Primary Maker: Unidentified maker
Title: Baby walker
Date: 1700-1750
Medium: Cherry
Dimensions: Overall: 15 in. × 25 3/4 in. × 25 3/4 in. (38.1 × 65.4 × 65.4 cm)
Credit Line: Purchased from Elie Nadelman, 1937
Object Number: INV.14959

Object Name: Baby walker
Classification: FURNITURE

Curatorial Remarks:
This object was once part of the folk art collection of Elie Nadelman (1882-1946), the avant-garde sculptor. From 1924 to 1934, Nadelman's collection was displayed in his Museum of Folk Arts, located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The Historical Society purchased Nadelman's entire collection in 1937. This baby walker is a form typical of Netherlandish walker called a "loopwagen." As early as the fifteenth century, baby walkers helped toddlers learn to walk and encouraged erect posture (which carried moral overtones of upright character). Dutch book illustrations and paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries show similar baby walkers and attest to their popularity. Like their twentieth-century counterparts, they gave toddlers circumscribed mobility. They also, importantly, prevented dangerous tumbles into hot stoves and fireplaces. With regular usage, wooden baby walkers like this eighteenth-century European example suffered considerable wear and tear. Few American examples are known, a scarcity that is not surprising in view of their delicate construction. The Nadelmans' baby walker is a rare survival.
Object Information

Physical Description:
Cherry baby walker consisting of horizontal ring supported by four raked, turned legs; with base consisting of square frame with shaped inner edge mounted on four short legs with wooden casters.

Markings: Circular adhesive label on underside of stretcher: "247 / ger" (Nadelman collection sticker)

Related Objects: