

Homestead Era - Entertainment

Prior to the Plants moving to Moultonborough, and the construction of Lucknow Estate there was a small farming community of six families each with farms ranging from 50-150 acres. There are still cellar holes from this time period found throughout the lower half of the mountain. Though mountain farming in northern New Hampshire proved to be difficult life – it was prosperous for the families that occupied the land.

Entertainment

One account notes that the families worked hard but maintained a sense of amusement – they invented their own songs, stories and games to pass the time and make their work more enjoyable¹.

One game that they might've played with cards around the table at the end of the day is Gin Rummy – a new (for this time) variation of the old card game Rummy. Gin was meant to be faster paced and more spontaneous than the original. Try your hand with the instructions below!

How to Play Gin Rummy

Instructions taken from: <https://bicyclecards.com/how-to-play/gin-rummy/>

WHAT YOU NEED:

- A 52 card deck, with the jokers removed
- 2-4 players, 8+ years old recommended

RANKING THE CARDS:

Ranked highest to lowest: K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A

Face cards (K, Q, J) are worth 10 points, other cards are worth the value indicated by their pips (i.e. 5 of Spades is worth 5 points, 4 of Hearts is worth 4 points)

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<http://www.moultonboroughhistory.org/MHS%20Articles%20&%20Tidbits/Articles/MHS%20Research%20Files/Th e%20Mountain%20People%20of%20Moultonboro.pdf>



OBJECT OF THE GAME:

Each player uses their hand to form combinations of three or more cards to get more than 100 points.

DEALING:

The deck is spread out on the table and each player takes a card. The player who draws the highest card chooses where to sit and deals out ten cards to each player, one by one, leaving the deck with the remaining cards in the center of the table. The top card of the stock deck is placed face up next to it to start the discard pile. In the following games, the player who wins the previous game becomes the dealer.

HOW TO PLAY:

The player who did not deal the cards starts the game, with the option to pick up the upturned card next to the stock deck, meaning that one of their cards must be discarded. If the said card is of no interest, the player passes without discarding. The opponent may, in turn, take that card and discard another, and if they are not interested, they pass without discarding. Then the first player can now take the top card off the stock deck, discarding another. The game continues, with each player in turn being able to take the top card off the stock deck or the discard pile, then discarding a card, but which may not be the same card that they just picked up from the discard pile.

The game consists of players grouping the 10 cards in their hand to make minimum combinations of three cards of the same rank or runs of the same suit. The ace can be combined with the deuce but not with the king (K). A player can fold when their hand contains only unmatched cards worth a total value of no more than 10 points, making a Knock. As soon as a player discards their last card, they show all of their cards, announcing the number of points that are left without combining. It is not compulsory to Knock, a player can prolong the game in order to improve their hand. The best hand is to make Gin, consisting of placing down the ten cards combined.

In either case, when a player folds, exposing all of their cards, the opponent does the same, having the opportunity to get rid of those cards that were left unmatched and being able to combine cards with those exposed by the player who Knocked or announced Gin. A partial game also ends when there are only two cards left in the deck, this game is declared null and the same player cards deals out a new hand.

When a player announces Gin they win the partial game, whereas if a player Knocks, either that player or the opposing player can win it. The player wins if the value of their unmatched cards is less than the value of the opponent's unmatched cards and the opponent wins if the value of their unmatched cards is equal to or less than that of the one that Knocked.

The cards of the opponent to the one who announced Gin or Knocked are valued after having discarded the cards that they have not combined and that link with combinations of the hand laid down by the one declared Gin or Knock.