

Maple Knoll Village

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A Gift of Love: My Doll, Peggy

The inspiration for this story is true: the love of my Grandmother and Mother as they crafted a Christmas Present for me when I was a child.

A good portion of activity in the house I was raised in centered on sewing, crocheting, quilting and weaving. My Grandmother was an accomplished, self-taught seamstress. She could look at a store-bought dress and make a copy; lay fabric on an overstuffed chair and make a new chair cover and crochet and tat lace doilies that were beautiful. She taught both my Mother and me to sew and enjoy needlework. It wasn't unusual for my Grandmother and Mother to sew late into the evening, as much of my clothing was made by them. "Gram" would take apart coats and dresses that still had some "wear" left in them. She then washed and cleaned the fabric, turned the fabric in the opposite direction and lay out her patterns.

I was about eight years old and still knew that Santa brought presents at Christmas. That year there was an unusual flurry of activity in the dining room around the sewing machine after I was tucked into bed. Night after night, in the weeks before Christmas, I could hear "Gram" and Mother working in the dining room on the sewing machine. I would creep down the stairs, and sit listening as they worked; wondering what they were working on so intently. I do remember thinking that it was something special, and could hear their voices as they laughed softly as they worked.

When I opened the first present that Christmas morning, the large box contained a Saucy-Walker doll!

I was so excited, and immediately named her Peggy. You could hold her hand and by manipulating her arm, you could help her walk. The second present was Peggy's blue steamer-trunk that contained a brown, satin-lined corduroy coat with a matching beret and white tassel, a plaid dress with a white pinafore, and a nightgown and robe! Things were looking up! However, my excitement turned to disappointment when I opened the third present and found matching clothes for me; exact designs of Peggy's clothing in my size.

I was so sad discovering that these had not come from Santa Claus; but were the product of "Gram" and Mother's late-night sewing. Little did I understand at the time, the labor of love that they shared making those clothes and matching doll clothes for me.

I still have the doll clothes, steamer trunk and Peggy. Each time I look at those small dresses I am reminded about the enormous love contained in those stitches and how my Grandmother's and Mother's love was 'worked' into that fabric for me.