

## NEBRASKA FOLKLORE PAMPHLETS

Reproduced From Material Gathered For a Book on the Folklore of the State.

Issued Irregularly, at Least Twice Monthly by the FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT IN NEBRASKA

Prepared in Cooperation With the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

### CHILDREN'S GAMES

Number Seven

Lincoln, Nebraska

September 1, 1937

Knowledge concerning the playing of the games in this collection has been gained by several years of contact with groups of children through the teaching and supervision of games. Their authenticity as Nebraska Folklore has been confirmed by original research in which several schools of the State have aided, and by bibliographical research.

The State of Nebraska is young, comparatively speaking, and her folklore could be of rather recent origin. Nevertheless, these games are not only Nebraska folklore, but for the most part, are traditional to all English-speaking people and to many European countries.

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#### ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MINERAL

One player is sent from the room. While he is gone, the others select some article in the room. He must find out what article has been selected by asking questions which can be answered by "yes" or "no."

By asking each player in turn a question, he first finds out whether the article belongs to the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom. Articles which he sees in the room will prompt further questions such as, "Is it hard?" and so on.

If anyone answers other than "yes" or "no" he immediately becomes "it." The one who gives the final answer before the article is guessed becomes "it." If the player cannot guess, he is then sent from the room while another article is selected and the game proceeds as before.

#### ANTE I OVER

Any kind of ball about the size of a baseball can be used for this game. The players divide into two equal groups. The ball is thrown over a small building, high board fence, hedge, or curtain which hides one group from the other. Each group has an umpire who checks on the opposite team. The ball is thrown by any member of the group, who says, "Ante I Over." The group on the other side make ready to catch. If the ball should fall back to the same side from which it was thrown, the group calls "Pig tail" or "Back, ball." When throwing the ball again, they must say "Ante I Over" as a warning to the second group that the ball is coming. If the ball is caught after being thrown over,

the group catching it run to the other side, and the one with the ball tries to tag with the ball members of the of the first group, who run to the opposite side. If the ball is not too hard, it may be thrown to tag players. Thus the group exchange sides every time the ball is caught. If a man is caught, he becomes a member of the group catching him. The game may end at any time. The leader who has the largest number of men wins the game.

### BITE THE APPLE

The players' hands are tied behind their backs. Each player tries to bite an apple which is suspended from a string so that it hangs before his mouth. Sometimes a boy and girl try to bite the same apple.

### APPLE DUCK

A boy and a girl (or several players) try to capture apples floating in a large pan of water with their mouths. This and the game above are especially appropriate for Halloween parties.

### BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

A child selected for "Buff" is blindfolded, and the center of the room is cleared. The other players ask, "How many horses has your father?" Buff answers "Three." "What color are they?" "Black, white, and grey." "Turn around three times and catch whom you may."

The children dodge as "Buff" chases them, and he must guess whom he has caught before he raises his blindfold. If he guesses correctly, the one caught becomes "Buff." If he guesses wrongly, he must again be "Buff."

This may also be played as a circle game. The players join hands and pass around to the right until "Buff" claps his hands three times. Then he points toward someone in the circle. The player at whom he points enters the circle and tries to evade "Buff." When caught, he must quietly submit to examination for identification. "Blind Buff" tries to discover whom he has caught by passing his hands over clothing and hair.

### BROTHER, I'M BOBBED

All who do not know the game leave the room. Two chairs are placed in the middle of the room. One who knows the game sits blindfolded on one chair, and one of those who do not is called in, seated on the other chair, and blindfolded. There is suddenly the sound of a whack, and the first one seated makes a great fuss and calls out, "Brother, I'm bobbed." He is asked who did it but does not guess correctly. The new player receives a whack and says, "Brother, I'm bobbed." He

also fails to guess correctly and receives several more whacks. As the whacks get more numerous and severe, the new player is told that he will not be released until he has guessed correctly. At last, in desperation, he takes off his blindfold and learns that the player in the other chair has been giving blows with a rolled up newspaper, and that he was complaining of blows which he did not receive. The one who has just been bobbed sits in one chair and a new victim is called in. And thus the game proceeds.

