



The



Family Guide

Investing in the Future



to Collecting



While Enjoying Books of Today



Children's Books



Dan Stern



The Family Guide to Collecting Children's Books

*Investing in the Future
While Enjoying Books of Today*



Dan Stern

*DMS Publishers
Santa Monica
California*

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—D.S.

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*"But lest you think me
innocent of every human failing,
let me add that I am in the grip
of one insatiable desire
which so far I have been quite
unable to control . . .
You will want to know
what I am suffering from:
books are the answer,
and the impossibility of
getting enough of them."*¹

—Petrarch (1304 – 1374)

Preface

Several years ago, while clearing a water-logged shelf near the ceiling, my mother came across all my old children's books. Some were beyond repair, others only mildly damaged, a few, miraculously, still in good shape. Several books had pages torn out and crayon scribbled over them—obviously the work of my younger brother, Billy.

As a writer, illustrator, reviewer and former children's book editor, I had already amassed a large collection of children's books, for work and pleasure. My old children's books were a valued addition to it. But I kept coming back to my old and battered books, reading them again and again, studying them, wondering what it was about the books from my own childhood that held such a sway over me. Their influence was much stronger than any of the more recent books I had, beautiful and well-written as they were.

Friends and acquaintances told me that I was lucky even to have my old children's books; most of theirs were no longer in print, falling apart or long ago given away by their parents. They all spoke with a remarkable passion about their favorite children's books, many of which were impossible to find again.

I began to think, "What if parents thought a little more carefully about where to store these books while their children temporarily outgrew them? What if children were encouraged not to scribble on and tear out the pages?"

While I was in college I worked in the book bindery of the library. I thought of myself as a “book doctor,” healing sick books. I look at books as living objects, friends who are always there for you. You can put a book down in mid-sentence, open it again 30 years later and it will still be happy to talk to you.

Imagine this: finding all your old children's books carefully stored away on a shelf, in good condition, with their original bindings and jackets. Open them again and plunge back into the world of childhood.

And, guess what? One of them just happens to be a signed, first edition of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, now worth over \$5,000!

Lucky you! Or was it just luck? Read on and find out . . .

Introduction

Think back. Which books in your life have made the biggest impression on you? More often than not, the ones you read as a child.

Children's books represent that transitional, blossoming moment in our lives when mysterious black marks on a page are transformed into images and adventures, opening our minds to a wider world.

The best of children's books are works of high art, colors and images having as profound an effect on a child as the story itself. They are objects of total design, with originality and care lavished upon text, layout and illustrations.

Perhaps most importantly, they are *democratic* works of art, widely distributed and reasonably priced. This accessibility makes collecting children's books an ideal way for people of all incomes to start building a collection and a resource for the future. Children's books also take up much less space and require less care than other collectibles like toys or furniture.

Children's collectibles are big business: in 1992 a Dudley Do Right lunch box that cost \$2.25 in 1962 was auctioned for \$2,200, the ballroom scene from the animated movie *Beauty and the Beast* was sold for \$44,000 and the first comic book to feature Superman on its cover in 1938 went for \$82,500.³

Children's books are still quite reasonable compared to other collectibles, but this is starting to change. In 1976 *The Wind in the Willows* brought \$3,500 at auction; in



Did you know that Franklin Delano Roosevelt collected children's books? About 400 children's books are in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, N.Y. They include some of his favorites, like *The Last of the Huggermuggers* (by Christopher Cranch, 1856) in which an inscription by Roosevelt reads: "This book and its sequel I read at least a dozen times."²

1990 a copy went for \$22,000. In 1979 a set of A.A. Milne's four children's books brought \$500 to \$900, depending on their condition; at a 1990 auction, a set of signed first editions of A.A. Milne's four *Winnie the Pooh* books sold for \$21,615. Even an unsigned, first edition of Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express*, which was published in 1985 for \$15.95, is already being sold for \$175!

Museums, galleries and collectors are all paying more serious attention: in 1992 the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the High Museum in Atlanta both held exhibitions of children's books. In 1987 the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York had a show devoted exclusively to pop-up books.

But there's no need to pay eye-popping prices. The best way to start collecting is the way most families do, with books being published today:

- They are affordable, useful and easy to find (not out-of-print, rare, or astronomically priced).
- By starting with modern books you can buy what you like for relatively little expense and gradually, economically, develop a focus (see chapter I).
- By collecting recently published books you can get first editions in mint condition for the lowest possible price. You can also identify first editions much more easily in books published since 1980 (see chapter II for why first editions are more valuable and how to

identify them).

- Authors and illustrators of today's books gladly sign them for no extra charge, something that will greatly increase the books' value later on (see chapter III).
- Newly published books still have their dust jackets, the paper covering that goes around the hard cover, in good condition. The dust jacket is one of the most important factors in a book's future value as a collectible (see chapter IV). You can use dust jacket covers to preserve them while the books are being used.
- Books published from the mid-nineteenth century until recently were usually printed on acidic paper and have already begun to deteriorate. Today most publishers use acid-free paper, so recently published books will last much longer.
- New technology continues to improve the quality of art reproduction.

Children's books are a lot more fun today than they were in Puritan times. Here is a typical admonition from a children's book published in 1699: "The Heavy Curse of God, will fall upon those Children that make Light of their Parents."⁴

By keeping in mind a few basic principles—I) develop a focus, II) always try to buy first editions, III) get them signed, IV) protect the dust jackets and V) take care of your books—you will greatly increase the future value of any book you buy and the value of your collection as a whole.

Whether you are buying these books for yourself or your

children, now is the time to start thinking ahead. With a modest initial investment and a little care you can build a collection that is useful, affordable and *a lot* of fun.

While there is no guarantee that you will get rich from collecting children's books, whatever happens you still will have a wonderful collection of books and the thanks of your children and grandchildren.

It's like a day at the races, except there's no way you can lose!

I) Develop a Focus

Developing a focus is the first step in starting a collection. This way you can have a comprehensive, possibly even complete collection. Having a focus will also help save space and money, and will enhance the value of your collection as a whole.

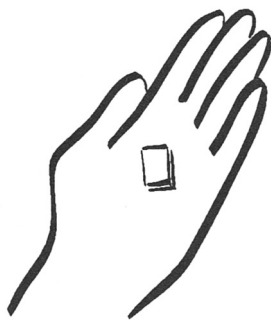
Allow your interests to develop over time. Look at books you already own. You will begin to see patterns emerge. Maybe you have many fables or books on African American themes. Why not build on these areas since they can serve as a nucleus and a foundation?

One woman collects just Cinderella and has over 700 different versions!

