



In 1959, the fifth and sixth grade pupils at Admire grade school, under the direction of their teacher, Elma Rust, made up some corncob and cornhusk dolls as a social studies project. **Heritage of Kansas** asked for the dolls for purposes of permanent display, and the students very generously donated them. Four of the corncob dolls are shown in the photograph above; the cornhusk dolls on page 39 seem to be telling the reader, "So long, until the next time."

Facts and Fiction

There was a time—a time not so long ago, either—when there were no drugstores on every other corner, no variety stores in every small town, no supermarkets in every shopping area. That was a time when bread was not “store-boughten,” but was made at home; when cakes were baked “from scratch”; when plastic playthings were undreamed of, and toys, too, were made at home “from scratch.”

A couple of generations or more ago, television and neighborhood movies were not the answer to filling idle childhood hours. Children had to devise their own entertainment. A little boy on a farm could explore the haymow or nearby woods (after the era of enemy Indians had passed). He could climb a rope hung from the barn rafters; he could swing on a grapevine or a rope swing. He could fish, or hunt rabbits or snakes or imaginary Indians. He could climb trees, or sit and whittle, or throw rocks at birds.

A lone little girl could play make-believe with a make-believe friend. She could bake mudpies, make bracelets by intertwining plant stems, swing on the gate. She could learn how to sew quilt pieces, and could help her mother bake cookies. She could pull the wings off flies stuck on the flypaper, and spit in the rain barrel to watch the rings formed in the water.

Of course a boy or girl with sisters and brothers had someone to play with—or fight with. They could run races and play tag and compete to see who could jump farthest, climb highest, yell loudest, or be bossiest.

When school time rolled around, the whole gang could play crack-the-whip, dare-base, poison, drop-the-handkerchief, black man, pom-pom pullaway, ring-around-the-rosy, fox-and-geese.

But kids don't change much from generation to generation. Games are swell for a while . . . yet, a person has to have toys to play with, too.

Heritage of Kansas in this issue features many of the toys that youngsters used to make for themselves—the noisemakers, the weapons, the dolls. Toy-making is a fast fading craft. Mothers hardly sew enough any more to furnish thread spools for an enterprising craftsman. Orange crates for scooters and doll houses seem to be practically non-existent. Ninety-eight-cent cap pistols have nearly replaced the old rubber guns, and bows and arrows-with-harmless-suction-cup-tips have all but routed the old pig-hickory bow and dangerously sharpened arrow. Ten-cent dollies are much easier to come by than are corncocks in most homes today, and real imitation stoves, refrigerators, and sewing machines are available in nearly every store.

Because the homemade toy is on its way "out," the *Heritage* thought it might be of some interest to the adults (shades of "the good old days," you know) and to the younger generations to print a record of many of the toys popular in Kansas, and the methods of making them.

Toy-making is part of the folklore of our people. No one used to learn how to make a kite by reading a book: he learned from his father or his big brother. No one ever read instructions on how to make a paper airplane: he learned by watching his school-mates and experimenting. Some of the toys have been traditional for many generations, some for less than a hundred years. Many are no longer popular; many are still current.

For some time now, the *Heritage of Kansas* has been collecting information about toys made by Kansans. The job of organizing this toy material was assigned to a freshman honorary scholarship student of the fall semester of 1961—Carol Huff, of Dellvale, Kansas. Miss Huff, whose by-line appears on "Homemade Toys from Kansas," came to Kansas State Teachers College from Norton Community High School, Norton, Kansas.

Her scholarship work required that she sort out the toy information in the *Heritage of Kansas* files, rewrite the directions for making the toys in the clearest possible way, compose introductions and explanations for the various sections, and see that suitable photographs were taken. She even contributed some information about toys she'd made herself, and drew some illustrations for them. Carol Huff, as a matter of fact, is probably the only seventeen-year-old college freshman now in existence who is an authority on Kansas toys made at home!