

Children's Games that could have been played at The Robbins House

Clay Marbles

Marble games have been played in all parts of the world with all manner of playing pieces for more than two thousand years. Children in colonial American played with marbles made of clay, which have been uncovered at a wide variety of eighteenth century sites; they were excavated in the Slave Quarters yard at the Royall House & Slave Quarters.

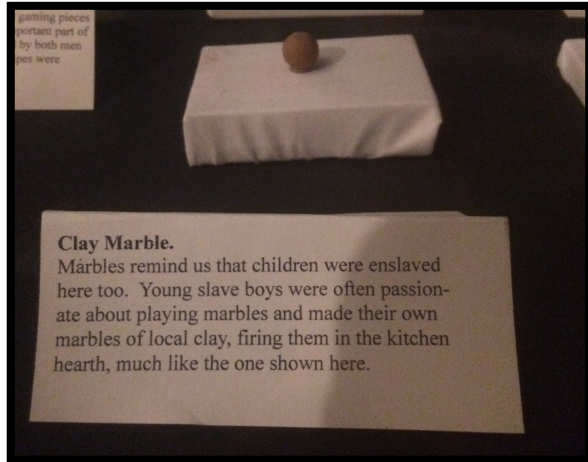


Photo of a clay marble excavated in the Slave Quarters yard at The Royal House & Slave Quarters in Medford, MA.

How to play Marbles – following is a simple version of the marble game, Ringer:

To Start

The first person to shoot in a game of marbles is determined by lagging:

- Draw a line on the ground.
- The players shoot at the line from 10 feet away.
- The player closest to the line goes first.

The Game

- Draw a ring (a large circle – usually about 3 to 10 feet across); each player puts an equal number of marbles in it, lining them up in rows spaced about 2 inches apart.
- Each player shoots in turn from outside the circle, trying to hit a marble out of the ring while keeping his shooter inside the ring.
- If the shooter has a miss, his turn is over and he picks up the shooter.
- If the shooter has a hit but the shooter also rolls out of the ring, he keeps the marbles that rolled out and his turn is over.
- If the shooter has a hit and the shooter stays in the ring then player shoots again from the place where the shooter stayed.
- On each new turn a player shoots from anywhere outside the ring.
- The person who collects the most marbles is the winner.

To Shoot a Marble

The most common shooting technique is to place one or more knuckles on the ground (see figure 2), with the shooter grasped tightly between the tip of your thumb and the end of your forefinger. Use your thumb to “shoot” out.

