

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE COLLECTION



A celluloid kewpie doll with its eyebrows, eyes and smile painted on. It is wearing a tulle and ribbon skirt/dress. The doll's joints are held together with elastic. Its hands and feet are not naturalistic and its legs are moulded together.

Size: L-570mm W-490mm

Won in 1920 at a raffle for the Mechanics Hall, Orbost, it was donated by Fay Williams Moss.

Fun Fact

In the play Summer of the Seventeenth Doll two itinerant workers present Kewpie dolls to their girlfriends every year for 17 years.

Do You Remember Kewpie Dolls?

Kewpie dolls have been a popular toy since they were first introduced more than 100 years ago. What started as just a small cartoon quickly became one of the first mass-produced toys in the world.

The **Kewpie doll** first made its appearance in the "Ladies Home Journal" in 1909. The illustrations were drawn by Rose O'Neill, an American artist, illustrator and writer.

The Kewpie Pages became increasingly popular, and O'Neill began producing Kewpie Kutouts, which were paper dolls printed on front and back that were accompanied with stories.

With increasing popularity and demand, figurines and models of the Kewpie were made from this illustration in 1913. Joseph Kallus was the sculptor who put together the first three-dimensional depiction of the doll.

The name "Kewpie" is derived from the name "Cupid." This name was chosen because of the doll's resemblance to the Roman God of Love. The Kewpie doll has been continuously manufactured since its introduction in 1913.

Kewpie dolls were originally made exclusively out of bisque but composition, celluloid, plastic and vinyl versions quickly followed.

They were manufactured in the U.S.A., Germany, Japan and even in Australia.

Dolls are by far the oldest toys in the world.

Below is a Roman rag doll, made in Egypt (1st-5th century A.D.) It is a linen doll filled with rags and papyrus. Coloured wool had been applied to parts of the face and body and a small glass bead attached to the left side of the head suggests that it was probably intended to be a female doll.



Dolls have traditionally been used in magic and religious rituals throughout the world. The earliest documented dolls go back to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Rome.

Dolls being used as toys were documented in Greece around 100 A.D.

The earliest dolls were made from available materials such as clay, stone, wood, bone, ivory, leather, wax, etc.

Wooden paddle dolls

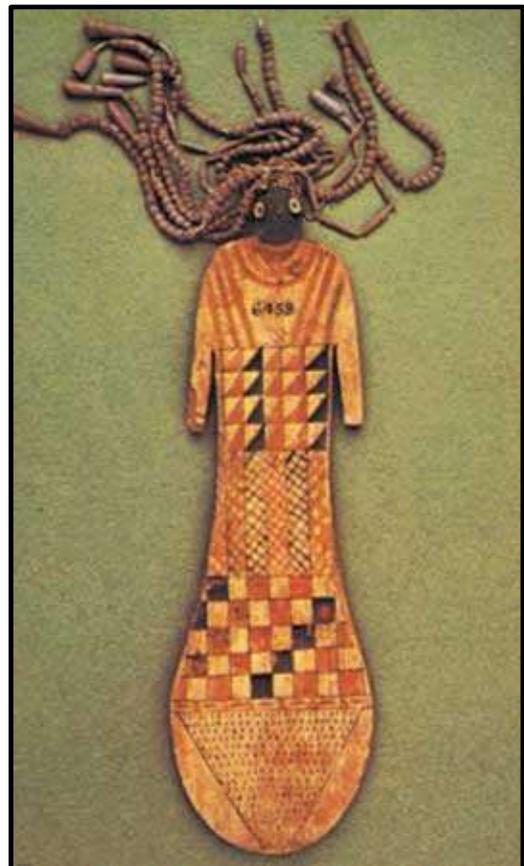
have been found in Egyptian tombs dating to as early as 21st century BC, with everyone from Pharaohs to Queens buried with more than one of these rudimentary human likenesses

People in ancient Egypt were frequently buried with paddle dolls, which were clay or wood statuettes. This burial practice was common during the Eleventh Dynasty, which lasted between the years of 2040 and 1991 B.C. As their name indicates, the dolls had flat bodies shaped similarly to canoe paddles. Archaeologists believe the function of the dolls was to serve as symbols of feminine sexuality and fertility.

Fun Facts

- **One Barbie is sold somewhere in the world every three seconds.**
- **Barbie's full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts.**
- **Barbie has three sisters Skipper, Stacie and Chelsea.**

The oldest Greek dolls (**right**) were made of clay and had movable limbs and removable clothing date back to at least 200 BC. In ancient Greece and Rome dolls were actually children's toys, with many found in Roman children's tombs. This evidence shows that, much like today, the dolls (which had removable clothing) would be dressed by their young owners in the latest fashions.



