Long before gaming captured academic attention, there were plenty of educational games, exploiting technologies of print and cardboard rather than digital media, designed for use in classrooms or by families with a degree of leisure and income. Such games continue to merit attention as expressions of attitudes toward nature, power, class, gender, and empire as well as learning and play. This exhibit, drawn from the holdings of Special Collections, features (more or less) educational games across multiple languages, diverse subjects, and nearly two centuries, beginning in the late 18th century. They invite speculation about the nature of games, as well as who might have designed and produced them.

A facsimile of *Round the world with Nellie Bly: A novel and fascinating game with plenty of excitement on land and sea* (1890) is set out and ready to play in the exhibit gallery. Other original games and modern versions are ready for you to play in the Special Collections reading room – please ask at the Special Collections desk. Contact askspecial@library.wisc.edu to inquire about bringing a class or arranging a guided group session.

Thanks are due to many, including library selectors former and current (especially Susan Barribeau, Nina Clements, Yoriko Dixon, Laura Martin, Carly Sentieri, Andy Spencer, and Lisa Wettleson), colleagues and student employees in Special Collections (with special thanks to Beth Richert), the Libraries’ acquisitions and cataloging specialists, Sarah Logsdon and Jari Xiong of Library Communications, and generous donors who made many of these acquisitions possible.

For another lively take on the subject, visit the exhibit “Your Turn: Artists’ Books as Games” in Kohler Art Library.

Robin Rider
Curator of Special Collections

The exhibit title “Most Agreeable & Rational Recreation” comes from advertising for a game by John Wallis, one of the most prolific of game producers in Georgian England. Illustrations on the columns in Special Collections are taken from *Science in sport, or, The pleasures of astronomy* (approx. 1815), *Round the world with Nellie Bly* (1890), and *Ecology: The game of man and nature* (1970).

**Three of a kind**

Jefferys, Thomas. *Royal geographical pastime exhibiting a complete tour round the world, in which are delineated the North East and North West Passages into the South Sea*. London: Thomas Jefferys, 1770. Map game with descriptions, instructions, and dedication to His Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales. Slipcase with original printed label “Printed and sold by Wm Faden, Charing Cross.”

If a player landed on “38. Siam — *here the traveller must stay one turn*, to see their elephants, which abound here more than in any other part of the world.” Players also learned that in California “the inhabitants have no houses, dwell in arbours in the summer, and creep into caves in the winter.”

Another instance of a map game with descriptions and instructions on either side of the map, plus slipcase with original printed label: this time, the work of John Wallis.

Note that “27. Rum Island lies to the southward of the Isle of Skye, where the traveller must pay a counter, and go back to Aberdeen, at No. 8.”


Like Wallis’s *New geographical game exhibiting a complete tour through Scotland and the Western Isles* of a decade before, this map game featured descriptions and instructions on either side of the map, plus slipcase with an original printed label decorated with a crown, flag, trident, drum, anchor, cannon, and cannonballs.

Based on a version with somewhat different title “published 24th December, 1794, by John Wallis, at his map warehouse, no. 16, Ludgate Street, 1794.”

**Antiquity**

*Fabelkundig kaartspel, bevattende een kort begrip der fabelleer: Versied met de afbeeldingen der goden, ten gebruike der jeugd.* [The Hague: Immerzeel en Comp., approx. 1808.]

Complete set of 48 playing cards depicting and describing classical gods and heroes. A review in 1809 held that such cards were praiseworthy for teaching about classical art, but their attention to some aspects of the Olympians’ behavior was clearly unsuitable for younger audiences.

*Abrégé de l'histoire romaine.* Paris: Marchands de Nouveautés, approx. 1809.

Hand-colored portraits with explanatory texts, filled with facts to be learned: *Ciceron* (Cicero), for example, “of great genius and admirable eloquence”; *Marc-Antoine* (Mark Anthony), “victor over Cassius and Brutus, smitten by the charms of Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.” Some cards have names in manuscript on the verso, as in “Josephine Bremond a aix provence 1809.”


Game inspired by classical antiquity, a variation on the traditional *jeu de l'oie*, or game of the goose, with rules outlined in the center of the board. The spiral track of sixty-three spaces was decorated with Olympians and mythological heroes, centaurs and fauns, muses and mummies, along with such historical figures as Caesar, Cleopatra, Seneca, and Plutarch. The publisher of this game was the multi-generational family firm of Pierre Jean.

**Society**

*Carte méthodique pour apprendre aisement le Blason en joüant soit avec les Cartes a tous les jeux ordinaires, soit avec les Dez comme au jeu de l'Oye.* Paris: Chez N. JB de Poilly. [approx. 1750].

A game originally designed for the grandson of Louis XIV, this format could be cut into a set of playing cards or played as the well-known game of goose, where players raced through a course according to throws of the dice. In either case, it afforded “an easy and methodical way to learn about the ‘heroic science of the coat of arms’” and bore a dedication by N. JB. de Poilly to the duc de Bourgogne.

“A wonderful and comprehensive language resides in the hand of each individual.” To play the game, each player was given “a hand-chart and that chart’s picture. To illustrate: A Saturn picture goes with a Saturn hand-chart,” etc. The Saturn personality, illustrated in a natty suit and spats, with books under one arm, “likes all things which pertain to the real side of life, ... loves nature, is cautious and prudent.”

