

Introducing "Eli" by Byers Choice and Tis the Season

Eli is available only at Tis the Season and is the second Byers Choice doll in the Amish series of Holmes County, Ohio. These carolers are named after some of my family members as a remembrance of them more than replicas of them. I value my heritage and want to remember my family members.

I was young when my grandparents passed away and have few memories of time spent at their home. I recall the large wraparound porch on the house and the willow trees in the yard. Inside their home was very quiet and peaceful. I can still see the shiny wood floors in the dining area, I can hear the ticking of the mantle clock and smell the scent of the oil lamps along with the sound of the lamps as they gave light.

Of my grandmother I recall the times she was ill before she passed away. I can still see my brothers, my sister and I sitting on the sofa in the living room. We sat quietly and whispered among ourselves in this atmosphere we were not accustomed to. After a while we would venture outside or end up in the kitchen playing Probe with aunt Melva.

Grandma passed away several years before grandpa and after she died grandpa moved into the "dawdy haus" (grandfather's house) on the home farm just up the road. This was the same house we lived in at the time I was born, located right next to the main house. Aunt Melva stayed at home and took care of grandpa until his death in 1971.

Throughout the years I have heard numerous stories about my grandfather, many of them from my own father. I know grandpa enjoyed music although technically it was not permitted in their home. My father ordered a guitar out of the Sears and Roebuck catalog as a young teen and taught himself how to play it. He and his brother would sit in their bedrooms in the evening hours and play and sing the old Louvin Brothers songs. Grandma and Grandpa would sit downstairs in the living room and listen to them till it was time for bed, then grandpa would tap on the stove pipe and say "ok boys it's time for bed now".

Grandpa was a hard worker but as a family they never had much. With eight children to clothe and feed money was always short. My father says they lived in a "cashless society" long before it was the popular thing to do! Along with farming my grandfather was also a preacher in the church and later became the Bishop of his church. I often have local folks tell me what a wonderful preacher he was. It is not hard for me to believe that because my father (John) was also a preacher, but not in the Amish church. I always loved to hear my father preach, he was always easy to understand and he made Christianity simple. There were principles you lived by. You do not lie, or steal, you respect your elders and you certainly did not talk back to your parents. I was taught many good things that are a part of this community's everyday life and I don't ever want to take for granted these valuable life lessons. It was my grandparents who taught my father how to live a Godly life, it was my father who taught me and it is my responsibility to pass that on to my children who will then teach my grandchildren. If each generation takes this responsibility serious the world will be a better place. Thank you grandpa Eli for the life you lived and how it has affected me.

Jo Ann Hershberger