China dolls are dolls made of glazed bisque which gives them a shiny appearance. China dolls generally have moulded hair and painted eyes (although not always).

China dolls were produced from approximately the late 1830s through the early 1900s (until about 1930) with the greatest number produced from the 1850s through the 1890s. Many millions of china dolls were produced, mostly in Germany, during this period.

Initially, china-headed dolls were manufactured with the head only and the purchaser either bought a body separately or created the body at home - the clothes were also largely made at home.

In the late 19th century, china-headed dolls started coming complete with cloth bodies that had extremities - arms and lower legs - made from china as well. The legs usually had moulded boots or shoes, but they still came naked and the vast majority of the clothes these dolls wore were homemade.



A celluloid baby doll, with moulded hair, painted blue eyes and red lips. She is wearing an embroidered calico dress. Her joints are held together by string.

L-660mm W-500mm

It was donated by Fay Williams Moss

Fun Fact

Matryoshka dolls are traditional Russian dolls, consisting of a set of hollow wooden figures that open up and nest inside each other. They typically portray traditional peasants and the first set was carved and painted in 1890. The greatest number of dolls in one Matryoshka set is 72.



China-headed doll with soft body. It has a low brow, moulded black hair and is wearing a black dress with a white collar and cuffs. Over the dress is a white pleated, embroidered pinafore. It has a Broderie Anglaise petticoat.

L-330mm W-300mm

It was probably made in the late 19th –early 20th century.

This doll was donated by Mary and Esme Reynolds, daughters of Edward F. Reynolds a tinsmith who had a hardware shop in Orbost until 1905. He was married to Elizabeth Davidson.

1920's Celluloid Dolls

Celluloid is one of the first synthetic plastics ever created. It is a plastic created from wood products that includes cellulose nitrate and camphor. First created in 1863, it was a popular material to make items as diverse as jewellery and dolls from the 1870s through the 1930s.

When celluloid was invented and first came to prominence, dolls were nearly all breakable and fragile--bisque and china dolls were easily shattered and papier mache and wax easily ruined. So, it wasn't a surprise that doll companies started experimenting with celluloid to mould dolls rather early on. By the early 1900s, celluloid dolls were plentiful, since celluloid was easily moulded and generally inexpensive.

Celluloid dolls were produced as late as the 1950s, but the vast majority were produced from 1900 through the 1940s.

Accessories

It was inevitable that once children began to play with dolls and to create their own accessories for these toys, opportunistic manufacturers would begin to market products to cater for them.

In our collection we have several dolls' tea-sets, a cane pram and a child's sewing machine which was possibly used to make clothes for a favourite doll.



This is a cane pram for a doll. It has a wire handle which was probably once covered with cane. There are 4 steel wheels with solid rubber tyres. The cane has been woven around wire attached to the base.

Who owned this pram?



A thirteen piece doll's tea set which consists of a tea pot, sugar bowl, milk jug with four cups & saucers. General colours are yellow and blue with red, black and green flowers.

Fun Fact

The making of corn dollies goes back many thousands of years. It was a pagan custom evolving from the belief in the Corn Spirit who was supposed to live or be reborn in the doll. The doll was kept until spring to ensure a good harvest.

A fourteen piece doll's tea-set. There are five cups (one odd), six saucers, a cream jug, a sugar basin and a teapot. All are a very light orange/bone colour + white with a running rabbit. The teapot has two young men in a car hunting a rabbit. The odd cup has flowers in red and yellow.

The set was made in Japan.



Both tea-sets were donated by Fay Moss (nee Williams), a local shopkeeper. With her sister, Norma, she operated a women's clothing business at 107 Nicholson Street, Orbst.



Two dolls - one male and one female - made of maize husks both painted colourfully and in a plastic box. There is a certificate from the country Women's Association for First prize in Basket Weave Handcrafts and Home Industries.

These dolls were made by Helena Francis Warren (nee McKeown) who lived in Newmerella. She was a fine amateur photographer.



A small hand-operated sewing machine. The body of the sewing machine is painted black. The top arm appears to have been painted in a white/cream colour. The machine could have been used to make small articles. There is no bobbin.

This is an example of a toy given as a "teaching" toy. It was used by its owner to practise sewing before graduating to an adult type machine. This machine was given to Ada Healey as a child. Ada Healey was for 20 years a volunteer and organizer at the Orbst Slab Hut. She was known for her craft skills and was a particularly fine knitter.

Fun Fact

Twelve giant kewpie dolls twirled their way around Stadium Australia during the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000