



## Coca-Cola Stories

### Coca-Cola Collectibles:

Well, here I am sitting in front of my computer, and I found the Coca-Cola® stories. After reading one, I had to read them all. They are all so fantastic and heart warming. They reminded me of myself and I realized that I too was a Coca-Cola collector. Oh, I don't have my house full of all those great items like some of the people that wrote in. What I have in common, though, is what every person seems to have, a place in their heart for Coca-Cola. Way down inside, there's this little kid looking at the world with a bottle of Coke®. It reminds me of a time when the world was a better place -- of being with your mom and dad, and loved ones. When I was 10, I went to Germany to visit my grandmother and grandfather, whom I had never seen before. The year was 1965. I never collected anything before but I wanted to bring back a souvenir. Something inexpensive and really unique. Something that would always remind me of my big trip. Well there it was -- a 1-liter bottle of Coca-Cola. I was astonished and amazed. Why I've never seen one before! And everything on it was written in German! Imagine that. Everyone laughed and thought I was silly putting that bottle in my suitcase and bringing it back to America, but I was certain that I had a great souvenir. All I can say now, 40 years later, is that I wouldn't trade that bottle for all the money in the world. Because, when I look at it, I can see my grandma and grandpa, my mom and dad, and me, somewhere in another time, another place, long ago, and far away. And it makes me feel good, and I smile.

My name is Betty, and I live in Central Florida. I am a Coca-Cola collector, and I have 90 percent of my home decorated with Coke stuff, including my kitchen, bathroom, dining room and living room. But I tell my friends that the reason I collect and have decorated my house with Coke products is because my mom started to collect when I was a teenager. But one day our house caught on fire and her collection burned. Everywhere she traveled, she would bring back a Coke souvenir. My mom died when I was 23 years, and I started collecting when I was 30. This reminds me so much of my mom.



I have a son named Jimmy who is now 20 years old. Since he was a small child, I have been collecting everything I could find with the "Dear Santa, Please pause here, Jimmy" Coca-Cola Santa image. I have a puzzle over our fireplace, refrigerator decals, banks, trucks, Christmas ornaments, a cookie jar, salt-and-pepper shakers, plates, a coffee cup and more. I even found a Christmas tin with "Christmas 1985" across the bottom of it, which is the year my son was born. Each and every year the memories grow and become so special.

I started collecting Coca-Cola stuff when I was about 15, and I am now 28 and I am still at it. My collection started when my sister and her family bought me a Coke plate set for Christmas, and I loved them so much that from then on I've tried my best to get all the Coca-Cola things I find. My kitchen is completely



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done in Coca-Cola. I've even painted my things in my kitchen to match. I have so much that I have boxes packed up in storage because I don't have enough room. Coca-Cola is my all-time favorite drink. It's crazy that my love has even spilled over to my family. My sister, sister-in-law, my grandma, cousins -- we all collect it now. Coca-Cola is the main topic of our family every Christmas. I would say Coca-Cola has definitely impacted my life. Thank you, Coca-Cola, for wonderful, wonderful, memories.



I had been drinking Coca-Cola as far back as I could remember. Right around the early 1960s, I went in to a general store and the owner had a cardboard Coca-Cola Santa Claus. I talked her into letting me have it, and ever since that day, I have had to collect everything Coca-Cola Santa Claus. Now, of course, I have expanded that hobby into all things Coca-Cola.



When I was 12, I was a Coke drinker. It was one chilly February day when I thought, why not start a Coke club! My neighbor was a big fan of Coke too, and he drank it as much as I did. I was excited with my idea, and wrote out the "Coca-Cola Commandments." I ran to my neighbor's house and showed him my idea. It was that day our club began. We made membership cards, and took a few cans and bottles and set up our "Coca-Cola shrine" in each of our rooms. Mine felt empty. I had a few stickers, cans, bottles, the commandments and my membership card. Each month, I scraped up some cash and bought a Coca-Cola item for my shrine. It grew and grew, and after a year I had a vintage Coca-Cola tray from the 1950s, another from the 60s, old ads, vintage bottles, blankets, pillows, glasses, banks, containers, lamps, tin signs and more. I still collect Coca-Cola stuff, more than ever. So, I thank Coca-Cola, my childhood pastime, for my wonderful collection and club. My neighbor and I have spent many hours talking about America's "favorite pastime," Coca-Cola.

