



DUNDAS  
MUSEUM &  
ARCHIVES

# DISCO

*“I learn!”*

## JUNIOR/SENIOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

*“Huckle-Buckle Beanstalk!”*

*Toys and Games of Early Settler Children*

While the advent of electronic games has offered portable and ready-made entertainment for young people today, there are many toys and games that have really changed very little. The recent popularity of loom bracelets is a reflection of the many string games children of our first settlers played. *Ninepins* is a version of bowling that was enjoyed by the early settlers. Although it was often played outside, it could be played indoors on a table or floor when the weather was inclement. One can still purchase this game today! School yard games such as tag and hide ‘n seek are still popular, and young children still like to rock their dolls in cradles.



**1** *This doll cradle at the museum is more than 200 years old!*



**2** *Nine pins was a popular form of table-top bowling on a rainy day.*

Perhaps the most refreshing experience for your students will be learning that there were no toy stores for the early settlers 200 years ago. Neither was there electricity or batteries. The children of the early settlers had to make their own fun. And they had only natural materials to work with. Marbles were made from clay; doll house furniture was carved from tree branches. Using blocks of wood and leftover fabric or string, children made a *Jacob’s Ladder* toy, delighting in the visual illusion it provided. The First Nations showed the early settler children how to fashion dolls from corn husks.



**3** *Trundling: Keeping the wooden hoop rolling upright with only a stick is a lot more difficult than it looks!*

Your students will also come to appreciate that children of the time had great fun at games and toys that were, compared to today, very simple. All one needed for a good game of *Hot Buttered Beans* was any small object to hide; a shiny pebble from the nearby river would do. And to fashion a *whirligig*, one merely needed a button and some string.

The Dundas Museum and Archives has a wonderful collection of early toys. Not only will your students have an opportunity to learn more about them, but also to try their hand at *Cup and Ball*, *Hoop and Stick*, as well as engage in some recess games like *Simon Says* and *Button, Button, Who Has the Button*.

Before leaving, the young people will make their own hand-painted whirligig - a memento of their visit to the museum - to play with at home.



**4** *Quoits was a popular game - just some sticks and rope rings - that gave rise to horseshoes.*