still similar to the broad usage by African Americans. The song categories are common links with both cultures where, "many of the African song categories survived the voyage to the New World though the musical characteristic were changed." These changes were significant enough to create a distinct difference between the two cultures, but not enough to dismiss the obvious African presence and African survivals within African American song categories and undoubtedly serve the same purpose of "offering examples of . . . every day life experiences." Songs ranging from work songs, to children's games to social commentaries thrived in indigenous African communities where they were an intricate part of every day life. In comparison, the distribution of song categories among enslaved African American communities parallel those
of African origin. While songs were divided between sacred and secular, work songs and game songs as a result of acculturation and forced beliefs, their functions were intertwined as they all played a large role in community life.

The impact of slavery in the United States was unique in that it promoted the necessity of a "slave culture," with characteristics defined by John Blassingame, author of The Slave Community as "an emotional religion, folk songs and tales, dances and superstitions." He continues with, "much of the slaves' culture- language, customs, beliefs and ceremonies- set him apart from his master." Unlike other regions in the Americas (Caribbean and South America) where enslaved Africans were able to preserve and practice their cultures, enslaved Africans in the United States were forced to abandon their traditional forms of expressions that they carried with them from Africa, especially within the parameter of music. One of the most noted is the playing of percussive instruments, mainly the drum. This gave African Americans no choice but to go underground with a vast amount of their practices and beliefs. When the concealment of their forbidden expressions was impossible, African Americans used a type of masking process where they substituted one form or style to represent another. This was the case with the use of percussion in African American song and game. Where playing the drums and creating rhythms
with other percussive instruments were outlawed, African Americans created instruments out of the next best thing: their bodies. Their hand clapping, foot stomping, thigh, chest and face slapping became the drums that spoke the words that enslaved African Americans could not speak. Body percussion was not uncommon to those of African ancestry. One major characteristic of various African musical culture is the use of hand clapping and foot stomping as accompaniment. Therefore, African Americans, by using this form of percussive style, retained their African musical heritage and its multiple rhythmic complexities.\(^{10}\)

One of the most noted elements within African American expressive culture is the use of antiphony, commonly referred to as call and response. Across the board, whether song, sermon or other styles of oral expression, the call and response tendency was (and is currently) strong and quite evident. A large component of the literature on African American oral tradition chooses as one of its main foci the use of antiphony. Ethnomusicologist Portia Maultsby notes the advantages of this particular form of delivery known as call and response where, "The call and response structure is the key mechanism that allows for the manipulation of time, text and pitch."\(^{11}\) One illustration presents itself within African American churches dating from slavery to the present. Ministers and preachers, throughout their sermons, rely on the congregation to communication
with them, responding to cries of "you don't hear me," with "Amen" or "Say that" or simply a sound that means agreement. Use of antiphony extends to music and even movement where each group seems to feed off the other; One beginning with the lead and the other responding, while also creating the venue for the first to continue. A prime example is the tradition of moaning songs in African American churches. Here, leaders, normally the elders in the congregation, lead the group by moaning with harmonious styles that are imitated by the congregation. The use of antiphony has survived the acculturation process that has affected much of African American culture. It is just as common in everyday expression and communication as in more formalized communication such as sermons and songs and is one form that proves to be a constant of African American culture.

Therefore, there is no doubt that call and response and rhythmic complexities based on a strong use of percussion are inveterately ingrained in African American play activities. Along with the element of movement, in its more defined states as dance, the delivery styles form the basis of all the plays to be examined in this thesis. Dance is a dominant force in African American games, plays and musical expression. It is the element of movement that supplies the various body movements that illustrate the meaning of the games. While some dances in games have specific names that often imply meaning, some with double meaning, one for
master, the other for the enslaved), other forms of dance in games are simply the swaying of hips and "weight shifts" to underline and add color to the lyrical meaning and musical beats.¹²

Dancing existed both in the secular and the sacred world of African Americans just as it did in their African traditions, "In traditional African dances there was little separation of sacred and secular performances."¹³ Because of the Christian teachings of religious morality by the American planters, secular and sacred dancing became separated which created specific guidelines for proper/improper religious dancing such as the avoidance of crossing the feet and certain hip movements. This, again, was based on the views by European Americans of certain Africanized styles as barbaric and uncivilized. While the divisions between sacred and secular existed, both forms still shared characteristics and often could be interchanged simply by a slight alteration in movement. For the purpose of play activities, it was the secular forms that was most imitated by African American children in rhythmic plays and games.¹⁴

The recording of African American musical expression for the purpose of preservation began after emancipation around 1863. In 1867, one of the earliest recordings emerged, *Slave Songs of the United States.*¹⁵ In this piece, like most collections during that time, one will find,
primarily, sacred songs or spirituals over secular songs (referred to as plantation songs during that time) that include play and game songs. There are two primary reasons for this trend; One is the recorders themselves. Most field researchers were European Americans who both saw the value of preserving this unique aesthetic style and had the luxury of time to carry out such projects. In some cases European Americans sought out only religious songs (slave hymns) of African Americans because they were considered acceptable or civilized because they had characteristics similar to the songs the Europeans themselves forced on African Americans during slavery. (At least the versions African Americans performed for the recorders seemed similar.) If the musical execution was not similar, the content of the songs was of a seemingly Christianized nature which did not offend their former masters or the Northerners who were well disposed but ignorant of African American culture.

The other reason the recording of secular songs as scarce was the reluctance of African Americans to perform songs of a non-religious nature. African Americans forcibly practiced pacifying and pleasing European Americans for such a long period that by emancipation this pacification was ingrained in their psyche and behavior patterns. They knew their secular songs were not meant for European Americans and realized the risk they took by sharing such
songs with them. Again, as a result of enslavement, African Americans tended to view themselves through the eyes of their former masters. They did not want to be categorized as uncivilized or barbaric and they recognized the similarity between their songs, games and dances and those of their African ancestors and peers, which were seen as such. In fact, some African Americans abandoned their original execution of songs and dance for a more European style. If these songs and dances were performed at all, it was not without ridicule from some people in the community. This furthered the transformation of some of these songs and dances into sacred, acceptable forms and treated the survival of many secular song categories, including games and plays. Nonetheless, there was enough retained through the tireless effort of dedicated field researchers, along with the preservation by African Americans themselves through their strong oral tradition, that the significance of that style is recognizable and usable for adequate research.

Before entering into the examination of the games and plays themselves, it is important to note, again, the flexibility of the play activities to be discussed. Not only will the reader discover that folk songs and dance of African Americans transform and are interchangeable with their games and plays; It will be apparent also that plays and games are quite interchangeable between themselves. For
instance, a play generally categorized as a ring play may occur also under singing plays. This is probably a result of multiple recordings where one group of children actually performed the ring play, while the other simply choose to supply the recorder with a vocal rendition. Singing accompanies most rhythmic plays as well, so it is only logical that these plays fall under both categories. To sum up, these games are not exclusively limited to any one category and should be considered interconnected to one another.
Notes


3. Talley, 253.

4. Ibid., 256.

5. Ibid., 256-258.


   See also Dorothy Scarborough's, *On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs* and William Allen, Charles Ware and Lucy Garrison's *Slave Songs of the United States* for other versions and information on this song.


10. Ibid., 52.


14. This is illustrated by a comparison of African American folk songs and spirituals with game and play songs. The latter correlates with secular folk songs.

16. For verification, one simply needs to review the existing literature. Many of the authors, like Lydia Parrish and Allen, Waren and Garrison, comment on the scarce amount of recorded and performed songs and plays of a secular nature.
CHAPTER IV

GAMES AND PLAYS FROM SLAVERY TO 1950's

A set of ring plays, dances and fiddles songs have been preserved through Lydia Parrish's recording of *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*. Collected between 1912 and 1915 from formerly enslaved African Americans, their descendants and children from that period, Parrish obtained ring plays that were discovered and documented after her recordings. She noted that she was not even aware of ring play songs until she stumbled across an article by Loraine Darby entitled "Ring Games from Georgia." When she returned to Georgia she questioned one of the residents of the Sea Islands, Julia Armstrong about a song found in Darby's piece. Julia's reply was "Dear me! It's a ring-play song but it's so long since I sung one I'd forgotten we ever did." Parrish later discovered that modern versions of the songs were still being sung by the local school aged children.

Parrish includes three ring plays in her examination: "Emma You My Darlin'," "Go Roun' the Border Susie" and "Sangaree." While she does not go into extensive details for describing the execution of the plays, the plays covered can be found in other sources on African American plays and
folk songs with more description. Parrish's coverage validates the presence of the plays within the African American community along with the time period or age of the plays.

While there is not much explanation by Parrish regarding the action or execution of the ring plays included in her piece, there are a few photographs that allow for some interpretation. "Emma You My Darlin'" falls into that category. This ring play has an accompanying photograph that shows Julia, one of her primary informants, teaching children the play. The children kneel, forming a tight ring while clapping and singing the lyrics:

Emma you my darlin' Oh Emma Oh! You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun' Oh Emma Oh. Emma you duh bad gal Oh Emma Oh!

