

The Doll Collector's Legacy Workbook

A Guide to Planning for the Future of Your Collection

Created by Jamie McGlothlin, aka Brodjam on eBay

Questions about this guide or assistance with doll collections?

www.brodjam.com

ebaybrodjam@gmail.com

845-514-5314

Introduction

For many collectors, a doll collection represents years, sometimes decades, of searching, learning, restoring, trading, and making friendships. While we often think about growing our collections, few of us spend time thinking about what will happen to them someday.

The truth is, the person - or people - who will eventually be responsible for your collection may have no idea where to begin. They may not recognize which dolls are valuable, which accessories belong together, or where to find someone knowledgeable enough to help. In an effort to simplify things, collections are sometimes donated to thrift stores, discarded, or sold for only a fraction of their value.

This workbook was created to make that process easier.

By taking just a little time to organize a few important details now, you can spare those handling your estate unnecessary stress while giving your collection the best chance of being handled with the care and respect it deserves.

This workbook is not intended as legal or financial advice. Rather, it is a practical planning tool that can be kept with your will, estate documents, or other important papers. It is meant to provide guidance and peace of mind to those who may one day be responsible for your collection. Like any important personal or estate document, it should be reviewed periodically, and updated if necessary.

A Few Notes Before You Begin

Complete only the sections that apply to you and your collection. This workbook is designed to be a flexible planning tool - not every page will be relevant to every collector. Feel free to skip any sections that don't apply to your circumstances, and revisit this guide from time to time as your collection or your wishes change. Even a small amount of information can make a meaningful difference for the person or people entrusted with your collection.

Section 1

About My Collection

This page provides the person or people handling my collection with a general understanding of what I've collected.

Collector's name: _____

Date this guide was prepared: _____

Last updated: _____

My collection consists of approximately:

- ☐ Fewer than 50 dolls
- ☐ 50–100 dolls
- ☐ 100–250 dolls
- ☐ 250–500 dolls
- ☐ More than 500 dolls
- ☐ I honestly have no idea, but it is substantial

My collection occupies:

- ☐ One display cabinet
- ☐ Several display cabinets
- ☐ One room
- ☐ Multiple rooms
- ☐ Multiple rooms plus storage
- ☐ Other: _____

The primary types of dolls I collect include:

☐ Fashion Dolls

• Brands include:

☐ Barbie Dolls

• Types include:

☐ Ball-Jointed Dolls (BJDs)

• Brands include:

☐ Child Dolls

• Brands include:

☐ Baby and/or Reborn Dolls

• Brands include:

☐ Porcelain Dolls

• Brands include:

☐ Vintage and/or Antique Dolls

• Brands and/or types include: _____

☐ Other

• Type & Brand:

(Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Section 2

Special Pieces

List dolls that deserve extra attention.Examples: rare limited editions, signed dolls, one-of-a-kind customs, childhood keepsakes.

[illegible]

(attach additional pages if necessary)

Section 3

My Wishes for My Collection

Use this page to record your preferences for how you would like your collection to be handled. Clear instructions can reduce uncertainty and help the person or people responsible for your collection honor your wishes with confidence.

If possible, I would like my collection to be handled in the following way:

- ☐ Sold individually whenever practical
- ☐ Sold through an experienced doll reseller, if practical
- ☐ Certain dolls kept by specific people (*see the "Gifts & Keepsakes" page*)
- ☐ Certain dolls donated (*see the "Donation" page*)
- ☐ Other:

If Possible, Please Avoid:

- ☐ Hold a garage or yard sale.
- ☐ Donate the entire collection without first determining its value.
- ☐ Dispose of any part of the collection without first determining its value.
- ☐ Sell the entire collection as one large lot unless advised by a doll professional.
- ☐ Other:

Gifts & Keepsakes

These are the dolls or collection items I would like to leave to specific people.

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

(attach additional pages if necessary)

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Gift

Doll(s) or Collection Item(s): _____

Recipient: _____

Contact Info: _____

Special Instructions: _____

If the intended recipient is unable or unwilling to accept the gift, my preference is:

- ☐ Offer it to another family member or friend.
- ☐ Include it with the rest of my collection.
- ☐ Sell it.
- ☐ Donate it.
- ☐ Allow my executor to decide.
- ☐ Other:

Donations

These are my wishes for the parts of my collection that I would like to be donated.