The alphabet is a wonderful organizing principle. In Lois Ehlert's ***Eating the Alphabet*** (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989) bold collage and rich watercolors combine to capture the essence of fruits and vegetables. ***As I Was Crossing Boston Common*** by Norma Farber, illustrated by Arnold Lobel (Dutton, 1975), features a witty, lyrical text with illustrations to match. ***On Market Street*** by Arnold Lobel, illustrated by Anita Lobel (Greenwillow, 1981), is a showpiece of decoration and detail.

Pop-ups and moveable books are a delightful, highly collectible genre. Their values tend to increase more than any other category as a whole because they are so popular and fragile. They were also popular in the late nineteenth century, especially the books of German master designer/producer Lothar Meggendorfer. Copies of his books can now sell for \$2,000 to \$6,500, but some of the best pop-ups of all time are being produced today, at very reasonable prices.

Universe by Heather Couper and David Pelham (Random House, 1985), is one of my favorite pop-ups. It's packed with information on panels that slide out from the side. Among its elaborate depictions are "The Big Bang," "Star Birth," "Star Death," and, of course, just in case you want to know what it's going to look like, "The End of the Universe" (another thing I love about children's books—their irreverence and audacity!). In David Pelham's ***A is for Animals*** (Simon & Schuster, 1991) pop-up animals spring out from behind simple square panels. ***Robot*** (Dutton, 1979) and ***Haunted House*** (Delacorte, 1981) by Jan Pieńkowski, are modern classics, filled with humor and inventiveness. ***The Peter Rabbit Spectacular***, based on the original tales by Beatrix Potter (Warne, 1994) and ***The Ultimate Bug Book*** by Luise Woelflein, illustrated by Wendy Smith-Griswold (Golden Books, 1994) are feats of paper engineering, two of the best to have appeared in recent years. Also see David Carter's ***How Many Bugs in a Box?*** (Simon & Schuster, 1988) and Kees Moerbeek ***Have You Seen a Pog?*** (Price Stern Sloan, 1988). There's even a Moveable Book Society (P.O. Box 11654, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08906).



Barbara Raheb of Los Angeles makes some of the smallest books in the world, including miniature pop-ups. Collectors pay up to \$200 for some of her books and the 345 works she has produced in 17 years fill just one shelf over three feet long.⁵

Perhaps you've always been fascinated by tiny objects. Why not collect miniature books? There is a very satisfying tactile quality to tiny books and boxed collections like Maurice Sendak's classic ***Nutshell Library*** (Harper & Row, 1962) or Rosemary Wells' hilarious ***Voyage to the Bunny Planet*** (Dial, 1992) have always been popular. There's even a tiny book bound in fake fur, ***The Little Fur Family*** by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Garth Williams (Harper & Row, 1946). When *The Little Fur Family* is closed you can't even tell that it's a book. It makes a great pillow, "Warm as toast, smaller than most."

Giant books were developed primarily as teaching aids in the classroom, but lately they've found their way into bookstores. They can be decorative additions to your home, serving as posters that can be changed every day simply by turning the page. Many popular older children's books like Robert McClosky's *Make Way for Ducklings* (Viking, 1941), H.A. Rey's *Curious George* (Houghton Mifflin, 1941), and Ezra Jack Keats' *The Snowy Day* (Viking, 1962) are available as giant books. Newer books that employ bold, graphic images like Byron Barton's *Dinosaurs, Dinosaurs* (Crowell, 1989), and Donald Crews' *Freight Train* (Greenwillow, 1978) are especially effective in giant book editions.

Series books are very collectible, partly because it's very easy to know when you have a complete set. But you can run out of room quickly this way. One woman wanted to collect Nancy Drew books "without taking out a second mortgage on my house." So she decided to concentrate on the books she read in the 1950's and 1960's, which narrowed it down to only 38 titles.⁶

Foreign language books are great fun, even if you don't understand the language. They make you appreciate the beauty of words and letters as abstract forms of art in themselves. Foreign books are also windows onto other cultures. One of the best places to find them—and take a great vacation at the same time—is the international children's book fair in Bologna, Italy. Children's publishers from around the world congregate there each April for four days to sell their books. The fair spreads over 200,000 square feet and exhibits more than 1,000 children's book imprints from all over the world. If you



At the first Nancy Drew convention held at the University of Illinois on April 17th and 18th, 1993, scholars and enthusiasts came together to celebrate the adventurousness and independence of a character who "shaped the imagination of generations of women."⁷ There they honored Mildred Benson, the first writer of the Nancy Drew books, who at age 87 still flew airplanes, had made nine solo trips to Central America to study Pre-Columbian archaeology and wrote a column "On the Go With Millie Benson." Said Ms. Benson: "I'm so sick of Nancy Drew I could vomit."⁸

can't afford to go to Bologna in person, the next best thing is the ***Bologna Annual***, published each year by North-South Books. It reproduces the international exhibit of children's book artwork that is the centerpiece of the fair. There's also a beautifully produced magazine, ***Bookbird: World of Children's Books***, that covers children's books from around the world. See if your local children's book library subscribes to it or contact *Bookbird*, The Journal of IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Stanley Coulter Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, 47907, tel: (317) 494-0400. ***The ABA Children's Bookselling Resource*** (see appendix D) has an excellent section on sources for buying foreign children's books.

"The Dorothy Cross collection at Kent State University has an appealing focus. It represents a 'mix' of books available in what might have been a typical home library of a cultured American family of modest income in the first two decades of the twentieth century."⁹ You could create a mix of books found in a typical home library of the last two decades of the twentieth century and create a valuable resource for future scholars.

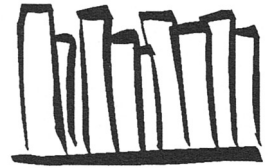
Consider forming a collection around different formats. "When Jane and I retire we may start collecting square books, those which are the same width and height. Always these seem to be the most beautiful; this adaptation from a Japanese folktale is no exception."¹⁰ The writer is referring to ***The Wave***, by Margaret Hodges and illustrated by Blair Lent (Houghton Mifflin, 1964). *The Wave* is a gripping story and a superb example of book design, muscular waves crashing across double page spreads. Other beautifully designed examples include ***Geography from A to Z*** by Jack Knowlton, illustrated by Harriett Barton (Crowell/Harper & Row, 1988) and ***A Child's Good Night Book***, by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Jean Charlot (William R. Scott, Inc., 1943, reissued in its original format by HarperCollins in 1992). There's something about *A Child's Good Night Book* that makes me return to it again and again, picking it up, turning it in my hands, reading it over and over. In it, Margaret

Wise Brown (author of the classic *Goodnight Moon*) creates gentle rhythms on the theme of sleep while Jean Charlot, a renowned muralist, creates equally powerful images; see the green-haired angel and the prayer at the end of the book.