The following ring play documented by Parrish, "Go Roun' the Border Susie," is a type of chase ring play that utilizes a common element found in children's games, the use of "windows". The play begins with the children acting out verses such as "That turtle dove started" prompting a girl to move into the ring and "Out goes the hornet" prompting a boy to follow her. Once both are inside the circle the children constructing the ring sing "Don't miss no windah" while the two move in and out to the ring, going between the children's uplifted arms. The following verse beginning with "Close in d'semble" signals the children to drop their arms (or close the windah) once the two children are on the
outside of the ring. The play then turns into a ring chase where the boy (the hornet) chases the girl (the turtle dove) while the circle of children repeat the chorus until capture or fatigue.6

The last ring play included in Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands like "Emma You My Darlin'" Parrish gives no description of the play. However, this time she does offer an explanation as to why the ring play is not described, "This ring play varies in action wherever I see it done. For that reason I will attempt no description." While "Sangaree" is played in various ways, the one constant is the tune which Parrish says "always remains the same."7

Chorus: Oh Babe (Sangaree) Oh Baby (Sangaree)
Oh Babe (Sangaree) Oh Baby (Sangaree)
If I Live (Sangaree) Don' get kill'(Sangaree)
I'm goin' back (Sangaree)
Jacksonville (Sangaree)8

This play obviously makes use of African Americans' sense of call and response and repetition in musical expression. There is no indicated leader/group division between the "Oh Babe" and the "Sangaree". However, considering the stated similarity between the style and format of the songs and the recollection of a performance of the play by former Georgia Sea Island singer, Mrs. Bessie Jones, it can be confirmed that there emerges a type of leader or leaders that take precedence in singing the call while the remaining group replies with the response.9
The collection of clapping plays in Parrish's work are some of the most noted historically, and cited frequently in literature that examines African American oral and musical traditions. Plays such as "Juba" and "Ham Bone" are widely known within African American communities where they encompass several generation of games. As well, these games are commonly known within various Anglo American communities particularly those scholars of folk culture and people whose generations are comparable to those of African Americans who remember the plays.

"Juba" is a play that is found in basically every historical review of African American play activities, dances and rhymes that emerged from the era of slavery. As well, "Juba" is a play that is still present in the memory of many African Americans growing up during the early to mid twentieth century. Here Parrish refers to the play by its first line "Juba dis an' Juba dat,"

Juba dis an' Juba dat  
An' Juba kill d'yalla cat  
An' get over double-trouble  
Juba!  

This version of "Juba dis an' Juba dat" is uniform to later recorded versions of the play. Parrish describes the actions of the play where the player crosses his (or her) hands to one knee then the other while, "Pat[ting] out an intricate rhythm." The last line of the song "Now Juba" accompanies a foot work that matches the patting of the hands. In Parrish's endnotes she comments that the dance
of Juba was then over a century old. This is of importance for validation of the history and authenticity of the play as well as its flexibility for being a both a clapping play and a dance.  

"Ham Bone Ham Bone" is a play that emphasizes the body percussionist skills of the performer. Being one of the more commonly known games, "Ham Bone" can be recalled by many African Americans from many generations following the era of Parrish's focus. A primary example is a personal recollection of the play that was passed on from my great grandmother. As with other play activities, the lyrics to "Ham Bone" offered by Parrish's performers are somewhat varied yet the execution of the play is quite similar. 

Twelve year olds Maria and George contributed two versions of "Ham Bone" for Lydia Parrish's research. Maria's version seems to be of a more recent adaptation of George's older version that uses more antiphony than Maria's. The patting is similar in both versions although Maria balances herself on one foot while patting her "rusty butt" while George, leaning against a wall, performs what Parrish notes as "a more complicated bit of patting" that entails him slapping his chest and rump to create the rhythm of the play:

Maria: Ham Bone Ham Bone pat um on uh shoulder
       Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t'hold her
       I went down town one day
       I went with my mother-too
       My mother bought me a billy goat
       If my billy goat don't butt
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt...

George: Ham bone Ham bone wha's you bin
   All roun' the worl' an' back again
   Ham bone Ham bone what'd y'u do?
   I got a chance an' I fairly flew...16

Both versions of "Ham bone Ham bone" can be continued and sometimes expands to incorporate other play songs.17 The significance of this play, however, is not the lyrical content but instead the musical accompaniment. "Ham bone" is unique in that it uses body percussion in ways quite different from other play activities that generally uses complex hand clapping and foot stomping. While it is all categorized under "patting," "Hambone" seems to take its patting to another level by utilizing body parts not normally used to create rhythms.

An interesting play that combines dance and rhythmic clapping is "Ball the Jack," a phrase that has also occurred in several other plays as a "motion."18 "Ball the Jack" was named after a railroad term although Parrish believed it to be of African origin since she observed an African performing a similar motion in a motion picture "Sanders of the River."19

The motion or dance performed in this play is described as a "serpentine wriggle" where the performer's head n shoulders and feet are stationary while movement flows from chest to feet and the hips rotate to the following lyrics and hand clapping:
Ole Aunt Dinah. Sick in Bed. Send for the doctor
The doctor said. Get up Dinah. You ain' sick.
All you need. Is a hickory stick. An' I ball the jack
on the railroad track.20

"Ball the Jack" is a motion that has been documented in
other collection of plays, Bessie Jones' collection in
particular.21 Parrish notes it was brought to St. Simons
Island (located in Georgia), where her field research was
conducted, around fifty years prior to her documentation by
an "up country Negro" and has been enjoyed by African
American children there ever since. The "Ball the Jack" is
one of those risque dances or movements that children enjoy
and adults often despise or condemn.22

One religious dance that crossed boundaries to serve as
a secular and children's dance to accompany their play songs
is the "Buzzard Lope." Often performed to religious songs
originating during the ante bellum period, this dance makes
use of imitation where the dancers copy the actions of a
buzzard by balancing one foot and creating the body
contortions and flapping their arms to resemble the actions
of the hawk.

The "Buzzard Lope" is one with ties seemingly linked to
African dancing and movement. It is frequently documented
that many traditional dances throughout Africa simulate
animal characteristics. In Alyce T. Cheska's comprehensive
examination of African play activities, The Role and Place
of Traditional Games and Dances in West African Nations,
Cheska identifies a game category of simulation games that is "determined by the players' ability to replicate another's behavior." This category is divided into several subdivisions, the relevant one being mimery games where the "player mimics behavior or another; e.g., action, pose, sound or appearance of a living creature, machine, natural phenomenon or person."\(^{23}\) Parrish also notes that Dr. Melville Herskovits has seen a similar dance performed in Dahomey, West Africa.\(^{24}\)

In Ms. Parrish's account of the "Buzzard Lope" she describes several incidents where she was fortunate enough to persuade the Islanders (St. Simons and Sapelo Islands) to perform the dance for her. The First performance used an old spiritual with the lyrics "Throw Me Anywhere in That Ole Field" where the "ole field" meant the graveyard. This reference is fitting for such an imitation play since buzzards (especially turkey buzzards) prey on carcasses. The second performance is more descriptive of the turkey buzzards habits of devouring the carcass through lyrics that verbally illustrate the actions of the performer and the turkey buzzards:

```
March aroun'! (the cow)
Jump across! (see if she's daid)
Get the eye! (always go for that first)
So glad! (cow daid)
Get the guts! (they like 'em next best)
Go to eatin'! (on the meat)
All alright! -cow mos' gone
Dog comin'!
Scare the dog!
Look aroun' for mo' meat
```
All right-belly full
- "Goin' to tell the res'"\textsuperscript{25}

This performance was used for participants: one did the patting, one danced, one recited the lyrical cues while the final person imitated the dead cow. As can be imagined this dance play was very illustrative and graphic, showing creative innovative talents of people with seemingly not much within themselves or their environment to enthuse or motivate.

Another play recorded by Parrish that falls within Cheskas' category of simulation games, that is "imitation games which are often more instructional than recreational" is "Shout Josephine Shout," which is later simply documented as "Josephine."\textsuperscript{26} This play song was generally performed with both ring plays and dance plays and made use of antiphony style. The play began with the leader calling out for "Josephine" and the group replying with "Ma'am" creating a sort of conversation between Josephine and whoever appears to be a female elder:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear yo' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes Ma'am.
Shout Josephine-Shout Shout!...

The play continued with lyrical additions discovered later that contributed the verses for pantomime. In these verses the leader sang out a particular area on the body or body
ornamentation (jewelry for example) where pain was present while the rest of players touched the spot and acted out the feelings of pain:

Pain in the head--Shout-Shout!
Shout Josephine-Shout!
Pain in the back--Shout-Shout!

Shout Josephine-Shout!
That finger ring
Shout! Shout!
That waterfall
Shout! Shout!27

The remainder of play activities in *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands* are plays that can be classified as "promenading and marching pieces." This contains plays such as "Pretty Green Shawl" documented as the "Negro counterpart" of "It's Cold Frosty Mornin'," a song originating in England.28 Both of these plays' actions are such where players are paired with lined partners that they continuously exchange. This action is similar to those performed in the commonly known dance "Virginia Reel."

William Newell describes this dance as an "imitation of weaving" where the dancers move throughout their performance of line formation from side to side, over and under, like the movement of weaving cloth.29 Another example of Virginia Reel similarities is "Four and Twenty Lawyers." Parrish notes the lyrics are of no more significance that to add direction to the participants movement. The distinctive feature of the play is the intense hand clapping, "the unmistakable stamp of Africa," combined with the Anglo dance
The body of information contributed in Lydia Parrish's book undoubtedly verifies and uncovers a piece of African American oral tradition that often was hidden within the minds and memories of both a people and an era. Fortunately, her brief descriptions of the plays leaves more than just text allowing for further research and expansion of her work.

