

# **DOLL, CLOTH (4) TOPSY-TURVY and WAKEY-SLEEPY**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTS**

**Repository:** Crandall Public Library.  
Folklife Center  
Glens Falls, NY.

**Creator:** Unknown maker (2), Erica Wolfe Gonyea (2)

**Title:** Doll, Cloth (4): Topsy-Turvy and Wakey-Sleepy

**Dates:** Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century?/ 1970s

**Quantity:** 4 Dolls + one folder.

**Identification:** Folk Art

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Erica Wolfe (now Erica Gonyea) inherited the two older dolls from her grandmother, Minna McEuen Meyer. In the 1970s, Wolfe copied the two dolls, which she sold. She also sold patterns for the Topsy-Turvy doll, mail order, through a doll magazine.

Mrs. Meyer's doll collection started as visual aids for her lectures. Her husband, Dr. Henry H. Meyer, was an editor at the Methodist Book Concern in New York City (the publishing arm of the Methodist Church), and later a Dean at Boston University. The Church sent him on inspection tours, and to Conferences, in Europe and Asia. The Church paid for his travel, of course, but the Meyers borrowed the money for Mrs. Meyer to go with him. When they returned, she would travel the Ladies' Lecture circuit giving talks about their travels and the cultures of the places they visited, using her honoraria to pay off the loan. In those days before movies and video, Mrs. Meyer collected dolls and clothing to illustrate her talks.

Over the course of time, she accumulated a collection of almost 80 dolls, both foreign and American, which Erica Wolfe inherited. The two older dolls in this collection, one Topsy-Turvy and one Wakey-Sleepy, were part of her collection.

## **INDEX TERMS**

**Topics:** Doll  
Folk doll  
Topsy-Turvy  
Wakey-Sleepy  
Doll makers

Doll collectors

**Places:** New York City

**Important People:** Meyer, Minna McEuen 1874 -1963  
Gonyea, Erica Wolfe 1946 -

**Form/Genre:** realia

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Preferred Citation:** Doll, Cloth (4): Topsy-Turvy and Wakey-Sleepy  
Folklife Center  
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

**Accession Information:** Donated to the Folklife Center by Erica Gonyea, 2019

**Processing Information:** Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea, 2019

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS**

1. Old Topsy-Turvy (unknown date and maker): 11 ½ inches tall, 7 inches wide. The doll has a painted cloth face, yellow yarn hair braids and a dress of blue and pink flowers. When she is turned upside down, the "Topsy" side has a brown painted face, black yarn braids, and a red dress with white polka dots. The paint on both faces is cracked and partly missing. The clothes are part of the doll: the doll cannot be undressed.
2. Newer Topsy-Turvy (early 1970s; made by Erica Wolfe): 11 inches tall, 8 inches wide. The doll has an embroidered face, copied from the painted face on the older doll (because Wolfe can embroider, but she can't paint), and yellow yarn braids. The dress is, again, blue and pink flowers. Turned over, "Topsy" has a face embroidered on brown cotton, black yarn braids, and a red dress with white polka dots. The clothes are part of the doll: the doll cannot be undressed.
3. Old Wakey-Sleepy (unknown date and maker): 13 inches tall, 5 inches wide. The body is made of light tan muslin. The hair is yellow yarn braids and bangs. On one side the doll has wide open eyes with round blue irises. The eyes, eyebrows and mouth appear to be drawn on in pen; the mouth and nose dots colored red. On the other side the eye-lids are closed, otherwise the features are the same. The body and face are stained, and the clothing is missing.

4. Newer Wakey-Sleepy (early 1970s; made by Erica Wolfe):13 inches tall, 5 inches wide. The hair is beige yarn bangs and side pony tails. The face is embroidered. The eyes are not copied from the older doll, but rather from a contemporary (1970s) McCalls doll pattern: wide blue eyes looking to the left. Embroidered eyebrows, nose dots and red mouth. The doll is wearing a pink gingham-checked dress with white lace trim and four white buttons on the front. Turning her over, the embroidered face on the other side has closed eyes, but is otherwise the same as the first. The Sleepy doll is wearing a nightie with little pink roses and a pink ribbon at the neck. The clothing (dress/nightie) is not made in one with the doll, so the doll can be undressed.

Erica Wolfe also made a boy version on this doll (not part of this collection).

5. Folder containing the original pattern for the newer Topsy-Turvy doll, along with one Xerox copy.

#### Related Collections:

See the many other cloth dolls in the Folklife Center Collection.  
Nativity Puppets made by Erica Wolfe