Nottingham Co-Operative Society Ltd. *The new game of co-opit*. London: Percy Goodman, approx. 1930s. The other side of the board read “Nottingham Co-operative Society Ltd. Co-operative Milk is rich full-cream milk. Pure and Germ Free With Full Nutriment, Vitamin Content, and Fresh, Natural Flavour. Delivered in sealed bottles.... Give your children their chance in life by letting them drink Co-operative Milk.... Co-operative milk is so rich, it pays a dividend.” The game had as its objective to persuade consumers of the value of milk from the Co-operative Society.


Other Psychology Today Games, including *Society today: The game of social change; Identities: The masks we wear; The cities game: Urban tension & negotiation; and Body talk: The game of feeling and expression* can be found in the T. George Harris papers in the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

The website boardgamegeek.com describes the *Blacks & whites* game as “more akin to a social experiment and performance art in game form.”

**Games for girls**


First published in 1831, this well-worn title included an account of “Historical games of Philadelphia,” one of the games and amusements the prolific Miss Leslie produced. She also edited an annual, *The gift*, designed as a Christmas and New Year’s present, and wrote such manuals as *Miss Leslie’s behavior book: A guide and manual for ladies as regards their conversation, manners, dress, introductions, entree to society, shopping [etc., etc.]*, also in the Cairns Collection.


This undated edition, perhaps produced by stereotype from an earlier edition, pointed to Leslie’s “Historical games of Philadelphia, Boston [etc.]” as in *The American girl’s book*. And we know from WorldCat of her *History of Philadelphia: A game for children*, a card game first published in 1831 and revised and republished as late as 1872. Eliza Leslie herself died in 1858.


McLoughlin Bros. game based upon the much reported 72-day trip around the world in 1889-1890 by 25-year-old Elizabeth Cochrane (pen-name Nellie Bly), reporter for Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York world*. One corner of the game board gestured towards Jules Verne and *Around the world in eighty days* as Bly’s inspiration, and scholars have seen both Verne and Bly as symbols of a late 19th-century world that began to seem much smaller.
What shall I be?: The exciting game of career girls. Bay Shore, N.Y.: Selchow & Righter, 1966
Options included ballet dancer, actress, airline stewardess, teacher, model and nurse. Not surprisingly, more recent commentators have found fault with the limited expectations baked into this game, contrasting them with the more expansive possibilities – including scientist, athlete, astronaut, doctor, engineer, and statesman – represented in What shall I be? The exciting career game for boys.
Selchow & Righter are probably best known as the publishers of Scrabble.

The second edition of The exciting game of career girls a decade later afforded more opportunities, although some of the sentiments expressed in the school, subject, and personality cards remain cringeworthy, at least to 21st-century viewers.

Where and when

Untitled volume of images after Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, engraved by Stefano della Bella, for Jeux historiques des rois de France, reines renommées, géographie et métamorphose. [Probably Paris: Chez Henry le Gras, Libraire ..., 1698.]
The allegorical images were originally commissed by Cardinal Mazarin to teach geography to the young French king Louis XIV. The page shown here explained that America was the fourth part of the world, discovered 150 years prior, sometimes known as the new world, extending across four climate zones. (Are those armadillos pulling the chariot?)

Educational "game of the goose" about the monuments of Paris, published by Édouard Hocquart (1789-1870?). If a throw of the dice landed your playing piece on #19 (Invalides, the tomb of Napoleon), you had to pay a penalty and remain there while everyone else has two turns. The goal was to be the first to reach the Arc de Triomphe at #63.

Including a large folding colored generalalogy of the English monarchy, with dates in light pencil. Written by a woman identified on the title page as Mrs. O’Sullivan, dedicated to a woman (Lady Anne Holroyd), our copy was also owned by a woman, Margaret Booker, who signed the front endpaper September 25, 1844.
The “game” is in question-and-answer format: Where did William I land? Pevensey Bay, September 29, 1066. And the last entry in the printed chronology is the death of the Duke of York on January 5, 1827.

Two series of 45 cards teaching about places and events in Europe. For example, Waterford, the principal Irish “Dairy County,” known for exporting “large quantities of Bacon and Butter.”
The game was produced by Jaques & Son, the oldest games maker in Britain still operating, advertising today as Jaques of London: “As a family who have been inventing and making toys & games since 1795, we believe in the power of play and quality family time spent together.”
From our family to yours, Emmett & Joe Jaques. 8th Generation Games Makers”

100 cards in this game, 700 questions in all, including “What great American city has no mayor nor muncipal government?”
The front of the box advertised the authors’ advanced degrees; the back of the box, their other games (characters, American and foreign; Bible characters; game of the states and of the world.” And the bottom of the box made known “Local and Traveling Agents Wanted.” Colby & Co. also took this small opportunity to promote “Adams’ Chart of History.”

Languages and literatures

A puzzle game featuring vignettes depicting La Fontaine's fables, in the publisher's wooden case, with a “Liste des Fables” pasted inside, and a hand-colored lithograph by E. Coyen on top showing La Fontaine reading to a group of animals. The dog seems less than impressed.

