

History at Home: Carriages

Purpose:

This activity gives children the opportunity to learn about the carriages in the History Museum of Mobile's collection and test their knowledge of what they have learned.

Info for Parents or Guardians:

You could share a little or a lot of the historical information that follows with children depending on their ages before you start the activity. This activity is geared toward children ages 8 and up. If the children are younger, speak in more general terms and provide a greater amount of help with the activity. These activities are designed to allow you to utilize materials that you probably already have at home. Feel free to substitute other materials. For example, almost any kind of paper, including wrapping paper, would work for this activity.



Diamond Jubilee State Coach for Queen Elizabeth II, Great Britain, Wikimedia Commons Image



Ox- or water buffalo-drawn cart with driver from Harappa, 3000-2500 B.C.

Carriage History:

A carriage is a horse drawn, wheeled vehicle for people. Carriages may be light and fast or heavy and large and basic or luxurious. Four wheeled wagons, two-wheeled carts and even chariots are early forms of carriages. The word carriage comes from Old Northern French word "cariage," which means to carry in a vehicle.

The first carriages date back to ancient times. Two-wheeled animal drawn cart models or toys that date back to between 3000 to 2500 B.C. have been discovered in the ancient Indus valley

civilizations of Harappa, Mohenjo Daro and Chanhu. These carts were designed for a driver.



The next step in the evolution of the carriage was the chariot, a two-wheeled cart designed to carry up to two people standing up. Chariots are believed to have been used in Mesopotamia



Tutankhamen Hunting. Detail from a painted chest found in the king's tomb, Thebes, c. 1340 B.C.

as early as 1900 BC. In Ancient Egypt, chariots were mainly used for warfare or hunting, and could be drawn by one or two horses. The chariot was revolutionary and effective because it could deliver warriors to battle quickly and had an advantage over soldiers on foot.

Later, the Ancient Romans used 4 wheeled wagons to transport people, goods and provisions. It is believed that the Ancient Romans made an important innovation. They made wagons more comfortable for riders by suspending the box like part of the wagon (that people sat in) above the wheel axles with chains or leather straps. This meant that passengers would no longer feel every bump in the road. In the Middle Ages in Europe, wagons were still very similar to what the Romans used. By the 1400s A.D., more modern type carriages were being developed including the coach, which had an enclosed cabin with side doors. In the 1800s, there were dozens of different types of carriages with different purposes. The History Museum of Mobile has a wonderful collection of carriages. In this activity, we are going to learn about some of the carriage types found in the museum's carriage gallery.

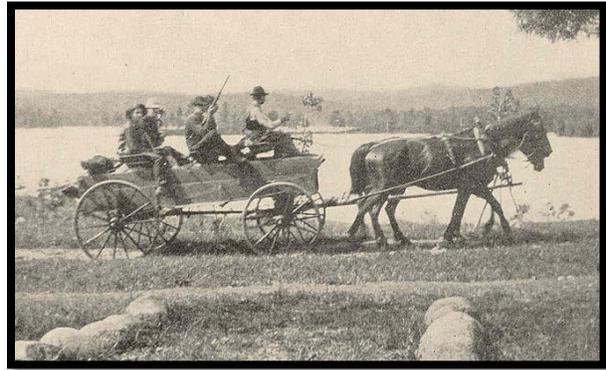


Activity:

Have children read about and look at images of different the types of carriages on the pages that follow and then identify carriages from the museum's collection on the activity sheet.

Popular Types of Carriages

1. **Shooting Brake:** This large carriage was designed to carry hunters and all of their equipment as they pursued whatever they were hunting.



A horse-drawn shooting brake in 1903 (photo from the New York Fish and Game Commission)

2. **Stanhope Phaeton**

A type of sporty open carriage popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It was drawn by one or two horses, and typically featured a minimal body atop four very large wheels. It was considered fast and a little dangerous.



Image courtesy of the Carriage Collection, Stony Brook Museums, Stanhope Phaeton Buggy built by Studebaker 1880s-1890s

3. **Hansom Cab:** A two-wheeled carriage designed to hold two passengers inside. The driver sat behind the carriage with the horse reins going over the top.



