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Here's history of favorite gifts

(AP) - Game players in Cuba can't play "Monopoly" legally, since Premier Fidel Castro once ordered all known sets seized and destroyed, saying it was 'symbolic of an imperialistic and capitalistic system.'

But Parker Brothers, which has sold over 100 million sets since the game was introduced in 1935, says the Soviet Union, which also banned it, is now letting Russians mortgage little red hotels to their hearts' content. The game, invented by a man named Charles B. Darrow during a spell of unemployment in 1933, now is distributed in 35 countries and in 19 languages.

SILLY PUTTY was invented accidentally in a General Electric Co. lab during World War II, when its scientists were trying to develop synthetic rubber for the war effort.

Besides providing an instant medium for fledgling sculptors, this substance has been used to pick lint, clean typewriter keys, level wobbly furniture, help the Apollo 8 astronauts fasten down tools during weightless flight, and to take hand and foot prints of the gorilla population at the Columbus, Ohio, Zoo. Its manufacturer, Binney & Smith, also says that New England Patriots football team members squeeze Silly Putty to strengthen their hands for catching passes.

ONE OF THE oldest toys is the yo-yo, with origins in a primitive weapon used by prehistoric Filipino hunters. The original version had a sharp piece of flint attached to a long thong. If the hunter's aim was poor, he could retrieve the weapon and try again.

The yo-yo evolved as a court toy in 17th and 18th century France and Spain; a painting of a nobleman holding a yo-yo hangs in the Louvre in Paris.

Playing with the yo-yo is a national sport in the Philippines and is practiced around the world. Over a half a billion yo-yos have been sold in the United States alone since they were introduced commercially in the late 1920s, according to the Flambeau Corporation-Duncan Toys.

THE TEDDY BEAR is a namesake of President Theodore Roosevelt and originated in 1902, when the president refused to kill a bear that his hunting party had captured and tied up for him to shoot. Roosevelt said it would be unsportsmanlike to take advantage of the defenseless animal.

Publicity about the incident inspired a merchant, Morris Michtom, to name two toy bears after the president and display them in his shop window in Brooklyn, N.Y. According to authors Peggy and Alan Badosky in 'The Teddy Bear Catalog,' Michtom received presidential permission to market the stuffed toys under the name "Teddy's Bears." The resulting success led Michtom to found the Ideal Toy & Novelty Co.

LIKE A TRUE waif, the original Raggedy Ann was a castoff found in an attic and adopted by 8-year-old Marcella Gruelle in 1914.

Her father, John Gruelle, a political cartoonist for the Indianapolis News, drew a face for the stuffed, faceless doll, and her mother, Myrtle, added a candy heart inscribed, 'I love you.'

To entertain his terminally ill daughter, Gruelle made up stories about Raggedy Ann. After Marcella died, he began writing the stories as a memorial, with the first Raggedy Ann book appearing in 1918. It later inspired the manufactured dolls, books, TV shows, comics, movies and a Broadway musical.

THE GAME OF tossing disks around in the air may go back before history, but the legend of Frisbees is traceable to a story of some Connecticut college students who made a sport of tossing empty pie tins from Mother Frisbie's Pie Factory and yelling 'frisbie' as an alert to the flight of the plates.

An entrepreneur named Fred Morrison took up the idea, selling disks