CA 20422 flat

Cards were divided into five numbered “families” of four cards each plus one card, “Justice.” As noted by Ellen J. Goldner in “Arguing with pictures” (2012), “According to the instructions, the object of the game was to gather a ‘complete family’ in a single hand. The process of the game, however, required players to trade family members.”

Saussine, Léon, éditeur. La grammaire illustrée: Jeu magnétique. Paris: L. Saussine, [approx. 1875?].
Cover illustration by Bernard Coudert. Hand-colored lithograph mounted on the glass tray within the box and a hidden magnetic needle; separate instruction booklet and additional instructions pasted inside.
The game consisted of 36 grammatical questions on three magnetized discs. For example, “Comment les Adjectifs s’accordent-ils avec les Noms?” (how do adjectives agree with nouns?)
Saussine exhibited his games and toys at the Paris international exposition in 1878 in the section entitled La Bimbelerie (Trinkets). For another of Saussine’s magnetic games, see the Geography case.

One of many variants on the game of authors, in which the card deck contains sets of four cards, sometime known as “books,” each of which lists works by a given author (although the genre was readily extended to such other categories as artists and philosophers). The player who collects the most sets of four cards wins.
The 13 authors in this set are Alcott, Adams, Whitney, Field, Alden, Trowbridge, Burnett, Riley, Jewett, Fosdick, Clarke, Alger, and Dodge. Instructions are mounted inside the box lid.

Jeu des poètes: Composé de 80 cartes avec portraits. Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, [ca. 1905]
Complete set of this literary “jeu de familles,” a French-speaking version of the game of authors. Housed with the original instruction card in a publisher's box featuring Victor Hugo. On display are cards for La Fontaine and Alice de Chambrier.

Along with advertisements for G. & C. Merriam Company’s dictionaries, the booklet features instructions for a relay race, word hunt, speed test, team race, grammar game, arrangement game, alphabet game, etymology game, biographical game, drawing contest, pronunciation game, puzzle game, correct page game, geographical
game, character game, shout and win game, history game, and synonyms game. One of the boys in the photo looks skeptical.

_Shakespeare bookcase game._ Baltimore, Md: Avalon Hill Game Co., [1966].
According to the instructions, the game “can be played on any intellectual level, each offering enjoyment and stimulation for players based on their skill and desire for knowledge.” The accompanying booklet contains synopses of all 37 plays, chronology for the history plays, and sources of famous quotations.

Our set includes a marketing postcard completed by 16-year-old Mary George of Potomac, Maryland, who indicated she regularly read _Seventeen, Life_, and _National Geographic_ and enjoyed watching “Love American Style.”

**Geography**


Gaultier fled revolutionary France for the Netherlands and then England. Both the original version in French and the English translations of Gaultier’s geography course enjoyed long publishing histories. This copy of the 8th edition bears ownership signatures of Mary Ann Parker from 1815 and W. Budgell from 1841.

Another in the often-reproduced series of Grandmama’s games by McLoughlin Bros., whose products also figured prominently in the American picture book market. This game aimed to impart and reinforce geographical facts: How high is the rock of Gibraltar? 1,500 feet.


Educational question and answer game with magnetized movable disks, another product of the firm of Léon Saussine, pioneer in magnetic games. Multiple languages on the box suggest Saussine hoped for an audience beyond France.
Another magnetic game produced by Saussine figures in the exhibit cases on _Languages and literatures._

_Jeu des explorateurs._ Paris: Watilliaux Editeur, [1898?].
“Game of the explorers” features a lithographic game board, itinerary cards, circular tokens, and fitted box with compartments for cards, wooden playing pieces, and a 6-sided die. Issued by the prolific Parisian publisher Charles Watilliaux, who produced hundreds of card games, games of skill and chance, and board games.

Of the eight itineraries for voyages around the world, all beginning and ending in Paris, one was clearly inspired by Jules Verne’s _Around the world in eighty days_.

Watilliaux was also responsible for the _Jeu des paquebots_ in this case and a zoological game in the case entitled _Nature._

Watilliaux, Charles. _Jeu des paquebots._ Paris: Watilliaux Editeur, [approximately 1898?]

This game of great French ocean liners includes two hand-colored lithographic maps (covering the Atlantic Basin and covering Africa, South Asia, and Australia), delineating routes of the Cie Générale Transatlantique (CGT) and Messageries Maritimes (MM), along with a large spinner, lead playing pieces, route cards, and book
of instructions, all housed in the original cardboard clamshell box. Each player selects a route and uses a spinner to govern his or her moves from port to port. Like *Jeu des explorateurs*, the product of Charles Watilliaux.


Twenty printed map cards show states or regions. Players are dealt the map cards, and the “conductor” of the game draws small oval “lotto” cards with the names of towns and calls them out, giving the place name cards to the player who holds the proper map and calls out accordingly. The first player to fill a card with twelve place names wins. Our set has nearly all of the prescribed 240 small cards (and they are *small*) and all twenty of the map cards.

Klondike Puzzle. [Ohio: Novelty Capsule Company of Alliance, approx. 1897]. Fuller Special Collections Fund.

“The object of this puzzle is to get the three gold bugs into Klondike through the pass.” Includes a metal “gold pan” inside, and, as background, a scene of the Yukon river, Skaguay Trail and Chilkoot pass. Price 10 cents. “Patent Applied For” possibly refers to a patent for a game apparatus applied for in 1897 by Clem G. Burns with assignor of two-thirds Fred Morris and Isadore Koch in 1899.

