

Raggedy Ann

Raggedy Ann is a character created by American writer Johnny Gruelle (1880–1938) that appeared in a series of books he wrote and illustrated for young children. Raggedy Ann is a rag doll with red yarn for hair and a triangle nose. The character was created in 1915 (US Patent D47789) as a doll, and was introduced to the public in the 1918 book *Raggedy Ann Stories*. When a doll was marketed with the book, the concept had great success. A sequel, *Raggedy Andy Stories* (1920), introduced the character of her brother, Raggedy Andy. Further characters such as Beloved Belindy, a black mammy doll, were featured as dolls and characters in books

The exact details of the origins of the Raggedy Ann doll and related stories are not specifically known, although numerous myths and legends about the doll's origins have been widely repeated. Gruelle biographer and Raggedy Ann historian Patricia Hall notes that the dolls have "found themselves at the center of several legend cycles—groups of stories that, while containing kernels of truth, are more myth than they are history. What makes this even more intriguing is that fact that Johnny Gruelle, either unwittingly or with the great sense of humor he was known for, initiated many of these legends, a number of which are continuously repeated as the factual history of Raggedy Ann and Andy."

Hall further explains that according to an oft-repeated myth, Gruelle's daughter, Marcella, brought from her grandmother's attic a faceless cloth doll on which the artist drew a face, and that Gruelle suggested that Marcella's grandmother sew a shoe button for a missing eye. The date of this supposed occurrence is given as early as 1900 and as late as 1914, with the locale variously given as suburban Indianapolis, downtown Cleveland, or rural Connecticut. More likely, as Gruelle's wife, Myrtle, reported, it her husband retrieved a long-forgotten, homemade rag doll from the attic of his parents' Indianapolis home sometime around the turn of the twentieth century before the couple's daughter was born. He used to get ideas from watching her."

Additionally, Gruelle did not create Raggedy Ann as a tribute to his daughter following her death at 13 from an infected vaccination; Hall notes the design of the prototype doll that became the Raggedy Ann doll was already in progress around the time that Marcella fell ill. Nonetheless, the anti-vaccination movement adopted Raggedy Ann as a symbol, though Marcella died from an infected vaccination, not from the side effects of the vaccination itself.

By the end of the 1940s, sales of Raggedy Ann-related books exceeded 7 million copies. The Indianapolis-based Bobbs-Merrill Company became the authorized publisher and licensor for Raggedy Ann-related literary works in 1962, and the Knickerbocker Toy Company began manufacturing the Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls in the early 1960s. Simon & Schuster and Hasbro claim ownership of the trademarks to the Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Ann and Andy names. The original patent, as well as the stories, are now in the public domain, their copyrights having expired.

The Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls and their related memorabilia have become sought-after collectors' items. Other related items continue to be produced including adaptations of the stories into comic books, audio recordings, animated films, and television and theatrical productions. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raggedy_Ann]

