



# Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930

*Miriam Formanek-Brunell*

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"Formanek-Brunell's study of the United States doll industry provides a fresh perspective on the construction of gender in America... Made to Play House is a pioneering book of interest to collectors, historians of women and of consumer culture, and anyone who has a child who plays with dolls." -- Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Journal of American History*

In MADE TO PLAY HOUSE, Miriam Formanek-Brunell traces the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century dolls and explores the origins of the American toy industry's remarkably successful efforts to promote self fulfillment through maternity and materialism. She tells the fascinating story of how inventors, producers, entrepreneurs -- many of whom were women -- and little girls themselves created dolls which expressed various notions of female identity.

"Much of the value of Made to Play House is its deft weaving of business history, cultural history, and material culture studies into a coherent, largely convincing, narrative... The vivid portraits of the female entrepreneurs with an agenda for childhood are the book's most significant contribution to the literature of history and business." -- Mary Lynn Stevens Heininger, *Business History Review*

"This superb interdisciplinary history deploys mechanical patents and material culture to chart the development of a gendered American doll industry." -- Eileen Boris, *Nation*

"The book makes a solid contribution to the literature on childhood as well as business history and... illustrates the use that can be made of material culture in historical research." -- Sylvia Hoffert, *American Historical Review*



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