

LENCI DOLLS BY CHRISTINE ROCK



LENCI POST CARD



Back Row: Center Girl Glass Eyed Googly, Left Golfer. Right Boy, Front Row Smaller Lenci's Christine's Lenci Dolls. She collects many types of Vintage only dolls, but she loves her Vintage Cloth. To see a few more of her dolls, we have posted to the web: Christine Doll Room 1 & 2
<http://www.members.accesswave.ca/~douglass/mdc/>



CHRISTINE'S LENCIDOLLS

The creator of the Lenci doll was **Elena Konig**. She was born in 1886 in Germany. Elena was only six when her father died at the age of thirty nine. She had many siblings; her mother had very little money at this time. Elena's mother was a former Austrian pianist who spoke four languages so she was able to get a long by giving piano and language lessons. Elena was fourteen years old when she and her older sister joined the circus. After five months Elena returned home and moved to Switzerland where she taught Italian and German. At the age of seventeen, she also painted blouses in her aunt's shop and went on to learn photography and study at the academy of applied arts. She received her diploma for photography in 1907. Soon after she got to know a lot of young artists and started to work with them.

Elena met her future husband when she was 21. She married in 1915 and moved to Italy. She had a baby in 1917 and at this time Enrico her husband joined the Italian air force as a pilot. Unfortunately the baby died suddenly. Elena was very lonely at this time so she started making dolls.

These **first dolls** were very simple but Enrico could see potential, she worked with her brother to make molds. Material such as felt was easily accessible. In a short time Elena opened a small cottage industry and during this time she became pregnant again but had a miscarriage, very depressed she stopped making dolls. The war ended and Enrico came home, friends persuaded Elena to show her dolls at a party and a gentleman from the United States who was searching for investment possibilities bought all the dolls she had to take them to the US. Not one doll made it as they were all bought up along the way.

In 1919 Elena founded a company and applied for the trademark protection for general toys, furniture, outfits and accessories

In 1923 the dolls were presented at a German fair and 100 different models

for children. At this time the trade name revolved around the Latin words "Luders Est Noster Constanter Industria". This means the game is the reason for our unchanging activities. The first letters of each of the words joined together result in the word "**Lenci**".

In 1920 the dolls were advertised as made of felt, hand painted and without any face seams. In 1922 there range of articles that they produced increased enormously to include cushions, **Clothes** hats, shoes, slippers, belts, curtains and wooden furniture to name a few items. In a very short time Elena didn't need to make more models herself. She hired well known artists. Picture of life size dolls in clothing.



were offered. At this time they employed over 300 people. In 1921 Elena have birth to a girl named Anili and in 1925 she gave birth to a son.

In addition to dolls the most famous product was Lenci **Ceramics** which stopped production in 1963.



In 1929 due to the recession the company almost went bankrupt. At this time the company was sold, however Elena still kept shares in the company and gave input. At this time a wide range of products were reduced and more concentration was focused on dolls. After about 2 years the economic situation was better and the company began to prosper once again. In 1935 traditional costumes were introduced and in 1936 the large painted googly eyed dolls were introduced.

In **1937** they produced Lenci's with **glass eyes**. Christine's Doll.



In 1938 Enrico dies and Elena withdraws from the company all together. The war almost closes down the company with few dolls being made. The company was bombed and many valuable documents were lost. The old forms were saved and they started up again producing celluloid and rubber dolls. Elena was asked to return but she refused and started up a small compact firm where cloth was woven and beautiful furniture was carved. Later she helped her daughter Anili with a small Co. in which a couple of doll types with the mark Anili were produced. In 1952 till early 1978 the company no longer produced dolls in the traditional style.

In late 1978 the Lenci Company began to make limited editions of Classical models. In 1974 Elena died at 88.



This is Bev. M Modern Lenci Doll

IDENTIFICATION

- All felt (sometimes cloth torso)
- Pressed felt head
- Jointed shoulders and hips
- Eyes usually side glancing

- Hair is usually made of Mohair

- Clothing felt or organdy

- Size from 6 to 40 inches

- Markings - cloth, paper tags, early dolls have metal buttons, some are marked on the bottom of their foot.

- Zig Zag stitching on the back of the neck.

- Known for their two tone lip color and two dots on their lower lips.

- Most larger Lenci dolls have applied ears made from two pieces of felt sewn together then top stitched.

- Underwear is usually organdy or muslin

- Shoes are usually felt or leather.

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