EARLY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY Sir John Suckling, an English poet, invented a game that has been played by countless millions ever since. In 1909, Elwood T. Baker, a Brooklyn WHIST teacher, created another that is now undoubtedly the most popular two-hand card game around. The first game is CRIBBAGE and the second is GIN RUMMY, but how many of the fans of either of these games could identify the inventor?

Even when the creator of a game is a matter of historical record, and this is rarely the case, the vast majority of the players of that game couldn't care less. They (with the exception of many CHESS addicts) are just not interested in the origins of their game. This indifference is reflected in the attitude of scholars who, when writing about a civilization, will scrutinize every aspect in minute detail but will dismiss the games played by that civilization as trivial or, going to the other extreme, as too intricate to be comprehended.

In my opinion, which is definitely not unbiased, a game is a work of art as worthy of being signed as a painting, a book, or a musical composition. This is not practical in the case of games that have evolved through numerous changes. And it is impossible where the creator's name has been irretrievably lost. But certainly in the case of games being created today—and this is the most productive time in the history of games—the inventor should have the right, and the obligation, to sign his work.

This chapter will consist of games contributed by ten of my very creative friends. Most of these friends are professionals, not in the sense that they earn their living from games (only one does) but

because they have taken the time and the effort to learn their craft and then have practiced it, turning out a steady flow of finished work.

I am the president and chief archivist of a very informal group with a very formal name: "New York Game Associates," or N.Y.G.A., for short. At irregular intervals we meet and present new games for approval, and for criticism.

Three of the games in this chapter, and many of my own games in the following chapters, spring directly from the stimulating N.Y.G.A. atmosphere.

Claude Soucie, a charter member of N.Y.G.A., is the father of seven charming children and the creator of such delightful family games as SPLIT PERSONALITY, KNIFE YOUR BUDDY, and BIG FUNERAL. Claude is also a humorist and has, as the above titles indicate, often successfully blended both facets of his personality in his work.

Claude's game of WATCH, published by the Campaign Game Company, is not in a humorous vein but, for a game of pure skill, has a light touch that allows just about any age level to enjoy it. Another plus: a game takes about five minutes to play.

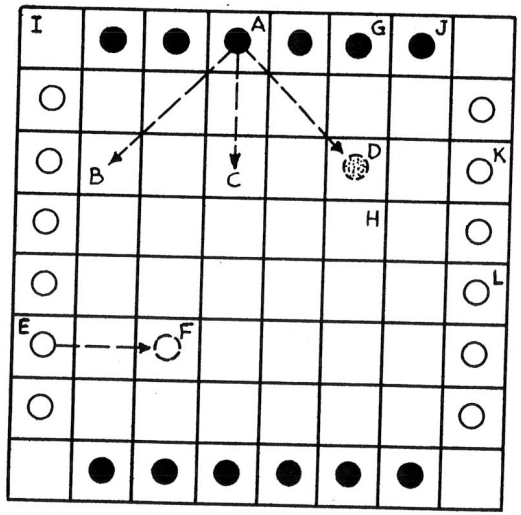
LINES OF ACTION (LOA) is also a game of pure skill. It can be played on a checkerboard, but it presents a new manner of moving the pieces and, something much harder to find, a novel objective. Claude also has a version that can be played by from two to six players on a special board. This, hopefully, will be available to the public in the near future.

LINES OF ACTION (LOA)

by Claude Soucie

- *Number of players.* Two.
- *Equipment.* A checkerboard and twelve pieces for each player. The pieces are set up, as shown, on the outer spaces of the board, one player having the black pieces and the other having the white.
- *The play.* Black moves first. Play then alternates. A piece moves in a straight line, including diagonally, *exactly* as many spaces as there are pieces, enemy or friendly, including the piece moved, in that straight line. (For example, Black, at the beginning of the game, could move his piece A to space B, C, or D.)

A piece can move over one or more friendly pieces, but cannot land on a space occupied by a friendly piece. The pieces passed over are not affected in any way. (For example, let us say that Black's first move is piece A to space D and that White then moves piece E to space F. Black could now move piece G three spaces to space H, passing over his own piece. Black could also move piece G five spaces to the left to space I, passing over three of his own pieces. There are other moves, of course, that piece G could make. Piece J could not move five spaces to the left since this would cause it to land on a black piece.)

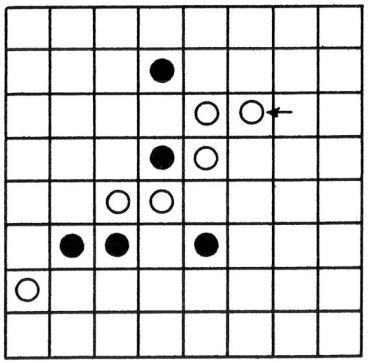


A piece cannot move over an enemy piece. It may, however, land on the same space as the enemy piece, thereby capturing it and removing it from the game. (Following the previous example, if Black has moved a piece to space D, White could not move piece K three spaces to the left, passing over the black piece. White could, however, move piece L two spaces diagonally to capture the piece on position D.)