### BUTTON BUTTON

The children sit in a semi-circle with palms of hands together. "It" holds a button between the palms of his hands and goes from one player to another passing his hands between those of the seated players finally leaving the button in someone's hands. He continues the play after leaving the button so that the others will not know who has it. Then he says, "Button, button who has the button?" All the children guess, not waiting for turns, and the one who guesses correctly has the fun of passing the button next.

### CROSS QUESTIONS AND CROOKED ANSWERS

Players sit in a circle. No. 1 whispers a question to No. 2, such as "Can you skate?" No. 2 whispers the reply, "I can roller skate." Then No. 2 whispers a question to No. 3, etc. Each player is given two slips of paper; on one, he writes the answer he gave, and on the other, he writes the question he asked. The questions and answers are all collected in separate containers. The hostess passes questions to every other one in the circle and answers to those who do not receive questions. Then No. 1 reads the question on his slip, and No. 2 reads an answer.

The unusual information received from answers which do not fit the questions furnishes good entertainment.

### CROWN THE CAT

Standing in a circle, each player with arms outstretched rests his hands upon the shoulders of his neighbors. All of the players except two stand in a circle with arms outstretched, each player resting his hands on the shoulders of his neighbors, or the players may join hands with arms raised. The rat stands at one side of the circle and the cat at the other side. The rat says, "Ready," and runs in and out or across the circle. The cat must follow the exact course of the rat, or he is crowned and another cat is chosen. If the rat is caught, the cat becomes the rat and chooses another cat.

The game is also known as, Cat and Rat, Chase the Squirrel, and Follow Chase. Small children enjoy the following bit of dialogue as a preliminary to the chase: The cat says, "I am the cat." The rat says, "I am the Rat." The cat says, "I will catch you." The rat says, "You can't." Then the chase begins.

## DARE BASE

The players divide into two groups of equal number. The ground is divided into two fields by a straight line through the center. A group takes possession of each field and establishes a prison in the extreme left hand corner. The players from one field venture into the enemy's territory and if caught are put into prison. A captor must remain in prison until one from his own group comes and touches him. The prisoner and his rescuer may be tagged before reaching their own territory and brought back to prison.

The game ends when one side makes prisoners of all opposing group, or when a free man enters the enemy's prison when it contains no prisoners. This game is also known as Prisoner's Base.

## DO THIS, DO THAT

The players stand in a semi-circle facing the leader. He goes through some performance and assumes a pose and says, "Do this." All the other players must do the same thing. Some movement suggestions are: jumping, skipping, sawing, washing, dancing, and health exercises. If the leader says "Do that," the players who imitate him must drop out of the game and pay a forfeit.

## DROP THE HANDKERCHIEF

All the players but one stand about a foot apart in a circle. One player who is "It" passes around the outside of the circle and drops a handkerchief behind someone. The players may not look behind until the dropper had passed them. The one behind whom the handkerchief has been dropped picks it up and chases the dropper who tries to reach the vacant spot in the circle left by the one who has the handkerchief. If he is touched, he must enter the center, called (through the traditional development of the game) the "mush pot." The only way he can get out is by seizing the dropped handkerchief before the receiver discovers it. He then becomes the chaser and the receiver must go to the mush pot. This game corresponds to the singing game Itiskit Itaskit.

## FIND THE SLIPPER

All the players but one stand in a circle with hands behind their backs. The slipper is passed around behind the backs of the players, and the one in the center tries to locate it. All the players make motions as if passing the slipper so that it will be difficult to find. When the one in the center finds it, the one who had it goes to the center.

The players may sit in a circle with feet drawn up to raise the knees so that the slipper may be passed under them. If the players sit, then "it" stands outside of the circle.