You may have a special affinity for books of your own childhood. People especially want books of the 1930's, 40's and 50's, but because of the problem of new books going out-of-print so fast, even books of the 60's and 70's and are sought after. See chapter VI for dealers that can help you find books that are no longer available in bookstores.

The books I grew up with (those of the 1960's) were mostly created with pre-separated art, a technique artists used to save on production costs.¹¹ Even though it was difficult to do, they did get wonderful effects—oddities of registration added a spontaneous element of chance, the limited palette a refreshing simplicity. When I was a child, my favorite book was *Pepito's Story* by Eugene Fern (Ariel Books, 1960, reissued by Yarrow Press in 1991). It's a wonderful story and a masterpiece of pre-separated art, intense colors amplifying emotional states and a brilliant use of white space. The last illustration, of a tiny house with its windows lit on a huge, dark purple hill at night, is one a child never forgets.

Maybe you love the work of a particular author or illustrator. Try to collect everything they've done. Go to the library and check out *Something About the Author* (a series of books published by Gale Research Inc., Detroit, MI) which lists all their books. Make a want list of books to complete your collection and send it to all the book dealers you know (see the selected list of dealers in chap-



If you see a book you like, BUY IT NOW. Once a book goes spine (back edge) out on a shelf it's out of sight, out of mind. Books go out-of-print very quickly now because of a 1979 Supreme Court ruling that made publishers' inventories taxable. Many don't even go beyond the first printing.

ter VI). Ask your local children's bookseller to let you know when your favorite author's or illustrator's next book appears.

Use your local children's librarian and specialized children's bookseller as resources. Ask them to show you something fun, what they think the best books of the season are. Contact the Association of Booksellers for Children (ABC, 4412 Chowen Ave. S., #303, Minneapolis, MN 55410, tel: (612) 926-6650), to find the location of the children's bookseller specialist nearest you.

Major awards like the Caldecott and Newbery Medals are announced the year after they are first published, so the winners are often into their second and third printings. But if one bookstore doesn't have the first edition of a recently published book, another store might. I wanted to get a first edition of the 1994 Caldecott Medalist, *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say, more than a year after it was first published. Initially I gave up because I was told by a bookstore that it was already in its third or fourth printing. But not long after that I happened to be browsing in a different bookstore and I found a whole stack of first printings of *Grandfather's Journey*!

Award winners are widely collected. The Caldecott Medal, the highest award for children's book illustration in the United States, is the most popular award that people collect. The value of a first edition Caldecott rises quickly. For example, an unsigned, first edition of Ed Young's ***Lon Po Po***, which won the Caldecott Medal and was published in 1989 for \$14.95, is already being sold for more than \$60. The Newbery Medal, the highest award in the U.S. for writing for children, is also a popular way to create a collection. The Greenaway (the English equivalent of the Caldecott) and Carnegie ((the English equivalent of the Newbery) Medals are increasingly valued by collectors in this country.

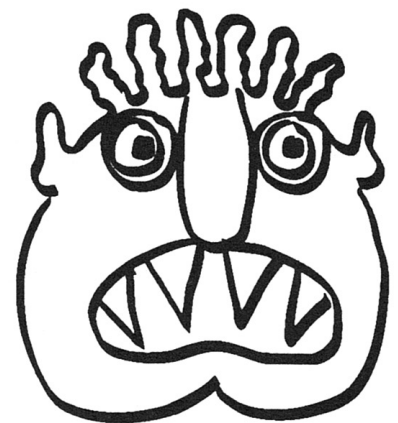
Famous authors and illustrators, like Maurice Sendak, Dr. Seuss and Chris Van Allsburg, are always collectible. Even first editions (see the next chapter regarding first editions) of their most recent books show healthy increases in value only a few years after being published. For example, a signed, first edition of Chris Van Allsburg's ***The Z Was Zapped***, which sold for \$15.95 when first published in 1986, is currently being offered for more than \$100. Works by Tasha Tudor continue to show

strong appreciation in price, and the books of Bertha and Elmer Hader, the Petershams, Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire and Dorothy Lathrop are making a comeback. In recent auctions, pop-ups (antique and modern) and books by Maurice Sendak, Tomie de Paola, Edward Ardizzone and Leo and Diane Dillon sold especially well.

My favorite authors and illustrators include Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire, Esther Averill, Harry Behn, Ludwig Bemelmans, Marcia Brown, Margaret Wise Brown, Mark Buehner, Virginia Lee Burton, Eric Carle, Lucy Cousins, William Pène Du Bois, Roger Duvoisin, Marjorie Flack, Andre François, M.B. Goffstein, William Joyce, Maira Kalman, Kevin Henkes, Arnold Lobel, James Marshall, Steven Kellogg, Juliet Kepes, Ruth Krauss, H.A. Rey, Jon Scieszka, Maurice Sendak, Dr. Seuss, Lane Smith, Bernard Waber, E.B. White and Garth Williams. I wish I could talk about all my favorite books here, but let me at least describe a few recent ones that I think will be valued by collectors in the future:

- ***Go Away Big Green Monster*** by Ed Emberley (Little, Brown 1993). Ed Emberley is a former Caldecott winner, which adds to the collectible value of this book, but it is truly ingenious anyway. With an economy of means Emberley uses die cuts to make a monster appear and disappear, giving young children a sense of control over one of their worst nightmares.

- ***The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*** written by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith and de-



signed by Molly Leach (Viking, 1992). Watch for wildly original, distinctive books like this one that strike out in new directions. *The Stinky Cheese Man* is a hilarious take-off on the design of books, an exuberant collaboration of writer, illustrator and designer. This book pushes the limits of the book form with the “Table of Contents” crashing on the characters, the words “Title Page” being larger than the actual title, a character on the back cover actually drawing attention to the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) bar code on back of book—something designers always hate and try to hide—and all sorts of self-referential touches and parodies of traditional tales.

- ***Chrysanthemum*** by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow, 1991). Kevin Henkes is one of the few people who writes as well as he draws (in the tradition of Robert McClosky, William Pène Du Bois and Arnold Lobel) and this book has the feel of a classic. The story deals with a common theme in childhood, being made fun of for one's name, and Henkes handles it with great humor and warmth in both illustrations and text.

