

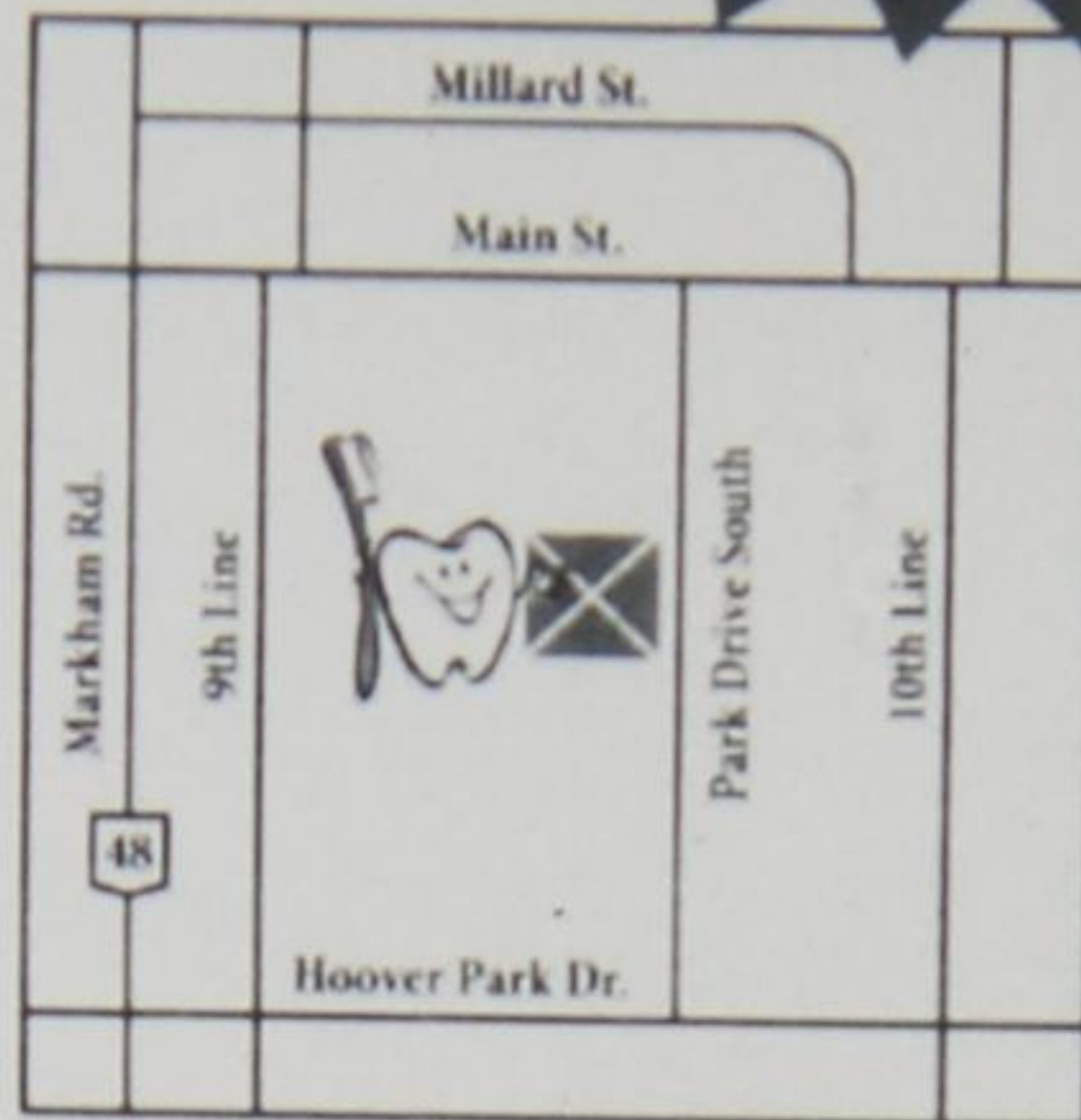


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## Treasures & Heirlooms

By Rob Reid

A crisp, sunny and dry fall to everyone. Here is a doll that every little girl would have loved to own a century ago.

This doll was made by the Armand Marseille doll company of Koppelsdorf, Germany, which started producing dolls in 1885 and continued until approximately 1930. At the height of production they produced over 1000 doll heads per day, so it's no surprise that Germany produced over 80 per cent of the world's dolls until World War I.

Almost all of the doll heads were made of bisque. Bisque is unglazed porcelain with a matte finish, which gives it a realistic skin-like surface that can be tinted or painted any colour desired. The head is then attached to a body made of cloth or leather, or a jointed body made of wood, papier-mâché, or what is called a composite body, which is a mix of pulp, sawdust, glue and similar materials.

The head is created using a mold and is fired in a kiln. It can be painted and fired several times to create the skin tone and various facial features. Most bisque doll heads also have glass eyes and some even have moving tongues which can vary in size from half an inch up to life-size. Mohair, which comes from an angora goat, is often used because of its long, silky, human hair-like qualities.

Identifying antique bisque dolls can be

fairly simple as most of the major makers included their name and often a mold number right in the head. It is usually found at the nape of the neck and hidden from view by the doll's hair or clothing.

This doll is a #390, which is one of their most common molds and was produced for over 30 years. Her head is 3.5 inches wide and she stands 21 inches tall. With glass eyes, an open mouth with teeth, mohair and a jointed composite body she is a fairly typical and common doll.



As with any antique condition is everything. German and French bisque dolls were generally made as children's playthings, so finding early dolls in great condition can be a challenge. The head is in reasonable condition with some thinning to the mohair, but the composite body has seen better days. Several fingers are missing and the feet are splitting open. She is also missing any original clothing.

Prices for dolls have fallen considerably in recent years, with a majority of them selling in the \$200 to \$500 range in top shape. Obviously in its current condition this doll would sell for much less.

I welcome inquiries about any objects and look forward to seeing and perhaps writing about them. Please forward a photo and a description to me through Stouffville Free Press, drop them off at Reid's Antiques, 6397 Main St. Stouffville during regular business hours or via my website at [www.reidsantiques.com](http://www.reidsantiques.com).

## On The Ball



The Ballantrae Golf and Country Club held its fourth biennial summer games in early September with competitions in 18 categories, including water volleyball. Five teams, representing each condo, participated in the event and were cheered on by enthusiastic supporters. Other categories included cycling, table tennis and pickle ball.  
Kate Gilderdale photo