*The counties of England. A geographical game: Containing the views of the chief towns in each county, their products & notable buildings etc. beautifully printed in colours*. London: John Jaques & Son Ltd., [approximately 1900?]

We hold mixed sets of this often-reissued game from the venerable Jaques & Son of London. For all, the “rules for the game” are in remarkably small type, as are pertinent facts about the locations, as for Derby: “Sir Thomas Lombe’s Silk Mill. Established in the 18th century. Population, 41,000.”

Fuhrmann, Max. *Eine Reise durch Deutschland*. Munich, 1933.

Offset lithograph map for what boardgamegeek.com identifies as a promotional board game in which players travel from Berlin (#1) to Bückeberg (#90), their moves determined by a die. The game highlights German agricultural and industrial activity. Internal evidence, including mention of the reopening of the Reichstag (after the fire of February 1933), makes clear that the map was published after the appointment of Hitler as Germany’s new chancellor, although the map lacks overt symbols of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party.


The race begins at Liverpool, England, and travels through Spain, India, Japan, China, New Zealand, and Australia. One of several handkerchief games from the same, as yet unidentified, producer: “The game of ludo,” “The soccer game,” and “Snakes and ladders” (Americans would call the last one “Chutes and ladders”).


This racing game is played with two dice, the players initially fixing an agreed amount of bets and fines to create a stake pot. The route starts in northwest France, winding its way from east to west down to the south, before heading back up northwards, going west to east. To win the game, the first player to arrive at square #67 must have acquired along the way the principle ingredients of Ovomaltine (now better known as Ovaltine): barley, milk, eggs and cacao. Any omitted product, and the player must start the game again.

**Scientific amusements**

Leybourn, William. *Pleasure with profit: Consisting of recreations of divers kinds, viz. numerical, geometrical, mechanical, statical, astronomical, horometrical, cryptographical, magnetical, automatical, chymical, and...*
historical: Published to recreate ingenious spirits, and to induce them to make further scrutiny into these (and the like) sublime sciences [etc.] London: Printed for Richard Baldwin, and John Dunton.

Leybourn defined recreation as “a second Creation, when Weariness hath almost annihilated our Spirits,” and urged his readers to choose lawful and ingenious recreations, so as to be diverted from such “vices to which youth (in this age) are so much inclin’d.” Presumably the automata described here qualified as both lawful and ingenious. For a critique of deceptive automata, see the exhibit case on **Chess and checkers**.


One of four self-published volumes filled with scientific recreations, their causes and effects and how to construct them. Shown here: some of the many amusing and surprising electrical phenomena that captured both public and scientific attention in the latter half of the 18th century.


In this game, based on the edition of 1804, players raced through 35 illustrated spaces, ending at Greenwich Observatory. Margaret Bryan ran a boarding school for girls at Blackheath and later a school in London. Special Collections also holds her *Compendious system of astronomy*.

Dr. James Lattis of the Astronomy Department asks students in his history of astronomy course to invent a game using this game board.


In this, one of several editions, Piesse sent “these puzzles, experiments, recreations, and legerdemain on the errand to amuse others who have not yet smiled on them.” The games Piesse included, among them an “amusing and instructive” game of natural history, likely afforded less entertainment value than tricks of “fire upon ice” and “fire by percussion.”


The game, developed by T. H. Davis, formerly Assistant at the Royal College of Chemistry, had received a favorable review in this same journal the previous year (July 4, 1879), and that review was in turn reviewed in the *National journal of education* (Boston and Chicago, Oct. 2, 1879), which expressed the hope that “the game may cross the Atlantic and find its way among our own scholars, and aid them in the elucidation of chemical quantivalence, so often a dread and terror to the beginner.” We would be delighted to find an example of the game itself.


Trained as a chemist and primarily remembered for his pioneering work in aviation, Tissandier also founded the weekly scientific journal *La nature*, which included a column about physics conducted without specialized apparatus.

In this book on “scientific recreations, or teaching by games,” he called attention to the electrophore of Jules Peiffer, a device presented at the universal exposition in Paris in 1878; the electrophore used the long-familiar principle of static electricity to dramatic effect.

A question and answer game about who discovered, invented, or introduced into France hot-air balloons, airplanes, automobiles, steam trains, bicycles, etc. Other products from N. K. Atlas (the partnership of Leon Nicolas and Charles Keller) included the geographical game “Les Départements de la France” and the fortune-telling game “Le nouveau Cagliostro ou l’Avenir dévoilé.”

One in the genre of magnetic games pioneered by Léon Saussine in Paris, as in the exhibit cases about Languages and Literatures and Geography.

**Nature**

Neues zoologisches lottospiel — jeu de lotterie zoologique. [Germany, ca. 1840]. Fuller Special Collections Fund.

Based on the classes of mammals as described in the natural histories of Buffon, Schreiber, Cuvier, Schinz, etc. Before beginning the game, players had to decide whether winning requires completing a horizontal line of three, four, or five animals.

That the cover bears the title in German, French, and English suggests an international marketing strategy.

Flora, das Blumenspiel. Flora, le jouer à fleurs. Flora, the game of flowers. [Germany]: Georg Wolfgang Faber, approx. 1850s.

