

Baby Carrier

For mothers on the go with small children, a child carrier is a must. Today's mothers have a variety of carriers to choose from to lug their little ones from place to place while doing errands or visiting friends. Some carriers have folding or ergonomic handles. Others attach to strollers or shopping carts and many double as car seats. In the mid-1900s, many moms were also looking for alternatives to lugging children on their hips as well as a portable way to keep track of their small children when working outside or even in the house. Pictured here is the "Lug-Me-Mom" an early child carrier manufactured by Mirotex Products of St. Louis and designed to give moms some freedom.

The main body of the "Lug-Me-Mom" is made of army-green colored heavy canvas. The 21 inch long canvas carrier encases two supports in the center, a longer back support along with a second shorter support make up the seat of the carrier. The padded seat pieces are covered with a slick fabric which based on the name of the manufacturer might be Mirotex an easy to clean synthetic fabric that today is sometimes used for outdoor furniture.

The child is held in the Mirotex seat by one leather strap which encircles him or her below the chest and buckles in the center. Once the child is buckled in, pulling tight two additional leather straps attached to the canvas sides at the top and bottom of the carrier pull the sides together to hold baby firmer. Once he or she is snug in the seat, mom can grab the stiff canvas handles on each side of the carrier and she and baby are off.

In addition to helping parents, "lug" their child, this carrier also doubles as a diaper bag of sorts. On the inside of the canvas sides of the "Lug-Me-Mom" are several pockets where mom or dad could put a spare diaper, a couple of toys, and maybe even a few snacks. At the top of the carrier is also a canvas loop that looks like it could hold a strap so the carrier could be attached to something like the seat of a car.

A tag on the inside of the carrier indicates that parents could purchase the "Lug-Me-Mom" for \$9.75 compared with between \$35 and up to \$200 for child carriers today.

Unfortunately, we don't know which Johnson County children might have been carried in this or where their parents purchased this "Lug-Me-Mom." The carrier was donated to the Johnson County Historical Society by Frank Fryauf over 20 years ago

along with many items from the Fryauf Harness Shop and Fryauf Leather Goods which operated on Dubuque Street from the 1880s to the 1960s. Perhaps the Fryaufs sold the “Lug-Me-Mom” in their store or perhaps one of the Fryauf children was transported in this carrier.

Were you carried around in a “Lug-Me-Mom” or similar child carrier? If so, share with us what you know about this child carrier by sending us a note or e-mailing us at leighann@johnsoncountyhistory.org.

