

Hands-On Items



Tabletop Ninepins – Throughout the North American colonies, men and women of all classes enjoyed the popular pastime known as ninepins. The game proved to be an amusing distraction as early as 1636. Ninepins can be played with two or more players. The object of the game is to knock

down as many wooden pins as possible with each roll of the ball. The first player to score exactly 31 points is the winner. To begin, the ninepins are set up at one end of a table or on a mark on the floor, in three rows of three to form a diamond shape. The players set a mark at some distance from the pins where they will stand to roll the ball. Each player bowls both balls, tallies the score, replaces the pins, and passes the balls to the next player. Players continue to knock down pins until someone wins by scoring 31 points. If a player goes over 31 points, that player must continue to take turns until he or she knocks all ninepins down in one turn to win the game.



Cup and Ball Toy – The object of the cup and ball game is to swing the wooden ball into the cup, which is not at all as easy as it seems. This toy was quite popular in Europe with children and adults alike throughout the time of settlement of the American colonies. It was a favorite on the North American continent as well, as it could easily be made at home or purchased from a merchant.



Wooden Dice – Although many colonial Virginians may have considered dice too closely associated with gambling to be used with propriety in their homes, dice were nonetheless a common household item and could be purchased in stores.

Cards – In a similar nature to dice, cards and card games often accompanied gambling. Gambling games plagued the camps of both the British and Continental Army. Washington went so far as to issue a directive to “forbid playing at cards, or other games of chance.”

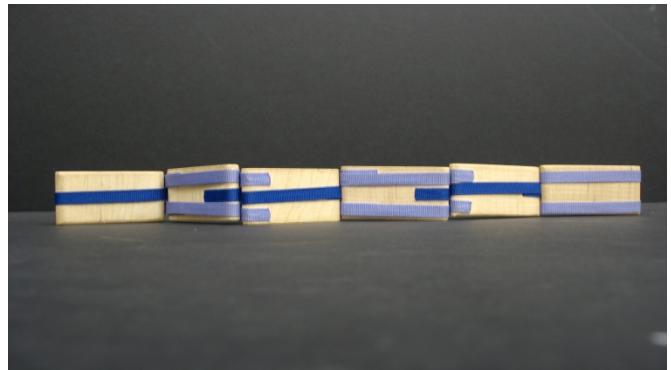


Bilbo Catcher –The Bilbo catcher is a more advanced version of the ball and cup toy. The Bilbo catcher combined the objective of the ball and cup with an added challenge of catching the ball with a smaller cup or the spindle point.

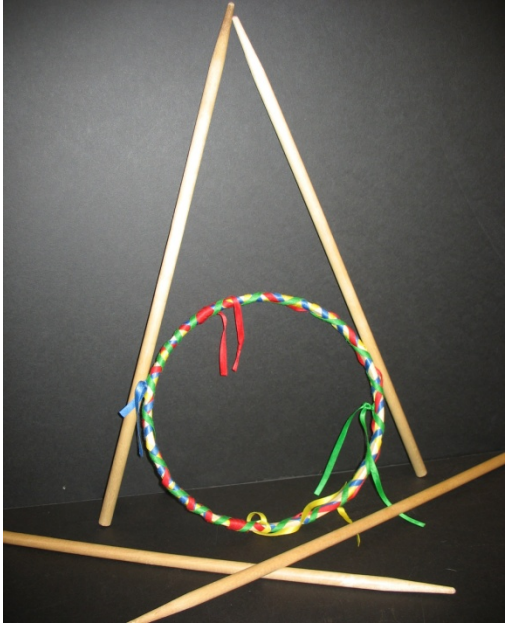


Bean Bags – Without the invention of electricity, colonial children spent a lot of playtime outdoors. Children used what they had or could easily find to fashion toys. Rocks, scraps, and items like bean bags were commonly combined to make games like hoop toss, hot potato, and hit the cans.

Jacob's Ladder – The optical illusion created by the falling blocks gave the toy its name. Referencing Genesis 28:12, the toy is a representation of the ladder to heaven. This toy was used to teach religious lessons to colonial children.



Whip Top – The whip top is one of the oldest versions of the toy top. This version thrived in the North American colonies due to the easy construction of the necessary pieces. The whip could be made with any branch or stick with a varying number of leather or buckskin lashes. Start the top by hand, and then use the lash to maintain the top's speed. Once the technique is mastered, races or games similar to king of the hill can be played.