Donation #1

Doll(s) or Collection to be Donated: _____

Organization or Recipient: _____

City & State (if applicable): _____

Special Instructions: _____

Donation #2

Doll(s) or Collection to be Donated: _____

Organization or Recipient: _____

City & State (if applicable): _____

Special Instructions: _____

Donation #3

Doll(s) or Collection to be Donated: _____

Organization or Recipient: _____

City & State (if applicable): _____

Special Instructions: _____

If my preferred organization is no longer accepting donations, my preference is:

- ☐ Donate to another doll-related organization.
- ☐ Donate to another nonprofit organization.
- ☐ Sell these items instead.
- ☐ Allow my executor to decide.
- ☐ Other: _____

(attach additional pages if necessary)

Section 4

Collection Records & Information

To help locate information about my collection, I've noted below where records and other helpful materials can be found.

Inventory, collection lists, spreadsheets, or databases: _____

Receipts or purchase records: _____

Photographs or photo albums: _____

Boxes, certificates, or other paperwork: _____

Additional notes that may help identify or understand my collection:

Section 5

Personal Notes

This collection has brought me many years of enjoyment. Every doll has a story, whether it came from a convention, an antique store, an online auction, or a friendship made through collecting.

Please don't feel overwhelmed by what to do with it. I've prepared these notes simply to make things easier for you.

Whether you decide to keep part of the collection, sell it, or pass it along to another collector, I hope it brings someone else as much happiness as it brought me.

Thank you for taking care of something that meant so much to me.

[illegible]

Helpful Suggestions for Handling My Collection

If you're reading this, thank you for taking the time to care for something that meant a great deal to me. You don't need to become an expert on collectible dolls overnight. My hope is that these suggestions will make the process a little less overwhelming and help you avoid common mistakes until you've had a chance to learn more or seek advice.

Take Your Time

- It's okay if identifying everything takes time. Remember, you don't have to figure everything out by yourself. An experienced collector or reseller can often identify dolls, accessories, and paperwork much more quickly than someone unfamiliar with the hobby.
- You don't need to make immediate decisions about selling, donating, or distributing the collection.

Take Photographs

- Before moving or reorganizing the collection, take photographs of each display, shelf, cabinet, or storage area.
- These photos can help identify where dolls, accessories, and paperwork originally belonged and may be useful if questions arise later.

Handle with Care

- Wash and dry your hands before handling dolls.
- Work on a clean, uncluttered surface.
- Move slowly and avoid forcing joints, limbs, or accessories that seem stuck.

Avoid Cleaning or Repairs

- Don't wash dolls, clothing, or accessories.
- Don't attempt repairs, repainting, restringing, or gluing broken pieces.
- Even damaged items may still have value to collectors.

Leave Things As You Find Them

- Unless something is at immediate risk of damage, avoid removing clothing, wigs, shoes, jewelry, or accessories.
- If an item has become separated from a doll, keep it nearby until it can be identified.
- Avoid mixing dolls, accessories, paperwork, and boxes from different display areas until the collection has been identified

Keep Everything

- Save original boxes, stands, paperwork, certificates, tags, and accessories - even if you're not sure which doll they belong to.
- Don't worry about matching everything right away. Simply keeping these items together gives someone with experience a much better chance of identifying them later.

Not every box, certificate, or piece of paperwork will necessarily be needed or add value to the collection. However, it's best to keep everything until an experienced collector or reseller has had an opportunity to determine what is and isn't important.

If You Need to Pack the Collection

- Use sturdy boxes and avoid overcrowding.
- Label boxes with where the contents came from (for example, "Office Display Cabinet" or "Guest Room Closet") rather than trying to identify every doll immediately.
- Keep all items from the same display or storage area together whenever possible.

When You're Unsure...

If you don't know what something belongs to - or whether something has value - it's almost always better to leave it alone than to guess. A knowledgeable collector or experienced reseller can often identify dolls and accessories that may seem impossible to match.

Remember...

Most importantly, don't feel pressured to have all the answers right away. A lifetime of collecting isn't meant to be understood in a single afternoon. Taking your time, preserving what you find, and asking for guidance when needed are often the best ways to honor both the collection and the person who built it.

If You Need Assistance

The following person(s) or company(ies) are those I recommend contacting if you would like assistance with my collection. They are familiar with collectible dolls and may be able to provide guidance with identifying, organizing, or even selling all or part of my collection.

Experienced Collector / Reseller:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website or Social: _____

Additional Contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website or Social: _____

Notes:

About This Workbook

The “Legacy Planning for Doll Collectors” guide and workbook was created by Jamie McGlothlin (Brodjam on eBay) as a free educational resource for doll collectors. You are welcome to download, print, and share this workbook for your own personal use.

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For questions about this workbook or to learn more, please contact:

Jamie McGlothlin

Brodjam on eBay

Website: www.brodjam.com

Email: ebaybrodjam@gmail.com