My story is of my grandmother. She was 85 years old and collected everything, and I mean everything! She had glass six-pack bottles of every Super Bowl from 1967-2002, as well as almost every special edition bottle, can and item that The Coca-Cola Company sold. She had magnets, toothpick holders, cups from fast food restaurants, brochures that had Coca-Cola ads, and even the stuffed animal polar bear. If you guys made it, she most likely had it. She passed away in March 2004 and her house seemed to be the actual World of Coca-Cola® in Atlanta, GA. Not only that, at 85 years old, she never hesitated to visit the World of Coca-Cola every chance she had. If she had to count, she could tell you that she visited it about 60 times. The reason that this affected me was that every summer for about 15 of my 21 years, I never stopped loving going to her house and seeing all this history at her place. The amazing thing is the love and wonder she had for Coca-Cola when she was a kid and it never grew old, nor did she get tired of it. To watch her at 85 still



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have the sparkle in her eye at the World of Coca-Cola (just like a kid in a toy store) always made my day.

My Aunt Grace had a beauty shop in her house in the mid 1960s-70s. I remember going in her shop and getting 6 cents out of her drawer so I could get a Coke. Sorry to say, Aunt Grace passed on. Her husband, my uncle I.B., asked me to do some work around his place. Naturally I wouldn't accept any cash. When I went to leave one day, he said, "Kenny, come here. I want to show you something." (This is the year 2002, mind you.) He had Aunt Grace's old Coke machine, a Vendo Model A23E, made in Kansas City, MO, still set on 6 cents. It had bottle tops with corks still in it. You can come see my machine any time!

I have liked the nostalgic part of Coca-Cola and have a laundry room full of Coke memorabilia, so for Christmas this year I decided to use empty Coke cans for ornaments and recycle the tree later.

I delivered Coca-Cola products in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, for seven years. As a route serviceman we received promotional trinkets (key chains, trays, pencils, etc.) from the company every time something new came up. A lot of this stuff got lost or used and then tossed in the trash. If I had only known then what I know now! My serious collecting actually began in 1994 when I stopped at an antique dealer. As I walked through the door, a price guide was staring me in the face. I purchased the book and took it home just to see what was in it. I fumbled through a lot of pages only to find items that I had tossed years ago. I came across one page that highlighted spin-tops. I have some of those! Down to the kids' toy box I went, rummaging through it until I found all four spin-tops. They were given to us as a set when Coca-Cola hosted a spin-top contest here in Sudbury. Since that time I am always looking for (and finding) all kinds of interesting Coca-Cola collectibles. My family and even the people I work with bring back trinkets for me when they go on vacation. I hear it a lot, "I was thinking of you the other day. I saw this real neat Coke thing..."



I have been drinking Coca-Cola since I was little. My father owned a bar and I would get a bottle of Coke and peanuts and my heart was happy. I'm now 47 years old. My whole house is Coke. I have my living room filled with blankets, pillows and wallpaper; my dining room with a ceiling fan, trays on the wall and other pictures. In my kitchen, I have dishes (10 different sets), silverware, glasses, magnets on the ice box, another ceiling fan and, of course, a canister set. At Christmas, well, we do our Coca-Cola Christmas tree and Coke train set around the bottom of the tree. We have three different Coke villages. Even the bathroom and bedroom are Coke. What started out as a little refreshing drink turned out to be a BIG thing in my house -- and EVERYONE knows it. I can dress from head to toe in Coke clothes, too. I'm just in love with Coke.



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I have always enjoyed Coca-Cola. I guess I started collecting Coke items after my grandmother died. My mother gave me an old Coke lighter my grandmother had and made me promise not to get rid of it. I kept it and through the years I have collected all I can. My brother, when he visits other countries, always brings me a can or bottle.

My father gave me the Coca-Cola Santa doll in 1957, just like the one in your showcase [at The World of Coca-Cola]. The doll is aging nicely and he comes out of storage each Christmas for the holidays -- after all, he is "Santa." Since my father is no longer living, it was a special moment for me to see my twin Santa in the showcase.

I had the original Santa Claus doll with the Coke® bottle. A patron of a bar in Watertown, NY, gave my dad the Santa to give to me. Then when I was 8 and brought it to school for "show and tell," I lost the small bottle. I think my mom still has the Santa. I loved my Santa and my Coke!

I started collecting Coca-Cola bottles in the 1970s when I was a young child. At the time I wanted to own a bottle from every state. As I grew older, and traveled more, I began collecting international bottles. I now collect international and commemorative bottles as they are released. My childhood collection has grown to about 700 bottles. My collection has appeared in local venues and was written about in a regional newspaper. My collection has inspired my 8-year-old cousin to begin a Coke bottle collection of her own, just as I did when I was around her age.