## FORFEITS

This game often follows some other game in which a forfeit has been paid for some error or failure. Otherwise some article is collected from each player, such as a knife, handkerchief, ring, necklace, or shoe.

One player sits on a chair in the middle of the room and acts as judge. The leader stands behind him and holds a forfeit over his head and says, "Heavy, heavy, hangs over your head." The judge asks, "Fine or superfine?" If the article belongs to a boy the leader answers, "Fine" and if the article belongs to a girl he answers, "Superfine." The leader then asks, "What must the owner do to redeem it?" The "Judge" then pronounces sentence. The following stunts are a few suggestions for sentences to be imposed. \*Ask a question that cannot be answered in the negative. The question is, "What does y-e-s spell?"

\*Pay a compliment to each person in the room in turn.

\*Leave the room with two legs and come back with six. The player does this by bringing a chair in.

\*Sit upon a fire. This is done by writing "A fire" on a slip of paper, and then sitting on the paper.

\*Yawn until some one else yawns.

\*Make a speech on any subject assigned by the judge.

\*Hold one foot in the hand and hop on the other around the room.

\*Put four feet against the wall. (Place the foot of a chair against the wall.)

\*Make a pile of chairs as high as the head, and then take off shoes and jump over them.

\*Kiss a book inside and outside without opening it. This is done by taking the book out of the room, kissing it there, coming back, and kissing it again inside the room.

\*Take another boy by the arm and lead him before each lady present. Kiss the hand of each lady and after each kiss carefully wipe the other boy's mouth with a handkerchief.

\*Crawl under a table and bark like a dog.

\*Initiate a little German band. (Three or four redeem forfeits at the same time.)

\*Bestow a smile on each person in the room.

\*Laugh in one corner of the room, sing in the second corner, cry in the third, and whistle or dance in the fourth.

\*Another "no" to a question asked by each member of the group.

\*Put one hand where the other cannot touch it. (Put the right hand on the left elbow.)

\*Two players stand upon an open newspaper in such a manner that they cannot possibly touch one another. Place the newspaper over the sill of a door, and then close the door between them.

\*While blindfolded, feed some other player.

\*Blow out a candle blindfolded.

\*Bray like a donkey.

\*Sing up the scale and down again.

\*Bow to the wittiest; kneel to the prettiest; and kiss the one you love best.

\*Eat a yard of string, rabbit fashion--nibbling it up into your mouth.

\*Propose your own health in a laudatory speech.

\*Sing a lullaby to an imaginary baby in your arms.

\*Say "Six mixed Biscuits," six times.

\*Stand on one foot and count backwards from 100.

- \*Count as far as you can with a single breath.
- \*Say the alphabet backwards.
- \*Spell Constantinople. (As the victim reaches "ti" all the audience will cry out "no"--which is really the next syllable, though it would seem to indicate that a mistake has just been made.)
- \*Put on the hat of any person present and speak like him or her.
- \*Stand on one leg and crow, flapping your arms.
- \*Make your will, the others having previously decided, unknown to you, what four things you have to leave. Bequests must be to people present.
- \*Being blindfolded, turn around three times, then kiss the hand of the first person you touch.
- \*Play an imaginary instrument.
- \*Repeat a verse of poetry, counting the number of words in it as you proceed.
- \*Spell your own name backwards, in one breath.

### FOX AND GEESE

A large circle from 15 to 30 feet in diameter, usually made in the snow, is required for this game. Five paths or lines are made across the circle through the center. The circle can be made on a floor with chalk or on the bare ground with a stick.

The "fox" stands in the middle of the circle and attempts to catch the geese when they venture away from an intersection. A "goose" may not turn back nor make an angle at the intersection. The "goose" who gets tagged becomes the "fox." A more complicated game is played with two circles, one within the other, in which the geese may turn at any intersection, and the geese are limited to one for each section of the circle.

