

# 10 Awesome 100-Year-Old Crafts for Kids

BY THERESE ONEILL

MARCH 10, 2014

HANDICRAFT ... BY ALBERT NEELY HALL, DOROTHY PERKINS

Text and pictures were copied from <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/55417/10-awesome-100-year-old-crafts-kids> On Thursday February 4, 2021

At the dawn of the 20th century, middle class children were less likely than at any time in history to spend their days toiling for survival next to their parents. So they started getting bored. And books, full of things to make and do, began to emerge ...

Many of those projects are still fun to create today. Others require way more hatpins and unused cretonne scraps than are commonly found in modern homes. Below [below are] ... 10 craft and building projects, of various skill levels, that are just as fun to make today as they were 100 years ago.

## 1. AN UMBRELLA PLAYHOUSE



FIG. 665. — An Umbrella Play-Tent



FIG. 666. — How the Umbrella is Supported on a Chair-Back

To make this clever little tent, all you have to do is find an umbrella that still has a curled handle, and secure it tight to the rung of a chair with twine (or nylon rope). The author recommends sheets or old draperies for the walls, and clothesline for the “braces.” Fasten the braces to each spine of the umbrella: “The best way to attach them is by using a needle and thread and sewing each to the little eye in a tip.” Then, stake the rope into the ground outside, or, if inside, thumbtack it to the floor. (Which parents probably won't allow, but it's still nice to have outside!)

## 2. CORN STARCH JEWELRY



FIG. 229 — A Lavalier



FIG. 226 — A Bracelet

Here's the recipe: 1 tablespoon of corn starch to 2 tablespoons of salt, to 1 tablespoon of cold water. You can add food coloring or watercolors for color.

Mix the water and cornstarch, and heat the salt in a pan. When it is "piping hot," put it in with the cornstarch and knead. To make the **Bracelet**, roll the dough into round beads with your fingers and poke a hole through them before they harden. Intersperse with tiny beads. For the **Lavalliere**, the author recommends silk cord for stringing, and forming the pendant around a hairpin, so it's easier to string.

## 3. STILTS



STILTS

Books of this era usually assumed even children had familiarity with basic carpentry and construction, so instructions could be brief.

Take two stout poles, P, about six feet long and from one and a half to two inches square, for the uprights (Fig. 1). The foot blocks, C, should be about four or five inches long, three inches wide, and as thick as the upright. Nail these two feet or more from the lower end of the upright, using strong steel nails or screws to keep them in place.

It is also recommended to nail on a leather strap to help feet stay in place.

#### 4. A GLASS REFLECTING FRAME FOR COPYING PICTURES



FIG. 267.— A Reflecting-Frame for Copying Pictures

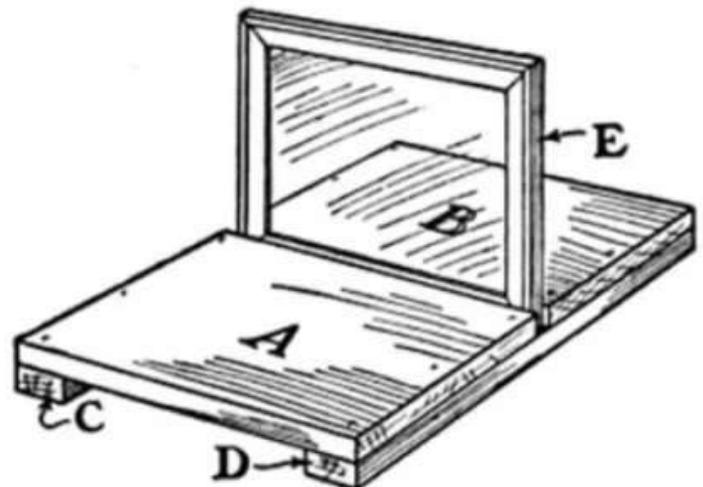


FIG. 268. — The Completed Reflecting Frame

Scanning, copying, and printing a picture you want to copy is for the faint-hearted. True art lovers build one of these and do it by hand. Again, instruction is brief, even when the intended reader is an 8-year-old girl.

Two boards (A and B), two cross-pieces (C and D), and a small picture-frame with the glass fastened securely in place (E). The boards A and B should be about 1 inch longer than the picture-frame, and they should be square. Place the pieces upon the pair of crosspieces C and D, with the edge of the picture-frame slipped between them, and nail them to the crosspieces, driving them tight up against the frame to hold it securely in an upright position.

To actually copy a picture, you would trace the reflection in the glass onto fresh paper. Brilliant in its simplicity.