Within the 1920's another collection of play activities emerged. A collector named Thomas Talley presented his findings in *Negro Folk Rhymes Wise and Otherwise*. This work was the first published of its kind in that its collector was African American and the content dealt specifically with folk rhymes, rather than primarily with song and dance, where rhymes and play activities would be sub-categories. Talley collected his rhymes in the same manner as Parrish: field research among African Americans who either survived enslavement or their descendants. A unique and refreshing factor about Talley's research is that he focused his collection on secular rhymes, which offers a contrast to popular research of sacred and spiritual music. Supported by Fisk University, where Talley was a professor of chemistry, he left a collection of material that not only...
gives the lyrics of the rhymes and divides them into categories such as Play Songs and Dance Songs, but he supplies his readers with an extensive section that analyzes the categories for meaning and Africanisms. This is particularly refreshing since the majority of historical literature dealing with folk songs, rhymes and play activities do not offer interpretation of style, form or meaning. This lack of information undoubtedly handicaps the researcher when analysis is necessary for comparison or authenticity of the music or plays.

*Negro Folk Rhymes* includes a large number of rhymes that are found in other sources under the guise of play activities, games and dances. Reviewed in this thesis are rhymes that fall under Talley's categories of Dance, Play and Nursery rhymes. These rhymes, for the most part, have been discovered in other sources which is useful for comparison to the origins of other games. There are some games that have not been uncovered in literature outside of Talley which is helpful for researching authenticity. These particular rhymes chosen were so because of their relation to plays most commonly executed by children and recollected by their elders. Again, since Talley failed to include description of most of the individual plays, it is necessary to rely on other descriptions for any type of review of style and execution.

Within Talley's collection there are numerous rhymes
that have also been documented as plays in other sources. The majority reviewed here fall under his category of play rhymes while the remainder are classified as dance and miscellaneous.

"Juba" is one of the most commonly recited plays surviving from the period of United States enslavement of Africans. Naturally, there are several versions of the play since oral tradition accommodates adaptation and evolution. "Juba" has been documented as a dance song as well as a dance. This particular version obviously closely illustrates the dance content of the play:

Juba whirl dat foot about.
Juba blow dat candle out. Juba! Juba!
Juba circle, *raise de latch.
Juba do dat *long dog scratch. Juba! Juba!33

Talley notes that the segments indicated by the asterisk are dance steps. He frequently used "Juba" as an example in his analysis section, "A Study in Negro Folk Rhymes." Here he noted how "Juba" illustrates the characteristics commonly linked to African and African American musical and dance expressions of antiphony and body percussion.34 The dance is described as one that allows the illustration of the lyrics through the movement while stomping or beating the rhythm of the words. The call and response (or 'sponse as Talley calls it) of "Juba" is simply the lyrics of the play with echoing of "Juba! Juba!" Accurately, Talley compares "call and 'sponse" to "...what we would call in
Caucasian music, solo and chorus.  

Lyrically, there is much difference in Talley's recorded version of "Juba" and Parrish's version. While both are dated as material surviving from the period of slavery, Talley's version seems to focus more on the element of dance and shear recreation than the one recorded by Parrish. The lyrics in her version have the underlining meaning or identification with the condition of enslaved African Americans while posing as merely a dance play.

"Run, Nigger! Run" was another rhyme recorded by Talley as a Dance song. This version is quite similar in form to other researched versions included in this thesis:

Run, Nigger, Run! De Patter-roller'll ketch you.
Run, Nigger, Run! It's almos' day

This dance rhyme, again, illustrates the double meaning and usage of rhymes, songs and dances of African Americans during slavery to convey a hidden message. For example, the final stanza in this rhyme is:

Oh, dat Nigger whirl'd, dat Nigger wheel'd
Dat Nigger towed up de whole co'n field.

Although Talley does not contribute commentary on this specific rhyme, it is possible, through comparisons to other versions of the rhyme, to speculate that, while the lyrics illustrated the movement of the "Nigger" and seemed simply like a dance or game to the masters, it actually was the
events that took place in life of one attempting to escape slavery. This speculation is based on comments by others who either remembered the rhyme or those who collected it.  

A popular children's play song that can still be heard in playgrounds and classrooms today is "Did You Feed My Cow?" This play is found in Talley's collection under play songs despite the fact that it is not always performed in song. Professor Talley explains that African American folk rhymes, particularly children's rhymes may originate in one form, prose for example, yet be performed in rhyme or song. That is, some children sang the verses while others simply chanted or repeated them:

    Did yer feed my cow? Yes, Mam!
    Will yer tell me How? Yes, Mam!
    Oh, w'at did yer give 'er? Cawn an' Hay.
    Oh, w'at did yer give 'er? Cawn an' Hay.  

Talley notes that his recorded version of the play was sung and much emphasis was placed on rhyme. Other versions to be discussed later prove similar in structure with slight variations in word selection. This play is still a classroom favorite where more frequently children recite the verses rather than sing them. In fact, personal recollection offers reciting the rhyme as a child, and more recently participating with a younger relative in performing the play in the same fashion.

"Did You Feed My Cow?" is another excellent sample of the call and response element that exists in African
diaspora musical expression. The entire play, whether Talley's version, versions documented in other literature or those performed today, is designed where a leader calls out the questions ("Did yer feed my cow?") and the group replies with the chorus or answer (Yes, Mam!). Antiphony is one of the most noted characteristics of African American music and it does not limit itself to one musical genre. Whether spirituals, work songs, field cries and hollers, secular music or play songs, call and response has remained a constant, proving to be a distinct cultural identifier with their African roots.42

A ring play discussed by Professor Talley in some detail is "Goosie Gander." Again, this is one of those plays that was interchangeable, existing as both a play rhyme and a play rhyme song:

...Goosie, goosie, goosie-gander
What d'you say? - Say: 'Gander'
Ve'y well. Come in de ring, Honey!
I'll pull yo' years way yander!43

Talley describes this play where children sat in a circle while one child walked on the inside of the circle, going from child to child saying "Goosie-gander." If the child replied "Goose" the child inside; the circle would respond "I turn your ears loose." If the child instead replied "Gander," the one in the ring responded "I pull yo' years way yander" and a scuffle would begin. Complying with the style of ring plays, the one who ended up being "it" (in
this case the child getting his ears pulled) would be the next one in the circle. Talley notes this was a popular play during his time and while it originated as a "simple prose call and response" ring play, "children inclined to rhyming things, started to do the rest" and recreated the rhyme element in the play.44

Another play song that has been described in other literature as a barn dance is "Little Sister, Won't you Marry Me?" Although, as frequently found, the lyrics are not exactly uniform with other versions, the meaning and design of Talley's recorded play is similar to the others:

Liddle sistah in de barn; jine de weddin
Youse de sweetest liddle couple dat I ever did see
Oh love! Love! Ahms all 'round me!
Say, liddle sistah, won't you marry me?45

Thomas Talley offered distinct insight on the oral tradition through his work Negro Folk Rhymes Wise and Otherwise. His piece contributed needed material on the secular musical tradition of African Americans. While Negro Folk Rhymes does not provide much in the way of description of individual rhymes and plays, it does give its readers an expansive body of information on the importance and relevance of other musical and oral expressions outside of sacred and spiritual music.

Dr. Grace Fox contributed the next body of literature to be included through her doctoral dissertation Ring Plays and Other Games of the Florida Negro. The time frame of her research and publication falls within the early 1920's which
is common to the period of the previously reviewed materials. Like her colleagues, Fox obtained her material through field research in various regions of Florida. The result of her work is full lyrical texts of numerous ring and other play activities with brief descriptions of execution and every available version of the play.

Fox's research is made up of interviews of both adults and children to obtain the oldest and most recent versions of the plays. Her material validates the originality of many games through her original research and comparison to other literature documenting games. She discovered several of the plays in other publications that verified their origins. Those that were not found in such literature were listed as plays that possibly had African American origin since they were not discovered in other sources. Her dissertation donated positively to the body of literature on African American plays and their oral traditions in that she did not merely repeat or discuss plays published in other sources; rather she introduced some new games into the picture and provided descriptions of their performance.

It is always difficult to limit the number of plays included from one author since the majority of literature offers a wealth of valuable information. Maintaining consistency, the games chosen for discussion here are, therefore, those that allow for comparison to other versions.
referred to in other sources. Fox's dissertation most certainly introduced several plays that had not been discovered in other published literature during her research. The games included in her paper fall under two categories: ring plays and other games, a category which covers games such as counting-out rhymes, dramatized plays and long ways dances.47

The first play reviewed from Fox's dissertation is a dramatic ring play entitled "Aunt Dinah is Dead." This play was found from West Florida to the Florida Key Islands. Also, this play is included, in similar form, in the Smithsonian Institution's compact disk release, Been in the Storm So Long.48 Here it is titled "Mr. Postman Die." The style and call and response patterns are parallel to the version Fox collected:

Leader: Aunt Dinah is dead!
All: How did she die?
Leader: She died like this!
All: Oh, she died like this
Leader: She died like that!
All: She died like that.

