



MAKING MEMORIES

Sixty years of toys and childhood treasures - 1930 to 1990

Special Contributor: Sandra Ketchum

A fascinating public exhibition in this area promises to bring back childhood memories for all of us who loved toys when we were children.

The Spencerville Mill Foundation is asking local residents and other interested people to open up their attics and long-forgotten toy boxes, hoping they are willing to share their vintage toys in a special display show that will take place at the historic Spencerville Mill from July 3rd to July 15th.

In part, this exhibit is a heartfelt tribute to the past. Before batteries, microchips and plastic creations of all kinds, toys were painstakingly handcrafted, simple and durable. They were also often individually made from materials at hand with colours and embellishments that suited a particular child

Visitors are invited to share the personal owner memories of much loved toys, trikes, board games, dolls and other amusements as you browse through these treasures from your childhood. Many will be homemade but some may capture the best of more commercial times when manufacturers produced intricate toys such as transformers that had their own captivating magic. And who could forget the global appeal of the world's most famous fashion doll "Barbie" when she first appeared in 1959? A bit later in

1970, one of the biggest blockbuster movies of all time exerted an even stronger force when characters from Star Wars flooded the market place much as toy soldiers, porcelain-faced dolls, spinning tops and teddy bears had appealed to previous generations.

A less glamorous doll appeared in 1983. By the end of the year almost 3 million of the Cabbage Patch toys had been "adopted" but the insatiable demand had not been met. The Cabbage Patch Kids are on record as the most successful new doll introduction in the history of the toy industry.

From the perspective of today, we can truly say that "toys were us" as companions and comforters. Most of us have never forgotten our favourites and, as this exhibit will show, many of us never let them go.

This "yesteryear" display will delight families and individuals of all age groups and bring back long-forgotten memories of the pleasure of play that now vintage toys and games contributed to our childhood.

The only sad note is that some of the treasures that we discarded or sold at garage sales now have considerable value. That hockey card or baseball signed by a famous player, that intricate hand-crafted train set, that now sought-after teddy bear or doll often appear on the Antiques Road Show TV series worth thousands of dollars – astonishing owners and viewers alike. Nevertheless, the memories are still worth treasuring.

Organizers of this event would be pleased to include your childhood gems in our exhibit and promise to treat them with care. Loaned items will be displayed for viewing only for the duration of the exhibit. **LH**

Editor's Note: Contributors' registration and drop off at the Spencerville Mill & Museum, 11 Water Street, will take place on Friday, June 22 from 2:00 to 5:00 pm and again on Saturday, June 23 from 10:00 am to noon. Toys can be picked up on July 16 and 17 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. See the Registration Form on the Mill website at: www.spencervillemill.ca/toys-of-yesteryear-exhibit. For more information call Sheila at 613 658-5290 Email: sfawcett@jcis.ca In keeping with retrospective entertainment, admission to the exhibit is only \$2. Children under 16 are free.