I started collecting Coca-Cola items back in 1976. If it says Coca-Cola, I want it. Our home in Elkhart, Indiana, has approximately 2,200 square feet of Coca-Cola memorabilia. Today we made the trip to Atlanta for the sole purpose of seeing the World of Coca-Cola. Not only have I filled a substantial amount of space in our home, but my office is also a Coca-Cola haven. Every year for birthdays and Christmas I receive Coca-Cola items as gifts from family/friends at the office. I continue to collect all Coke items and intend to auction all the items off for my retirement income. In addition to the items I collect, it is my drink of choice.

My brother-in-law collects Coke memorabilia. I bring him Coke items from all over the world as I travel. Last year in New Delhi as I was returning to the U.S., Indian customs called me from the departure lounge to open my luggage. They wanted to know what was in the Coke bottle. I opened it and the inspector got a large smile on his face. He thanked me and I left. Looking back, I saw him collecting money from his co-inspectors. He said, "See I told you it was a Coke." Another man said, "Only an American would do that!"



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I have been collecting Coca-Cola® items since I was 12 years old. That is when my aunt and uncle bought me a Coca-Cola truck. My collection now has 300-500 pieces (I've lost count), including a 35 cent machine and Coke cooler. I am here [at World of Coca-Cola] celebrating my b-day today. What a way to celebrate!

It is very sentimental for me to visit this Coca-Cola plant [World of Coca-Cola]. I am 59 now, a citizen of Peru. When I was 9 and 10, I would look forward to the arrival of the Coca-Cola delivery truck to the store at the corner of my house to trade my five bottle caps for a miniature Coca-Cola bottle. I collected 24 miniatures and two boxes to put them. Unfortunately, my sister-in-law gave them to her niece, when I came to the U.S. in 1961. I lost a piece of my childhood.

It all began in 1984. My husband (a driver for a large delivery company) was given a large double-sided Coke cooler by a business on his route. After seeing it in our home, friends and relatives began giving him Coke goodies, and we began picking up commemorative bottles on trips. It has now burgeoned to a huge basement museum that we affectionately call The World of Coke North!



When I was a little girl, I remember having a dispenser where I could pour Coca-Cola into the mini Coca-Cola curved glasses. There were four to six glasses. I thought this was so cool! Eventually, the fountain dispenser broke from over usage. Although the fountain still comes into my thoughts from time to time, I am unsure what happened to my dispenser. Maybe Mom knows!

When my husband asked me to marry him, I said yes. When we were planning our honeymoon, I told him only one request. We **MUST** go to the World of Coca-Cola. We were married yesterday and are here today. What a great start to our honeymoon. In our new home, we have a kitchen, dining room and soon-to-be-finished bathroom all in Coke. We love Coke!!



I purchased a 1960s Coke machine with a glass door in the front. I have it in my garage and it's set up for 50 cents. We live near a rock quarry and sometimes when the blast is strong enough, my machine will give a free Coke.

As a very young boy, my mother and I used to pass the time by visiting a nearby hardware store. It had to be nearby since my father was teaching at a college out of state and he had our only car. At that hardware store was a circa 1950 side pull 10 cent Coke machine. You were not allowed to take the bottles with you. Over the years I began to really treasure those times my mother and I had, and I wanted to re-live



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those moments. As I was telling this story to some friends while I was in college, they told me of a similar machine nearby. I went to see about the machine and, of course, I bought it for \$150.00 -- still working just like the one from the hardware store as a child. To my surprise, it had been used at another hardware store since the day it was delivered. Today it sits in the living room serving up ice-cold Coca-Cola from the original equipment.

I was born in Georgia, so I have been around Coca-Cola my whole life. I can remember when my family and I would go back to Georgia to visit. We would go to my grandmother's house and the first thing she would do is hand us a "Co-Cola," as she called it. I never knew my grandmother that well, as we moved away when I was very young. So I never got to see her that much, but I will always remember her with a "Co-Cola," in her hand. I started collecting memorabilia a few years ago when my grandfather passed away and he left me his collection. It wasn't that much, but I will always remember my grandparents when I see a sign or advertisement for Coca-Cola.



My father has a Coke Santa Doll from 1956, which he gave to me when I was born. I am now 23, and I still have the doll, and sleep with it every Christmas. The Coke Santa is my image of Santa. The designer sure knew how to make people smile -- just like drinking a Coke.