Floral mosaic puzzle with 92 pieces of various colors and trapezoidal shapes and sizes. Accompanying hand-colored guide sheets provided examples for children to follow. Here, too, a title in three languages.

Another such mosaic puzzle is in the case on Mathematical recreations.

BBIFIN or The witty naturalist. A new game of 120 cards in a case. Written in the hope of obtaining a little help for some of the poor of Coventry. Coventry: A[n]n Lewin, Printer, Hertford Street. [approx. 1869].

Once pink cards were distributed to the players, someone would read from one of the white cards, and players tried to identify the matching pink card.

Ann Lewin (1809-1877) evidently continued, after her husband David’s death in 1855, in the business of stationer, bookseller and lithographic printers at 25 Hertford Street in Coventry.

We welcome your ideas about why “Bbifin.”

Eight pairs of woodblock illustrated playing cards from a wild bird card game. United States: Approx. 1880. Fuller Special Collections Fund.

Each illustrated card was paired with an accompanying card of descriptive text, all with intertwined letters WGO (?) on the verso for the card manufacturer. This incomplete set includes 4 Australian birds (oceanic fruit pigeon, cassowary, top knot pigeon, and emu).

"The Emue (sic) inhabits the plains and open forest country of Central Australia, where it was in former days very common: but now it seems to be disappearing so rapidly that it is likely, ere many years to be numbered with the dodo, and other extinct birds.”


As designed by American inventor and toymaker Charles Martin Crandall, 28 wooden dominoes with chromolithographed heads and tails of animals, in the original wooden box. The animal halves could be matched as a learning exercise ... or mismatched as an exercise in imagination.

With 12 chromolithographed game cards plus a booklet featuring Watilliaux’s motto “mentue manuque” (mind and hand). Other games issued by Watilliaux can be found in the Geography case.

Leutemann, Heinrich. [Zoological block toy]. [Leipzig: Possibly F. E. Wachsmuth, approx. 1885]. Stauffer Fund. Block toy consisting of 36 cubes divided in 6 groups of 6: when aligned, each group revealed in total 36 scenes of animals classed by species. Together with 36 chromolithograph “key” sheets, all contained in the original box.

The great game of zoo. Boston, Mass.: M.L. Severy, 1894. Most games here were for two or more players. According to the booklet of instructions, “Amusing and instructive game of zoo: An explanation of classification and terms, together with directions for playing twenty games.” In the original box, a deck of cards based on taxonomic principles of Louis Agassiz and Cuvier, with four “suits” made up of members of the vertebrae family, mollusks, articulata, and radiata. The 53rd card was the “Double Zoo,” and featured Shakespeare as the epitome of homo sapiens.

Nouveau loto zoologique instructif. [France]: [publisher not identified], [approximately 1900?]. Fuller Special Collections Fund. The 12 larger lithographed cards each depicted multiple animals, while the smaller cards showed one animal each. The game was somewhat akin to bingo, and the central figure illustrated on the box cover evidently served as the caller for the other players.

Les trois règnes de la nature: Jeu amusant, jeu instructif. Paris: Watilliaux, [approximately 1900?]. Fuller Special Collections Fund. The box contained game boards covering the three reigns of nature: animal, vegetable, and mineral, along with a 56-page instruction booklet and a green drawstring bag with game tokens. The colored illustration pasted onto the box depicted, somewhat incongruously, the landing of Christopher Columbus. Two other games by the versatile and prolific Watilliaux appear in the Geography case.


Mathematical recreations

An arithmetical pastime intended to infuse the rudiments of arithmetic under the idea of amusement. London: Biggs & Co. for John Wallis, 1798. Printed on one sheet, now in two halves: the game itself and directions in rhyme (plus various tables). Spinning ten-sided tops (the “tee-totums” illustrated, but not surviving, here) allowed players to advance in a race in spiral form to the laurel wreath at no. 100. John Wallis Sr. and his sons John Jr. and Edward were pioneering and prolific publishers of board games in Britain from the latter decades of the 18th century. Other examples of Wallis games are in the exhibit cases entitled Three of a kind, Scientific amusements, and Geography.

Concerning “Grandma’s Games, A Series of Six Kinds” (useful knowledge, geography, arithmetic, riddles, Old and New Testament): “The Series affords a means of conveying to children, in the form of play, a vast amount of desirable information. All six games should be in every household.”

Other examples of Grandma’s (or Grandmama’s) games are in the cases on Religion and Virtue and Geography.


A hand-colored lithographed guide showed the possibilities using the 24 pieces of various shapes and colors. Though the main box title was in German, the box also aimed at French- and English-speaking audiences. The same square format and a similar array of shapes and colors can be seen in a mosaic game about flowers in the case entitled Nature.


“The practical geometer: An activity game” consists of 37 geometric wooden pieces, numbered on one side only, forming three equal planes, all in their original box. *Der Praktische Geometer* was published by Otto Spamer (1820-1886), whose graphically innovative work inspired a retrospective at the Leipzig Schulmuseum, “Otto Spamer’s Bücher Fabrik,” in 2020.

*Le multiplicateur: Jeu pour faciliter aux enfants l’étude de la table de multiplication.* [Paris]: [Elloy Frères], [between 1890-1899?]. Cole Fund.

