
A BOY SCOUT TREK CART

Document of unknown origin

© Isle of Wight Scouting Heritage, 2024

The Two-Wheeled covered cart known as a trek cart has become the approved vehicle for transporting equipment and supplies on over-night hikes. In addition, when the summer camp is more than hiking distance, the cart is often fastened behind an automobile as a trailer. Indeed, I know two lads who arrived at camp with a cart hitched between bicycles and a canoe strapped to the box of the cart and all had come through without mishap.

The cart will accommodate all of the ordinary equipment of a Boy Scout patrol, or excess equipment of several patrols. It is well adapted to the requirements of a few days' fishing and camping. And, since the portable radio set has become part of outdoor outfits, the cart is just the conveyance for it.

The photograph of Fig.158 shows a covered wagon caravan belonging to several patrols of Boy Scouts. Half a dozen of these carts, neatly painted in patrol colors, topped with their white canvas covers and drawn in single file by the Scouts, four to a cart, are most imposing and often form the outstanding feature of a holiday parade.

THE COST AND UPKEEP

The cost of building a trek cart is small, approximately \$7.00, and may be met readily by a special assessment of troop or patrol. Two boys can complete the carpentry in an afternoon's time and the patrol artist needs but parts of three afternoons to turn out a good paint job, including lettering. If the equipment is taken care of and housed in the winter, it should last indefinitely. The cart at the right of Fig.159, the original cart of the Boy Scouts of Elmhurst, Illinois, which I designed and built seven years before this writing, has seen much service, yet is as good as new. An added coat of paint now and then, of course, is largely the secret of keeping a cart in condition.

THE PROBLEM OF WHEELS

The first essential is a pair of buggy wheels. If you cannot pick up a pair in your vicinity, you will probably find what you need by inquiring at a farmhouse. A small ad in a local paper brought our boys offers of more buggy wheels than they could use. Wheels should cost little, if anything. However, it is better to pay something for a good pair, than to accept old wheels ready to fall to pieces.

BUILDING THE CART

When you have obtained wheels, remove them from **The Axle** and take the axle to a blacksmith shop for shortening and drilling. Figure 16i shows the correct distance between hubs, also where to have holes drilled for bolting the axle to the bolster of the cart. The cost should not exceed \$1.25.

Figure 162 shows a detail of **The Tongue and Body Frame**. Make tongue A of a piece of 2-by-4, end crosspiece B and handle-bar D of pieces of 2-by-2, braces C and bolster E of 2-by-4s. The lengths are marked upon the diagram. Spike

crosspiece B and handlebar D to the ends of tongue A, and reinforce the handlebar with a pair of 2-by-2 iron angle braces (Fig. 162). Round the ends of handlebar D with a plane or drawknife, and smooth with sandpaper.

The location of holes for bolting bolster E to the frame is given in Fig. 162. The holes in the axle bar will locate the end holes in the bolster. The bolts running through bolster E and the braces C also extend through the bottom of the box, and a second nut and washer are necessary for each to fasten the box to the frame. Bore a second hole through each brace where shown, for bolts for bolting the rear end of the box to the frame.

The Running Gear will look as shown in the photograph of Fig. 168, when the wheels have been mounted and the frame is upended.

The Box (Fig. 163) is of simple construction (Fig. 164), with band strips added around the top and bottom. Buy 12-inch soft-pine boards 14 feet long out of which to cut ends G and sides H, and 6-inch matched boards for bottom L. In laying out and cutting the end and side boards) be careful to get the corners square and to saw exactly on the lines. After nailing the ends of the boards together, test the corners to make certain that they are square before nailing on the bottom boards.

Cut end band strips J and L of the right length so their ends will come flush with the sides of the box, and cut side band strips K and M to overlap the ends of strips J and L. The side bands must be notched to form sockets for the hoops of the wagon cover to slip into. Lay these out as shown in Fig. 165, with the end notches slanted to give a rake to the end hoops. Saw down the ends of the notches and split out the wood between with a chisel. After nailing the band strips in place, drive an additional finishing-nail through lower bands M near the lower edge, at the point of each socket notch (Fig. 163), to form a bottom to each socket to support the hoop end.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER TOP

The Top Hoops.

