

able to help in compiling the history of Canada's few original toy-manufacturing companies. One special need is for access to any catalogues of toys made by any of the Canadian companies. Canadian catalogues for reference are scarce and I would really appreciate direction to any new sources.

In the meantime, I am continuing the collection of Canadian-made toys, related information and artifacts including catalogues,

company records and history, manufacturing techniques, and personal reminiscences of individuals involved in the Canadian toy-making industry. I am learning a great deal, I am enjoying the research, and I am confirming my impression that there is a whole chapter of Canadian industrial and social history that is being lost even as we try our best to record it. David Gray, R.R. #3, Metcalfe, Ont., K0A 2P0, 613 821-2640 evenings; 613 954-2663 days.

Research Query: Mobile Hanging Cradles

In the History Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization is an unusual bent-wood hanging cradle. The frame of this cradle has at one end a pair of cast iron wheels and at the other a small curved handle by which the bed may be pulled. Although the cradle was purchased in Gananoque, Ontario, and an almost identical one in the collection of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies at CMC was bought at Shakespeare, Ontario, near Stratford, a similar cradle is shown in Lyndon C. Viel, *Antique Ethnic Furniture* (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead, 1983) and is associated with the American Upper Midwest.

Mr. Viel refers to this latter cradle as a Norwegian "field" cradle, so named because it could be taken with the family to the fields during harvest. This interpretation seems to be improbable, at least with respect to the CMC History Collection cradle. An examination of that object demonstrates that the small cast iron wheels can lift the frame only a couple of inches off the ground, and the overall construction, while sturdy, is not robust. Not only could it not endure much rough treatment, there are no marks reflecting non-domestic use.

A picture of the CMC History Collection cradle published in the *Ottawa Citizen* as part of a feature on the *Comforts of Home* exhibit resulted in a contact from a local man who had a similar cradle in his possession. This cradle was used by the man's father as a baby. That information places the cradle in Ancaster, Ontario, around 1888. Other information from



◀ **Fig. 1**
Cradle, History Division, acc. D-8835. The supporting framework or "runners" of the cradles owned by the Doon Heritage Crossroads collection and privately in Ottawa converge at both ends. Both also have wooden wheels. The privately-owned cradle has a wooden stretcher between the runners in the centre at the bottom, and its handles are turned on a lathe. The Doon Heritage Crossroads cradle lacks an axle between the wheels; instead, assemblies fasten a wheel to each runner. A chain attached above the wheels, possibly a replacement for a leather strap, keeps the runners from spreading apart. (Courtesy Canadian Museum of Civilization)

the Doon Heritage Crossroads collection in Waterloo, Ontario, indicates that they also have a very similar cradle, which they refer to as a "corn cradle."

While all four Canadian cradles show some differences of construction in the frames, pulling handles and wheels, they are substantially similar. All appear to have been factory made and all but one have been decorated with yellow or gold pinstriping.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization would like to know more about possible origins and uses of these cradles. Readers with any information are invited to write or telephone Dr. Peter Rider, Atlantic Provinces Historian, telephone 819 776-8365, or Magnus Einarsson, North European Folklorist, 819 776-8226, Canadian Museum of Civilization, P.O. Box 3100, Station "B," Hull, Quebec, J8X 4H2.