### GOING TO JERUSALEM

This game is also known as Musical Chairs. All the players are seated in chairs which have been faced alternately in different directions. While someone plays the piano, the leader carries a cane and walks around the row saying, "I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to Jerusalem." Every few minutes, he stops before some player and taps his cane on the floor. The player immediately rises and follows him, leaving a vacant chair. The leader continues to summon followers until all are marching. The music suddenly stops and all scramble for a seat including the leader. The one who fails to get a seat falls out of the game and one chair is taken from the row. The game continues until no chairs and one player is left. This one becomes "It."

The game may be played for the selection of partners. Two rows of chairs are placed. The girls march around one, the boys around the other. When the music stops, the girl and boy who are without seats become partners. The game continues until all have partners.

### HIDE AND SEEK

This game is preferably played out of doors. One player hides his eyes at a goal or base such as a door, or side of a building. The other players scatter and hide while the goaler counts aloud to one hundred. Then he says:

Bushel of wheat,  
Bushel of rye,  
All not ready holla, "I."

If anyone calls "I" the goaler counts again and repeats his rhyme. As a last warning he says:

One, two, three,  
Look out for me.  
For I am coming  
And I can see.

Then he starts in search of the players. When he spies one, he runs to his goal and hits it three times with the flat of his hand, saying, "one, two, three for (name)." The game continues until all are caught or until the goaler, weary of hunting calls, "All who are out may come in free." If the goaler strays too far from his goal, a player may make a run for the goal and if he reaches it before the goaler does he hits the goal three times and says, "One, two, three, I'm free." The first one caught becomes the goaler. This game is sometimes called "I Spy."

### HUNT THE THIMBLE

One child sends all the others from the room, after which he places the thimble in an inconspicuous place in plain sight. He then calls the others into the room, and they begin to search for the thimble. As each one sees the thimble he says, "I spy" and sits down. If it is rather difficult to find, the one who hid it says "warm" when a searcher is near the thimble and "cold" when he goes away from it. After all have found it, the one who first saw it has the privilege of hiding it. Children especially enjoy this game when adults, working in the room where the thimble is hidden share their secret. The game may be varied by sending only one child or half the children from the room while the others hide the thimble. Then the group who hid the thimble sing some song and as a searcher gets nearer or further from the thimble, the music gets softer or louder. The game is also known as Hide the Thimble, and I Spy.

### GOSSIP

The players sit in a circle or a row. The leader hands a slip of paper upon which a short paragraph is written. The first player reads it and then whispers it as nearly as he can remember to his right hand neighbor. The neighbor, in turn, whispers it to his right hand neighbor until all have heard the gossip. The last player repeats aloud what he had heard. This is compared with the written paragraph.

### JACOB AND RACHEL

This game is also known as Rueben and Rachel. Any number from ten to thirty can play at one time. All but one of the players form a circle and join hands. The one player, Jacob, stands blindfolded within the ring. The players circle around him until he calls, "Stop" and points toward the ring. If he is pointing at a girl, she becomes Rachel and enters the ring. If he points between players or at a boy, the players circle again. After Rachel enters the ring Jacob calls, "Rachel, where art thou?" Rachel must answer, "Jacob, here I am." At intervals Jacob calls "Rachel" to find out where she is, and Rachel answers "Jacob." After Jacob catches her, he has to guess who she is. Then Rachel is blindfolded and selects a Jacob whom she must catch and identify. Sometimes the ring of players assist either Jacob or Rachel by making the ring smaller or larger.

## LEAP FROG

In the simplest form of this game, the first player makes a back by bending over and placing his hands on his knees. The jumper runs from a base or line, and vaults himself over the "back."

A jumper running from a base or taw-line vaults himself over the back by placing his hands flat on the shoulders. He then runs for a few steps and makes another back. The third player jumps over each back, runs a few steps, and makes a back. When there are no jumpers left the first "back" becomes a jumper and the game continues indefinitely. The player may demonstrate his skill by calling "high back" thus demanding the back to be raised.

