

The Children's Game of Cricket

Electronic mail message from Larry Haas, Sun City, Arizona and Roger Haas, Portland, Oregon. Larry and Roger Haas grew up on a farm in near Eureka, South Dakota.

As children we played a game we called "cricket" but it is different from the game called "cricket" that comes from England that involves a ball. I am wondering if this was a German-Russian game. We dug a small hole (about two inches cubed) and laid a short stick (about 4 inches long) across the hole. All players went out to the field except the "cricket lifter/batter"; who would lift the short stick (cricket) out of the hole with a longer stick (about 2 feet long) and attempt to throw the shorter stick out in the field where there were fielders. If it was caught by a fielder, that person was up to bat.

If there was no catch, then the batter continued with step two which was to place one end of the short stick into the hole, and then strike the exposed part of the stick with the longer stick. Once it was hit, the short stick would spin up into the air and it had to be hit into the playing field. If the batter failed to hit the stick after three tries, he was out and the next batter was up to bat. The next batter was predetermined by pulling out a number from a cap.

If the batter succeeded not to be put out by striking out or having the cricket caught by a fielder, he had a third step to throw the stick in the air and batting the cricket out into the field. If he failed to strike the stick after three tries, he's was out. If he batted it out to the field and it was not caught, he continues the three step pattern until the stick is caught.

This was a dangerous game, because catching the cricket with a bare hands stung or hurt many times, especially if it was going at a high speed or if a person was in close proximity. Once one fielder got hit in the forehead and he was unconscious for a little while.