

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF DESCRIPTION & VALUATION

Antique Child's Barrel-Back Rocking Chair — Turned Legs — Upholstered Seat — c.1900–1930s



MARKET VALUE

\$85–175

Realistic shop/private-sale price — solid wood, original form, intact rockers

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$175–300

Collector ceiling for a well-preserved antique child's rocker with original construction



Antique child's barrel-back rocker, c.1900–1930s

Solid dark hardwood — turned front legs

Barrel-back curved solid splat — upholstered round seat

Gold floral print fabric — original rocker rails

Antique Child's Barrel-Back Rocking Chair

Solid Hardwood — Turned Legs — Upholstered Seat — c.1900–1930s

HISTORY

The child's rocking chair holds a special place in American domestic history — a piece of furniture that was both a practical gift to a child and a symbol of the home's warmth and stability. From the mid-19th century onward, miniature rocking chairs sized for children were produced by American furniture makers in great variety, from simple country-made ladder-backs to more sophisticated factory-produced forms with turned legs, decorative backs, and upholstered seats.

This chair represents the **barrel-back** form — one of the most charming and structurally distinctive child's rocker designs of the late Victorian and early 20th century period. The barrel-back style features a solid curved splat back that wraps the sitter in a gentle arc, mimicking the curved staves of a barrel. This form was popular from approximately 1890 through the 1930s and was produced both by small regional furniture makers and by larger American furniture factories. The curved back gave the small chair an upholstered, club-chair quality — comfortable, embracing, and visually substantial for such a small piece.

The chair is constructed in solid dark hardwood — likely walnut, oak, or stained birch — with **turned front legs** joined by a turned stretcher rail. The seat is a round, barrel-drum form upholstered in a gold floral-print fabric. The back features a decorative cut-out detail at the top — two small circular piercings — a common decorative touch on children's furniture of this era. The rocker rails are original and proportionate, giving the chair a gentle, authentic rock. The overall scale and construction are consistent with American furniture making of the 1900–1930 period.

Child's rocking chairs of this quality and age survive in surprising numbers, but finding one with its original construction intact — original rockers, original seat, structurally sound joints — is less common. Many examples have been stripped, refinished, or reupholstered multiple times. This chair retains its authentic aged character while remaining structurally functional.

NOTABLE INFORMATION

- ♦ Form: Barrel-back child's rocking chair — curved solid splat back wrapping the seat
- ♦ Material: Solid dark hardwood — walnut, oak, or stained birch (stylistic attribution)
- ♦ Legs: Turned front legs with turned stretcher rail — classic American furniture joinery
- ♦ Seat: Round upholstered drum seat — gold floral print fabric
- ♦ Back detail: Decorative cut-out piercings at top of back — period decorative touch
- ♦ Rockers: Original proportionate rocker rails — structurally intact
- ♦ Era: c.1900–1930s — American furniture production, barrel-back style peak period
- ♦ Condition: Structurally sound; aged patina consistent with genuine antique construction

Collector's note: Antique child's rocking chairs are collected as childhood antiques, folk furniture, and decorative display pieces. The barrel-back form is among the more desirable styles — more sculptural and visually interesting than simple ladder-back or spindle-back rockers. Key value factors are structural integrity (solid joints, original rockers), original construction (not heavily refinished or restored), and overall proportions. This chair's turned legs, decorative back piercings, and intact rocker rails are all positive indicators.

Attribution to a specific maker is not possible without a maker's mark, which was not typical for American furniture production of this period. Market Value reflects realistic shop pricing; Estimated Worth reflects what an antique furniture or childhood antiques collector would pay.

"A small chair that held a small child — and the memory of an afternoon that never quite ended."

Mom's Joy Room | Morgantown, WV
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Sandy Wade, Proprietor

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