Fox notes that the lyrics are chanted rather than sung which is consistent with the version performed by the children who performed the play in Been in the Storm So Long. This illustrates the transmission of play activities and oral traditions from both time and space. This play was discovered by Fox in Florida, as far south as Key West. However, it was also recorded in Johns Island, South
Carolina as recently as 1989. This says a lot for the preservation of traditions as well.49

Fox described the performance of the play as the children creating a single circle with the leader in the center.50 Imitation was used where the leader illustrated how "Aunt Dinah died" by grabbing a part of her body with the other participants copying her actions. The play proceeds to the verse:

Leader: Aunt Dinah is living
All: How'd she live?
All: She's living in the country
Gonna move to town
Gonna shake her hips till the sun goes down.

Then the leader begins a dance commonly known as "trucking" and advances to one of the children comprising the circle who takes over the dance and moves into the middle of the ring.51

The play "Goosie" is similar in fashion to "Did You Feed My Cow?" It is composed primarily of call and response where the general response to the call is "Yes Ma'am:"

Little Girl! Little Girl!
Yes Ma'am
Have you been to the branch?
Yes Ma'am52

Fox comments that the contributor of this play says she learned it from her grandmother who was born into slavery in the United States. The contributor could not recall any details or meaning attached to the play although Fox adds that the contributor spoke the words in "a soft high pitched
One can only speculate that possibly the vocal tone relates to the imagery of the "little girl" in the play.53

The following two plays, one ring and the other clapping, are two of the most well known plays still in circulation currently. "Little Sally Walker" and "Mary Mac" are undoubtedly common and have been played by American children regardless of location, economic status and often ethnic background. That is, these two plays present themselves in both African and Anglo American communities and are remembered by both the young and the old.54

"Little Sally Walker" was documented in Games of Florida Negroes with six versions. Dr. Fox notes that "Little Sally Walker" is a game of English origin. While she does not say whether or not it originated as a ring play, she clearly states that "it is a well-known Negro ring Play."55 One of the earliest articles on the games and plays of children, "Games of Washington Children" by W. H. Babcott, includes a version of "Little Sally Waters."56 This version (with slight variations) is also found in William Newell's Games and Songs of American Children.57 Both describe the play with a girl in the center (apparently of a ring) acting out the words of the play, and both authors document the play as an English game:
Little Sally Walker  Little Sally Waters,
Sitting in a saucer  Sitting in the sand
Cryin' and weepin'  Weeping, crying for a young man
For all she have done  (Babcott)
(Fox)

Little Sally Waters
Sitting in the sun
Crying and a weeping
For a young man (Newell)

While the versions offered by Babcott and Newell do not present extreme variations, the six contributed to Fox generally all differed in why Little Sally Walker was weeping and crying. In one version she is distressed over a young man, another it is her actions or "all that she have done."

Yet another version has her crying for a "bottle of wine." The most unique difference between the "Little Sally Waters" of Babcott and Newell and the ones given by Fox (and later Jones and Hawes not to mention other folklorist and field researchers) is the element of letting the backbone slip. In almost every version contributed by Fox, there is the line "put your hand on your hip and let your backbone slip." Fox describes this action as follows:

...Standing face to face these two players put their hands on their hips, give the disjointed hip jerk, then shake their lower trunk from side to side as they finish the song.58

It seems as though this "backbone slip" and shaking offered (and continues to offer) the participants the chance to do their motion with a sassy twist, one often forbidden or
frowned upon by adults as movement not appropriate for children.

"Mary Mac" is one of the few plays described specifically as a "partner clapping play." Clapping plays, or hand games, seem to not have been too popular during that time. However, the use of clapping for keeping rhythm and musical accompaniment was present in the majority of games and plays.

This play is one known all throughout the African American community. Obviously, the lyrics have altered slightly over time and one could speculate that the clapping patterns have evolved as well. The main format of the play has, no doubt, remained intact:

Mary Mac, dressed in black
Sixteen buttons down her back
She jumped so high, she touched the sky
Never came back until the Fourth of July...
(version 1)

1. John, John the Barber
   Went to shave his father.
   The razor slipped and cut his lip
   Hurrah for John the Barber...

2. I asked my mother for fifteen cents
   See the white elephant
   Jump the fence
   Jumped so high
   He touched the sky
   He never came back 'til the
   Fourth of July (version 2)

These first two versions are lyrically similar except that verses are reversed; That is, both versions have the same verses although the verse with "John the Barber" begins the
play in version two where that verse follows the verse "Mary Mac" in version one. The clapping pattern is the same in both versions. It is described as:

Verse: Clap hand to own sided
       Clap own hands together
       Clap partners hands.

This continues until the players reach a line in the chorus "the rabbit with the hatchet." After this line they increase the speed of their clapping until the end of the play. 60

The final two versions are interesting in that their lyrics and clapping patterns are somewhat different. Version three begins with the words: "Sing! Sing! Sing!" which is performed by the two performers joining hands and shaking them to the rhythm of the words. This quite similar to a clapping play that emerges much later called: "I Don't Wanna Go to Mexico No More" or "Shame, Shame, Shame". Here the players grab hands and rock or swing them to the time of the words: "Shame, Shame, Shame". Also this version is the only one discovered during this period, (by the author of this thesis) that employs the repetition commonly heard in later performances of the play:

2. Mary Mac Mac Mac
   Dressed in black black black
   Twenty four buttons buttons buttons
   All down her back back back back... 61

Version four is distinct in that this version makes no mention of "Mary Mac," only "John the Barber." Also instead
of clapping with partners, the children who provided Fox
with this play did dance step that could be performed with
or without a partner. She described it as a "hop step' that
included a rocking motion:

John, John the Barber,
John, John the Barber
Went to shave his father
The razor slipped and cut his lip,
And that was John the Barber...[2]

Dr. Grace Fox limited her research to the state of
Florida but that does not limit the scope of the material
she obtained from Florida. By now it is evident that these
games and plays traveled throughout the United States, as
well as the Caribbean and Europe. As people migrated from
state to state and from country to country, they carried
their memories with them to be passed on to their next
generation. The children themselves exchanged plays and
songs with each other, changing and adapting as they went
along. Dr. Fox preserves many of them in her dissertation
and from her work new insights have been discovered.
Notes


3. Parrish, 93.

4. Ibid., 193.

5. Ibid., 35.

6. Ibid., 97-98.

7. Ibid., 99.

8. Ibid., 99-100.

9. Mrs. Jones performed this play for the 1976 American Folklife Festival at the Smithsonian Institution. It was recorded on a video cassette titled *All Things Shall be Remembered*. Jones remembered the ring play as "Sandy Rae."

10. "Juba" is found in the majority of literature used for this thesis. One can consult the Smithsonian Institution archives from 1993-1994 to listen to interviews of both African and Anglo Americans who vividly recall the play.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. This information is concluded from many conversations the author had with African Americans who all remember "Hambone" from their childhood. The play has also been cited in several works on African American folk songs and plays.

15. See Chapter Five for my version of the play.

17. Ibid., 115. George's version goes into "Brother Froggy Went to Town" which resembles "Froggy Went to Courtin'" (Talley, 190).

18. See Step It Down, chapter 5, the play "Soup Soup," 102.

19. Parrish, 117.

20. Ibid.

21. See note 18 in this chapter.

22. Parrish refers to this motion as "Snake Hips," a referral that is also mentioned in Step It Down, chapter on "Jumps and Skips."


24. Parrish, 117.

25. Ibid., 108, 111.

26. See Chapter Five in this thesis for discussion of the play.


28. Ibid., 104.


30. Parrish, 105.

31. Again there is emphasis on sacred musical expression.

32. While Talley has collected several original versions of rhymes this does not imply that these rhymes are not hidden in other literature and do not exist outside of Talley's documentation.

33. Talley, 9.

34. Ibid., 233.

35. Ibid., 265

36. See discussion of "Juba" in this chapter.
35. Ibid., 265

36. See discussion of "Juba" in this chapter.

37. Talley, 34.

38. Interviews by folklorists collecting for the Library of Congress document this statement.

39. Talley, 78.

40. This was documented by school aged children and one younger relative.

41. Talley, 78.

42. One can examine several sources from the included bibliography such as Dr. Mary Twining's dissertation An Examination of African Retentions in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands and Dr. Southern's The Music of Black America for verification of this.

43. Talley, 75.

44. Ibid., 262-263

45. Ibid., 90. There are other versions of this play found in Step It Down and Play Songs from the Deep South.

46. Grace Fox used Alice Gomme's Traditional Games of England, Ireland and Scotland as a basis for comparison.

47. Fox, see table of contents.


49. Ibid.

50. It is important to note that ring plays can be played with more than one circle.

51. Fox, 45-48.

52. Ibid., 69.

53. Ibid.

54. These plays are found in all the principal collections of the games of African American children and are still played today.
55. Fox, 91.
56. Babcott, 262.
57. Newell, 134.
58. Fox, 92.
59. Ibid., 156-158.
60. Ibid., 157.
61. Ibid., 158.
62. Ibid.
CHAPTER V
GAMES AND PLAYS FROM 1960's TO THE PRESENT

There have been significant research and publications on the survival and changes of African American children's games and plays since the period of Lydia Parrish and Thomas Talley. While the majority of literature on the play activities of African Americans offered mainly textual material with little analysis of the meaning of the plays, the literature coming after the 1960's gave both the textual material as well as discussion and relevance of the games to African American children's (girls specifically) socialization to their surrounding culture and community.¹ There was much emphasis on any African continuities that could be discovered in the games and researchers seemed to broaden their scope to games and plays from the African diaspora for any overlapping of materials between cultures. Although children frequently used imitation of adults and their music and movement, a more common trend finds imitation movements more in plays that do not focus so much on rhythmic skills. These include games such as hand, ring and jump rope games.² Rhythmic plays that African American children currently play seem to incorporate the current dances and rhythm and blues songs into their games.
However, African American children continue to play many of the games of their foreparents.