## 5. SPATTERWORK PICTURES

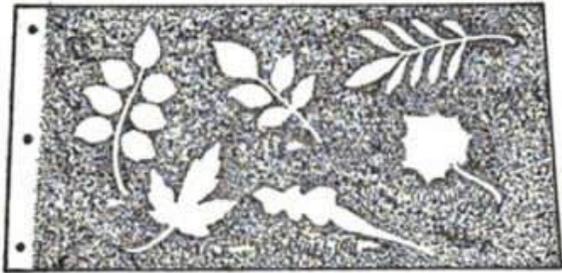


FIG. 584. — Make Spatterwork Leaf Records, like this



FIG. 586. — Making Spatterwork Pictures

It's easy to let children experiment with things that spatter in a world of washable fingerpaints. One hundred years ago, there was just ink. Black, permanent, terrifying ink.

To make leaf impressions, place flat leaves on paper, making sure to block off the edges where you don't want paint. (Also it might be wise to have your child do this project in a parking lot while wearing a trashbag.) Then,

Dip a paintbrush into the ink, and draw the blade of a pen-knife across the ends of the bristles, as shown in Fig. 586. Move the brush from side to side so that the spattering will be even. When the ink has dried, lift the leaf from the page, and you will find a white silhouette of it upon a stippled background.

## 6. A BOOK-MARKER



FIG. 78.— A Book-Marker

This book marker needs 1 ¼ yards of satin ribbon, and “fancy work ring.” (We're not sure what that is, but any flat ring would probably do.) Cut the ribbon in two pieces, one 12 inches long and one 24 inches. Pull them halfway through the ring and stitch them all together. Notch the ends so they don't fray. The hand-lettered verse, “Not mine to tell/If the book be good/But I keep my place/As a marker should” is optional.

## 7. CIGAR BOX HARP [Another type of box may also work]

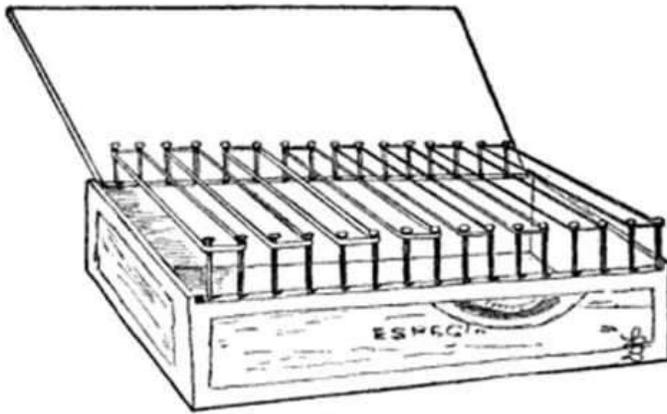


Fig. 487.



Fig. 488.

To make this cute cigar box harp, drive thin nails through the front and back of the box, then stretch “elastic” bands (rubber will likely do) across two nails. Use bands of varying width, and tighten them to your personal taste by wrapping them around more than once. Then use a quill to play it. Except you probably don’t have a quill, in which case a toothpick should work just fine.

## 8. CLOTHESPIN DOLL



Drive in two little nails for the arms, cover the head with clay, and draw on a face. Stiff paper “of an intense color” is used for the dress. Tie a contrasting sash to keep the dress on, and stick on a button for a hat. If you want her to stand up on her own, turn up a half inch hem and glue it heavily.

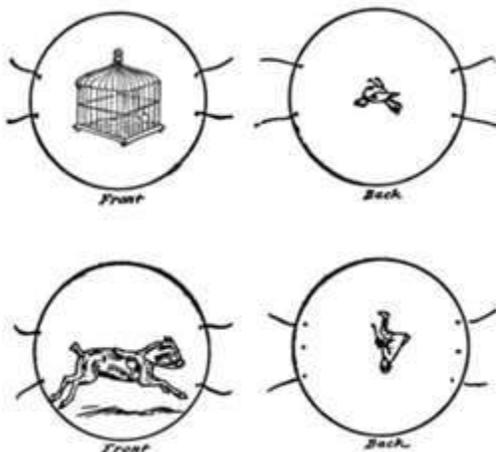
## 9. DAVID AND GOLIATH SLING [USER WITH EXTREME CAUTION]



*Dennis the Menace* slingshots are old and busted. It's time to harness the power of centrifugal force in your rock throwing. You'll need an oval piece of leather, about 3 inches long, and leather strips tied to each end, one long and one short. Then,

Whirl the sling several times around your head, and let go the shorter thong. The stone will fly to a considerable distance, according to your skill and force. As long as the leather holds the stone it can not fly, but the moment the thong is released the stone escapes at right angles to the radius of the circle.

## 10. THAUMATROPPES



Before Netflix, there were thaumatropes. They're a small circle of cardboard with a picture of two things that go together on either side, such as a bird and a birdcage:

Attach two pieces of string, six inches long, to each edge. By holding the ends of the strings between the thumb and forefinger of each hand and twisting the disk around rapidly, the bird will appear to have entered the cage.