

Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library

Santa Barbara, California

With the final Gollyfest, and the last opportunity to actually see a variety of gollies and golly items, fast approaching, I've decided to include articles about any "golly places" that I know. I am starting with Susan Quinlan's Museum in Santa Barbara, California. I met Susan and her husband Terry at the first Gollyfest held in San Francisco in 2001, and our paths crossed many times as they have attended Gollyfests in San Diego, Toronto, Oregon and various Bear Shows in the US and UK. At the last Gollyfest in San Francisco, Susan will share the history of the Museum from "dream to reality." She has kindly written this article to share with all our members. Looking through her website is like a listing of IGCC members with the work of artists Celia Baham; Patricia Blair, Kay DiMattei; Adriana Esqueda, Melissa Hoover; Sheila Mallin; Geri Olsen; Denis Shaw, Romy Roeder & Lee Feikert on display.



I began collecting dolls in 1979, and soon began selling at weekend doll shows. It was at one of these shows that I won a drawing and received four Little Golden Books. Little did I know how this prize would change my life. The books were four doll stories, two of which were *So Big* and *Baby Dear* illustrated by Eloise Wilkin. As it got later and attendance dropped off, I had time to look at the books more closely. At first I was disappointed with the prize, but when I realized that they were about dolls, I became more interested. I began to think about doll books in general and wondered how many there were. I knew that there were several other books about Raggedy Ann, Barbie, Hitty, and Miss Hickory. But were there many others? Being a librarian, I thought that a search for doll-related books would be an interesting project to undertake and would support my doll collecting interests, so I began to compile a list of all the doll books I could identify. Since I didn't think there would be that

many, I decided to include dollhouse and teddy bear books in the search as well. I made a conscious choice to exclude paper dolls from my doll collection. I do collect a few books about paper dolls, but I do not collect old paper dolls or the recent reprints or new paper dolls. For awhile I tried to purchase all of the paper doll books by Tom Tierney, but have now fallen behind on his work.

I began my list of books by using the various bibliographies, such as the Library of Congress Catalog, the British Museum Catalog, (in those days these were in printed form), and other sources listing children's books by subject. Imagine my surprise when my list grew to several hundred titles! Still this seemed manageable, and I began to buy the books on my list as I found them. My husband Terry and I began to visit book fairs and second hand bookshops, and I found books that had not turned up in my earlier searches. It finally dawned on me that the early cataloging of children's books was minimal. They were not considered important and usually were given rather generic designations such as "children's stories" rather than identify the actual subject of the book.



Then in 1981 *Dolls: a Complete Bibliography* by Nancy Lutz was published, and I was so excited because now I would know how many books had been published. This publication included teddy bear and dollhouse books as well as doll books. I got the book and turned immediately to the last entry. There were 779 entries, so I assumed that was the number of books I should be looking for. Then I decided to find out exactly how many Raggedy Ann books there were, and turned to Johnny Gruelle. No entries were listed! Then I tried to find some Barbie books I owned, and they weren't listed either. I realized that I had much further to go in my search than I had imagined, and that there was a lot of work ahead of me.



When we traveled for my husband's business, I would spend time in various libraries checking out their card catalogs. The Toronto Public Library contains the Osborne Collection and the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum library has a large collection of doll books. Perhaps the most fun of all was doing research at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. and the British Library in London. I continued to haunt the bookstores and the book fairs.



Then came the advent of online catalogs, so now I could check the Library of Congress (and later WorldCat) and the British Library from home. I also checked online catalogs for the large libraries in the country, such as, the New York Public Library and the Chicago Public Library, as well as specialized collections such as the DeGrummond Collection and the Bethnell Green Museum of Childhood. My list

grew and grew. I always carried my list with me because I could no longer remember which books I owned and didn't want to be buying duplicates. As my list reached several hundred pages, I reduced the font size and found a way to fit four pages of books on one page of paper, and then copied it front to back. My list was over 200 pages, and growing, and heavy to carry around.



Today my list is still growing, but it is now on my computer. Many of the titles I add are new books, for even though the number of doll collectors seems to be dwindling, the books being written for them are not. I still find older books that I do not have on my list that appear in various venues. And then there are many books for which I had incorrect entries, and it is such a joy to finally find the book and get the correct information about it. Today I have over 10,000 books in the library, and a list of books I am still searching for that is at least 75 pages long.

Along the way I developed additional interests and now collect selective books on toys, puppets (and ventriloquism), toy theatre, and costume. These are in addition to the 10,000 books.

I don't remember when I became interested in Golliwogs, but I suspect that it was during an early trip to England. I was looking for dolls and came across some gollies in the shops. I wish now that I had purchased many more than I did, for there were some wonderful handmade examples that I passed up. I also became aware that a number of doll books were about golliwogs or had them as characters.

Space was becoming an issue as both my doll and book collections continued to grow. I can't remember exactly when we decided that we needed to open a museum, but it was in the early 1990s. We were living in San Francisco at the time and began to look there for a suitable building, but we had no luck. One of the main problems in San Francisco was finding a place that had adequate parking. We even extended our search to surrounding areas, but still didn't find anything that seemed just right.

The San Francisco Bay area would have been a wonderful place for the museum, because there is such a large population in the immediate area. But I had grown up in Santa Barbara as a child and had always hoped to return there some day. So we went there and looked for a location. We found a place that seemed perfect and had it remodeled. The building is 10,000 square feet, and I was very nervous. How was I ever going to fill up all this space? It took over a year to do the renovations and then another six years to set up the exhibits. We did the renovations while I was still working in San Francisco. Then I took early retirement in 1998, and we moved to Santa Barbara and began to work on the exhibits. I was amazed at how quickly the space was filled. The museum has three exhibit galleries, a library, and tearoom and gift shop. We designed special display cases that have no obstructions such as pillars, frames, or dividers so that the exhibits could flow without interruption. I divided my collection into three major categories: California-related, book-related, and everything else. The exhibits were finished in 2005 and we had a grand opening party in mid-December.

I really should not say the exhibits were finished, as I keep adding more dolls and bears each year. I still have about half of my collection in storage. In addition to the eighty built-in display cases we currently have, we plan to add thirty-eight stand-alone cases in the future so that I can do changing exhibits.

As we set up the exhibits, I displayed a number of my golliwogs that fit into the categories I was doing. I especially wanted to see what kind of reaction there would be to gollies from those going through the museum. So far it has all been positive, and in some cases I have been able to educate my visitors about the gollies. I intend to do a golliwog exhibit when we have changing exhibit cases in place.

Today the library is open by appointment only, and there is a daily use fee to use the library. I usually recommend that the serious researcher exhaust their local public libraries as a first step, and get as many books as they can on inter-library loan.

Illustrations: Museum entrance; Golliwogg's Circus by Patricia Blair; Golliwogg's Polar Adventure by Lee Feikert; Lolli Gilli by Denis Shaw; Three Blind Mice by Judy Stutzman; Golliwogg's Air-Ship by Romy Roeder

