

The E.W. and Faith King Collection of Juvenile Literature has grown beyond the initial collection started by Dr. and Mrs. King through gifts from other donors. The collection currently numbers about 14,000 volumes, spanning four centuries. It contains a wealth of treasures such as several early and first editions by American and English authors in the King Collection,

including Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*,

L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Robert Lewis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Although the above titles are fun to read, the purpose of the very early books printed for children was not enjoyment but rather to instruct adolescent members of the privileged classes and nobility. The Collection includes several editions of Comenius' *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Intended "for the use of young Latin scholars," the books served as not only an encyclopedia, but also a Latin vocabulary and reader, and the earliest picture book printed especially for children.

Hornbooks, battledores, and chapbooks were also available in the 17th century, and often served as a person's first primer and introduction to reading in Europe and the New World. Hornbooks and battledores typically contained the upper and lower case letters,

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## Edgar W. & Faith KING

### COLLECTION OF JUVENILE LITERATURE

the Lord's Prayer, and a single line proverb mounted on a solid backing. Unlike hornbooks and battledores whose primary purpose was to instruct, chapbooks are examples of early popular literature. Short, often exciting, stories with illustrations were printed in eight panels on both sides of a large sheet of newsprint-style paper. This sheet was folded several times, the edges were cut, and the result was a cheap book of sixteen pages generally sold by traveling peddlers.

The King Collection also holds a variety of reading instruction books either intended for use at home or in the classroom, including the 1803 copy of the *New England Primer*, and the *Franklin Primer*, dated 1802. Both contain the alphabet, Bible verses, prayers, a short catechism and simple illustrations.



However, William Holmes McGuffey truly revolutionized the way young students learned and set the standard for

future instructional material with his *McGuffey Readers*, the reading texts of choice for American youth in the mid to late 19th century. In addition to a comprehensive compilation of McGuffey's works, the Collection also has an assortment of lesser known readers, as well as selections from later series, such as the *Elson Basic Readers* and several examples of William S. Gray's *Dick and Jane* readers, which assumed importance in the early half of the 20th century.

In addition to works representing major historical developments in children's literature, the King Collection of Juvenile Literature also traces the use of illustration in children's books ranging from the early wood block prints



of Thomas Bewick and Alexander Anderson to notable contemporary artists. In the early 18th century, European women and children produced the majority of color illustration by applying watercolor to each individual page of every book produced. The emergence of

chromolithography, a color printing process using zinc plates, in the late 19th century resulted in a quicker illustration process as well as brighter, bolder color pictures that delighted many children.

As color printing evolved, readers could enjoy the delicate artwork of Beatrix Potter, Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane. The King Collection also includes works illustrated by Randolph Caldecott, George Cruikshank, William Denslow, Gustave Dore, Henry Farny, Maxfield Parrish, Howard Pyle, Arthur Rackham, Maurice Sendak, Kate Seredy, Tasha Tudor, and N.C. Wyeth. This list only scratches the surface of the many marvelous illustrations done by artists known for the quality of their fine artwork as well as for their book illustration.



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