One of the first pieces to come out during the late 1960's (1969) was produced and preserved on 16mm black and white sound film. Coming out of the Department of Anthropology at San Fernando Valley State College, Bess Lomax Hawes along with Robert Eberlein wrote and directed Pizza Pizza Daddy O. This short film documents eight games performed by a dozen African American girls within their neighborhood school playground. This piece is valuable in that it gave the girls freedom to simply "play." They chose the games, the order in which they occurred and they had command of their spacing. Hawes comments that the reasoning behind the film being titled "Pizza Pizza Daddy O" was the fact that this game seemed to be the children's favorite within the eight recorded games. This would not have been detected if the girls were supervised and directed as to what games to play. Hawes and Eberlein's film supplied researchers with a printed guide that gives references or citation as to where the included games have also been documented which verifies authenticity and provides for similarities and contrasts in style and lyric.

"This-A-Way Valerie" is a play constructed with the parameters of a line play. It is described as one where each participant is allowed chance to dance between the lines of children:
This-a-way Valerie
Valerie, Valerie
This-a-way Valerie
All day long...

The children kept time with the singing of the lyrics while
dancing down the middle of the lines doing movements that
complement the song. This particular play was compared to
another play included in the film "This-A-Way Batman." This
play was said to be a "Jazzed up Parady" of This-A-Way
Valerie." It was noted to be a popular play among the
girls since they played the game on three different
occasions with slightly different versions every time:

This-a-way Batman, Batman, Batman
This-a-way Batman all day long
Oh Step back Robin, Robin, Robin
Step back Robin All day long...

What is interesting about "This-A-Way Batman" is its
combination of several plays into its lyrical content,
Besides "This-A-Way Valerie" there is a version or part of
"Short Shout" (documented by Lydia Parrish and remembered
by Bessie Jones as "Josephine"). The common parts of these
plays goes as follows:

I got a pain in my side -- ooh, ah
I got a pain in my side -- ooh, ah
I got a pain in my stomach -- ooh, ah
I got a pain in my stomach -- ooh, ah
I got a pain in my head -- ooh, ah...

This is undoubtedly a survival of "Shout Shout" and
"Josephine" where they both talk about "pains" in various
parts of the body in antiphony style with some type of
proclamation stressing the pain.

Another play similar to one that the girls' grandparents probably played is "My Mother Died." This play allowed the children the use of "verbal and gestural improvisation" as they illustrated the way various family folk "died" and the way the sister was still "alive:"

[1] My mother died
  How did she die?
  She died like this
  She died like this

  Where's she living?
  Oh she lives in a
  place called Tennessee
  She wears short short
  dresses up above her
  knee...

Bess Lomax Hawes comments that the girls seemed to enjoy imitating the sister with the "short short dresses above her knee." It can be imagined that this was one of those chances for the girls to be sassy and act out some movements that would not have been allowed outside of play. This play is obviously akin to "Aunt Dinah Died" and "Mr. Postman Died."

"Imbileenie" is a play that was definitely a creation of the children during their own childhood. Bess Hawes says this play hit Los Angeles around 1964 and that it has been performed by both African and European American children. From personal recollection this hand game is one that emerged during my youth between 7 and 10 years old. The performance is similar to the version I played and in fact, the game was recalled by a male in the same age group as myself who remembered hearing it:
"Imbileenie" is described as including finger snapping and slapping of the thigh along with the usual clapping patterns for hand games. Again from personal recollection the play consisted of slapping the thigh, snapping the fingers then slapping the partners hand (the partner is doing the same actions). This all takes place with one hand and is done in time to the beat of the words. The obvious variation in my version of the play and the collected one is the lyrics that accompany my version.

Imbileenie, diss apeenie
Oo-ah ambaleenie
Achirie Katchie Liberace
I love you
I love coffee I love tea
I love the colored boy and he loves me...  

The final game reviewed from this collection was undoubtedly the favorite of the children. While "Pizza Pizza Daddy O" was documented in Los Angeles, it was also discovered in the southeastern region with a call and response lyric.

Mary had a baby (Tanya, Sherry etc)
Pizza Pizza Daddy O
How you know it?
Pizza Pizza Daddy O
Cause she told me so
Pizza pizza daddy O...
Further into the game the leader calls out popular dances which the children do along with the chanting of the song:

...Let's freak it
Pizza pizza daddy o
Let's twine it.
Pizza pizza daddy o...\^{14}

The inclusion of popular dance steps and music was a common trend in rhythmic games of this nature. Often games were created entirely from popular dances and secular music. Dr. Mary Twining, renowned authority on African American children's games notes in her doctoral dissertation that, "Young girls dance as part of their games and plays...They really enjoy performing the current popular dances."\^{15} Examples of this are games such as "Candy Girl" and "Rollercoaster" discussed later in this chapter.

One of the most important pieces of literature produced on the games and plays of African American children is *Step It Down*. This book seems to be one of the authorities on the subject since it is one of the few contemporary studies that focuses primarily on games and plays and their survival and transmission. The bulk of the material was contributed by Mrs. Bessie Jones and performed by her and some of the Georgia Sea Island Singers during a two week workshop organized by co-author Bess Lomax Hawes. As well, Mrs. Jones' magnificent work and performances are preserved on video and audio tape at the Smithsoniand Institution as a result of the American Folklife Festival.
(1976). Here Mrs. Jones was the featured guest in the area of African American children's games.\textsuperscript{16}

Mrs. Bessie Jones is one that was considered one of the key sources for historical information on the world of games, plays and songs from the African American communities specifically ones from the Sea Islands. Mrs. Jones was born in Smithville, GA in 1902, later moved to Dawson, GA and finally resided on St. Simon's Island, GA. She recalls that she remembers her games and plays through her grandfather who, "was brought from Africa for a slave and was on a plantation in Virginia when freedom came."\textsuperscript{17} He later moved to Georgia to work on another plantation.

In her autobiography \textit{For the Ancestors} Jones candidly retells the days of her youth including hardships and fun times as well as her adult life and its challenges. A chapter "More than games," documents several of the games mentioned in \textit{Step It Down}. Here she vividly describes the history of these games and relevance to African American everyday life and existence during and after enslavement. In both sources, along with her performances at the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife, Jones tells a story that, while seemingly unique in her experience, is familiar to many African Americans elders. She shows how important play activities were not only to children during her childhood but to adult life and community existence. She mentions several times how a
particular game or play was constructed to teach a lesson or
a value or even to relay a message of their discontent with
their situations, "the (slave) masters thought they was
happy and carryin' 'on havin' a time, but the slaves was
talkin' to the white folks about all their troubles."[18]

Mrs. Bessie Jones was a dynamic women whose life was a
living storybook of the rich oral traditions of her family
and African Americans in general. Her insight into the
importance of preserving the plays of her and her
grandfather's childhood is appreciated as it exposes another
little bit of the supposedly lost culture of enslaved
Africans in the United States.

In Step It Down the authors divide the games and plays
into various chapters such as "Jumps and Skips" and "Songs
and Stories." The games discussed here come from the
chapter "Clapping Plays" and include the classics of
"Hambone" and "Juba." Beginning with "Hambone" Mrs. Jones
performed the play both for the workshop that inspired Step
It Down as well as for the Bicentennial Festival of American
Folklife where she was one of the performers for the
Children's Area.[19] "Hambone" is a play that was played
primarily by boys and is referred to in Step It Down as a
"hand jive game that utilizes the part of the body that
could be considered the hambone:

Hambone, Hambone, pat him on the shoulder
If you get a pretty girl, I'll show you
how to hold her.
Hambone, Hambone where have you been?

71
All 'round the world and back again...²⁰

The action accompanying the above lyrics are thigh slapping to follow after each line of the play. It is explained as an action that involves slapping the side of the thigh followed by hitting the side or chest and finishing with striking the thigh again, this time in a downward motion. I can remember "Hambone" being taught to me with the same patterns by my great grandmother. The lyrics however vary from the ones supplied by Jones:

Hambone Hambone have you heard?
Mama's gonna buy you a mocking bird.
If that mocking bird don't sing,
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.
If that diamond ring don't shine,
Mama's gonna buy you a bottle of wine...²¹

Naturally "Juba" is included in Mrs. Jones' repertoire of games. In regards to this game she said it was one that originated in Williamsburg, Virginia by enslaved Africans; Although their masters believed it was a game originating in Africa. She added that the African slaves were forced to eat gibblets (gibble or jibber, all referring to Juba) on Sundays which was essentially mush or slop out of a trough. After the "feasting" ceremony (the slop was mostly leftovers from the entire week from various homes and sometimes a "treat" of roasted pig or rabbit), they were expected to entertain their masters with games that they brought with them from Africa. "Juba" was one of those games they performed. While it is noted in Step It
Down that the word 'juba' is most likely a variation of a West African day name, the game originated right there on those plantations. It originated with a double meaning and purpose, one to satisfy the master and the other to satisfy themselves by secretly talking about their masters, their situation and how one day they would no longer live as slaves:

Juba this and Juba that
And Juba killed a yellow cat
And get over double trouble Juba
You sift - a meal, you give me the husk
You cook - a the bread, you give me the crust
You fry the meat, you give me the skin
And that's where my mama's trouble begin...  