- ***Snow White and Rose Red***, retold from Grimm, illustrated by Gennady Spirin (Philomel, 1993), and ***The Frog Princess***, retold by J. Patrick Lewis, illustrated by Gennady Spirin (Dial, 1994). Gennady Spirin is a remarkably prolific illustrator given that his art

is in the highly rendered, traditional Russian style. His work generally has a very dark patina which can be oppressive and cluttered when he covers the whole page. But when he leaves some white space, as in these two books, his work breathes and comes alive with a spontaneity, vitality and warmth that is often lost in this very realistic style of illustration. Check out the bear in *Snow White and Rose Red*; it seems to pop right off the page.

• ***The Escape of Marvin the Ape*** by Caralyn Buehner, illustrated by Mark Buehner (Dial, 1993) and ***Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm*** by Jerdine Nolan, illustrated by Mark Buehner (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1994). Mark Buehner is a talented young illustrator early in his career. Exuberance, humor, and delight in details, are trademarks of his style. Like Steven Kellogg, you can tell this is someone who really loves what he does. In both of these books, Buehner ingeniously hides little animals in each of the illustrations in a way that underlines the action and gives children and adults extra fun in following the story.

• ***Dear Benjamin Banneker***, by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney (Gulliver Books/Harcourt Brace, 1994). The field of children's literature has produced a remarkable number of husband and wife teams, and this young couple is well on its way to becoming one of the best. This book is



the true story of a talented black man who challenged Thomas Jefferson for having written “all men are created equal” while owning slaves. Using scratchboard and oil paint, Brian Pinkney (son of the well-known children’s book artist Jerry Pinkney) creates luminous, expressive illustrations, full of feeling and movement.



I use my collection as a working, reference library. I like to collect different styles of writing and illustration to study. I’m not so interested in having the entire body of work of a particular author or illustrator since once I have several examples of their style I want to leave room for others in my collection. As a result, my collection may not end up being worth as much as it could be if I were more focused, but I do follow the basic principles you’ll learn in the next few chapters: always check for first editions, get books signed by the author and illustrator whenever possible, use dust jacket covers, and take care of the books. These steps greatly increase the value of individual books and the collection as a whole in the long run. In the meantime—and most importantly—I get to use and enjoy my books.

- Above all, follow your heart.
- Buy what you will use and enjoy.

Focus on books that make you smile!

II) Buy First Editions

Even if you never develop a focus, always try to buy first editions. All other factors being equal, collectors and dealers always pay higher prices for the first edition of a book.

Consider this: a first edition of Robert McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings* (Viking, 1941), in nice shape, with dust jacket, **could sell for \$1,500 or more**. A second printing of *Make Way for Ducklings* in similar condition would only be worth \$25!¹²

What is a first edition?

When you open a book dealer's catalog and see the term "first edition," it actually refers to the ***first printing*** of the first edition of a book. It is a shorthand that has led to a lot of confusion.

Technically, one should always say "First Edition, First Printing" or "First Edition, First Impression." But since very few people do, it is essential to remember that for collectors, **the *first printing* of a book is the most desirable** and what is commonly referred to as the "first edition."

Why are first editions more valuable?

Besides the natural human tendency to want to have the first of anything, there are some good reasons for wanting to have the first edition of a book:



Unlike stamps, a book that has a mistake—bound upside down, pages reversed or missing—is not more valuable. It is actually less valuable.

If you see your children love a certain book and it is a first edition, consider buying another, later printing for them to use and save the first edition for when they have grown up.

- First editions are usually produced with more care than later printings. Artists and art directors often go “on press” (to the printer to watch the first print run) in order to achieve the best possible results. Later printings are not supervised as closely, so errors and a reduction in quality can creep in. Also, sometimes well-known authors or artists like Maurice Sendak or Nancy Ekholm Burkert are able to insist on better quality paper and bindings for the first printing.
- First editions are usually printed in smaller numbers than later printings. This is because the publisher doesn't know how successful the book will be at first and does not want to print too many copies. So the first printing becomes like a limited edition of the book.
- In late nineteenth and early twentieth century children's books, the quality of illustrations usually deteriorated with successive reprintings due to printing methods of the time. Today's printing methods have improved greatly, but a reduction in quality still occurs when reprintings aren't supervised carefully.

How do you identify first editions?

Books are normally identified as first editions on the copyright page. The copyright page, where registration

protecting works of literature and art is written, is usually on the back of the title page (or sometimes at the end of the book).

In many older children's books copyright notices looked something like this:

Copyright, 1931, by Marjorie McGillicudy. All rights reserved.

They did not provide much information and often weren't even on a page by themselves.

The best way to tell if an older book is a first edition is usually from the dust jacket—the protective paper covering that goes around the hard cover of a book—if the book still has one. Price, biographical and “other books for sale” information on the dust jacket can help establish when it was printed. But this requires a lot of research.

Another advantage to collecting books of today is that since about 1980 most publishers have been noting on copyright pages whether a book is a first edition or not.

Here is what a typical copyright page might look like on a recently published book:

Text copyright © 1994 by Frederic Martin

Illustrations copyright © 1994 by Mary Stuart
All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Martin, Frederic. The Biggest Balloon.

Summary: A rhymed account of the crossing of a huge balloon carrying five animals over the ocean.

[1. Stories in rhyme. 2. Animals - Fiction]

I. Stuart, Mary II. Title

PX9.3.F225Ar [F] 93-6521 ISBN: 0-000-11111

Published in the United States

by XYZ Publishers
Printed in U.S.A. First Edition
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

As you can see there is a lot more information than there used to be. And it does say “First Edition.” But let’s take a closer look:

Printed in U.S.A. First Edition
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The numbers below the words “First Edition” indicate the printing of the book. In this case, the numbers start with “2.” So it’s actually **the *second printing of the first edition!***

Technically, “first edition” refers to the way a book appears when it is first published. If any revisions to the text or illustrations are made, it would be then be a “second edition.” So even the 25th printing of the first edition of a book is still a “first edition.”

And this is where the confusion comes in: when collectors and dealers refer to “first edition” they mean the first printing; **when publishers say “first edition” sometimes they mean first printing, sometimes they don’t.**

I have seen “First Edition” on copyright pages followed by the numbers 11 12 13 . . . meaning it’s the 11th printing! And, technically, the publisher is correct: as long as there have been no changes to the text or illustrations it is still a “first edition” in later printings.

So, remember, for the purposes of collectors, **the numbers (or letters) are more important than the words** “First Edition.” Only when there aren’t any numbers fol-

lowing the words “First Edition” or “First Impression” or “First Printing” can you be sure that it is the first printing that collectors want so much.

