

# BOWL & DICE GAME

The dice game has innumerable variations across North America. This traditional game is called Hubbub in southern New England. The game described in the 1600s includes five or six small dice which are tossed in a wooden bowl or basket. The game is accompanied by sticks or beans for scoring. Dice were usually carved from bone or antler, in some versions plum or peach pits were used. Dice were engraved, burned and polished or painted to distinguish one side from the other when they are tossed.

The dice game was often played in a large gaming house or arbor made from poles set in the ground and covered with tree boughs. Natives of New England played this game in the 1600s for great stakes. Animal skins and furs, kettles, knives, axes were set out and huge stores of strung wampum were hung from the arbor poles. Elements of reciprocal exchange is demonstrated in traditional gaming of Native Americans in southern New England. Money in this dice game was gambled away, but was probably won back again, in subsequent games. The dice game provoked great celebration and shouting with cheering 'hub hub hub' hence the name hubbub for the game. Entire villages sometimes wagered against other villages over the two individuals chosen to play the game.

How to play "Wa'lade hama'gan", a Penobscot bowl and dice game:

The object of the game is to acquire as many sticks as possible and then bankrupt your opponent. Play takes place in three phases. In the first phase players try to accumulate as many sticks as possible in a primary pile. In the second phase (known as drifting) players attempt to move as many pieces to a second pile (known as the treasure pile). Sticks in the treasure pile have increased value against sticks in the opponent's pile. The third and final phase of the game occurs when one player has sufficient markers in the second pile to bankrupt the opponent. During the course of play, markers are awarded when a "roll" of five or six of the dice come up as the same color (either brown or white). Players alternate casting the dice or lightly banging the bottom of the bowl. This version of the game requires 6 dice, 56 Narrow Sticks, 4 Flat Sticks, and 1 Crooked Stick (Speck 1976).