Buy pine lattice strips 1-3/4 inches wide for the hoops. Bending them into form is an easy process, but the work must be done carefully. Put the strips to soak in water, because they must be soaked thoroughly to bend without cracking. And while they are soaking, describe a circle with a radius of 16 inches upon a wooden partition or floor, as indicated in Fig. 166, and drive five or six nails around the circle at equal distances apart, and four nails below the circle, as shown.

When the strips are ready for bending, take one and bend it around the nails (N, Fig. 166), working slowly and evenly so the wood fibers will stretch without breaking. When you have bent a hoop into shape, tack cord across its ends, lift it off the nails, and slip its ends into a pair of the box sockets.

You will require the service of mother or sister to prepare: -

The Top Cover.

With the diagram of Fig. 167 before her, she will have no difficulty sewing up the lengths of canvas on her machine. Buy seven yards of 8-oz. duck, 27 or 40 inches wide. The material should be cut into three strips of equal length, and the strips should be sewed together with lapped seams 1/2 inch wide. The two long edges of the cover must be turned over to form a 1/4-inch hem through which to run ropes for

closing the ends of the cart (Fig. 159) and the other edges must be turned over to finish off the raw edges of the goods.

Run clothesline through the end hems. Use a piece of stiff wire with one end bent into a loop to pull the ropes through. With the ropes in the hems, try the covering upon the hoops. Gather the ends as shown in Fig. 159, and fasten the ropes to screw eyes screwed into the inside of the box ends. This is all the fastening that is necessary, but it makes a neater job to have tapes sewed to the inside of the cover to pass around the hoops and tie to screw-eyes screwed into the sides of the box opposite the hoops. With the cover in place, the proper positions for these tapes are easily determined.

PAINTING

Complete the trek cart by giving the running gear and box two coats of paint. Use your Boy Scout patrol colors, of course. Before painting, go over the work, sandpaper all wood surfaces, and drive nail heads below the surface. Automobile enamel makes a better finish than oil paint. It is more expensive, but you need apply it only for the second coat, using any good outside paint for the priming coat. After the first coat has dried, putty nail-holes, joints and defects.

OTHER USES FOR THE TREK CART

The photograph of Fig. 168 suggests how you may invert the box of the trek cart and set it upon stakes driven into the ground for a table. This will serve as a dining table and a stand for a portable radio set. You may stick the top hoops into the ground and fasten the cover over them to form a food shelter or extra tent, as shown in the photographs of Figs. 160 and 168. And you may upend the running-gear as shown in Fig. 168, and splice the tongue to form

A MAST FOR A RADIO AERIAL

Figure 169 shows a compact rig for a tongue extension that set up makes a mast 20 feet high. Of course, it is best to have two carts so equipped to provide a mast for each end of the aerial, otherwise you must use a tree or other support for one end.

To Rig up the Mast first spike the block Q to bolster E and hinge the piece of 2-by-2 P to the block. Cut this piece 34 inches long. Drive a spike into the end as shown. With this hinged piece dropped to the position indicated by dotted lines in Fig. 169, the spiked end will stick into the ground, and the tongue will be braced in its upended position.

The middle length of the mast is formed by the 2-by-2 bar R (Fig. 170). Fasten a leather or iron strap around the tongue near the handle-bar, to slip the mast through (Figs. 169 and 170), and bore a hole through the mast and tongue for a bolt to pin the mast in position. Bore a 1-inch hole in the mast end 5 inches deep in which to insert the topmost member of the mast, a Boy Scout staff or other pole (S, Fig. 171), and notch the staff near the end to provide for attaching the aerial wire.

To Carry the Mast Bar, fasten a strap to strut P near its end to form a loop large enough to slip the bar through. As you will see by Fig. 169, this loop will support bar R and strut P. To keep bar R from slipping back and forth along the tongue, bore a bolt hole through it near the upper end, so that the bolt used to pin the lower end to the tongue when the bar is raised (Fig. 170) may be used to pin the upper end to the tongue when it is slung, as in Fig. 169.