The problem is that there is no standardization among publishers. Sometimes they drop the words “First Edition” after the first printing, sometimes they don’t. Sometimes they print the numbers left to right, sometimes right to left, sometimes alternating. Sometimes they use letters. Sometimes they say “First Edition” and don’t have any numbers. Sometimes they have numbers, but don’t say “First Edition.”

Go figure.

Here are some examples of what a first edition (i.e. first printing) should look like:¹³

Printed in U.S.A. First Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the U.S.A.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Printed in the U.S.A.
First Edition
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

First Edition
A B C D E

Manufactured in the United States of America
2 4 6 8 0 9 7 5 3 1

First Edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Impression
[no numbers or letters]

First Printing
[no numbers or letters]



Just like checking the dates on milk containers at the supermarket, you might as well check the shelves for the more valuable first printing: there is no difference in the publisher's price between different printings of a book soon after it is published. Sometimes they are mixed together on the shelf. If you can't get a first printing, try to find the earliest printing possible.

First Edition
[no numbers or letters]

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
[no "First Edition" written]

If one bookstore doesn't have the first edition of a recently published book, another store often will. Even if a store says to you, "We're out of it and the publisher is out-of-stock, too," you probably can find it by checking around, especially at stores with less popular children's book sections. And check the shelves yourself because sometimes stray copies don't show up on the store's computerized inventory.

Now here's a pop quiz. Can you tell what printings the following are? The answers are at the bottom of the page.

Printed in U.S.A. First Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

First Edition 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Printed in U.S.A.
First Edition
3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2 1

First Edition
C D E F G

Manufactured in the United States of America
2 4 6 8 0 9 7 5 3

First Edition 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Congratulations! Now you get the idea.

The importance of being able to identify a first edition really came home to me at a book signing recently. I picked a book off the top of the pile and just as the author and artist were about to sign it, I noticed that the copyright page said, "First Edition 2 3 4 5 6 . ." (i.e. second printing). Going back to the pile I found another book with a copyright page that said "First Edition 1 2 3 4 5 6 . ." (i.e. first printing). *Then* I got it signed.

- Answers:
1) 2nd printing 2) 3rd printing 3) 1st printing
4) 3rd printing 5) 2nd printing 6) 4th printing

III) Get Your Books Signed

Books signed by the author/illustrator, especially first editions, become more valuable than unsigned copies.

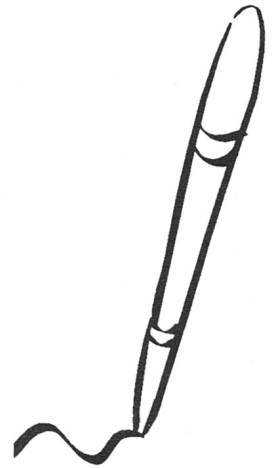
For example, at the 1990 auction of the H. Bradley Martin collection at Sotheby's in New York, a set of **unsigned** first editions of A.A. Milne's four *Winnie the Pooh* books sold for \$2,750; **signed they sold for a total of \$21,615!**

By collecting recently published books you can get them signed by their authors and illustrators for no extra charge. They often tour the country to promote their books, reading and signing at bookstores.

Get on the mailing lists of local bookstores and galleries to find out when authors and illustrators will be appearing in your vicinity. If you live far from a bookstore, or if authors and illustrators you like don't come to your area, bookstores sometimes sell signed copies through the mail.

Try to get illustrators to do a little drawing, as that adds to the value of the book—an original illustration as well as a charming keepsake.

People often ask whether it's better to get a personal inscription (i.e. "To Sue Alexander with best wishes" versus just plain "With best wishes") when getting a book signed. A personal inscription makes a book more valuable because it means there was a personal connection with the signer. There is a warmth about a personal inscription that an anonymous message or plain signature lacks. Also, the longer the inscription, the more it adds to the value of the book.¹⁶



Unless you are the author, illustrator or someone famous, writing a dedication or inscription in a book yourself will reduce its value for most collectors, but "Frederick Gardner of Amityville, NY, . . . treasures the dedications found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century juveniles for their reflection of 'adult striving and the child's reaction to it when following the events of a period.' Also cherished are *i n s c r i p t i o n s* — particularly invectives heaped upon the book thief written by the book's young owner . . ." ¹⁴ like the following from a book published in 1875:

"Steal not this book, my honest friend for fear the gallows be your end, and when you die the Lord will say where is that book you stole away and if you say you do not know the Lord will say go down below."¹⁵

On the other hand, if there's a chance you may want to give the book as a gift to someone else (and you're not sure who yet), it's better not to have the author or illustrator sign it to you personally.

At one time even I didn't appreciate the importance of getting books signed. I actually returned a book signed by Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer because I didn't want his signature marring the title page. The bookseller was horrified that her signed first edition Singer had somehow gotten mixed in with her other books and was grateful that I had returned something so valuable to her.

IV) Protect the Dust Jackets

The dust jacket (also known as “dust wrapper”) is the paper cover that wraps around the hard cover of a book. It keeps the cover free of dirt, marks and fading. Today’s dust jackets are usually plasticized and more durable than the thin paper ones of earlier days, but they still can be damaged and worn.

I can’t emphasize enough the importance of protecting the dust jacket. It will greatly enhance the value of the book later on and the information preserved on the flaps is an important and fascinating reflection of the time when the book was published. That information (about the author/illustrator and other books for sale at the time of publication) is also crucial in determining whether books published before 1980 are first editions or not because they usually don’t have the numbering system described in chapter II.

Allen Ahearn, in *Book Collecting: A Comprehensive Guide*, states “On books twenty years old or older, the average increase in value added by the dust wrapper would be close to 400%, providing the dust wrapper is in fine condition.” For certain rare books it’s not unusual for the book to sell for five to ten times more with the dust jacket than without, sometimes even 20 to 25 times as much.

At the 1990 H. Bradley Martin auction at Sotheby’s in New York, a first edition of Kenneth Grahame’s 1908 *The Wind in the Willows* with the very rare dust jacket (and an autograph letter inserted) sold for \$22,000. At that same auction another first edition of the same book with-



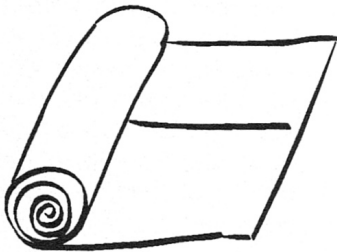
When giving a book as a gift, consider not clipping the price on the corner of the dust jacket. It’s really not that big a secret as to what books sell for and clipping the price will reduce the book’s value as a collectible. But it *is* good to remove the price sticker many bookstores add to the dust jacket. The sticky gum is acidic and will damage and discolor the dust jacket over time.

out the dust jacket and not in quite as good condition sold for only \$4,400.