Game of Graces – This game was particularly popular among colonial women but was also played by boys. To play, two opponents stand across from each other, each with two wands. One player crosses his or her wands like scissors with the hoop hanging near the crossing point of the wands. Draw the crossed wands apart quickly to fling the hoop towards the other player. The receiving player then attempts to catch the airborne hoop with his or her wands and return it as quickly as possible. The winner is the player who either catches the most hoops or misses the fewest hoops.

Trap Ball – This game was played by larger groups of colonial children. A 20-foot circle is drawn around the trap in the center. The batter sets a ball in the trap, steps on the seesaw mechanism, and hits the ball out of the air. If the batter fails to do this three times, the batter is out. The other players wait outside the circle and attempt to catch the ball before it touches the ground. The player who has possession of the ball after it was hit was the next batter. If the batter hits the ball out of the circle without the ball being caught, the batter scores a point and continues battering until he is “caught out.” After every player has had a chance at bat, the highest-scoring batter wins the game.

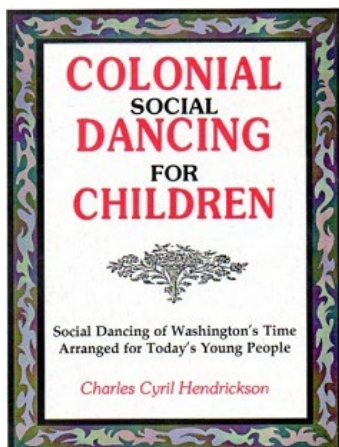




Metal Figurines – Colonial children played with scale models of heroes and villains, which were similar to today's action figures. Made of wood, metal, or even scraps of tossed goods, figurines miniaturized the people of the time. Soldiers and other military themes were particularly popular.

Hoop and Stick – Hoop and stick has been a popular children's game for several centuries, dating back to the fifteenth century in England. The primary goal of the game is to keep the hoop upright and rolling using only the stick. Once the method is mastered, several other games can be created. Navigating obstacle courses, throwing things through a rolling hoop, and hoop battles were common games that colonial children played. Hoops were typically constructed from wood, but often metal barrel bands were used as they accomplished the same goal and were easy to find.





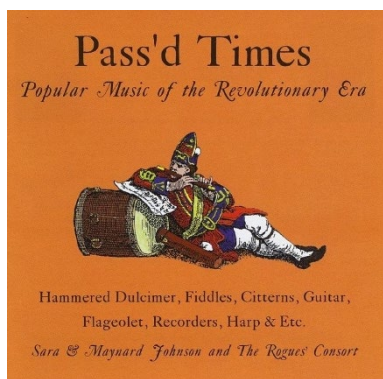
Colonial Social Dancing for Children – A complete instructor's handbook for teaching children the basic steps and figures of country dancing, America's most popular social dance during the time of George Washington. Accompanying the book is a CD of colonial country dance tunes.

Tin Whistle - The tin whistle, or penny whistle, is a travel-friendly, high-pitched whistle flute that has six finger holes. Similar to a recorder, it was a popular and inexpensive instrument listed on 18th-century store inventories.

Djembe Drum – Originating in Western Africa, the djembe might have been introduced to the North American colonies through the slave trade. Music



and playing instruments was a big part of Western African culture. Drum circles, often primarily featuring the djembe, were largely social and community-building events for West African civilizations.



Pass'd Times CD – The CD is full of songs popular during colonial times. The popular music was mostly dance or drinking music. The instruments of the time included harpsichords, fiddles, recorders, and guitars.



Snare Drums - In the 18th century, snare drums served as signal instruments for the infantry, relaying the commander's orders to soldiers in camp and on the field of battle. The steady rhythm of the drummers kept the soldier's mind off the tedious march. As was the custom, the drums are made of ash shells and hoops, with calfskin heads and gut snares. The drums are beaten using wooden mallets.

Music of the War of 1812 CD – This CD set has twenty American songs, marches, and dances that were popular military songs during the period. The set also includes a one-hour radio program narrated over the music.

George Washington: Music for the American President CD –

This recording includes songs and instrumentals familiar to, or written for, President Washington. The instruments used include recorders, harpsichords, violins, voices, among others.