Again juba referring to the mush or "mixed up" food that was fed to the slaves, the obvious "you" in the play then referred to the masters. Mrs. Jones remarks,

"And get over double trouble," that was "Someday I'll get to cook my own food." These games were for talking to them white folks direct because the slaves didn't like the way they were being treated.

The action accompanying the play was called "patting" or "patting juba." Patting consists of an alternating slap of thigh to back of hand which creates a sort of galloping effect. This version of "Juba" is quite similar to the one collected earlier by Lydia Parrish's which makes sense since both Parrish and Jones' material came from the same area. Thomas Talley's version of the play was collected as a dance song and does not mention the element of patting nor do the lyrics conform the ones supplied by Parrish or Jones.
The next group of plays fall under the category of "jumps and skips." This group contains plays such as "Shoo Turkey" and "Josephine," both similarly constructed and skin to Parrish's version of "Josephine." Actually both of these plays are somewhat similar in fashion to another play "Did you Feed My Cow?" and "Goosie." As well, there was the ever popular, at the time, "Pizza Pizza Mighty Moe" (a version of "Pizza Pizza Daddy O"). Hawes and Jones noted that this was a modern game, not one the elders from the Sea Islands knew. Yet they had much consideration for it and its performance:

Evaline?
Pizza Pizza Mighty Moe
Well, have you seen her?
Pizza Pizza Mighty Moe
She's got a wooden leg.
Pizza Pizza Mighty Moe...

One play that sticks out in the memory after reviewing Bessie Jones' repertoire in All Things Shall Be Remembered is "Knock Jim Crow." While the most entertaining parts of the play is the catchy tune and dance, the lyrics and title of the play itself have much significance. Mrs. Jones remembered,

When I was a little girl, I thought Jim Crow might have been a bird, because it was "going down to the new ground," and they always shoot them birds out of the corn.

Besides being a bird Jim Crow was also a European American actor, Thomas D. Rice who was popular in the late 1920's as
a black face vaudevillian portraying the character of a plantation slave.\textsuperscript{28} The Jim Crow dance among the African American community was one of imitation and was considered something entertaining while the obvious political connotation overshadowed the play. It is ironic how the lyrics could apply to both a bird being shooed from the grounds as well as the political system of Jim Crow being removed from African Americans' lives:

Where you going, buzzard?  
Where you going, crow?  
I'm, going down to new ground  
To knock Jim Crow  
Up to my kneecap  
Down to my toe  
And every time I jump up  
I knock Jim Crow (speed increases)  
I knock...\textsuperscript{29}

The movements for this play are as interesting and creative as the song. They consist of the participants clapping underneath alternate legs as they lift them up and down. There is a person in the middle who also does the above movement but also turns around in circles on "knock." Naturally, all of this must be executed in time with the singing.\textsuperscript{30}

Under "Singing Plays" are two universal plays that both have origins outside of the African American community. "Green, Green the Crab Apple Tree," "Johnny Cuckoo" and "Go in and Out the Window" have been discovered in several sources such as \textit{Journal of American Folklore}, Newell's \textit{Games of American Children} and one of the earliest articles on
children' games, "Games of Washington Children," The similarity between these plays is due to their British origin, although they are popular throughout the world.

"Green, Green, the Crab Apple Tree" has been collected under the title of "Green Gravel" in Newell's book and "Sweet Gravel" in Babcock's article. The play is a ring play that Bess Lomax Hawes notes was also referred to as "Green Graves." She adds that the play is a ceremonial dance rather than a game:

Green, green the crab apple tree
Where the grass grows too deep
Miss Emma
Miss Emma
Your true lover is dead
He wrote you a letter
to turn back your head.

There is much significance in the line "to turn back your head" as Hawes comments that it was "originally a child's re-enactment of a mourning rite." Newell adds that,

Turning the head is a sign of sorrow; in some British versions the game is continued by another in which the lost lover appears and the dancers, who have all turned about, are one by one made to face the ring...

In any case all three versions of the play used here are quite similar:

Green Gravel
Green gravel, green gravel
The grass grows so green
The fairest of ladies
Is fit to be seen

Dear, dear
Your true love is dead
He sent you a letter
To turn back you head

Sweet Gravel
Sweet gravel, sweet gravel
Your true love is dead
He wrote you a letter
To turn back your head
(Newell)

All three sources explain the performance of the play as a ring play where the children walk holding hands and singing the words. The one child who has been designated by the mentioning of his or her name, or by being in the center of the ring, turns half way around where the back faces the center of the ring on "turn back your head." The child then rejoins the ring and the play continues until everyone has had a chance to turn.34

This play is a high spirited play that seemed to be enjoyed by both Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Lomax Hawes and by the children. In her teaching of the play during the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife the children participating continued the game long after Mrs. Jones had attempted to end it. The children skipped faster and faster in a circle chanting the words loudly with excitement while the adult participants stood back and watched with amusement.35

"Johnny Cuckoo" is an adaptation of the British game "Three Dukes A-Riding;" titled "Here Come Three Dukes A Riding" in "Games of Washington Children:"

Johnny Cuckoo
Here comes one johnny cuckoo
Cuckoo, cuckoo
Here comes one johnny cuckoo
On a cold and stormy night...
You look too black and

Here Comes Three Dukes...
Here comes one duke a riding
A riding, A riding
Here comes one duke a riding
Sir Ransom Tansom
Tiddy
Bo Teek...
dirty
Dirty, Dirty
You Look too black and
Dirty
On a cold and stormy
Night
I am just as clean as
you are
You are, you are
I am just as clean as
you are
On a cold and stormy
night... (Jones)

You're too black and
dirty
Dirty, Dirty
You're too black and
dirty
Sir Ransom Tansom Tiddy
Bo teek
I look as good as you
do
You do, you do
I look as good as you
do
Sir Ransom Tansom Tiddy
Bo Teek (Babcock)

While Babcock documents this as a ring play, Jones remembers
it as a line play where one player (the Johnny Cuckoo)
inspects the other players to choose the best soldier. As
the play advances the entire line turns their backs on the
Johnny Cuckoo and switch their hips because he or she is
"too black and dirty." This action is taken in stride since
Johnny Cuckoo gets to repeat the action, in defense, of the
line on "I am just as clean as you are." At the end an
additional Johnny Cuckoo is chosen until there is no one
left to make up the line and everyone has been chosen as a
soldier.

One of the most popular plays that is shared by both
African and European Americans is "Go In and Out the
Window." It has been documented in numerous sources and is
remembered by African and European Americans from
practically all economic and social backgrounds.

"Go In and Out the Window" was often referred to as "Go
Round and Round the Valley" by European Americans while
African Americans tended to use "Go In and Out the Window". Categorized as a "pleasure of motion play" it is performed where one lead player surrounded by other players travels in and out of the ring by going under the players upstretched arms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go In and Out the Window</th>
<th>Round and Round the Valley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go in and out the window</td>
<td>Go round and round the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go in and out the window</td>
<td>valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As we have come today</td>
<td>Go round and round the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I kneel because I love</td>
<td>valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you [repeat]...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I measure my love to</td>
<td>As we are all so gay!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show you [repeat]...</td>
<td>Go in and out the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jones)</td>
<td>window [repeat]...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go in and face your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lover [repeat]...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Babcock)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A unique factor of this play when played by Bessie Jones and the Sea Island Singers was the acting of the verse "I measure my love to show you." This action required the use of a piece of paper, handkerchief or anything worthy of substitution. The diagonal corner was then held up to the chest of the person who was chosen by the player in the middle of circle. The paper (or whatever was used) was then raised and lowered to illustrate the measurements of the players love. Stu Jamieson, collector of Anglo American play party activities and fellow participant along with Mrs. Jones in the 1976 Children's Area of the Festival of American Folklife agreed that the measuring action
was more dominate in African American communities.

Here is a version of the play he recalled:

Go in and out the windows (sung three times)
As we have done before
Go wash those dirty windows (sung three times)
For we have gained the day
Go forth and find a lover (sung three times)
For we have gained the day
I kneel because I love you (sung three times)
For we have gained the day
I'll measure my love to show you (sung three times)
For we have gained the day...

Hawes notes that the line "For we have gained the day" is the more common line in Anglo American and British versions of the play while "As we have come today" takes precedence when African Americans play this play.39

The final games to be discussed from Step It Down are plays that fall under ring plays and dances. "Soup, Soup" is a play that is constructed similarly to one found in an article by Loraine Darby dating 1917,"Way Down Yonder." Both versions are set in antiphony style with a response to the call being "soup,soup:"

Soup Soup
Way down yonder
soup, soup
Belows the mean
soup, soup
I got a letter
From Alma Stone
soup, soup... (Jones)

Way Down Yonder
Way down yonder
soup to soup
Where dem white folks
soup to soup
Just singing on' prayin
soup to soup...
(Darby)40

In Jones' version the play continues on to say:

There ain't but the one thing [soup,soup repeat]
That I dislike That's puttin on airs
And balling that Jack...
These verses, according to Jones referred to a time when people would discourage children from doing things such as "putting on airs" yet when it all came down the adults could get down and dirty and "Ball the Jack" (an action involving the movement of the hips). This play allowed children to engage in those risque or adult actions that would be frowned upon otherwise.41

"Way Go, Lily" is another play that is said to be "just for exercise" by Mrs. Jones while the lyrics and performance by Mrs. Jones at the Smithsonian Folklife festival implies otherwise. Listed as one of Mrs. Jones' oldest ring plays, "Way Go, Lily" is one where the child in the middle skips around the ring swinging each child composing the ring until the end when the last child to be swung is left in the middle to be the center performer:

Way go, Lily sometimes
Way go, Lily sometimes
I'm gonna to rule my ruler sometimes
I'm gonna rule my ruler sometimes...

