

Reference Notes

A Brief Look at the Roles Dolls Play in Our Lives

Dolls are known in many cultures and are one of the oldest and most recognizable toys. Doll making goes back to as early as 2000 BC. There is archaeological evidence of “paddle” dolls in ancient Egyptian tombs.

Paddle dolls are a type of female figurines also known as tomb servants. Just as humans went from simply trying to survive to building sophisticated civilizations, the function of dolls has also changed to reflect the times.

Dolls have evolved from sacred objects to well-loved playthings to gorgeous collectibles. In the 21st century BC, the dolls were made from available materials from their country of origin. Some of the materials early dolls were made from include clay, stone, wood, bones, ivory, leather and wax. As time changed the materials which dolls were made from

changed as well.

Today, dolls are made from porcelain, glass, plastic, cloth and other materials. Dolls have been a part of our lives for centuries.

Fashion dolls, or dolls wearing interchangeable clothing in various styles, first became popular during the mid-19th century in Europe, Great Britain and America. These dolls were initially collected by women of the economic upper classes and the dolls’ fashions reflected the luxury and privilege of the target group.

The Great Exhibition of London in 1851 saw the first appearance of newborn child dolls with round heads and delicate bowed appendages. These dolls were made by the London based doll-creator Mme. Montanari.

The golden age of doll makers was between 1860 and 1890 when interest in dolls surged and new innovations were being made. Mechanical dolls were created that could

walk, move and sing. The most attractive and expensive were those of the French design, known as “Parisienne” dolls. These dolls came equipped with various outfits, which reflected the opulence and finery of fashion at that time.

Paper dolls first became popular in Europe, especially in England, Germany and France during the mid-nineteenth century. Paper dolls are removable dolls with coordinating garments imprinted on card stock and models were regularly based on popular individuals of the time.

Another popular mainstream doll was the Dream Baby, created in 1913 by the German firm Armand Marseille.

Dolls with an ethnic appearance—especially Asian and African—were also popular in addition to the more well-known superstar and celebrity dolls. The continent of Africa is home to hundreds of tribal communities, all of

which have a rich tradition of arts and crafts, some of which include dolls. Like the rest of the

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world, African dolls are playthings as well as learning tools. In some parts of Africa, dolls were also used as fertility symbols (in traditional female form). These beaded dolls represent centuries of history beginning well before European incursion.

According to GiGi's Dolls: "Toys can play a positive role in children's

lives. Through play, children learn to be social, to play well by themselves, and use their imagination in productive ways. There have always been dolls throughout the centuries that represent positive images for children." In contemporary times, dolls have changed to reflect both social and political trends. The Barbie doll is

considered one of the bestselling toys of all time, but the American Girl doll is also very popular. Both of these doll collections offer educational options, such as books and potential career ambitions to the young people who enjoy them. Play is an important and fundamental-

ly vital part of healthy adolescence. That happy connection to childhood is part of the reason that numerous adults still collect and preserve dolls. From the very young to the merely young at heart, dolls play an important role in how we connect to the larger world around us.

Dolls: Pathfinder

Whether you are a collector, an enthusiast or simply need a net toy, there are several sources that can supply you with dolls and information relating to dolls. Here are just a few options.

"Dolls." *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*.

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/children/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/dolls>

(accessed 10 January 2017).

"Dolls from the Index of American Design." *National Gallery of Art*.

[http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/slideshows/dolls-from-the-index-of-](http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/slideshows/dolls-from-the-index-of-american-design.html)

american-design.html

(accessed 10 January 2017).

Fass, Paula, Ed. *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society*. Gale Publishing, 2003.

"History of Dolls."

www.historyofdolls.com/ (accessed 10 January 2017).

"How to Make Hand-

made Dolls." <http://www.marthastewart.com/921431/how-make-handmade-dolls#207582>

(accessed 10 January 2017).

"The Positive Role That Dolls Play in Children's Lives." *GiGi's Dolls*.

<http://www.gigisdolls.com/blog/the-positive-role-that-dolls-play-in-childrens-lives/>

(accessed 10 January 2017).

Doll collections and popular lines:

American Girl- <http://www.americangirl.com/shop/dolls>

Barbie-www.barbie.com

Cabbage Patch Kids-

<https://www.cabbagepatchkids.com/>

Corolle- <http://us.corolle.com/p-about-corolle.html>

Madame Alexander- <http://madamealexander.com/>

For further research into dolls, please consider consulting:

About Home (Doll Collecting)- <http://collectdolls.about.com/>

Collector's Weekly- <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/dolls/overview>

Doll Reference- <http://dollreference.com/index.html>

Collections and Museums devoted to dolls and toys:

Doll Museums- <http://www.doll-museums.com/>

National Museum of Toys and Miniatures- <http://toyandminiaturemuseum.org/>

National Toy Hall of Fame - <http://www.toyhalloffame.org/>

Spencer Doll and Toy Museum- <http://www.spencerdollandtoyuseum.com/>

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