There are two ways you can preserve the dust jackets of your books. One is simply to take the jackets off and put them away in a drawer. The other way is to use a dust jacket cover— a clear acetate covering that wraps around the dust jacket and protects it from tearing and scuffing. Most people are familiar with dust jacket covers from library books which almost always have them on.

I recommend using dust jacket covers because then the dust jacket is protected, it stays with the book, and the cover of the book is protected. Inside a drawer the dust jacket may get crushed, crinkled or misplaced.

Dust jacket covers also hold torn or deteriorated covers together very well without tape. Tape is very acidic and should never be used on or in books (see chapter V). Dust jacket covers can be purchased from most used book dealers or directly and much more cheaply from the following manufacturers. Call for their free catalogs. Also ask for their archival catalogs and acid-free products (see p. 37):



Get dust jacket covers on rolls because many children's books are long, horizontal "landscape" formats (i.e. wider than they are tall). I use center slit covers and 12 inch tall rolls should cover most books.

Brodart – telephone (800) 233-8959

Demco – telephone (800) 356-1200

Garylord Brothers – telephone (800) 448-6160

University Products – telephone (800) 628-1912

How to put on a dust jacket cover (in 9 easy steps):



1) Place the dust jacket face down on the dust jacket cover.



2) Open the upper side of the dust jacket cover. Move the dust jacket up close to the fold.



3) Open the other side of the dust jacket cover.



4) Pull the lower side of the dust jacket cover towards the upper side.



5) With the dust jacket firmly enclosed, crease the lower edge of the dust jacket cover.



6) Fold the dust jacket flap where it wraps around the cover of the book.



7) Crease the edge of the flap. Repeat steps 6 and 7 for the other side.



8) Place the covers of the book under the flaps.



9) Voilà!

Using dust jacket covers is cheap and easy to do. Like preventative medicine, it really pays off. It's a message about the book that says, "This is an important book, treat it with care." Authors and illustrators will also appreciate it. Once I took a book with a dust jacket cover on it for Caldecott Award winning illustrator Uri Shulevitz to sign. He turned it over carefully in his hands, looked up at me, smiled, and said, "Nice."

V) A Reverence for Books

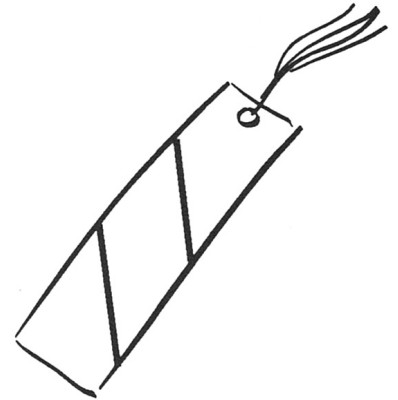
You can greatly increase the lives of your books and their value as collectibles for generations to come with a few simple measures.

First of all, think about how you handle your books. If you treat books with respect, hold them gently (just as you would any object or person that you love), and turn their pages carefully with dry, clean hands, they will remain in excellent condition and last a long time. Also remember that the way you treat books is the way your children will learn to handle their books.

Store books away from ceilings, basements, furnaces, sunlight, attics or outside walls—anywhere they might be exposed to direct light, heat or humidity.

Above all, **NEVER USE TAPE** to fix tears on pages or dust jackets. Tape is extremely acidic and it eventually falls off anyway. As anyone who has come across something with old tape on it—especially Scotch tape—knows, tape turns brown with age, leaving an ugly, sticky residue. If you do want to mend a page there are acid-free tapes available from conservation supply houses like Gaylord Brothers (see p. 37).

Dust jacket covers (see previous chapter) hold torn or deteriorated dust jackets together very well without tape—actually much better than any tape ever could because the dust jacket is completely enclosed, halting old tears and preventing new ones from developing. Consider



There is a bookmark by Hardie Gramatky (author/illustrator of the classic *Little Toot*) that shows children how to handle and take care of books. It's available from the Children's Book Council (telephone (800) 999-2160).

There is a magic marker pen that tests whether paper is acidic or not simply by making a line on the paper and seeing what color it turns. It's called the Abbey pH Pen[®] and it's available through Gaylord Brothers (next page).

getting acid-free dust jacket covers which are only slightly more expensive than regular ones.

Don't put newspaper clippings in books. Newspaper is highly acidic, which is why it turns brown after only a few days or when exposed to sun. If you really want to keep a clipping with the book, make a copy on acid-free paper or put it in an acid-free envelope. In general it's better not to keep anything inside a book, including pressed flowers which will stain the book (unless you value the flowers more than the book).

If you do have a book that needs repair, the first rule of conservation is to do no harm. Minor repairs can often be done yourself and can be quite satisfying. Most libraries will have beginner books on bookbinding. You can also consult a local bookbinder. Ask local used/rare book dealers for good bookbinders or contact the Guild of Bookworkers (521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175, telephone (212) 757-6454) for a list of teachers and practitioners.

For paperbacks and fragile old books without dust jackets there are clear plastic envelopes they can be slipped into. It's best to order these from one of the conservation supply sources listed below to be sure the plastic is inert and won't hasten the deterioration process.

For insurance and general record keeping purposes it's a good idea to keep all your receipts for purchases of children's books together, make periodic videotapes of your collection and keep it all in a safe deposit box. Computer database programs now make cataloging your collection easier than ever to do. Note that many insurance

policies don't cover collectible items beyond the value of their original purchase price, so a special policy or rider may be necessary if you have especially valuable items in your collection.

Here are some sources for dust jacket covers and library preservation supplies. Call for their general and archival catalogs:

Brodart Co.

1609 Memorial Avenue
Williamsport, PA 17705
Tel: (800) 233-8959

Brodart has archival dust jacket covers on rolls,
great for children's books that come in long,
horizontal formats.

Demco

P.O. Box 7488
Madison, WI 53707
Tel: (800) 356-1200

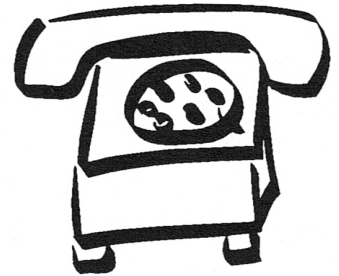
Gaylord Brothers

P.O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221
Tel: (800) 448-6160

Gaylord Brothers has an excellent archival catalog filled with "technical tips" and useful supplies.

University Products, Inc.

