

FASCINATING FIND

CRADLE



The gold cradle, or rocker, was invented during the Californian alluvial gold rushes in the 1840s.

This one consists of a wooden box about a metre long, in the shape of a child's cradle, which is rocked sideways on its wooden frame.

The rocking action separates the soil particles, allowing the gold and heavy black sand to sink and be caught in the internal trays while the lighter sand and gravel is washed away. At the end of the day the contents of the trays is panned off to recover the gold.

A team of men shoveling, carting, rocking, and pouring in water can process at least five times more dirt than is possible by panning.

The cradle is displayed with other mining exhibits in the gold room.