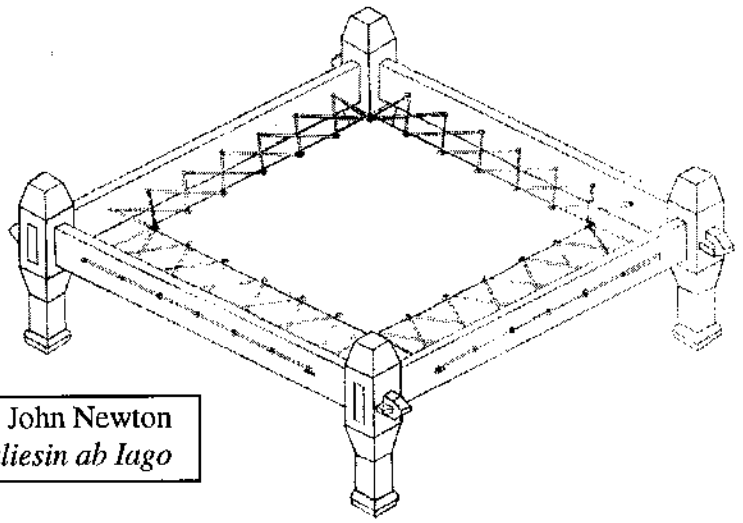
Something to Sleep On. . .



by John Newton
Taliesin ab Iago

This sturdy bed fastens together with tenons and pegs, so it transports easily, but its rugged look also makes it suitable for a permanent part of your reconstructed bedroom set.

The first thing you need to do is make the corner posts. I made mine with 6"x6" lumber, because I was afraid that 4"x4" would not have enough strength at the joints.

Cut the 8' post into four 2-foot sections. These will be the corner posts. In each post, cut a rectangle big enough to insert a 2x6 all the way through. The holes should be 1.5"x5.5", set 2" in from the side of the posts, and the closest side should be 4" from the end of the post. The long dimension should run with the length of the post.

The simplest way I found to cut these holes was by drilling holes as close together as I could, all the way around the rectangle, about 1/4" inside of its circumference. Then I used a sharp chisel to cut out all the wood inside the rectangle of holes. When these rough hole were cut all the way through the posts, I turned then on their sides and repeated the process, but I cut only half way through the beam this time.

If you're following my method, at this point you should have rough rectangles entering from three sides of the posts and meeting in the center.

Now, on the fourth side of the posts, cut a smaller rectangle. It should measure 1.5"x2.5", be 2" in from the post side, and the near edge should measure 5.5" from the same end of the post as the other rectangles. You can clean up the holes and cut them exactly to size with a coping saw.

To finish off the posts, trim them everywhere but where the rectangles were cut (see details). This helps considerably as far as weight goes.

The Rails:

There are two types of rails in this bed. The side rails—and the head/foot rails. All shaping should be done to both ends of each rail.

The side rails are simplest. First, trim 5" from the length of the 2x6 rail. (Note: This is for 8' boards, and a 6" separation between rope holes. If you are using shorter rails, or a different hole separation, you need to calculate a different trim.) Do this for both rails.

Next, cut a rectangle that measures 1.5"x2.5", is 2" from the end, and is 1.5" from the side. The short ends of the rectangle should be parallel to the long side of the 2x6. Use the same technique used on the posts to cut this hole. Do this for both rails, at both ends.

For the head/foot rails trim 3" from the length of the 2x6 rail (See note under side rails above.). Do this for both rails.

Cut a tongue in the end of the rail that is 2.5" wide, and 7.5" long. This should be centered on the board, so that there is a 3" drop in the width of the 2x6, 1.5" per side. Bevel the end of the tongue. In the center of the tongue, 2.5" from the end, cut a 1/2"x2.5" rectangle in the rail. The end of the slot that is towards the tongue needs to be angled, making the rectangle on one side 3" long. Do this for both rails, at both ends.

For all four rails you now need to drill holes for the ropes. Use a 6"

separation. Start measuring from the close edge of the cut out rectangle on the side rails, and the base of the tongue on the head/foot rails. The holes should be 2.75" in from the sides of the rails. The diameter of the holes should be about 2 to 2.5 times the diameter of the rope you are using.

The Wedges:

There are 4 wedges used in this bed. Make each out of 1/2" plywood for added strength. They are 4.5" long, 2.5" wide at one end, and 1" wide at the other. NOTE: only one side of the wedges taper.

The Mattress:

Normally, for a rope bed you use ropes for the mattress. You can do that with this design, but I really hate to, because ropes give you uneven support that is spongy, not to mention the really neat waffle patterns you get on your back. So what I did was to make a canvas sheet held to the frame by rope laces. This gives you consistent support, and is easier to get tighter that a standard rope mattress.

To do this I used a canvas sheet that was 8" smaller in length and width than the frame. I did a double hem, folding 1" of fabric over twice on each edge. This gave me a triple layer of canvas on each edge, and 6 layers in the corners. I then attached grommets to the canvas, at equal spacings alongtheedge to correspond with every hole in the frame. The grommets should have a slightly larger diameter than the rope, except the comer grommets, which should be the same size as the rail holes. Note: the larger the grommets, the easier it is to lace up.

Assembly:

Everything is made now, and all you have to do is put it together. First take one corner post, insert one of the side rails into the hole that runs completely through the post measuring 1.5"x5.5". Slide the rail through until it is flush with the other side of the post. The hole in the rail should now line up with the small hole in the post.

Next take a head/foot rail, and slide the tongue into the larger hole, through the hole in the siderail, and through the small hole in the post. Push this in until the flaring wood at the base of the tongue fits snugly up against the rail inside the post.

