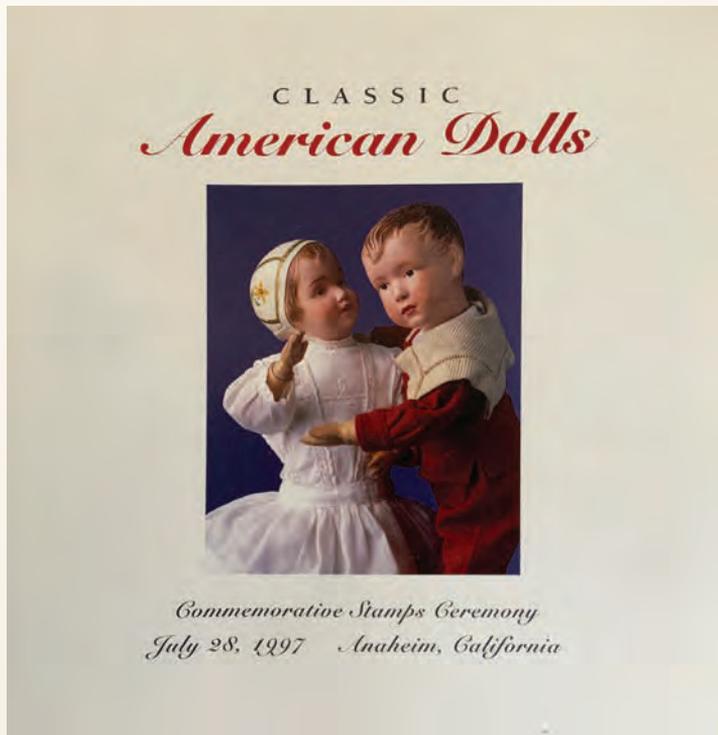


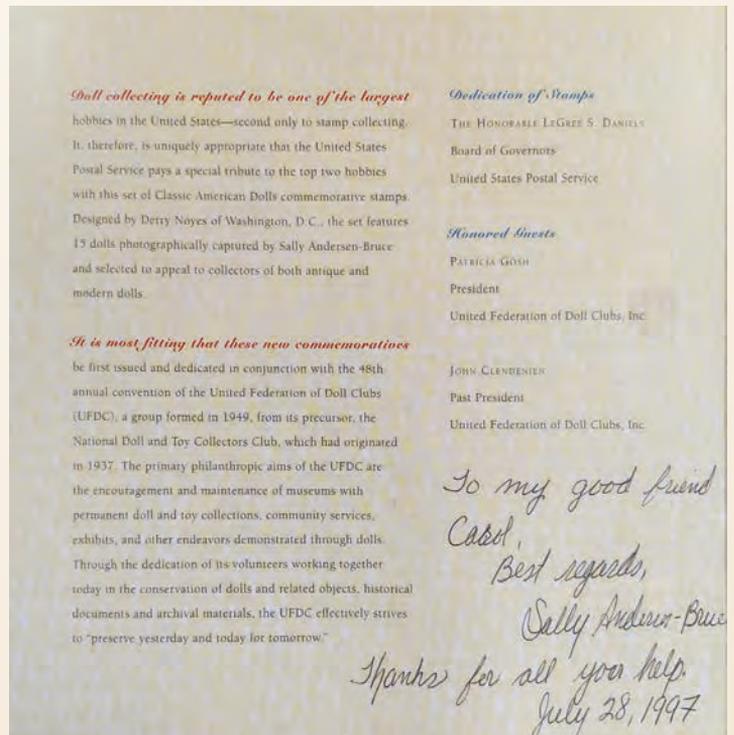
Carol Corson

Tribute to a Classic American Doll Collector

By Marcia Leizure



Stamp catalog cover and dedication to Carol



It's been 25 years since the United States Postal Service issued those Classic American Doll Stamps, but even today, oftentimes while picking up a collection of dolls for auction, we will still find the blocks of unused doll stamps in a trunk or drawer.

The stamp issue was significant for several reasons: It was the first time that photographs were used in any stamp series, and the typical four-stamp block was expanded to represent the chosen fifteen American dolls. It had taken nearly ten years to settle on which dolls were to be included in that stamp issue: With the guidance of doll experts and selected collectors around the country, the choices were made from two centuries of American dolls.

In Carol Corson's archives, we discovered the original invitation to the Commemorative Stamps Ceremony, on July 28, 1997. Featured on the cover, is the Schoenhut couple Dancing! The inscription, by the photographer who

took the photos states, "To my good friend Carol, Best regards, Sally Anderson-Bruce. Thanks for all your help." This is just one example of how Carol helped so many doll enthusiasts by sharing her knowledge, as well as through articles in *Antique Doll Collector*, judging dolls at the competitive exhibits, her popular UFDC programs - on Kamkins, Izannah Walkers, or Lancaster Rags, and of course, in her bible "The Schoenhut Dolls, a Collectors' Encyclopedia." Of the fifteen stamp dolls, Carol had ten in her collection. The question remains, which of the dolls shown in the "Classic Dolls" belonged to Carol? We have confirmed that she owned the Greiner, the Dewees Cochran, and maybe the Chase...and surely, she must have owned the Schoenhuts?

