

Homestead Notes

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Not Just a Hobby for Mrs. Weicksel . . .

Antique Dolls Are An Investment

Farm
Feature
Writer

By
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Ten days before Christmas and little girls all over the world are dreaming about the new doll they hope Santa will put under their Christmas tree.

Mrs. Robert (Betty Lou) Weicksel, near Union in Colerain Township, has around 100 dolls but she, too is always looking for another one. No, she isn't looking for another one to add to her collection but for another one to sell. She is an antique doll dealer.

Mrs. Weicksel doesn't have the run of the mill dolls that parents buy for their little daughters because her dolls are too expensive. Hers are one of a kind. Like people, they were made with individual characteristics. Dolls like hers just aren't made anymore. They aren't cheap to buy but are an investment. The kind of dolls she handles mostly pass from dealer to dealer and occasionally one or two can be bought at a sale. Some of them increase in value \$100.00 a year.

Five or six of Mrs. Weicksel's dolls were pictured in "Collectors Encyclopedia of Dolls" by Coleman. She had eight pages of pictures of her dolls in "Dimples & Sawdust" by Marlowe Cooper, Colorado. Yes, Mrs. Weicksel knows dolls. She wrote eight installments of articles about the French Steiner dolls for the United Federation of Doll Clubs.

Mrs. Weicksel used to deal entirely in French dolls, then she got a few German dolls but now she has many kinds. Her oldest doll at present is an English doll that was made in 1830. She is a wired eyed wax doll that has her

original clothes on. She is made of wax over composition.

One doll in her present collection is supposed to have come from the Henry Ford museum. She is made of wax over papier-mache and has been rewaxed.

Probably the most sought after are the French dolls. Mrs. Weicksel has a couple Jumeau dolls. She did have a French Bru doll but sold her. Some unusual Bru dolls sell as high as \$3000.00 now. They have kid bodies, bisque hands and head and shoulder plates. Of the very fine French dolls, the ones with closed mouths are more valuable than those with teeth showing.

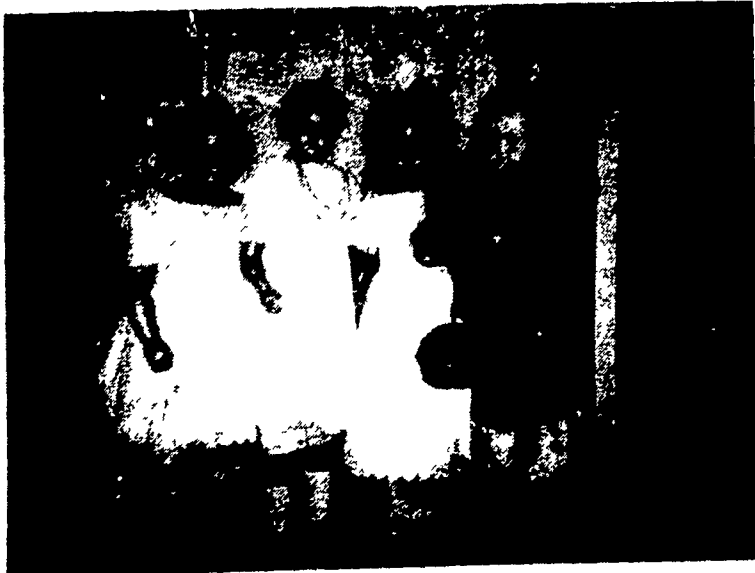
Some of her fine German dolls were made by A.M. Armand-Marseilles, Kestner and by Simon & Halbig. She has Steiner dolls and pre-Greiner dolls which were made in Germany or later in Philadelphia prior to 1858.

She has some English poured wax dolls that date back to 1870 to 1880. They have brown eyes, which is unusual in wax, and have hair which is inserted in the wax.