A BOY SCOUT TREK CART

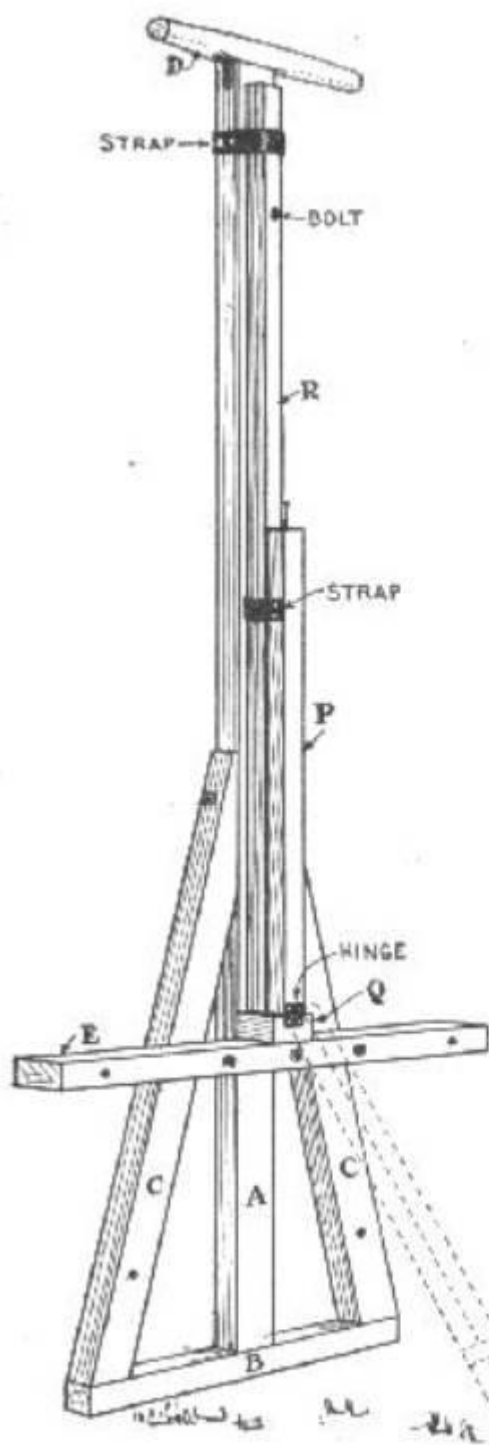


FIG. 169

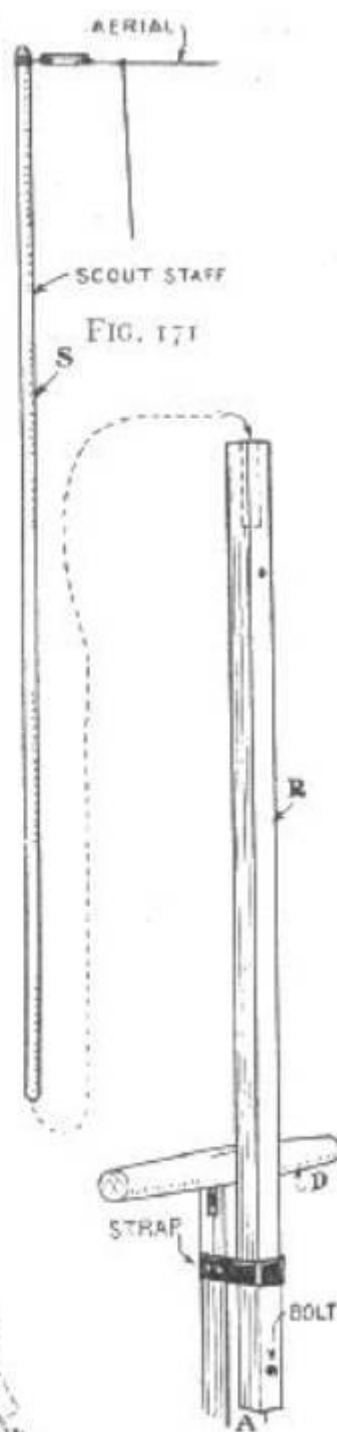


FIG. 170

FIGS. 169-171.—Details of Rig for Aerial Mast
Shown in Photograph of Fig. 168.