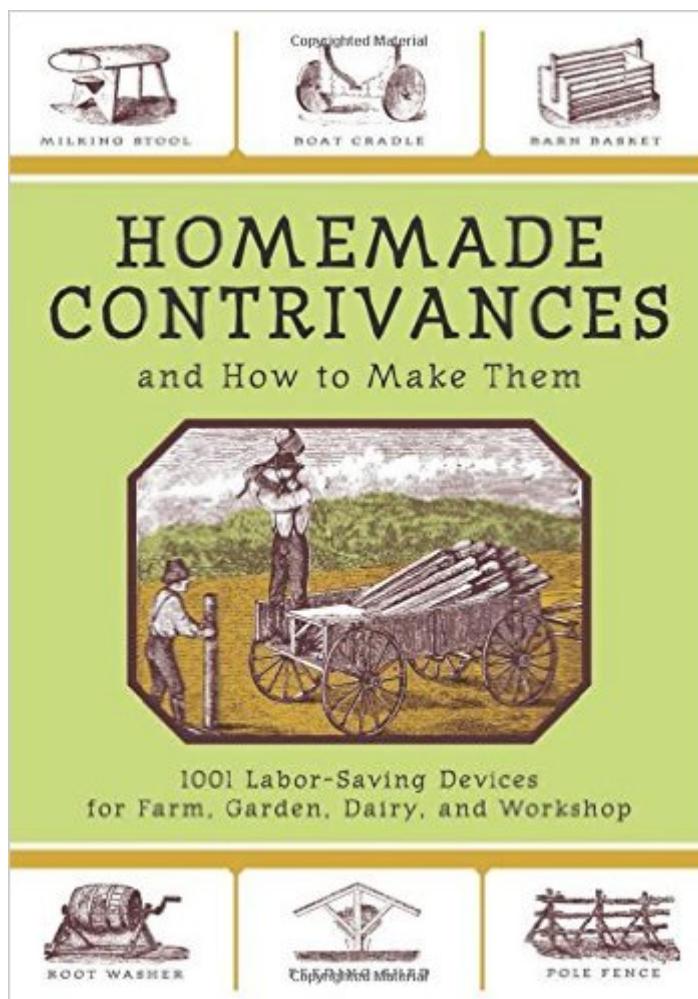


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# Homemade Contrivances And How To Make Them: 1001 Labor-Saving Devices For Farm, Garden, Dairy, And Workshop



## Synopsis

The traditional American devices contained in this intriguing compilation date from an era long before milking machines, pesticide sprayers, and industrial hay bailers. Yet the simple inventions described for doing everything from managing young bulls to protecting drain outlets can be just as useful for today's farmer as they were for the homesteaders of over a century ago. Discover how to make such items as a movable nest for hens, a ribless boat, a contraption to extricate a mired animal, a farm cart with adjustable racks for larger loads, a wire fence tightener, a fruit picker, a grindstone set and frame, and much more. This book is a boon for the rancher, farmer, or anyone who loves the rural life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Read this book (for free) on Google as it is out of copyright. Judging by the reviews on here, I feel some explanation may be in order. When these books were originally written, almost all the intended readers made a living doing things by hand; building what they needed as they needed it. People were very handy and were used to figuring out problems on their own. As such, "how to" books of this vintage are very vague by modern standards, because the authors assumed that each reader would modify the ideas to suit their own specific situation and the materials at hand. As an example, here is a quote from pg 57 of "Farm Equipment & Hand Tools" edited by George Martin (an excellent book, I might add) "...consists of a piece of hickory or white oak bent into a half-circle, and the ends passed through a somewhat larger rod of the same kind of wood, and wedged fast." That one sentence, along with a single drawing of the completed object, is the complete set of instructions for designing and building a wall mounted device to hold open bags to be filled with

grain. No measured drawings, detailed, illustrated step by step instructions on assembly, only an overview of construction and the few details that your average 19th century handyman wouldn't have thought of on his own. Other common phrases are "a good oak stick about 18 feet long, or whatever length is needed" and "thus constructed, it is used in the usual way." It is just assumed that if you are reading this book, you have to know your way around a workshop and understand how these gadgets are supposed to work. Judged in this light, these reproduction books are excellent, as they really are filled with ingenious ideas and solutions to problems many people still face (especially gardeners and homesteaders). BUT, if you aren't comfortable figuring out all the stuff the original author assumed you would know, the books are pretty useless except as entertainment. For an excellent example of the flavor of these books, read in the "first pages" shown on the website; that really sums up the way these books are written.

This book is a boon for gardeners, farmers, or anyone who likes to tinker in a toolshed. Gates, boats, sheds, fences, tools... you name it, you can learn how to make it. The devices here stem from the early days of American farming, when things were made to last. Charming, practical, and over six hundred pages, this book is a real bargain!

I bought this book because I am interested in researching daily life of the period (for historical fiction writing purposes) and can say this book exceeded my expectations. The print is clear and so are the illustrations, which can sometimes be a problem in reprints of old books. I am not mechanically-minded, but I could certainly follow the principles of the engineering required in most of these no-nonsense entries here. The illustrations were also very helpful in this regard. It was an eye-opener to realise how complex the task of farming, gardening and husbandry was back in the late 1800s. If you want to learn about old farming techniques and what it took to be a farmer back then, then you can't do better than this book. If you want to 'return to the land' with your own farm in the modern day, then it's probably better to consult a newer book on the subject.

If you ever needed a guide book to construct useful items from the past - this is it. Aside from actual items there are bits of advice scattered throughout. For problem solving on a budget, gaining insight from past applications or needing to make what you cannot quickly or easily buy - this book is the one you should have.

From the description it had when I bought it, I thought this book would have instructions on how to

build things for our little homestead. It doesn't really. There are some illustrations from which you can figure out how to do a few items, and someone more mechanically-inclined than myself would definitely have an easier time figuring out how to build each one, but overall it wasn't what I was expecting based on the description. As another reviewer stated, this is more of a historical book than a "how-to" one. I will keep it, because I find it interesting.

I purchased the Skyhorse 2007 reprint to replace an original copy from 1899 and couldn't be more pleased with the quality of the reprint.<sup>1</sup> The text and images are both very cleanly reproduced to the extent that this reprint is actually easier to read than my original copy (which has become very dark with age).<sup>2</sup> This is of course alk. paper, and of a decent thickness, whereas the 1899 copy is printed on acidic, thin, and very low-quality paper (even by 1899 standards). For anyone interested in obtaining a copy of this book, the Skyhorse reprint is the clear choice over and original printing.

I found this book interesting in an historic way as it shows means of doing jobs and creating tools or devices with what one might have on hand or could be made locally out of things that were easy to get hold of. That being said, many of the materials are not available now. There are not any village blacksmiths down the road who could make some of the items cheaply, and the illustrations are very incomplete as are the instructions for making many of the items. Maybe 130 years ago the ideas would have been easier to understand especially since many items were very common and everyone back then understood how they worked. Unfortunately, now days if one is setting up a farm and wants to use what they have to create some of these devices they would have to do some research on historical wagon construction or historical architecture etc. It would be a great book if someone updated it for todays audiences and also put in information on what regulations one would have to check on before building some of these devices as they might run afoul of environmental or water rights laws that did not exist back then.

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