

1050-01-22

**Willem J Wallinga\*** (wj13@unh.edu), 12 Maplewood Ave., Rochester, NH 03867. *The Historical and Educational Origins of Probability Theory.*

The invention of probability theory in the 16th and 17th centuries has been a subject of recurring interest for historical researchers in mathematics. The earliest efforts arose from attempts to analyze simple games of chance involving randomizers such as coins and dice, objects that have existed worldwide for several millennia. This developmental delay is a source of great debate and speculation among historians, and has been described as one of the greatest enigmas of modern science. Students in the 21st century face a similar delay in learning the basics of mathematical probability. Despite being familiar with a wide range of randomizers and games of chance at an early age, children have not been traditionally introduced to concepts in probability until at least adolescence. This presentation will elaborate on these common themes. (Received January 05, 2009)