517 Main Street P.O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041
Tel: (800) 628-1912



Gaylord Brothers also has a toll-free Archival HelpLine, (800) 428-3631, where you can speak to a trained conservator for free on Thursdays and Fridays.

VI) Sources for Books

For currently available and new books, try to go to a specialized children's bookseller. Children's literature is a vast and often misunderstood field, one which requires years of reading and experience for a bookseller to be able to recommend the right books to parents and children. To locate the specialized children's bookseller nearest you, contact the Association of Booksellers for Children (ABC, 4412 Chowen Ave. S., #303, Minneapolis, MN 55410, tel: (612) 926-6650).

For books from your own childhood that are no longer available (out-of-print), or to fill in gaps in your collection, I have listed alphabetically some rare and out-of-print children's book dealers that I have worked with or know of by reputation. You can also contact the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020, tel: (212) 757-9395), for a more extensive list of dealers and those in your area. See Appendix B for auction houses like Sotheby's, California Book Auctions and Waverly Galleries, and Appendix D for periodicals like *Martha's KidLit Newsletter*, *AB Bookman's Weekly* and *Firsts: Collecting Modern First Editions*.

Also, an "Antiquarian Book Arcade" recently opened in New York City. Located at 110 West 25th Street on the 9th floor, it has over 65 booksellers under one roof! (tel: (212) 620-5627, open daily 10:00 am – 6:00 pm.).

Marion F. Adler

Out-of-Print Children's Books

P.O. Box 627

Stockbridge, MA 01262

Tel: (413) 298-3559

Specializes in locating hard to find children's books.¹⁷

"Free World-Wide Search Service for Out-of-Print Children's Books. Open by Appointment for Buying, Selling and Browsing."

Aleph-Bet Books

670 Waters Edge

Valley Cottage, NY 10989

Tel: (914) 268-7410

Knowledgeable dealers who sell nineteenth and twentieth century children's books: "We have the largest selection of rare and collectible children's books in the northeast . . .

Visits are welcome by appointment."

Books of Wonder[®]

132 Seventh Avenue (at 18th Street)

New York, NY 10011

Tel: (800) 835-4315

Children's book specialists who sell new books, older collectible books and original art. Because they are in the heart of New York City, the publishing capital of the world, they get many authors and illustrators who may not travel elsewhere to sign books. Books of Wonder then sells those signed books, often first editions, at no extra cost (other than shipping) through the mail. Books of Wonder also recently started a "Collector's Club" which provides discounts, signed first editions (with archival quality dust jacket covers) and other special offers.

Cattermole Books provides a truly invaluable service by providing ex-library books (books that have been discarded from public libraries) at very reasonable prices. Ex-library books are usually not worth much as collectibles because of the marks left by stamps, tape, children, etc. But they are very useful for study purposes and as reading copies of books that are expensive or hard to find.

Cattermole 20th Century Children's Books

9880 Fairmount Road

Newbury, Ohio 44065

Tel: (216) 338-3253

Picturebooks and literature published since 1925. Fascinating catalogs, wide range of prices, and the most amazing return policy around: "All materials are returnable at any time for any reason or none; further Cattermole will credit the full purchase price of any book returned in purchased condition toward the price of a better, more valuable copy of the same book, at any time in the future."

Carol Docheff-Bookseller

1390 Reliez Valley Rd.

Lafayette CA 94549

Tel: (510) 935-9595

A favorite supplier of Marion Adler (see previous page): "Out-of-print/first edition children's books. Monthly catalogues issued."

Hobbyhorse Books

P.O. Box 591

Ho Ho Kus, NJ 07423

Tel: (201) 327-4717

This dealer specializes in children's books from the nineteenth century and earlier. Well-written, detailed catalogs.

The Prince and the Pauper

3201 Adams Avenue

San Diego, CA 92116-1654

Tel: (619) 283-4380

An entire store devoted to used and collectible children's books. Worth the trip.

Jo Ann Reisler, Ltd

360 Glyndon St. NE

Vienna, VA 22180

Tel: (703) 938-2967

One of the most active dealers: "Serving Discriminating Collectors since 1970. Fine Children's and Illustrated Books, Original Illustrative Art. Aggressive Prices Paid: Quote Us!"

Justin G. Schiller, Ltd.

135 East 57th Street, 12th floor

New York, NY 10022

Tel: (212) 832-8231

Upper end of the market (i.e. high prices) with an emphasis on nineteenth century and earlier children's books: "Early Children's Books & Related Juvenilia, Manuscripts and Original Drawings . . . the oldest antiquarian book firm in the United States continuously specializing in rare and collectible children's books in all languages and all time periods."

Bibliophile Online

301 Arizona Ave., Suite 200

Santa Monica, CA 90401

Tel: (310) 394-5590

and

Interloc

P.O. Box 5

Southworth, WA 98386

Tel: (360) 871-3617

For the technology minded there are a number of online services for booksellers and collectors springing up. Bibliophile Online and Interloc are two that offer ways to advertise and search for collectible books via computer and

