

The Velda Chapman Doll Museum (Adult Tour)

Velda attended school in Strongsville through 8th grade and finished school in Brunswick. From early childhood she was interested in dolls. Her love and respect for her dolls continued into adult life, and she continued to collect dolls until she had more than three hundred and fifty from all parts of the world. Velda's brother was fourteen years older and quite tolerant of a kid sister's pranks, except when every chair was filled with dolls and there was no place for adults to sit.

Velda and her husband, Howard, helped to organize the Strongsville Historical Society in 1963 and to develop our village by having old buildings moved here and restored. Howard and Velda are no longer living, but their dream of a village where people can come and learn about life in the early days of Strongsville lives on.

Years ago parents encouraged their daughters to play with dolls so they could practice being good mothers. Girls also tested their sewing skill by making dolls' clothes. Although girls were the ones who usually played with the dolls, many of the doll manufacturers were men.

The First Room You Enter

In this room you will see many types of dolls:

Barbies, trolls, storybook, Amish, Cabbage Patch, Gone with the Wind

Doll heads made from dried apples that resembled very old, wrinkled people
(*Point out the apple dolls in green-checkered clothing.*)

Cornhusk dolls which were made from dried corn husks which were bent and tied to make a doll. (*Point out the cornhusks dolls*)

Rag dolls from cloth or deerskin. (*Point out some of the rag dolls.*)

There are Nancy Jane Dolls on the East Wall.

(*Let them browse in this room at their leisure.*)

The Middle Room

[*Go counter-clockwise around the room.*]

Most of the 350 dolls Velda collected were foreign dolls. It was Velda's desire that future generations might be able to see the authentic native costumes worn by these dolls. The dolls in this room represent many different countries. Today,

native dress is fast being replaced by Western dress all over the world. Even in our country people used to dress differently than they do now.

In this room most of the dolls in the cabinets on the south wall are from Europe.

The dolls in the cabinets on the east wall are from Japan and China.

The dolls on the first cabinet on the north wall are from the Middle East, India, and South America.

The cabinet on the other side of the doorway are Native Americans and cowboys.

And the cabinet on the west wall has Irish and reproduction Victorian dolls.

(Let them browse at their leisure in this room.)

The Last Room

[Go counter-clockwise around the room].

There are Madame Alexander dolls in the cabinet on the south wall. These dolls were not made for children to play with, but for adults to collect and display. Many of them are historical figures.

In the cabinet on the east wall there are Effanbee dolls. Another brand of collectible dolls. On the same wall on the other side of the window are Vogue dolls.

On the North wall are toy lead soldiers that. These soldiers represent the time between World War I and World War II, which would be over 100 years ago.

On the west wall are our Antique dolls. Toy makers created a variety of dolls in the 1800s. Most looked like adults. Dolls that resembled babies were not made until the late 1800s. Some dolls had wooden bodies. Many had joints at the elbows, hips, and knees so that children could bend their arms and legs. Doll heads were made of wood, papier-mache, wax, bisque, or china. Dolls with wax heads were the most expensive. They had glass eyes and natural-looking hair. Some even had real human hair. Sometimes a doll was so beautifully dressed that its owner was only allowed to play with it on Sunday and then only with clean hands. Some dolls were not to be touched by children at all.

The last cabinet has some more Madame Alexander dolls.

(Let them browse at their leisure.)