



Toys and American Culture: An Encyclopedia

By Sharon M. Scott

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Tracing developments in toy making and marketing across the evolving landscape of the 20th century, this encyclopedia is a comprehensive reference guide to America's most popular playthings and the culture to which they belong.

- Nearly 200 alphabetically arranged entries document the historical and cultural significance of toys
- Cross-references and a listing of additional resources accompany each entry and encourage further investigation
- Photographs and illustrations gathered from public and private collections across the country depict the entire century of America at play
- A guide to related topics identifies the entries according to broader categories such as toys, designers, companies, museums, events, and organizations
- A resource guide provides information for contacting American toy companies, accessing national toy museums, and attending annual toy festivals, and offers many avenues for pursuing further information about toys and American culture including books, scholarly journals, audio recordings, films, and websites

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Toys are the touchstones of childhood and are major collectibles in the antique and pop-culture markets. Most of the literature on toys deals with these aspects of the topic. *Toys and American Culture* is the first to approach toys in their cultural context. According to the preface, "Toys are the building blocks of society," and they reflect the cultural values of the time when they arose. This encyclopedia concentrates on the twentieth century, though some items from the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries are included as "bridges" to the past and future of toys. There is no attempt to be comprehensive in coverage but rather to focus on toys that are associated with imaginative play (puzzles and games are therefore excluded) and most tied to American culture. The encyclopedia has an A-Z format, with an alphabetical list of entries and a subject-delineated list of topics. Many of the more than 160 entries are for the toys themselves: Beanie Babies, Colorforms, Easy-Bake Oven, Hot Wheels, Marbles, and Shrinky Dinks are but a few examples. For each, the coverage includes the date that the toy was introduced, who designed the toy, how it was marketed, and how it has changed over the years. Thirty-one designers have entries of their own, including John Wright, son of Frank Lloyd Wright and the inventor of Lincoln Logs; Antonio Pasin, inventor of the little red wagon; and Richard Knerr, the founder of Wham-O. Major companies such as American Girl, Hasbro, and Tonka also have entries, as do special topics such as Made in China and Racist toys. Most entries include see also references and books, articles, and Web sites for further reading. The volume ends with a time line, a list of resources, and a comprehensive index. An excellent purchase for most public libraries and academic libraries with an emphasis on contemporary culture. Also available as an e-book. --Danise Hoover

Review

"*Toys and American Culture* is an ambitious reference book that breaks new ground in taking the entire field of American toys as its purview. ... a useful addition to the expanding toy reference bookshelf, reflecting the growing significance of toys, play, and children as topics worthy of attention within a broader historical and cultural context." - **American Journal of Play**

"...this insightful book is a must for anyone involved in the care and well being of a new baby." - **drtoy.com**

"An excellent purchase for most public libraries and academic libraries with an emphasis on contemporary culture." - **Booklist**

"*Toys and American Culture* is a valuable source of information on an important aspect of American popular culture and would therefore be a worthy addition to both public and academic library collections." - **Reference & User Services Quarterly**

"A must-have volume for toy collectors, writers, and researchers, and an outstanding resource for anyone who ever played with toys..." - **Midwest Book Review**

"...this entertaining guide to American culture will find an interested audience in school, public and academic libraries." - **Lawrence Looks at Books**

"Scott, an author and journalist specializing in American popular culture, offers an encyclopedia of toys in American culture that addresses the relationship between the two and the invention and development of toys in terms of historical events, social movements, and international progress. Entries trace developments in toy making and marketing in the twentieth century, the history of influential toys, and important trends,

individuals, designers, museums, events, organizations, companies, and publications, with discussion of the cultural, social, and historical significance of each toy. A sampling of entries: Barbie, action figures, Bratz, Cabbage Patch Kids, Chatty Cathy, Disney Company, Elmo, FAO Schwarz, Fisher-Price, gender stereotyping, guns, Lincoln Logs, PEZ, safety, Star Wars toys, Toy Industry Association, and Walmart. B&W photos and illustrations are included. Games are omitted. The bibliography incorporates events, organizations, and collections." - **Reference & Research Book News**

About the Author

Sharon Scott is an author and toy enthusiast whose work on American popular culture has been published by Greenwood Press, Golson Media, and ABC/Discovery News.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sally Watts:

As people who live in often the modest era should be revise about what going on or facts even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe can update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This Toys and American Culture: An Encyclopedia is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Annamarie Windham:

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