The game may be converted into a race by forming two lines. When all are down, the last back in the line jumps over all in succession and runs back to the taw-line. The others do the same. The team reaching the taw-line first wins the race.

The game offers many opportunities for variation. Some other forms of the game are known as Leader and Footer, Par, Spanish Fly, Bung the Bucket, Johnnie Ride A Pony, Calvary Hill, Saddle the Nag, and Skin the Goat.

## OLD WITCH

From five to ten children can play this game. The players are old witch, mother, oldest daughter, and the younger children, whose names are Monday, Tuesday, etc.

The play begins at some place selected as the home. The mother and children are in the home, and the old witch who lurks near by waiting for the mother to leave peeps out occasionally.

The mother says to the oldest daughter, "I am going to the garden." To the other children she says, "Monday, take care of Tuesday; Tuesday take care of Wednesday," etc. and to the last child she says, "Make sure the old witch does not carry off any of your sisters; get dinner, and do not let the pot boil over."

As soon as the mother goes out of sight, the old witch comes along all stooped over, walking with a cane. She comes to the door of the home and raps with her cane.

Eldest Daughter: Come in! What did you want?

Old Witch: Let me light my pipe at your fire, my fire is out.

Eldest Daughter: All right but do not dirty the hearth.

Old Witch: Oh no indeed, I will not dirty your hearth.

The oldest daughter turns her head back to the old witch who blows in the fire and makes a hissing noise to represent the pot boiling over into the fire. The eldest daughter runs to the door and calls, "Mother, mother, the pot boils over."

Mother: Take a spoon and skim it.

Daughter: Can't find it.

Mother: Look on the shelf.

Daughter: I can't reach it.

Mother: Stand on the stool.

Daughter: Stool's broken.

Mother: I suppose I must do it myself.

The mother comes back and immediately misses Monday.

Mother: Where is Monday?

Daughter: Look in the pantry.

Mother: Monday! Monday! (Looks in the pantry) She isn't there!

The daughter suggests other places as upstairs, down cellar, etc.

When the daughter can think of no more places to look she says, "She must have gone with the old lady who came to ask for a light for her pipe."

"That was the old witch!" exclaims the mother. She seizes the eldest daughter and pretends to beat her severely. The girl weeps and promises to watch more closely if her mother will cease beating her.

The same thing happens until all of the children including the eldest daughter have been taken by the old witch. The mother goes out in search of the children. She meets the old witch and inquires, "Which path leads to the witches house.?"

Old Witch: Both paths.

Mother: Which is shortest?

Old Witch: This one.

Mother: I'll take it.

Old Witch: An ugly bull blocks the path.

Mother: I'll go the long way.

Old Witch: A fierce dog guards the path.

Mother: I will slip by while he sleeps.

The old witch runs ahead of her until they come to the old witch's house. The mother tries to enter.

Old Witch: (Blocking the way.) Your shoes are too dirty.

Mother: I'll take them off.

Old Witch: Your stockings are too dirty.

Mother: I'll take them off.

Old Witch: Your feet are too dirty.

The mother tired of pacifying the old witch, gets angry, and, pushing the old witch aside, enters the house. The children stand with hands over their faces.

Mother: These look like nice pies.

Old Witch: Very nice pies.

Mother: (Tasting pie) This needs more sugar.

The old witch stirs in more sugar. The mother tastes again and says. "This tastes like Monday." Monday uncovers her face. The mother says "It is Monday." Shaking her the mother says, "Run home, Monday."

The mother tastes each pie and after adding more salt or sugar or fruit the mother recognizes the taste of her children. When all have been sent home the witch starts to run. The mother and children chase her, and the one who catches her becomes the old witch. The second one becomes the mother. Mother names the children.

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Nebraska Folklore Pamphlet Number Eight will be issued on or before September 15, 1937, and will contain the conclusion of Febold Feboldson and Antoine Barada.