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"Playing cards" originated in Hindustan around 800 A.D.. In Italy in about 1279 the first use of cards in Europe was mentioned. The game later spread through Germany, France, and Spain. In fact, the traditional four suits- diamonds, hearts, spades, and clubs- were created in France during the fifteen hundred's. The first settlers brought with them to America the card games of Europe, thus establishing cards and card games firmly into our culture. There are fifty-two cards in a traditional playing deck, with thirteen cards per each of the four suits. There is a vast variety of games that can be played with cards, for example; Gin, Blackjack, War, Solitaire, Five Hundred, and many more.

The time is around eight o'clock, on a thursday night in the kitchen of a typical middle class home. Two couples are sitting around the table playing a card game known as Rummy Five Hundred. The older of the two couples is nearing their forties'-the "Mom and Dad" of the group. The younger couple is their daughter and her boyfriend. Each member of the group has his or her own style or technique in the way they play. The father plays with competitive concentration and lively humor when things are going in his favor. He is the aggressive player in the group and also an extremely talented bluffer. The mother is a little more quiet and relaxed in the way she plays. Although she is not as assertive as the father, she has confidence in her skills. She also has the ability to bluff. Also, she is the only one who can tell when the father is bluffing. The daughter has a relaxed but

and the mother is a very good bluffer.

scheming concentrating style, in which she tries to devise ways to beat her father in a unspoken competition. She has a tendency to pay a great deal of attention to the other players and their moves. Not as aggressive as the other two, she would rather wait and see how the game is going before deciding her strategy. Lastly, is the boyfriend, a very quiet player. He is not influenced by the others at the table. he prefers to think through each move carefully, whereas, the other three like to lay down their cards and score points quickly. He is likely to hold everything until the last play and lay down his entire hand at one time. Each of the players develops and uses an original style that works for them. This falls into the definition of folklore in accordance to patterns in tradition. As with any tradition, members of a group may all participate in the same tradition and follow a general set pattern, but each individual will have a unique way of deviating from the pattern. This deviation is used by the players in the card game. Each one of them must follow the general rules for Rummy, however, each one also has a strategy of their own on how to win the most points. For example, some people choose to play combinations as soon as they are created. Others may choose to hold cards in order to draw more points. Some individuals, like the father, choose to bluff so no one is really sure of what they have or do not have. Others are straight forward in telling about their hand.

Another way cards fits into the definition of folklore, is that games and the way they are played vary from area to area. Rummy played the family mentioned uses seven cards. The object is to obtain as many points as possible by laying combination of three or more cards either in sequence by suit or in numerical matches. The cards count five for number cards, ten for face cards and tens, and fifteen for aces. The winner is the first one to five hundred. However, in dif-

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ferent areas the same game-Rummy- is played with anywhere from seven to ten cards and points are counted according to the face value of the cards. The object of the game may change also. For instance, the winner might be the first one to three hundred or a thousand, or it might be the first one to lay down everything in one's hand.

The father and daughter have similar styles of playing because he was the one who taught her how to play. In the teaching process, he passed along many of his own techniques. However, their styles do have slight variations because of the daughter's interaction with others. Some of her techniques come from her mother and also those learned from friends and peers. Many people learn to play cards through the observation of the way others play. Observation of others is the main reason why each individual has his own unique style and techniques. Through observation of several different people one person creates his or her own style by combining all of the techniques into one individual style. Each person learns from different people so all combinations are different. For this reason also, playing cards is a folklore tradition. Styles and techniques are passed down and combined from generation to generation and from group to group.

The setting of the card game, as mentioned earlier, is in the kitchen of the family's home. The kitchen is often a popular place for relaxed, informal conversations or meetings. The card game is very informal, serving merely as a form of entertainment. However cards, especially when played for money, can take place in a very formal setting such as a casino or a club. Even when the game is just a weekly meeting of a bridge club, the playing area will be moved out of the informal kitchen into a more appropriate, formal living room area. The type of cards being played and the reason for play-

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ing is a definite factor in where the game will be played.

Playing cards has many different functions in our society. For the family the game is simply a form of entertainment , a means of passing an otherwise boring night. Cards can provide entertainment in many different ways. One person can play Solitaire to pass away the time. Two people may play War, Gin, or even Blackjack. IF these two get bored they can all some friends and play Poker, Rummy, Hearts, or any one of hundreds of other card games.

Cards can also be played for money. There are a few people in our society who make a living off playing cards for money. In these cases a little more tension is brought into play and some of the fun taken out, especially when someone is losing. Playing cards for money can be found in several places, including- casinos, clubs, bars, or even a home where the stereotyped "men's Friday night Poker game" is played. When money is involved the settings are usually more formal. How formal the setting is depends on the amount of money involved.

A game of cards can also be the source of important social interactions. Games provide a setting where people may exchange knowledge, gossip, discuss current events, and tell stories or jokes. As observed in the family's game alot of social exchange was apparent in many different forms. First, the card game can allow for exchange of knowledge, not only in techniques, but also current events. The family talked about everything from what was in the national and local news to the latest circulating gossip. Such topics discussed during the course of the evening included: present condition of our government, a child abuse case in the news, a traffic light replacement, a new plant opening in the local industrial park, a cousin's wedding, the martial situation of a couple down the road, and the probabilities of the daughter getting a car over the summer. Topics vary with the

interest of the different groups, but will usually follow the same basic categories.

Secondly, often games provide an opportunity for storytelling, light teasing and joking. These three forms of expression help to break tension between players. The parents, in the game mentioned earlier, thought it to be a golden opportunity to embarrass their daughter in front of her friend by telling "toddler tales". In groups of young adults , the " remember when..." stories are more popular. Alot of light-hearted teasing and joking is passed back and forth between players. This teasing may consist of ribs about dumb moves, lack of luck, odd or funny situations, nicknames, or past experiences. An example of the type of teasing occur between the family has the mother and daughter , who just happen to be beating the guys somewhat badly, kindly continue to remind them that the object in scoring was to go forward and not backwards.

Lastly, cards can provide exercise for a person's wits. There is always the unspoken of challenge of who's strategy is going to work the best, or who can come up with cleverest remarks. In many card games individual are required to respond quickly to the game. This reflex strengthening helps some individuals to respond quicker in other situations. Any exercise of the mind is beneficial to a person knowledge.

In all the above mentioned ways a simple, everyday game of Rummy represents several different aspect found in the definition of folklore. The game and the game's rules are an example of the traditional pattern , and the different styles of the players show the pattern's flexibility. Just like other traditions and parts of folklore the games, rules, and the styles and techniques are passed from generation to generation. Being firmly established in our modern culture , cards serve many functions. Not only do they provide im-

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portant social interactions and entertainment, but in some cases
cards even provide a means of making a living. About the family
card game, needless to say the girls won the game five thrity-two
to two hundred and eight. Sorry guys.