Lastly, insert the wedge into the slot in the tongue, and tap it with amalletto sear it firmly. Repeat this same process for the other three corner posts.

To lace the canvas mattress on, I would suggest first securing the four corners with short bungee cords stretched around the corner posts. This keeps the canvas up and fairly well centered.

Start lacing through a hole next to corner post. To secure the beginning of the rope, I use a wooden toggle in an eye splice that supports against the wooden frame. The lacing pattern I use is hard to describe, so just look at the lacing diagram with the plans, and follow the numbers and arrows starring with #1.

When lacing the first two sides, don't leave any slack, but don't worry, You can tighten it with a taught line on the inside of the rail. You can then remove the four bungee cords.

Miscellany:

At this point you can throw bedding, sheets, and pillows on—and you're ready to go. As far as bedding and stuff goes, I found it quite handy to sew small cloth ties to the edges of the sheets and such. That way I can tie them to the rope lacings, and they won't come off when I'm sleeping.

The lacing takes about 81' of rope the way I did it. I use an 85' section, so I have plenty of tie off at the end.

The disassembled bed stores quite compactly, and travels very easily. Just be sure you don't make one that is longer than your tent or transport space!

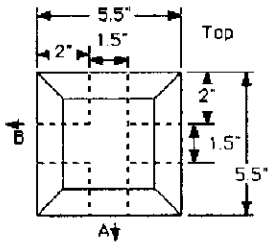
The only thing left is to decorate it. You can make nice embroidered quills. and other bedding, or even do some bas-relief carving on the frame. I'm also working on a canopy, and headboard design lo fit this finished bed, but that's another story.

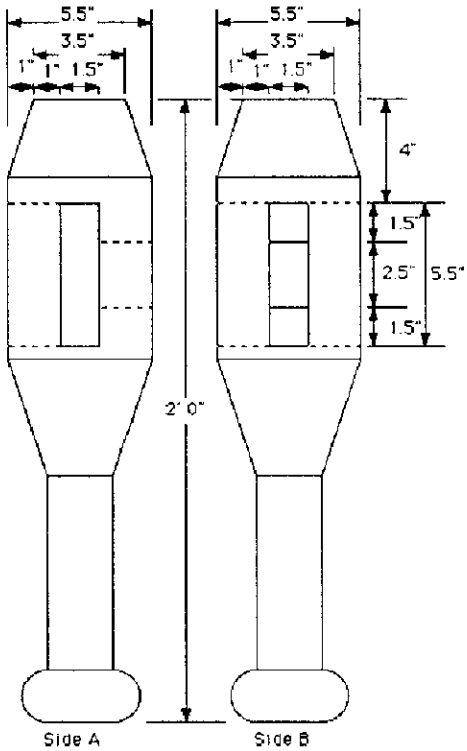
Materials:

1	6"x6"x8' post
4	2"x6"x8' boards
c. 110	Hemp rope
c. 37square ft.	Canvas
46	Grommets
1/3 square feet	plywood - 1/2"

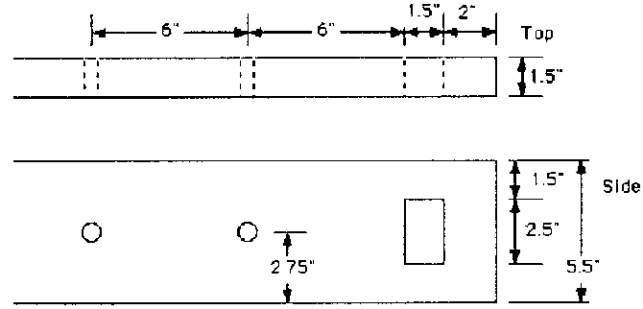
This materials list was for my bed, which ended up about 8'x7'. If you don't want something that big, you can use 2-2"x6"x8' and 2-2"x6"x6', or use 8' boards, and cut them dawn to whatever specific measurements you want.

Corner Posts

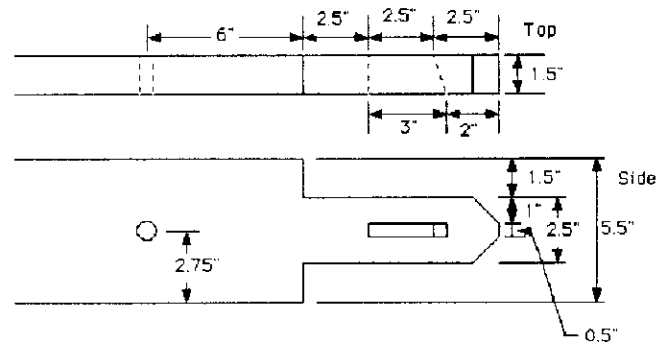




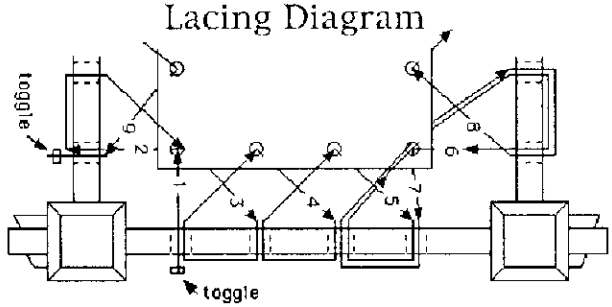
Side Rails



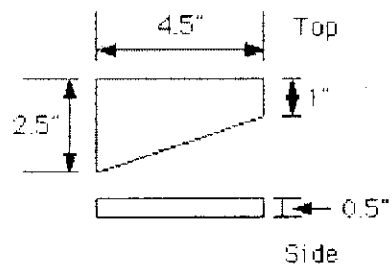
Head and Foot Rails



Lacing Diagram



Wedge



Plans for a Period Bed

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by

John Newton