

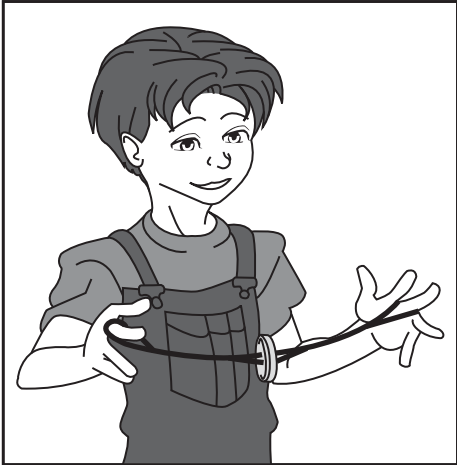
## Pioneer Fun

*by Kerrily Sapet*

- 1 Can you imagine life without video games or trips to the mall? For pioneer children growing up in the 1800s, the nearest town could be days away by horseback or covered wagon. Trips to the town store were treats for children, as families might only visit them a few times a year. Inside the store, pioneer children glimpsed toys, but none that ran on batteries or electricity.
- 2 Town stores featured candy, jump ropes, marbles, books that were designed to teach children good behavior, china and paper dolls. But even these simple toys were expensive. Most pioneer families had little money for fun and games. Parents needed to spend their hard-earned money on items that they couldn't make themselves, such as tools, nails, and shoes.
- 3 Without store-bought toys, pioneer children made their own fun out of what they had. This could be difficult too, as pioneers wasted nothing. Families used every precious item. They braided small scraps of fabric into rugs, made jelly from apple peels, and wrote with homemade ink created from water and soot. Short on money and supplies, kids used their imaginations, creating toys out of stones, sticks, buttons, cornhusks, wood, broom straws, and scraps of fabric.
- 4 Pioneer children made dolls, simple wooden tops and whirling toys, shaped marbles and beads out of clay, and played counting games. They created their own fun, making stepping stone bridges, sliding on frozen streams, and inventing new games to play. Some of the games they played have been memorized and handed down from generation to generation and are still played today, like hopscotch, jump rope, hide and seek, and "Mother, May I?"
- 5 Today, pioneer crafts and games are just as much fun. Step back in time and try your hand at making these toys from over 100 years ago.

## WHIRLIGIG

Pioneers were definitely handy with a needle and thread, as clothes, blankets, pillows, and most other items were made by hand. Frontier children made this toy if their mother had an extra button. If she didn't, they might have been lucky enough for their father to whittle them a button, and then the same toy was called a buzzsaw.



### Stuff You Need

- piece of string twice as long as your arm
- large button with two holes

### Make it:

1. Thread the string through the buttonholes. Tie the ends in a knot, forming a loop.
2. Hold each end of the string, so that the button is in the middle.
3. Swing the button in a circle to wind up the string.
4. Pull your hands apart and push them together again. The button will whirl and sing as it swings.

## TIN CAN LANTERN

Pioneers had no electricity so after sunset and before sunrise they used candlelight. To carry candles they used lanterns, which lit the inside of their dark barns and cabins, but protected against fire.



### Stuff You Need (Adult help is suggested)

- empty tin can (any size will work, just make sure it doesn't have sharp edges)
- hammer
- different size nails
- 12-inch long piece of wire

### Make it:

1. Fill a can with water and place it in the freezer until the water is frozen. The ice will give you a hard surface to hammer against.
2. Draw a pattern on the outside of the tin can.
3. Use the hammer to punch holes in the can with the nails, according to your pattern. The more holes you make, the more the candlelight can shine through.
4. Make two nail holes near the top of the can on opposite sides for stringing a handle.
5. String the wire through the holes at the top. Wrap the ends of the wire around the holes a few times to secure the handle.
6. Place a small candle or tea light on the bottom of your lantern. Watch for the interesting shadows it will create!