In All Things Shall Be Remembered Mrs. Jones and the participants continued the game with the children (and few adults) "ruling" with various items such as a shotgun and a hammer and a line of "I'm gonna rule over old master."

Mrs. Jones remarked that this game implied, at least to the other enslaved Africans, that one day "they" will be the boss; One day they will "rule over [their] ruler, sometimes.42
The play "Alabama Mississippi" is one not found in *Step It Down* but was discussed in Mrs. Jones' autobiography *For the Ancestors* and performed at the Folk life Festival (Smithsonian Institution). This game originated out of the Civil Rights Movement and Mrs. Jones' prayer band which traveled around the south offering an alternative to protest marches. Mrs. Jones recalled,

“So we were at a place called Beulah, Mississippi and Martin and all of them were there, and we read that in the Bible about shaking it off. We thought, there must be some way that we could sing this and make people understand. We couldn’t get anywhere by just putting it into song, because people would say we were singing the blues. So we put that teaching into a ring game there in Mississippi and just let the children shake it off.”

"Alabama Mississippi" was performed as a ring play where the person in the middle "shakes" off all the negative things on their minds (racial hatred, stress etc.):

Alabama, Mississippi
Alabama, New Orleans
Alabama number one
You gotta shake, shake, shake, shake it baby
Shake, shake, shake, shake it baby
Shake it back to New Orleans.

There are many more games and plays for review in the repertoire of Bessie Jones. *Step It Down* in conjunction with the Smithsonian video tapes *All Things Shall Be Remembered* that documents Jones performance at the 1976 Festival of American Folklife is an excellent source to bring the past to the present in regards to African American games.
The plays and games that have been collected from the 1970's and 1980's are, for the most part, ones created by the children themselves. Games like "Juba" and "Hambone" are ones that exist on paper and in the memories of parents and grandparents of children of the 1970/1980's. The fortunate children may be familiar with such plays through the teachings of their grandparents or other elders, but for the most part their games are exactly that, theirs.

I was fortunate enough to be one of those children whose great grandmother passed on the rhymes and games of her childhood. Unfortunately, the only game that sticks out in my mind is "Hambone." I can, however, recall most of the games I spent hours upon hours playing. I have been able to document the plays of my childhood in other sources focusing on African American children's games of the time period such as Apples on a Stick and Jump, Clap and Sing, an unpublished collection of games from Washington, D.C. school children, created along with the 1974 Children's Area of the Festival of American Folklife.46

The majority of plays from my childhood are clapping plays, two of which are popular within the literature on this subject. "Head and Shoulders, Baby" and "Down, Down Baby" are plays found in materials on both African American games and materials on children's games in general. These plays are widespread where they have been documented in Georgia, Texas, Washington D.C. and Missouri:
Head and shoulders, baby
one, two, three
Head and shoulders, baby
one, two, three
Head and shoulders, head and shoulders,
Head and shoulders, baby
one, two three
Knees and ankles, baby
one, two, three...

The play is continued with various body parts being
substituted for "head and shoulders." The action of the
play is the general clapping formation found in most
clapping plays where two partners touch their heads and
shoulders then exchange hitting each other's hand. This
play varies slightly in Step It Down where Mrs. Jones says
the kids do such actions as "walk the dog" and "milk the
cow" in addition to substituting the body parts. A
version found in Jump, Clap and Sing is uniform with the one
by Jones.

"Down, Down, Baby" is another clapping play with the
same clapping pattern as "Head and Shoulders, Baby." The
play I remember allowed for us to, yet again, engage in
motions or actions that we felt adults would see as risque:

Down down baby
down by the rollercoaster
Sweet sweet baby
I'll never let you go
Shimmy shimmy coka pop
Shimmy shimmy pow [repeat last two lines]
Momma, momma sick in bed
Called the doctor and the doctor said
Let's get the rhythm of the head
Ding dong [repeat]...

The play continues with the children getting the rhythm of
the hands and the feet with clapping or stomping to indicate
the rhythm. Finally the children get the rhythm of the "hot
dog" which was a gyrating of the hips in a circular motion.
This, of course, was the most anticipated part of the
play and the one we got the most enjoyment out of!

An interesting comparison can be made with a play out
of the Virgins Islands called "Let's get the rhythm of the
band." While it is described as a ring game, the lyrics
closely resemble those constructing the ending of
"Down, Down, Baby:"

...Leader: Let's get the rhythm of the hand
Answer: We got the rhythm of the hand
Leader: Let's get the rhythm of the feet
Answer: We got the rhythm of the feet
Leader: Let's get the rhythm of the Oh boy!
Answer: We got the rhythm of the Oh boy!50

Although their lines are divided into call and response
form, and "Down, Down, Baby's" lines are not, the play is
still similar in structure and words since line are repeated
in "Down, down, baby" (compare also "the rhythm of the Oh
boy!" to the "rhythm of the hot dog" for its rhythmic
similarities).

Two other plays that I remember spending hours enjoying
with my childhood friends were "Have You Ever" and "Oh
Sailor Went to See See See." Both of these plays have also
been collected for publication in literature during that
time:

Have You Ever
Have You ever, ever, ever
In your long legged life
Seen a long legged sailor
With a long legged wife?
No, I never, ever ever
In my long legged life
Seen a long legged sailor
With a long legged wife...

The play is a clapping play with several verses where words are substituted like "bowlegged life... bowlegged wife" and "short legged...". *Jump, Clap and Sing* and *The Griot Sings* both collected the same versions.

Oh Sailor Went to See See See
Oh sailor went to see, see, see
All that he could see, see, see
But all that he could see,see,see
Was the bottom of the ocean sea,sea,sea
Oh sailor went to chop, chop, chop
All that he could chop, chop, chop...[repeat like stanza one]
Oh sailor went to China...
Oh sailor went oo oo achie ka...

The actions for this play are again clapping with partners where appropriate actions would be performed to illustrate the words (chop, China, etc). "Oo achie ka" was a phrase that indicated a movement of the hips in a circular motion.51

The final two plays chosen for this paper from my childhood are ones that have not been located in any literature that I have reviewed. "Twiddle Lee Lee" and "Rollercoaster" are plays that were originally popular songs that were later adapted into hand or clapping plays.

"Twiddle Lee Lee" is a play that was originally recorded by The Jackson Five in the early 1970's. The play was performed like other hand games. The actions imitate the words of the song:
Twiddle lee lee (repeat four times)
Tweet baby tweet baby
Your momma stinks
Rock in the treetop all day long
Huffin and a puffin and a singing this song
All the little birds on Jaybird street
Loves to hear the Robin go: tweet, tweet, tweet
Rockin Robin (tweet, tweet, tweet)...

"Rollercoaster" like "Twiddle Lee Lee" was a play recorded as an R&B song in the mid 1970's by the Ohio Players. This seemed to be a less popular play than the more widespread "Twiddle Lee Lee" which makes me question whether or not my circle of friends and I put this song to a play:

Rollercoaster, my love
Say what?
Rollercoaster
Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh (repeat first four lines)...

The games that African American children are playing during the 1990's include several of the ones that were popular during my girlhood. Games like "Down, Down, Baby" and "Travel T" (a jump rope rhyme) are still quite common among young African American girls as well as the classics like "Miss Mary Mac" and "Little Sally Walker." Ironically, however, it seems that children are particular in what they chose to preserve, since a group of girls I questioned about a few of the games replied, "Oh I've heard of that. My sister used to play that but that's old." Some of the most popular games that I discovered during my research were again clapping games. Children are still quite innovative with their plays, often making up words as
they go along or taking a popular song and turning it into a play.

One of the most popular games was "Candy Girl." Again this is one of those games that was first a song, this time one by a group of young men, New Edition, who were popular during my high school days. It surprised me that the girls even knew the song:

Candy girl
You are my world
Look so sweet
Special treat
This is the way we do the MC Hammer
Candy Girl (the MC, the Hammer)
You are my world (the MC, the Hammer)
Look so sweet ""
Special treat ""...55

"Candy Girl" is performed as a partner clapping play except that popular dances are included when the second stanza is sung, for example, "the MC Hammer" would be a dance popularized by the rap artist MC Hammer. The girls filled in various other dances and "moves" of the time like the butterfly, the snake and the Janet Jackson.

Another favorite of the girls was "Shake It Senorita" or "Sentirita" as some of the girls pronounced it:

We're going to the country,
We're going to the fair
To see the senorita
With the flowers in her hair
Shake it senorita
Shake it if you can
Shake it like a macho
And do the best you can...56

This is a ring play where various "senoritas" are chosen.