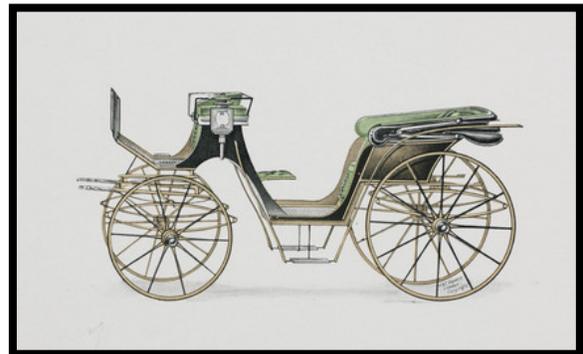
Hansom Cab, London 1877,
Wikimedia Commons Image

4. **Kentucky Breaking Cart:** a simple two wheeled open cart that is used to train and exercise horses.



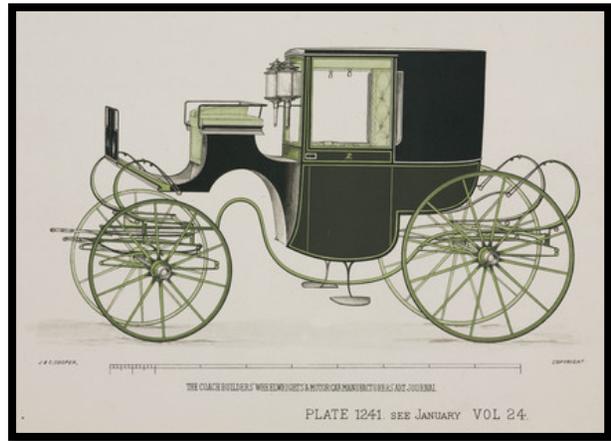
Kentucky breaking cart poster, 1900 by
Edward Penfield, Library of Congress

5. **Victoria Carriage:** An elegant type of French carriage named for Queen Victoria. It was usually pulled by one or two horses. The carriage was a light, open, four-wheeled, vehicle. It had a forward-facing seat for two people covered with a folding top, called a calash, and an elevated driver's seat above the front wheel axle.



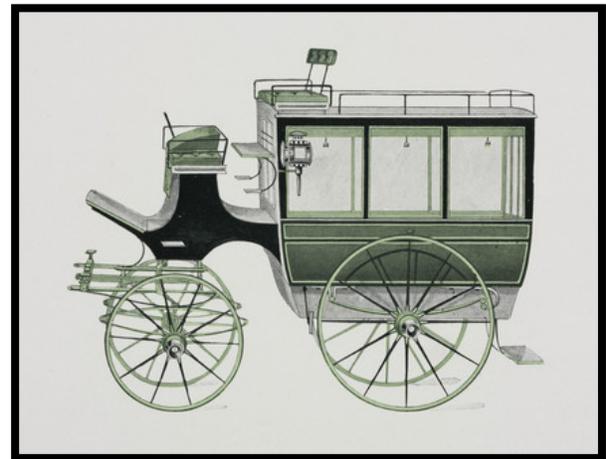
Victoria carriage, 1906, Wikimedia Commons Image

6. **Brougham Carriage:** A light, enclosed, four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage built in the 1800s. This type of carriage also had two center doors, and a forward facing seat for two people. There is also a version of this carriage that has a backward facing seat as well. There was an elevated seat for the coachman or driver outside, at the front of the carriage.



Brougham Carriage, 1903, Wikimedia Commons Image

7. **Omnibus:** a large, enclosed, horse-drawn carriage used to carry several people at once. It was mainly used in the late 19th century in both the United States and Europe, and was a common means of transportation in cities. Smaller, omnibuses were often used by hotels, and railway companies to get people and luggage to and from railway stations.



Hotel or Private Omnibus, 1906, Wikimedia Commons Image

Wooden benches along the sides of the passenger cabin held several sitting passengers facing each other. The door to the cabin was in the back of the carriage. There was an elevated seat for the coachman or driver outside, at the front of the carriage.

8. **Gig:** a light, open, two-wheeled cart pulled by one horse. A gig has a higher placed driver's seat that sits above the level of the two poles, or shafts that connect to the horse's harness. Sometimes gig seats are even placed higher than the wheels.



Stanhope gig, 1815-1830, Wikimedia Commons Image

Can You Identify the Carriages?

Look at these carriages from the History Museum of Mobile and see if you can figure out what type of carriage each one is.



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____

Carriage Activity Answer Key

1. Brougham
2. Victoria
3. Stanhope Phaeton
4. Omnibus
5. Gig
6. Hansom Cab