The game, housed in the original wooden box, includes 9 cards of multiplication facts (marked with—rather oddly—headdresses of various cultures and fashions), 45 circular multiplication tiles, plus 35 markers in a cloth bag. Stamped on the paper instructions inside were awards of gold and silver medals from one or another exposition of trade and manufacturing.


The Cincinnati Game Co.’s educational games “for school and home play,” under the editorial watch of Richard G. Boone, superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, included, among others, *Addition and subtraction,* *Multiplication and division* (also by Trisler), and *Fractions* (by E. W. Wilkinson). These mathematical games were edited by David Eugene Smith, professor (and historian) of mathematics at Teachers College, Columbia University.


English mathematician Charles L. Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, described here a board game to represent logical propositions like “Some fresh cakes are sweet.” The game requires one player “at least,” although “more amusement may be got by two working at it together, and correcting each other’s mistakes.” “Besides being an endless source of amusement (the number of arguments, that may be worked by it, being infinite), it will give the Players a little instruction as well. But is there any great harm in THAT, so long as you get plenty of amusement?”


This title followed on from *Mathematical puzzles and pastimes* (1957), also edited by Philip Haber, which featured on the dust jacket a juggler composed of geometrical shapes like those in *Mathematische Unterhaltungen.*
As noted in the foreword, “The foundations of a mathematical theory of ‘games of strategy’ were laid by John von Neumann ... between 1928 and 1941. The climax of the pioneering period of development came in 1944 with the pioneering Theory of games and economic behavior by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern.” The collection shown here, which suggests how quickly von Neumann and Morgenstern’s ideas were taken up, was owned by Elisabeth Stafford (Sokolnikoff) Hirschfelder, who earned her Ph.D. in mathematics in 1930 and long taught in the mathematics department here.

Chess and checkers

As Benjamin Franklin observed in his essay on the morals of chess, “The game of Chess is not merely an idle amusement. Several very valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of human life, are to be acquired or strengthened by it, so as to become habits, ready on all occasions.”

Boxwood relief printing block. Bassano [del] Grappa, Italy, late 18th or early 19th century. From the Remondini family of publishers, active in the Veneto from the middle of the 17th century to the middle of the 19th. A print pulled from this block, which bears the motto “Il nobile giuco della dama” (the noble game of checkers), could then be mounted on cardboard.

Bradford, Gamaliel, 1795-1839. The history and analysis of the supposed automaton chess player of M. de Kempelen, now exhibiting in this country by Mr. Maelzel; with lithographic figures, illustrative of the probable method by which its motions are directed. Boston: Hilliard, Gray and Co., 1826.
The supposed automaton, made in the year 1769, was first exhibited on the Continent and in Britain. According to an account from Edinburgh, “At every motion the wheels are heard, the figure moves its head, and seems to look over every part of the chess board.” The illustrations reveal the cramped figure that animated its motion.

Exhibition of Peter G. Toepfer’s chess game apparatus at the Century Hall ... Milwaukee, Wisconsin. [Milwaukee, between 1900-1909]. From the Peter Toepfer Chess Collection in Memorial Library and Special Collections. Patented December 17, 1901. The largest version, which weighted 120 lb. and featured a board 16 feet square and the king 3 ½ feet tall, would enable a “large number of spectators to witness ... the demonstration of chess problems....”


Card games

The frontispiece gestured more to recreation and card tricks than to natural philosophy and mathematics, but the text combined all these with wizardry and board games as well.

Melrose promised “pleasurable reading and healthy mental exercise” by providing a “graduated, progressive course ... deemed so essential in all educational matters”: his subject was the game of whist, a classic English trick-taking card game. Appended was a catalog of “practical” (!) handbooks from the same publisher, several of which addressed the subject of games.

*Quadrille international: Nouveau casse-tête.* [Paris]: Watillaux [sic], approx. 1900.

The instruction sheet for this brain teaser explained that the cards depicted four families (French, English, American, and German), each with a father, mother, son, and daughter. The objective was to arrange the 16 cards in a square, so that on each of the horizontal and vertical lines, and on each of the two long diagonals, there appeared a father, a mother, a boy, and a girl, all of different nationality. Watillaux’ other card games included a game of the great cities of Europe, a game of the French army, and an ornithological game.

*Happy birds. New popular card game.* Glasgow: James Brown & Son, Ltd. [approx. 1920-1924]. “Approved by Headquarters [?]”.

The object of *Happy birds* was to collect bird families, and the player with the largest number won. Each set was “made up of five cards, the head of a bird, its typical food, its type of foot, silhouettes of one or more members of its family, and lastly, a card giving the characteristics of the family in question and a list of the members it contains.”


A deck of playing cards with images from Vesalius’ *De humana corporis fabrica*, plus rules of the game for “Muscular happy families.” This 21st-century example followed the model of the happy families card game (think Go Fish), which dates back to the English games manufacturer John Jaques, Jr. and John Tenniel of *Punch*, just before the Great Exhibition of 1851.

*Legendary: Celebrating legendary women in STEM and their stories.* [Houston, TX]; [Madison, WI]: Represented Collective, 2022. Fuller Special Collections Fund.

Using cards to celebrate women, primarily black, indigenous and women of color, who have helped reshape “the narrative of who belongs” in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and who counts as “an innovator, a leader, a legend.”