In May of this year, Carol's nephew called Withington's and said that their aunt had passed a few weeks ago and they were cleaning out her assisted living apartment. They



Schoenhut girl with carved bonnet & Snickelfritz



Izannah Walker's



Kammer & Reinhardt 101, 114 belong to Schoenhut family as prototypes for Schoenhut dolls

As with so many lifelong collectors of not only dolls but other things, the culling process had already occurred. Selling the big Victorian in Philly, and moving to smaller quarters life would be simpler, she would be closer to family and the Plymouth Meeting Quaker school that had played such a significant role in Carol's life. She attended the school (class of 1951), was a teacher for 20 years, was on the board of directors, and was an active fundraiser throughout her life. And now, with her passing, she has designated the proceeds from the sale of her doll and toy collection to go to her beloved school. True to her generous ways, she continues to give back to those who made a difference in her long life. Carol was celebrated in the Plymouth Meeting Quaker School newsletter – with praise and appreciation for her contributions over the years.

Carol was well-known as a mentor to other kindred spirits. Becoming new members of the Schoenhut Collectors club, we received the current issue of the quarterly club news, more than half of the publication bore testimonials to how Carol had generously shared her knowledge and expertise as a passionate collector of not only Schoenhut Dolls but toys as well. I was told that Carol spent ten years researching and gathering



Dewees Cochran and Schoenhut

information for her “bible” “Schoenhut Dolls, A Collectors’ Encyclopedia” and it continues to be the “go-to” guide for those dolls. finally, Carol published a scholarly book on the doll manufacturing side of the company. There have been several books on the Circus toys, Teddy Roosevelt series, and other wooden toys. Though most of the best dolls were on display throughout the house, including dozens of the finest Schoenhut Characters of the Graziana series, the toys and animals were stowed away in closets - with the limited space, she could not display everything. We are discovering treasures every day!

Carol’s teaching skills served her passions well as a presenter of so many popular programs over the years at the UFDC Conventions, the meeting of the Schoenhut

collector’s Club and DCA members fondly remember the gathering of the Izannah Walker Clan (35 in attendance), at the annual meeting of the Doll Collectors of America a few years ago. Carol brought her Izannah “Boy” along with his four sisters from her collection! Though known for her Schoenhuts, her interests included many other types of dolls, especially American Cloth Dolls (remember those Doll Stamps?) She had many Chase (bobbed hair girl and the 9” smallest example), she had Lancaster Rags (finally solving the mystery of who made the dolls), she had over a dozen Kamkins (with babies, and wardrobes), she had Philadelphia baby with a trunk, Dewees Cochran,, Columbian, Greiner Papier Mache, a cabinet full of Grodner Tal wooden of the smallest size. The corner cabinet in the



French doll delagation

living room was full of tiny bisques; Barefoot, jointed, Max & Moritz, Mignonettes of every description.

The French Delegation is also well-represented in Carol's collection... with a few shelves in the glass case with Jumeau Tristes, Portraits, wood-body fashion, Steiners, Schmitt, Characters of every size and name. Carol was exposed to quality and value in a broad range of dolls but she had a special place in her heart for the cloth and wood.

In the articles written fifteen years ago about these curious black cloth dolls from Pennsylvania ... They would eventually be known as "Lancaster Rags". Carol, along with Nancy Smith, was able to fit together the bits and pieces of information about these rare dolls. One follow-up article in

ADC focused on the clothing of these dolls and they looked so dapper in their wool suits and leather shoes... disputing the notion that Black rag dolls were always dressed in "rags".

As we continue our journey through the history of doll collections in the 60 years of Withington Dolls, changes in fashion trends are reflected in the collecting tastes of auction goers. As old collections are sold, German dolly-faced dolls are more plentiful and therefore less desirable - two or three today, sell for the price of one ten years ago. However, if you collected American Cloth Dolls in the 1950s... especially Izannah Walkers, you have the darlings of the doll world today. The lowly Rag Dolls, cheaply made for the common man, are now among the most desirable of the "CLASSIC



American cloth dolls

American Dolls." Did I mention that Carol has five in her collection and her pride and joy was a rare Izannah Walker Boy in a pleated red plaid dress!

Many years ago, the Corson family homestead, called Journey's End, was given to the Plymouth Meeting Quaker School for land for more classrooms. In the Corson spirit,

Carol, in her will, wanted the doll and toy collections to be sold and the proceeds given to the school, to support exceptional programs for future generations. Carol's mother always said, "It doesn't matter where you come from, it matters what you do with your life." Carol Corson has done a lot!