

Those of us that had the privilege of growing up in a happy loving family have special memories to hang onto. My family did not have a great deal of money, but there was a great deal of love. My parents were very devoted in their faith and so church activities and events were a big part of our family life. We did not travel a great deal because my father had a dairy farm, so the cows needed to be milked two times a day at certain times. We could take day trips but we could not be gone for more than ten hours without hiring someone to milk for us. This greatly limited the number of places we could go.

When I was twelve years old, in fact on my twelfth birthday my dad sold the milking cows. It was a cold rainy day with early snow predicted and the barn roof was leaking. He decided he had enough. My mother was thrilled and we kids knew that our lives were going to be different. Two weeks later over a four day holiday weekend from school we took a driving trip out of state. We did not have a destination we were simply going to be gone for three nights and four days. It was an exciting adventure. We would stop at rest areas and get information for local sights and go see whatever we were interested in. We went to a large gift shop that featured handmade crafts from the Amish. They had corn husk dolls in all different sizes. They were fascinating to me and to my younger sister. We were told that later in the day there was going to be a demonstration on how to make the corn husk dolls. We had heard our dad and mom talking about needing to put in some miles so we knew that we could not stay for the demonstration. We each were allowed to buy one of the smallest corn husk dolls to take home. They were designed to be used as an ornament for the Christmas tree. I think the clerk could see the disappointment on our faces that we could not come for the demonstration. She told us that she had a few minutes and could show us the basic steps.

The corn husks are stripped from the years when they are still moist they are then allowed to dry. She gathered a few in her hands made a few twists and turns and tied twine and string from the husks and had two corn husk dolls within a few minutes. They were not decorated like the others, but she gave them to use and said we could decorate them ourselves. We never did learn how to make the dolls, but my sister and I still have both the Christmas decoration and our demonstration dolls.