I have a collection of Coke bottles stamped with the city and state of all 50 U.S. states, plus all the countries of Europe, and Canada, Mexico, Thailand, China, Korea, Sri Lanka and the Canary Islands. I started saving marked bottles in 1951 as I traveled around the USA and then enlarged my collection when my daughter spent a year in Austria and traveled extensively to Morocco, Israel, Egypt, etc. My collection is housed in a wooden case with states printed. A second holder was built for the European bottles.



Like people everywhere, I have been a Coca-Cola fan for many years. I have a few Coke bottles of days past; I have Coca-Cola marketing products around the house, Christmas decorations, toy car models and the like. I went a little further than most, however, and I chose Coca-Cola as the theme of a building that I constructed for my collection of old cars. I built what I envisioned as a 1940s to 50s era Coke bottling factory. It is a red brick two-story building that houses my 1947 delivery truck. Inside are old video and pinball games, Coke signs and memorabilia and other old cars. The upstairs portion serves as annex to my office.

People are constantly stopping by to take a look, especially on a nice day; they ask to peer inside and look at the truck and other vehicles while they tell me their Coke stories. Hardly a weekend goes by without someone wanting his picture taken in



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front of my building (or a picture of his old car taken there). The local Coca-Cola bottler has been by and enjoys the attention the retro-looking place gets. There is a back patio where we hold parties and serve Coke in bottles for special occasions. And youngsters are intrigued by the building and think they have stepped back in time.

I've built an old replica gas station next to the Coca-Cola building, complete with gas pumps and an old Coke vending machine. We fly an American flag proudly over the Coke building, and we fly a Coca-Cola flag too. On the top of the Coke building you will notice a globe sculpture of the "World of Coca-Cola." It weighs about 300 pounds and is mounted on a rotating base. Motorized, it spins counter clockwise at a flick of a switch for special occasions.

So if you are ever in El Paso, Texas, and want to stop in and say hello, look for the old cars heading our way; we'll save a cold bottle of Coke for you!

Joe Pickett -- El Paso, TX, USA

From the time I can remember, Christmas was always at my Grandmother's house. I remember rocking in her favorite rocker holding a Coca-Cola Santa doll with a Coke in his hand. That was in the early 1950s. In 1980, my grandmother died at the age of 99. The only thing I wanted from her house was the Santa doll, which the family gave me. It represented everything that Christmas and my grandmother meant to me. Since that time, I have found two more Santa dolls so that each of my three boys will have one to pass on to their children.



While traveling through Europe several years ago, I collected a Coca-Cola can from each country. As I continued my trip, my luggage got heavier and heavier. I finally had to store my Coke collection at a friend's house in Paris while I continued my journey. I ended up in Yugoslavia as the war was breaking out. Since I had no access to newspapers, I had no idea what was happening in world politics. It was quite a journey through the country, with train stations under siege and transportation out of the country nearly impossible. I managed to get my can of Coke for my collection and did make it out without harm. I picked up my Coke collection in Paris and made it home without too much of a problem. Upon my arrival home, my brother was looking at all the cans I had collected and was playing with the large can from Yugoslavia. The country had since broken up and was no longer "Yugoslavia," so I was glad to have a memento. My brother started playing with the can and dropped it, splitting the can open and ruining my Coca-Cola memento. I was so angry with him I didn't speak to him for days!



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I love Coca-Cola! I have an entire (large) collection of Coca-Cola products. My favorite is a very old Coke machine in the original, perfect working order. It belonged to my Dad (who is now deceased). When I was a very small child, I remember my Dad having the machine converted from 5 cents to 10 cents. It is priceless to me! My Dad was a barber; not only do I have his original Coke machine, I also have his barber chair and pole in perfect condition. The Coke machine brings back memories of me sitting in his barber chair and drinking my Coca-Cola from his machine. This was my treat every day for cleaning his shop. Some of my best memories involved Cokes with my Dad.



I was a supervisor with the United States Postal Service. My office was decorated in Coca-Cola memorabilia. I became a local person known for my Coke collection. People from all over the city would come just to see my collection, which was displayed on all four walls, including my desk. This room brought goodwill to the postal service. I talked to many people who had problems with their mail service; a lot of times they became irate, so I just took them into my office. Once they came into my office, they just started looking at the memorabilia and it kind of soothed them. I instantly became friends with them, and we solved their problem in a friendly manner. Thanks Coca-Cola for making my job a little easier.