



Colonial Cradle

It's portable, it's safe, and it can be quickly filled with wonderful memories.

For an infant, bouncing over nineteenth-century roads in a horse-drawn wagon could be just as dangerous as zipping along twentieth-century highways. Today, we have car seats to minimize the risk. Back then, the 'Pennsylvania Dutch' cabinetmaker who designed this cradle added six small knobs — three on each side — so the mother could tie her child in while traveling. As an added safety feature, he made the cradle quite narrow so the baby couldn't be bumped from side to side.

Choosing Dimensions and Materials

Twentieth-century infants who have used this cradle have demonstrated that it may be a bit too narrow. The baby outgrows it rapidly. To help extend the usefulness of this piece, we've provided *two* sets of dimensions on the End View diagram. If you build it according to the dimensions on the right, the baby will have more room to grow. If you

stick to the dimensions on the left, you can make an authentic reproduction of this classic cradle as it now appears in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

After you've decided on the dimensions, choose your materials. The original cradle is made from pine and walnut, but any straight-grained, knot-free lumber can be used. (Don't use plywood; it splinters too easily.) We recommend a close-grained hardwood such as maple or cherry, as these materials make strong corner posts and rockers.

As originally designed, the headboard, footboard, and sides were 1-1/4" thick — 5/4" stock was quite common a hundred years ago. You can still find thick planks at some lumber yards that cater to craftsmen, or you can have them custom sawn and planed. However, it may be far easier (and the cradle will be a lot lighter) if you simply adjust the dimensions slightly to make these pieces out of 3/4" thick stock. Make the mortises and tenons 3/8" wide instead of 1/2", and make the bottom frame assembly 1/2" longer and 1/2" wider than shown. (See the Side Detail and Bottom Detail diagrams.)

Cutting the Patterns and the Joints

Cut all parts to size. To form the tenons on the headboard, footboard, sides, and sun shields, cut a 3/8" x 7/8" rabbet along an edge, turn the board over, and cut another rabbet along the same edge. (If you're working with 3/4" thick stock, cut 3/16" x 7/8" rabbets.) Notch the top and bottom