

*“Children's Picture Book Collection”*

Sarah Shafer

Thinking back upon my childhood, one of my favorite memories is sitting in a big rocking chair listening to books. Not only was this a special time with my Mom or Dad, but I was also able to let my imagination run free as I gazed at the illustrations. My parents and I would go to the library every week and check out stacks of books until, eventually, I was reading to them! During high school I worked at a toy shop after school. I found myself recommending picture books to parents shopping for their children. Though I enjoyed finding books with fascinating stories and illustrations, I never thought about starting a collection of my favorite discoveries. One day, my Great Aunt Ruth visited and gave me a book called *The Tale of Three Trees*. On the inside cover she signed her name and wrote, "read this with your little ones someday, it is a sweet story". My Aunt's gift became the first children's picture book in my collection. Today I own nearly fifty hardcover, beautifully illustrated books. Each year I collect five to ten more that I choose for myself or are given to me as a gift. Perhaps in the future I will be able to sit in a chair and read with my own children. For now, I have six nieces and nephews who love to choose their favorite stories from my collection and listen intently as I read to them. For me, my collection is far more valuable than china dolls or antique furniture. Each book contains a wealth of knowledge and fantasy. My picture books do not sit on a shelf covered with dust, but are shared with children.