- *Winning the game.* A player has a winning position when all of his remaining pieces have been gathered into one connected group. The connection between pieces in the group can be either orthogonal or diagonal.

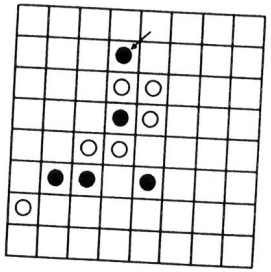
If a player is reduced, by captures, to one remaining piece, that piece constitutes a winning position.

- *Drawn game.* When a player, by making a capture, creates a winning position for himself and at the same time, by eliminating an isolated piece, creates a winning position for his opponent, the game is a draw.
- *A sample end game.* The following ending of an actual game shows some of the richness of position that can develop in LOA.

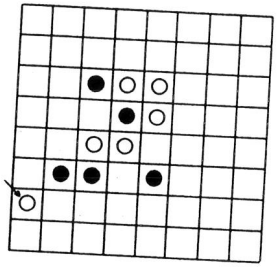


In the position shown, if it were Black's turn to play he could win the game by moving his topmost piece down three spaces, capturing a white piece, and uniting all of his, Black's, pieces.

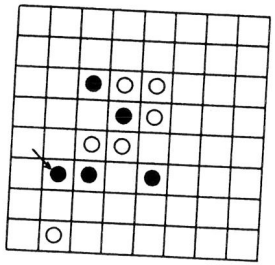
However it is White's turn and he moves the piece indicated by the arrow to the position shown in the following diagram.



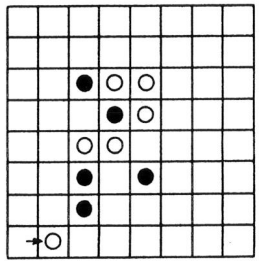
Black, blocked from an immediate win, moves the indicated piece to the position shown below.



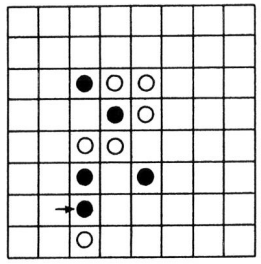
White moves his isolated piece as shown in the next diagram.



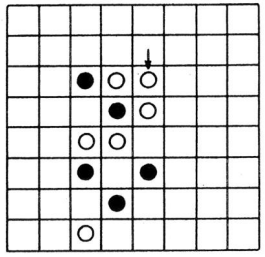
White threatens to win by moving two spaces directly upward. Black parries the threat by moving his piece to the position shown in the following diagram.



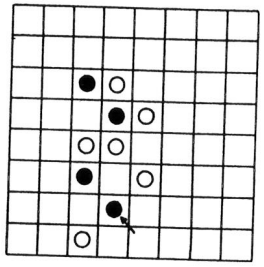
White's upward move is now reduced to one space. Instead he moves the piece horizontally. (He is not permitted to jump over the black piece.)



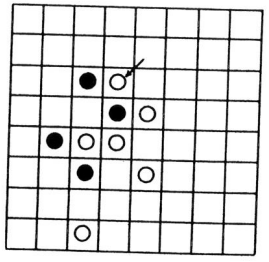
White again threatens a win by moving two spaces diagonally upward and Black interposes by moving the piece indicated.



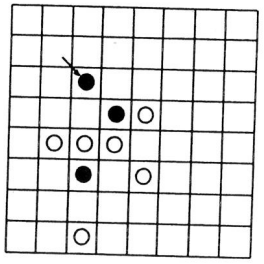
Black can now win by moving his topmost piece two spaces down diagonally and White counters by capturing a black piece, jumping over his own piece.



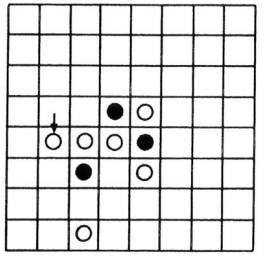
Black, in no immediate danger, moves the piece shown up to the left.



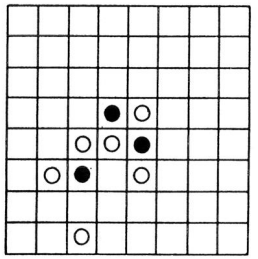
Black again threatens to win by moving his second piece from the top two spaces to the left. And White is still not able to connect up his isolated piece. White again saves himself by capturing a black piece.



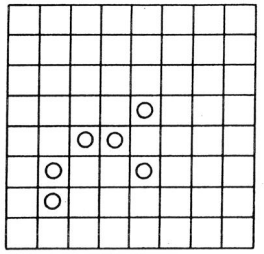
Black continues his attack by moving the indicated piece.



Black is once more in position to win by moving his bottom piece to the right. White stops this by adding another piece to the line, changing the move of the black piece to three.



Black is blocked from moving to the right. He also cannot stop White from moving one space diagonally up to the left, winning the game.



White's winning position (with the black pieces not shown).