

Most people have fond memories of their childhood. Even if a child is from a home that experienced issues or problems they still talk about a special toy, outing or camp experience that they remember as an adult. Most of the memories seem to center around either summer camp or a special holiday celebration. I think this is why as adults so many of us are willing to donate items for holidays or make contributions to camps. We want other children to have similar experiences to what we had.

My father came from a very large family that was quite poor. His parents came to the United States as children. My grandmother was six years old when her family arrived in the United States on a boat from Germany. My grandfather, her future husband, was also on that boat with his family. The two families settled on farms not too far from each other. As the children grew they became very fond of each other and when they were adults they married and moved to a farm of their own. They had ten children my father was the second oldest. Most of his childhood involved working on the family farm and also helping on neighboring farms. He did not have a great deal of time to play. As an adult he married my mother. They also owned and operated a farm. We needed to help on the farm, but he always made sure we had time to play and toys to play with. Money was not always plentiful, but we always seemed to have playthings. What they could not afford to buy my father and mother would make. One of my most cherished possessions is a Barbie doll house that he built and my mother decorated.

Barbie dolls were created the year I was born. They are even more popular today. Back when I was growing up the accessories were not as plentiful as they are now. Today you can buy several different kinds of Barbie doll houses that fit the different themes that have been created for the dolls through the years. One Barbie doll house is a castle to go with the princess theme. My Barbie doll house was made from wood and did not fold down into a carrying case like the ones created today, but it is very special. I have taken it with me through the years and still have it displayed in a guest bedroom. Only a few years ago my mother made new curtains for the little windows and matching comforters for the little beds. She told me that the dollhouse project was one of the best things that she and dad ever worked on together. They would never had remembered going to the store and buying one for me, but they remember working in the garage putting the small pieces together that dad cut out of scrap wood.