

Pioneer Games

Gunny Sack Races

Even though children at the Ranch worked hard, they always found time to play. Many children today have a huge variety of toys, games and activities to choose from. Children at Fielding Garr Ranch had to play with simple games and a few homemade toys. Most of these games were played outside, using objects found around the ranch.

Old potato sacks could provide children with hours of fun by simply stepping inside and jumping. As early as the late 18th century, around the time of the Revolutionary War, soldiers and countrymen were hopping around in potato sacks to pass the time.

Pioneer children found great fun in this simple activity, as do children (and adults) today.

Activity



Have the students line up and step into their bags. Both feet have to stay in the bag while racing, and the sack should stay as close to the waist as possible. On the signal, racers begin hopping towards the finish line.

You could do a mini tournament by selecting the top four from the first race to race again. Then the top two, and finally the ultimate Gunny Sack Winner!

You could also try a relay race. Divide into two teams, with one sack per team. The first player gets into the sack and races around a designated tree or other object, and back. The next person in line gets in the sack and repeats the once-around. The first team to finish the line wins!

Hoop & Stick

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An old barrel hoop provided hours of fun when it was rolled with a stick. Boys and girls raced their hoops across the ranch yard using a stick to guide them and keep the hoops upright. Contests were often held to test hoop rolling skills. Sometimes, participants would guide their hoops through obstacle courses. In other contests, children tried to keep several hoops rolling at once.

Activity



Give each student in your group a hoop and stick. Have them line up and see how far they can keep the hoop rolling.

You may want to have them try to guide their hoops around trees or other obstacles.

Have students hold the stick off to one side of them, rather than directly in front of them. That way, if the stick strikes the ground and stops, they won't run into it and hurt themselves.