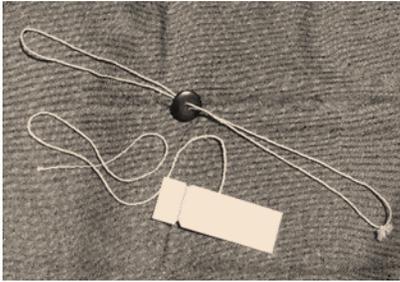


Make Your Own 18th Century Toys



Though there wasn't much downtime for anyone living in Maine in the 18th century, play was still an important part of life. The button whirligig and bullroarer were popular playthings because they could be made with easily accessible materials and offered hours of entertainment. Variations of these two toys have been found in archeological digs across the world.

Button Whirligig

This toy is fun *and* relaxing to play with! Try painting the button to watch the colors appear to melt together as you spin it. If you don't have a button, try cutting a large button-like shape out of cardboard or thick paper.

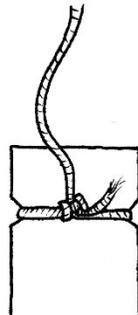


How to make it:

Thread a piece of string about two feet long through two holes of a button and tie the string to make a loop with the button in the middle.

How to play with it:

Hold each end of the loop of string with the button in the center. Toss the button away from you a few times so that the string twists up. Firmly pull the ends of the loop apart, closer together again, and repeat. Once you get into a rhythm, see how fast you can make the button go!



Bullroarer

The bullroarer serves many purposes for different people. Sometimes it's used as a toy, as an object to help make spiritual contact, or even as an instrument. This example is made from a piece of milk carton but traditionally, they are made with wood.

How to make it:

Cut a bookmark-size piece of thin material like plastic packaging or wood. Make two small notches on one end to secure the string (see above). Try making a bullroarers using different materials to see what different sounds each makes!

How to play with it:

Hold onto the end of the string and spin the bullroarer as fast as you can! Try changing the length of string or speed to make different sounds.