Winnie Karanja is the founder and CEO of Represented Collective; illustrations in this set are by Lucia Duplessy, Jessalyn Mailoa, Alicia Ribeiro, and Adrienne Shelford.

**Beyond the tabletop**

Ferguson, James. *An easy introduction to mechanics, geometry, plane trigonometry, measuring heights and distances, optics, astronomy, to which is prefixed, An essay on the advancement of learning by various modes of recreation by Mr. John Ryland, of Northampton.* London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1768.

The textbook included a list of other books and instruments available for purchase, among them cards for “Ryland’s living orrery made with sixteen School Boys”: “Now begin your play, fix your boys in their circles, ... and then put your orrery in motion, giving each boy a direction to move from west to east, mercury to move swiftest, and the others in proportion to their distances.”

With experience as a ranger naturalist in Yosemite and instructor at the Nature Lore School, Vinal (known as “Cap’n Bill”) assumed the post of professor of nature education in the Nature Guide School at Massachusetts State College, now University of Massachusetts-Amherst, in 1937. Special Collections holds a second edition dated 1963.

Nesbit, Paul William. *Instructive nature games; a description of nature games selected and developed for their teaching and entertaining value mostly afield.* Drawings by Jewell W. Nesbit. Estes Park, Colo.: [1947]. “A description of nature games selected and developed for their teaching and entertaining value mostly afield.” Note the elimination procedure for naming games based on forms “we do not wish to become extinct.”

**Environment**

*Dirty water: The water pollution game: teaches people of all ages about ecology and water pollution.* Cambridge, Mass.: Urban Systems, Inc., [1970]. Fuller Special Collections Fund. Simulation game designed to teach ecology, problems of water pollution, and intricacies of the decision-making process. If you have a copy of a similar game (also 1970) published by Educational Manpower, Inc., in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, please talk with us in Special Collections!


*Smog: The air pollution game: Teaches people of all ages about air pollution.* Cambridge, Mass.: Urban Systems, Inc., [1970]. Fuller Special Collections Fund. The purpose of the game was “to acquaint the players with some of the complexities with which a local administrator must deal in controlling the quality of the air over his town.” The game, published in the wake of the Air Pollution Control Act (1955), Clean Air Act (1963), and Air Quality Act (1967), and in the same year as the Clean Air Act (1970), also featured 29 “outrageous fortune” cards and 1 “budget settlement” card.

**Politics**

*Presidential election: An exciting game.* Salem, Mass.: Parker Brothers, [ca. 1890-1896]. Chromolithograph game board, 37 printed blue “Votes” cards, wooden playing pieces, in original box; two sheets of instructions affixed to the interior of the box. The game board consisted of a grid of 44 squares, one for each state of the Union, each with the state’s name, state seal, and number of electoral votes; the vote cards ranged from 25,000 to 100,000. Wyoming, which became a state in 1890, is represented; Utah, which achieved statehood in January 1896, is not.

Presidential puzzle. [1932.] Shirley E. Cherkasky and Jessie M. Christensen Special Collections Fund.
Dating from the presidential campaigns of Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, the objective was to move one of the two blocks of wood with a candidate's name into the corner designated as the White House.

Playing at school

Die Schule — L’Ecole — The School. [Germany], [approx. 1870s].
Double-sided chromolithograph figures and objects, including a teacher and ten pupils, each with movable limbs, and other schoolroom accessories, plus slotted wood bases to hold the figures, all in the original wooden box, with printed pictorial label — in three languages — on the sliding lid.
The American Charles Crandall may have borrowed this idea for his own simplified “District School” produced in the mid 1870s.

Peoples

Twelve numbered playing boards, each with chromolithographed maps and numbered inset tiles; beneath the tiles lay illustrations of peoples, products, and nature.
Issued by the long-lived Parisian firm founded by Léon Saussine, whose games figure in several exhibit cases. A similar image to that on the cover of the box figured, though with different title and contents, in a Saussine atlas puzzle (Atlas géographique) that we hope to acquire.

Die Völker der Erde. Les nations du monde. The nations of the world. [Germany: 19th century?] Fuller Special Collections Fund.
Likely of German origin, perhaps from Nuremberg, known for toy and game production in the 19th century. Like the title on the box, the rules of the game were laid out in three languages (including slightly unidiomatic English): “That player who by his correct answers has got in possession of the greatest number of cards, wins the contents of the pool.”
Some of the images resembled those in Shoberl’s World in miniature, published in London by Ackermann in the 1820s.

Japanese educational games

課外算術絵噺カード 四年之巻. 中村孤月 立案者 中村和夫 画. 東：泰山房. 1919.2. Stauffer and Cherkasky Funds.
Set of 24 extracurricular arithmetic cards for fourth grade primary school students. Illustrated by Kazuo Nakamura. Each card posed a practical home or farm problem of basic arithmetic on the front, with the solution on the back. Original box with Prof. Kewpie waving hello.

