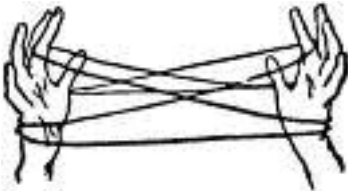


Colonial Kids' Games

What sort of games did children play before television and video games? Here are just a few. You might find they are not as easy as they look; they require dexterity and skill.

Cat's Cradle string game



The game of Cat's Cradle is only one of many finger and string games, although it is the best known. String games like this one have a rich and varied history. It is thought that this particular game traveled to Europe in the early seventeenth century with the tea trade from Asia. Some sources say that children played Cat's Cradle in England as early as 1782. In the American colonies, Cat's Cradle (or "Cratch Cradle") was one of the earliest and most popular of all known string games. You need 2 people (or at least 4 hands!) and

6 feet of cord, yarn or string tied into a loop.

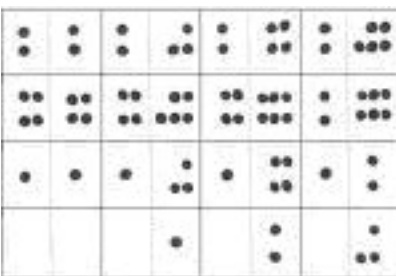
Cup and Ball game



Cup and ball toys tests the player's eye-hand coordination, and can be played indoors or out. The ball is connected to the cup with a string and the player tries to swing the ball so that it falls into the cup. A favorite American pastime for generations, it can still be found in many forms, although it is usually made of wood.

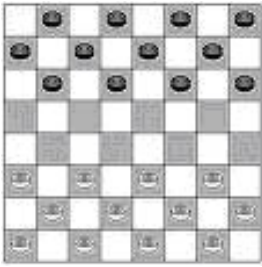
This toy's origins can be traced back to early India and ancient Greece, with it being the fashion in late 16th-century Europe for both children and adults alike to be skilled cup-and-ballers. It traveled from there to the New World, being one of the earliest games played in America.

Dominoes



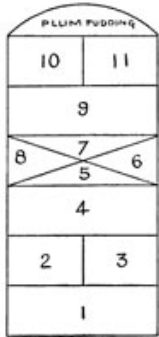
With a long and fascinating history, the game of dominoes is recorded as being played in China in 1120 A.D. Moving west, the game came with traders to Europe, where it became the most popular game of the mid-eighteenth century. Immigrants brought it to America with them where it is still popular game, both on line and in real space. While most of today's dominoes are made of wood, they were originally made of ivory and ebony. The name comes from the French domino, the winter hood of a priest which was white on the inside and black on the outside.

Draughts (Checkers)



One of the most popular games of all times, checkers combines the two-color board of chess, the game pieces of backgammon of the Middle Ages, and the moves of another old game called alquerque. Easy to learn and with simple rules, checkers have given hours of pleasure to millions of players down through the years.

Hopscotch



One of the oldest and most popular of all children's games, a hopscotch diagram is still visible etched into the floor of the Roman Forum. The vast network of roads that supported the Roman Empire's military and economic might also made possible the spread of hopscotch to many parts of the world. With many different patterns and variations of the rules, hopscotch is still a favorite with children of all ages.

Jacks



A century old game, jacks is played with bones, seeds, stones, small cloth bags filled with sand or other materials. Modern games are played with six-pronged metal, wood, or plastic objects and a ball. Also called dibs, jackstones, five stones, checkstones, or knucklebones, archeological evidence shows that primitive forms of the game were played in prehistoric times, as well as in classical Greece and Rome, and colonial America.

The modern game consists of bouncing the ball and picking up a specified number of jacks before catching the ball before it bounces a second time. In the basic game, players start by picking up one jack each bounce, then two, then three, and so on. Other variations involve images of putting cats down a well, sending people into church, and playing baseball.

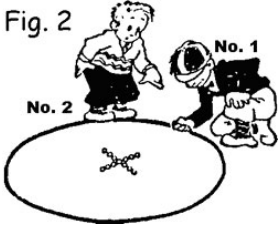
Jump Rope



It seems that skipping rope and rhymes have gone together for centuries, as indeed they have. The rhymes have been passed down the generations orally, while others were written down to record for history. While the girls liked to skip to rhymes, the boys at first just had contests to see how many jumps they could make. Though its worldwide history is centuries long, jump rope only became a favorite pastime of American children in the 1830's, when the allure of chanting rhymes while skipping replaced jump-counting contests. And though it's often represented as a solitary activity, modern jump rope activities often involve groups of three or more.

Marbles

Fig. 2



One of the oldest of all known games, games of marbles have been played in ancient Egypt as well as classical Greece and Rome. In America, the game has not changed very much. A ring is drawn in the dirt, marbles are placed inside, and the players try to shoot the marbles out of the ring with a shooter marble, which is called a knuckler.

Pick-up Sticks



Also called Jackstraws, Jerkstraws, Spilikins or Woodpile, Pick Up Sticks were originally made of ivory or bone, and was a popular game with both children and adults. When it became particularly popular in Colonial America, the sticks were made of wood. By the 20th century, the "sticks" were made rounded for easier use and started to be called Pick Up Sticks, after the children's counting rhyme: "One, two, buckle my shoe; three, four, shut the door; five, six, pick up sticks..." The object of the game is to drop the sticks in a pile and then remove them one at a time without disturbing the rest. The game can either be scored

by counting the number of sticks each player picks up, or using the color of the sticks determine their point value, with the player having the most number of points declared the winner.

Stick Horse Rodeo



A stick horse is an old-fashioned toy that still belongs into every kid's toy box. Make a stick horse out of wood, cardboard, or fabric. It doesn't even have to be a horse! Give your character a name and see how fast it can run, walk or gallop, eat hay and of course race through the fields. There's nothing like horse race through the living room or a rodeo in the back yard.

Yo-Yo



While the toy has been around since before recorded history, the modern name was coined by Donald Franklin Duncan in 1932. Called a Bandelure (winding toy) in French or a "Prince of Wales" toy, the toy has been traced from ancient Greece to many of the European countries. In the beginning of the 1800's, it became fashionable in England under the name of Quiz, with most persons of fashion owning one.