It is accompanied by hand clapping and spirited movement in
a circle.

"Shame Shame Shame" is a clapping play I also played in my childhood, but then we called it by its first line "I Don't Wanna Go to Mexico No More." My version of the play is exactly the same as the ones the girls played for me and play currently, excluding the "Shame" part. Also there are an old version and a new version of this play, where the distinction between the two is the hitting of the hands on "shame" rather than the rocking of interlocked hands:

Shame shame shame
I don't wanna go to Mexico
No more, more, more
There's a big fat policeman
At the door, door, door
He will grab you by the collar
Boy, he'll make you hollar
I don't wanna go to Mexico
No more, more, more
Shame!

Naturally, there are other plays and games popularized by African American girls. Some are even distinct to them such as cheers and some jump rope rhymes. Cheers are often actions that girls have learned from observing their older sisters or girls who cheer in school. Other times they are ones they make up in imitation of cheerleading. These street cheers are amazingly similar to stepping that occurs in Black fraternities and sororities. They both are definitely concise examples of body percussion creating music since they (street cheers and stepping) use stomping of the feet, clapping of the hands, and slapping of various
body parts to create the beats for their songs and lyrics. Some of the more popular cheers and jump rope rhymes are "Travel T" (jump rope), "Teddy Bear" (cheer) and various counting out rhymes for rope jumping such as "Red Hot."
Notes

1. The majority of literature produced during this period and later classifies rhythmic plays such as ring and clapping as those played by females. It seems as though the boys engaged more in games of competition and chance.

2. Games like "Mother May I" is a prime example. This game is one of competition where one child plays Mother and gives the children permission to do actions they request to do (such as advance to the finish line). Also it is easy to find imitation games where children play "House," a play where children act out the events and situations of their household.

3. Hawes, Bess Lomax and Robert Eberlein. Pizza Pizza Daddy O. Produced at the Department of Anthropology, 1969, 16 mm black and white sound film, 18 mins.

4. See manual accompanying Pizza Pizza Daddy O,1,8.

5. Ibid., 4. A more recent demonstration of "This A Way Valerie" is performed in the 1992 film Daughters of the Dusk by Julie Dash.

6. Ibid., 5-6.

7. See Lydia Parrish's book and Chapter Four in this thesis for discussion of "Shout Shout" and Step It Down for "Josephine."


9. Ibid., 7.


11. Hawes and Eberlein, p 5.

12. Game supplied by author of this thesis.

14. Ibid.

15. See Step It Down. It is noted that this is included because it was, at the time, a new and popular play. It was not one that Bessie Jones remembered from her childhood. Also consult Dr. Mary A. Twining's work An Examination of African Retentions in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands.


19. Jones, All Things Shall be Remembered...

20. Jones, Step It Down, p 34.

21. Game provided by the author of this thesis.

22. See Step It Down, For the Ancestors, the article "Sea Island Singer. Preserving the Songs of Slave Days" and All Things Shall be Remembered for discussion of "Juba."

23. Jones, For the Ancestors, p 45.

24. Jones, Step It Down, p39. See also Chapter Four in this thesis.

25. See Chapter Four.


27. Ibid., 55.

28. Ibid., 55-56.

29. Ibid.


92
32. Newell, p 121.

33. Ibid., Babcock p 252.


37. Ibid., 76 and Babcock, p 255-256.


41. Ibid., also see *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands* for the play "Ballin the Jack."

42. Ibid., 117.

43. Jones, *All Things Shall be Remembered*, Tape 2. See also *Step It Down*, p 118.

44. Jones, *For the Ancestors*, p 68.

45. Ibid., 68-69 and *All Things Shall be Remembered*, Tape 1 and 3.


47. Contributed by the author of this thesis. Also consult *Did You Feed My Cow?* by Margaret Brady, p 58.

48. Jones, *Step It Down* p, 31 and *All Things Shall be Remembered*.

49. Game contributed by author of this thesis. Version of the play are found also in *Shake it to the One that You Love the Best*, *Apples on a Stick*, and *Shimmy Shimmy Coke Ca Pop*. 

51. Play contributed by author of this thesis along with *Jump Clap and Sing* p 16, 19-20 and *The Griot Sings* p 40.

52. Play contributed by author of thesis.

53. Ibid.

54. Information gathered from personal interviews of girls in Washington, D.C. summer program. Also taken from the Smithsonian Office of Folklife Programs archives, material from the 1991 and 1993 "Kid's Stuff" area of the Festival of American Folklife.


57. Information taken from personal interviews of D.C. girls in summer youth program and from personal recollection by author.

58. "Kid's Stuff" Festival of American Folklife 1993 Neighborhood Cheers, Mt. Norman Recreation Center Cheerleaders, Tapes 3A and B.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Children, despite the technological advances they have access to, still preserve and enjoy the games of their fore parents. While the form or style may not remain exact or constant the basics are still intact. This is most certainly the case where one can still find young children playing imitation games such as "House" (each child accepting a role of an adult in their household) or rhythmic games like "Miss Mary Mac." The clapping patterns and lyrics may have been adapted to fit the current trends and styles but the underlining meaning and original format have not.

Body percussion or creating rhythms through complex hand clapping or foot stomping patterns is just as much a necessity in today's rhythmic plays, dances and songs as it was in musical expression of former enslaved ancestors and those before them in Africa. Africans carried their expressions of rhythm with them aboard the slave ships and managed to retain them, in varying degrees, wherever they were deposited in the diaspora. Body percussion has been an important element in African American oral tradition from the days of slavery where it holds the dual position of
creating musical instrumentation for their singing and dancing (replacing the forbidden drum) and relaying messages and sentiments meant for only them. This most certainly correlates to the importance of drumming in African societies. This form of expression most certainly was relevant in every form of musical expression by African Americans including: work songs, field hollers and cries, spirituals, secular music and naturally plays and play songs. As these plays aged with the passing from generation to generation the body percussion stayed intact, influencing new plays and games created by the new, innovative children of today.

Antiphony, or call and response, is one of the most discussed and analyzed elements of African American oral tradition. Not only is it discussed in reference to African American culture, African cultures have been documented as those which utilize antiphony in their oral expression. In many African cultures, it is common place to find call and response type dialogue occurring on both spoken and sung lyrics. In African children's games as well as ceremonial and simple everyday singing, antiphony is a commonality within communal life. Antiphony is expressed within African American communities in several of the same ways as their African counterparts with a few expressions unique to them. The most common illustration of antiphony is in African American church services. Here is a prime example where
both the preacher and congregation create a rhythm by replying to each other's calls and responses. That example can easily be substituted for other participants such as a singer or storyteller and an audience, or a child in the center of a ring during a ring play where the other players mimic his or her words, tonality and actions.

Dance supplies the movements that illustrate the meaning or feelings of African and African American's musical expression. Movement, whether secular or sacred, is an outgrowth of African music and the two seem to go hand in hand. In African American culture dancing has historically played several roles, a few being for entertainment, for praise and worship, and for imitation, Antiphony also plays a part, especially in children's games, where the call and response element is transferred to movement; one example being the children in the group imitating or following the movement of the leader. Dancing for African Americans is time for individual expression; community togetherness and a time to display intense emotions. This is demonstrated through secular dances dating from slavery such as "Ballin the Jack," a dance allowing for individual creativity and risque movements, to reels, a form of dancing originating in the European American communities where dancing became a group activity. Currently the tradition stands strong where popular dances such as the "Butterfly" and the "Bankhead
"Bounce" permits the individual to shine, to the "Electric Slide," where the dance is performed and enjoyed as a group. This value of dance is by now obvious to the play activities of African American children's games.

All three of these sources are invaluable factors in the musical expression of African Americans and African Americans children's games. This thesis illustrated their importance through close examination of some of the most remembered and popular games and plays dating from United States enslavement of Africa to the present. More importantly, this examination has shown how inbred and unique these elements are to Africans born in the United States and how they have definitely been retained from their African ancestry.

More importantly, this project, hopefully, contributed relevant information to the already existing literature on the topic and motivated the interest of future researchers to continue the collecting and documenting the fast paced oral lore that is children's games. This form of oral tradition hold valuable insight and historical significance of the ideals, values and stories of the creating cultures. For African Americans it offers an alternative view into the culture that emerged as a result of acculturation. It shows a culture that was created through the borrowing of rituals from their European American slave masters and merging them with their practices and cultures they brought with them.
from Africa. As a result a unique culture was born where African Americans engage in cultural sharing but express the cultures in a way that is distinct to them, their situations and their lifestyles.
Bibliography


Fletcher, Inglis, "Florida Game Songs," *Journal of American Folklore* (1902): 143-150.

Fox, Grace. "Ring Games and Other Games of the Florida Negro." Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1951


Jones, Bessie. *All Things Shall Be Remembered. Children's Games from the Afro American Tradition.* Produced and directed by the Smithsonian Office of Folklife Programs, 1979, Three Videocassettes.


"I'm Going to Sing and 'Shout' While I have the Chance,: Music, Movement and Dance on the Sea Islands," Black Music Research Journal 15, 1 (Spring 1995) 1-15.


**DISCOGRAPHY**

Been in the Storm So Long: Songs and Children's Games From St. Johns Island. Folkways Record, Smithsonian Institution, 1983.


----------------------------- "Kid's Stuff." Festival of American Folklife, 1993 audio cassettes.