

# Mom's Joy Room

*Where Obsolescence Ends and Wonder Begins*

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | 304-282-3671 | momsjoyroom.net

## CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

### *Uncle Wiggily Longears & Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy*

Georgene Novelties (Georgene Averill), c.1934–1940s

ESTIMATED WORTH (PAIR)

**\$350–\$550**



*Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy and Uncle Wiggily Longears, following conservation cleaning*

A matched pair of vintage cloth character dolls from the beloved *Uncle Wiggily Longears* children's book series by Howard R. Garis, produced by Georgene Novelties (Georgene Averill) in the 1930s–1940s. Uncle Wiggily,

the elderly gentleman rabbit in his sage-green pants and tall black top hat, stands alongside his faithful companion Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat nurse in her floral dress and cream pinafore apron. Both are all-cloth stuffed construction with painted facial features, shaped paws, and original removable clothing — wonderful examples of American character doll manufacturing from the golden age of children's literary toys. The pair has undergone careful conservation cleaning and now presents in very good overall condition.

*"He tipped his tall silk hat to Nurse Jane, and she smoothed her apron just so — because even in the animal world, there were manners worth keeping."*

## History

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The Uncle Wiggily Longears stories were created by American author Howard R. Garis, who began writing the adventures of the elderly gentleman rabbit for the Newark Evening News in 1910. The series became one of the most beloved and enduring franchises in American children's literature, spanning over 30 published books and tens of thousands of daily newspaper serials that ran from 1910 well into the 1940s. Uncle Wiggily, a rheumatic but cheerful rabbit gentleman, traveled through the forest having gentle adventures and outwitting villains like the Skillery-Skallery Alligator and the Fuzzy Fox, always returning to his hollow stump bungalow and his devoted nurse, Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy — a muskrat who kept house, cooked pancakes, and looked after his health.

Georgene Averill was one of the most important American doll designers of the 20th century. Her company, Georgene Novelties (also known as Averill Manufacturing and Hendren-Garner), operated from the 1910s through the 1950s and produced an extraordinary range of cloth, composition, and bisque dolls. Averill is perhaps best known for designing the "Bonnie Babe" doll and for her cloth character dolls based on popular children's literary figures — including Raggedy Ann and Andy, Little Orphan Annie, and the Uncle Wiggily characters. Her cloth dolls are prized by collectors for their charm, quality construction, and faithful translation of book illustrations into three-dimensional soft toys.

The Uncle Wiggily and Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy cloth dolls were introduced by Georgene Novelties around 1934, following the peak popularity of Garis's book series. The dolls measure approximately 18–21 inches tall and are constructed entirely of stuffed cloth with painted facial features — Uncle Wiggily with his characteristic tall black hat, spectacles, green pants, and yellow floral collar, and Nurse Jane in her floral print dress, cream pinafore apron with sash ties, and tan felt ears. Both have shaped paws and long floppy limbs consistent with the Georgene style. The dolls were sold as both individual pieces and as companion pairs, with matched sets being particularly desirable to today's collectors.

These character dolls represent an important intersection of American children's literature and toy manufacturing. In the 1920s–1940s, bringing beloved book characters to life as dolls was a major trend — children could act out the stories they read (or had read to them) with their own Uncle Wiggily and Nurse Jane. Georgene Novelties' cloth construction made these dolls affordable and huggable, while the painted faces and carefully detailed clothing captured the charm of Garis's original illustrations. Today, matched pairs in good condition are increasingly scarce — many of these cloth dolls saw heavy play use, and their fabric bodies and painted faces are vulnerable to the wear, staining, and fading that decades of handling inevitably bring.

This particular pair arrived with notable surface grime, water-stain tide lines, and foxing spotting, and underwent a careful home conservation process — dry cornstarch treatment for general soiling, diluted hydrogen peroxide spot treatment for the water stains and foxing, and gentle hand care for the satin ribbon trim. The results significantly improved their presentation, though some residual staining remains visible on close inspection, as is typical and expected for cloth dolls of this age that have not undergone professional textile conservation. This is disclosed transparently as part of the honest condition reporting for this piece.

## Notable Features

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- ◆ Matched pair of cloth character dolls by Georgene Novelties (Georgene Averill), c.1934–1940s
- ◆ Based on the Uncle Wiggily Longears book series by Howard R. Garis (1910–1940s)
- ◆ Both approximately 18" tall, all-cloth stuffed construction with painted facial features
- ◆ Uncle Wiggily: sage-green pants with yellow floral cuffs, tall black top hat, shaped paws
- ◆ Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy: floral print dress, cream pinafore apron with sash ties, tan felt ears, orange satin ribbon bow
- ◆ Original removable clothing on both dolls
- ◆ Conservation cleaning completed — very good overall condition, with light residual staining remaining from age

### COLLECTOR NOTES

This pair of Uncle Wiggily and Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy dolls is attributed to Georgene Novelties based on stylistic characteristics — construction technique, painted face style, clothing design, and size — all consistent with documented Georgene Averill examples from the same era. No original maker's tags or labels are currently visible on either doll. The pair underwent home conservation cleaning (dry cornstarch treatment and targeted hydrogen peroxide spot treatment) to address surface grime, water-stain tide lines, and foxing. Light staining remains visible after cleaning, which is disclosed honestly here and reflected in the estimated value below. Matched pairs of these literary character dolls are increasingly sought after by collectors of both vintage cloth dolls and children's book memorabilia.

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***Sandy Wade***

Proprietor, Mom's Joy Room

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