A learner’s sugoroku, conveying lessons in morals, diligence, and social etiquette for both boys and girls. The creator of the game, Okuno Shōtarō (1886-1967), was a well-known educator who promoted storytelling in Japanese language education. Illustrated by Tsujiro Kusatsu.
Iroha karuta set featuring dogs, written by Masaru Mizutani, illustrated by Munehiko Yashiro. Published in Tokyo. With 47 text cards, 47 picture cards, two publisher’s information and instruction cards, in the original box, featuring dogs as soldiers. The dog shown needed to serve as a guard despite the weather.

This climate sugoroku, a lesson in identifying international weather flags, was produced for Kodomono kuni, a children’s pictorial monthly in the Taisho and Showa periods. Takei Takeo was one of the leading illustrators of the 20th century.

Construction katakana game, with unused “brushstrokes” to punch out, game board, and instructions to mothers.

Religion and virtue


The Game of Pope and pagan, or Siege of the stronghold of Satan, by the Christian army. Salem, Mass.: Published by W. & S.B. Ives, [1844].

Our game lacks the original box and game pieces. As described by boardgamegeek.com, this game was “a themed edition of the classic game of Siege,” in which “a ‘Christian Army’ of missionaries lays siege to the ‘Stronghold of Satan’ which is occupied by the Pope and Pagan.” Missionaries may move only on green paths of such moral qualities as kindness, purity, etc.


Bible stars: A pleasant Sunday occupation for young people. Approx. 1893.

187 cards with 4-page printed rules sheet in the original box: “Each [player] must have a Bible. A Parent or Teacher holds the Key and the Cards; the latter can be taken one by one from the box. The person who holds the Key takes a card promiscuously from the box, but does not allow it to be seen. He then looks in the Key, finds the corresponding name, and gives out the Book and Chapter which contain it. When all have found the chapter, the name or title on the card is read out, and whoever finds it first, reads the verse, and receives the card. Of course, all try to gain the largest number of cards.”
Harbin, Elvin Oscar. Phunology: A collection of tried and proved plans for play, fellowship, and profit, for use in the home, church, and community organizations for a wholesome program of recreation. Thirteenth edition, revised. Nashville; Richmond [etc.]: Cokesbury Press, [1923].

As the publishers noted, "The enhancement of fellowship by means of play, intellectual activities, social interest, is truly a worthy objective."

The cover of our copy appears in the digital collection Publishers’ bindings online, 1815-1930: The art of books, and a digitized version of the text can be found in the HathiTrust digital library.


Participants cut out the printed illustrations in the newspaper and identified the Bible verses they represented. As advertised in the Medford Mail Tribune, December 14, 1934: “The Bible Game is non-sectarian and has been approved by the nation’s most distinguished Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergymen. CASH PRIZES! offered by the SUNDAY OREGONIAN.”

Akin’s entry included manuscript maps and hand-colored illustrations, along with the requisite Bible verses and her own commentary.

Florence Akin (Banks), 1878-1962, was a teacher at the Irvington School in Portland, Oregon.

Matters military


According to Wintjes’ recent history of Prussian war games, “In Bohemia, Johann Ferdinand Opiz, a bank official, had developed a Kriegsspiel, which was first published by his son in 1806. In the publication, Opiz claimed the game to have originated in the 1740s, which would make it the earliest of the late eighteenth-century board wargames. Whether there is any truth to that claim or not, Opiz did introduce an important new element to the Kriegsspiel – the use of dice, which were used to determine casualties produced by infantry and artillery fire; in order to keep track of these casualties, Opiz also introduced the use of tables, which the players had to constantly update.”


A dice-based fortress and siege game consisting of lithographed cardboard pieces, painted metal cannons, dice, metallic paper counters in a drawstring bag, and a single sheet of instructions. Housed in original chromolithograph cardboard box depicting the setup of the game.


At the time of the publication of this work, Moss held the rank of captain in the U.S. Army; according to an unofficial Arlington National Cemetery information page, Moss evidently commanded an infantry regiment in France 1918-1919. He died in April 1941 and is buried in Arlington.


One of the wooden framed maze dexterity puzzles produced by R. Farmer & Son, possibly in 1916. (Another was Trench goal football: The great international game.)

The cut-out grooves formed a track, with a series of holes or “hazards.” Our version retains the metal ball-bearing, but lacks the instruction sheet usually found mounted on the bottom of the box.

Published on the eve of the Great October Revolution, this guide to children’s books and games includes a tipped-in illustration of a war game of an earlier generation.

Morse tutor: The easiest way to memorize Morse code. London: Fairylite, approx. 1940-1945.

As described by the Imperial War Museum, London, this was an “educational and instructional game produced by Fairylite, comprising 194 small (approx. 38mm x 20mm) rectangular card pieces each printed (black on white) with a single letter from the alphabet on one side and the same letter in morse code on the other; instructions for learning Morse code are printed on a card support fixed inside the base of the box and there is a separate booklet entitled Advanced Exercises for Morse Tutor Students.”

Other games produced by Fairylite are depicted in the old-school website gamesboard.org.uk.


User's manual for the second iteration of TEMPER, one of the earliest military computer simulations, designed by Clark C. Abt, who later wrote Serious games (1970). TEMPER was an acronym for Technological, Economic, Military and Political Evaluation Routine.


Founded in 1954, Avalon Hill Games was well-known for its strategy-based board games and war simulation games, as advertised in this brochure. It was included in another one of Avalon’s products, the Shakespeare bookcase game, shown in the exhibit case on Languages and literatures.