Some of the most fascinating dolls in Mrs. Weicksel's collection are a couple tiny hand made



Mrs. Robert Weicksel is holding her two favorite dolls. Left to right are her mother's 90-year-old doll and a French Jumeau doll.



Four of her 30 to 36 inch tall dolls with cloth bodies, otherwise all wax. One particularly has darkened through age.



Betty Lou Weicksel holding her oldest dolls. Left to right a pre-Greiner doll and one that is of wax over papier-mache. In

the case behind her at top is a confirmation doll. The others are a mixture of French, German, English and American dolls.

wooden jointed dolls which are encased in a brooch. Also a little larger, maybe four inches tall, are a couple little French all bisque dolls with glass eyes. Another interesting little item which would make a nice Christmas gift is a small German music box which plays a Christmas song while a Christmas tree revolves. Under the tree are a little teddy bear and a tiny package.

Mrs. Weicksel has all sizes of dolls. She has several dolls that are 30 to 36 inches tall. Their heads, legs and arms are all wax and they have cotton cloth bodies. Many of the antique dolls have complete wardrobes including handbags, gloves, a fan and a parasol which are in a trunk.

She has a Martha Chase doll which was made in the New England states. She is made of painted stockinette. She has one prized doll that belonged to Miss Angie Peoples of New Providence.

She has religious dolls which go back to 1830 to 1890. One of them "Christ The King" is in a frame. These dolls were given as confirmation gifts.

Mrs. Weicksel has character face doll reproductions. Also Shirley Temple and Patsyettes that date to about 1930. She has Madam Alexander dolls which are modern but very pretty which she considers a good investment.

She has some stuffed cloth cats which are dated 1892. A very unusual doll has a teddy bear face on one side and a doll face on the other side. She has boy dolls as well as girl dolls.

Strange to say, but Betty Lou says "I never played with dolls as

a girl. I played with teddy bears. I was a tomboy." The doll that started the whole thing was an old doll that belonged to her mother, her mother's older sister's originally. She had a china head and black hair with a kid body. She is 80 or 90 years old and has her original linen dress on. The first one she bought was a French Jumeau, a very pretty doll and one of the great favorites.

Betty Lou started collecting dolls in 1964 for her own hobby but soon found they were too expensive. It was then that Mrs. Eunice Althouse in Oxford, a dealer in dolls, encouraged her to try to sell them. She put an ad in Spinning Wheel magazine and joined the United Federation of Doll Clubs. They have members all over the United States and Canada.

In 1966 she became a dealer. She shows and has a sales booth at the regional and national shows of the Federation. She enjoys traveling to doll shows far and near. She sold as many as 500 or 600 dolls a year when she was



These little four inch all-bisque French dolls and the little German music box would make a lovely Christmas gift.

able to get the dolls, but doesn't have as many as she used to.

Women have come as far as from Arizona to see and buy dolls from her. She has shipped to far away places like England, Boston, New York, New Orleans, Louisville, Colorado, North Carolina, Hartford, Connecticut, Vermont and of course Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Weicksel had a carpenter build two cabinets with sliding glass doors in her living room for her dolls. She lined them with antique lace curtains. She collects old doll clothes and old costumes from which to make clothing for her dolls.

Betty Lou is an expert seamstress. As a girl she took one year of sewing in high school. Then in later years took several Extension sewing courses. She makes all her own clothes. She made two coats this fall, and made her husband a suit last spring. She has made neckties, children's clothes, slip covers and draperies. She also does sewing for other people occasionally.

The Weicksels have lived on their three acre farm for 28 years. Bob has 25 to 30 Brown Swiss and Holstein cows which he has on dry lot. He buys all his feed. He puts manure on neighbors' fields for the straw. He has always had a dairy. Betty Lou says "I raise the heifers for Bob. I enjoy that."

Robert was also in the feed business with his father-in-law several years. He and Betty Lou used to raise 150 to 200 turkeys a year and also raised broilers.

Mr. and Mrs. Weicksel are

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