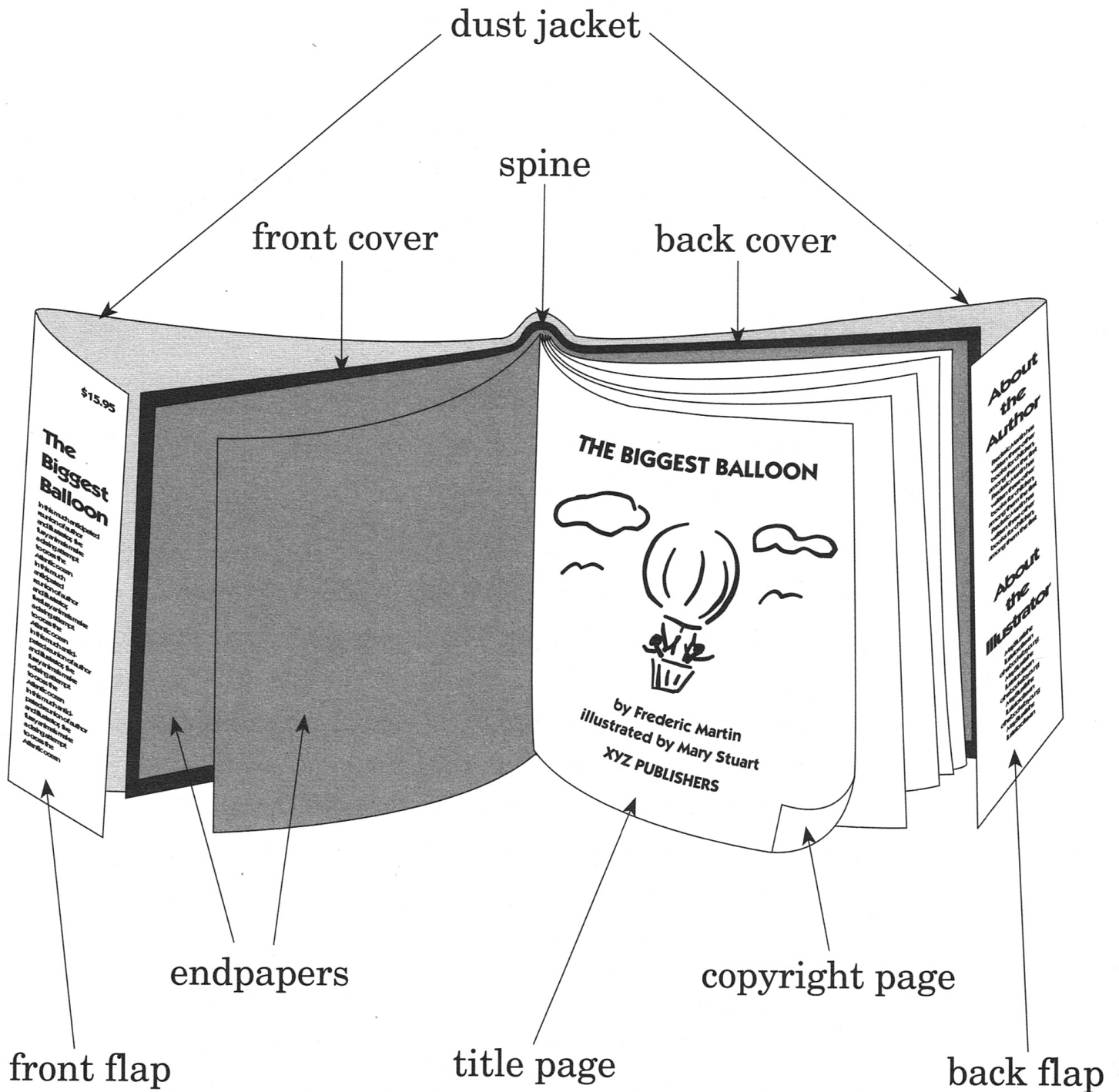
Good places to rummage for collectible children's books include library book sales, antiquarian book fairs, second hand bookstores, thrift shops, garage or tag sales, flea markets, and antique shows.

modem and over the Internet. Among other things, Bibliophile Online offers a “books for sale” database, online catalogs, international lists of dealers, a “Book Café” (with reviews , newsletters, workshops, etc.), resources like Internet “Newsgroups,” demo programs, a private mailbox, even a way to verify signatures of famous authors on-screen! Interloc also has a variety of forums, including catalogs, events, issues, auctions, libraries, dealers and more.

Appendices

Appendix A

Anatomy of a Book



Appendix B

Donating or Selling

The other side of collecting is donating or selling. Much as we would like to, we can't take it with us.

This assumes you haven't been saving the books for your children or grandchildren—a wonderful legacy!—while they temporarily outgrow them. But even they might consider donating or selling some of the books that have appreciated considerably or ones they don't want to keep.

Donating

Depending on your tax bracket, it can actually be more advantageous financially to donate a book than to sell it. Ask your accountant to be sure.

Also, in an era where libraries are being cut back in every way, individuals can play a key role in creating important, imaginative collections. This is especially important in light of a Supreme Court decision of the late 1970's that made inventory taxable, forcing publishers to put books out-of-print much sooner than they would otherwise choose to do so. So while there may be more than 5,000 children's books being published each year, they now go out-of-print at an even faster pace and will soon be lost to future generations and scholars.

There are many places that would appreciate having your books: local schools, universities and public libraries, your alma mater. See Carolyn Field's *Special Collections in Children's Literature* for collections that specialize in children's books and ask your local children's book librarian about collections in your area.

Always get written documentation when you make a donation, so you will have proof when you claim a tax deduction. If you need a written appraisal (required for donations greater than \$5,000) you can try a rare children's book dealer (see chapter VI) or The American Society of Appraisers, a 6,500-member nonprofit professional organization based in Washington (1-800-ASA-VALU or 1-703-478-2228) which has a directory of certified specialists. They adhere to a code of ethics calling for no selling, and flat or hourly fees (no percentage fees).

Consider the research collections listed below. They may want all your books or be looking for some of the items you have to fill gaps in their own collections. In this way your books would be well taken care of for future scholars of children's books. They are also great places for doing research on children's books:

The de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection

McCain Library and Archives
Southern Station, Box 5148
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5148
Dee Jones, Curator
Tel: (601) 266-4349

A major research center, the de Grummond collection is also probably the easiest to donate to. They seem to have the most room of any of the collections and will take materials from anyone. They also provide an appraisal free of charge that you can use for tax purposes.

The Kerlan Collection

Children's Literature Research Collections

109 Walter Library, 117 Pleasant Street S.E.

University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, MN 55455

Karen Nelson Hoyle, Curator

Tel: (612) 624-4576

An internationally recognized center for research in the field of children's literature, with contemporary American children's books forming the core of the collection.

The Northeast Children's Literature Collections

Special Collections Department U-5SC

Homer Babbidge Library

369 Fairfield Road

Storrs, CT 06269-1005

Ellen Embardo, Curator

Tel: (203) 486-2524

Specializes in writers and illustrators from the northeast United States.

Children's Literature/Special Collections

Knight Library

University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403-1299

Bernard McTigue, Curator

Tel: (503) 346-1904

Especially wants writers and illustrators from the west and northwest United States.

Selling

First of all, consult at least two rare book dealers who specialize in children's books (see chapter VI). Some auction houses have free appraisal clinics, like California Book Auctions. It can also be helpful to speak to a children's book librarian or professor of children's literature, as they often have a good grasp of the history of the field and usually no interest in buying and selling themselves.

If it turns out to be a very valuable book, you should consult more dealers and several auction houses as well.

Once you are armed with some specific information, you are ready to sell. If you happen to know any collectors who might be interested in your books, the best thing to do is approach them directly as you can then keep all the profit yourself. But short of that, there are three ways of selling: through dealers, at auction or advertising.¹⁸

Selling Through Dealers

Approach several dealers. Because they cater to different clienteles and have different specialties, their offers can vary quite a bit.

If they have an immediate customer they may give you close to what they would charge for the book in order to get it for their client. If it is an area they are especially interested in and knowledgeable about, but they have no ready buyer, the offer will be roughly 50% of the final price (i.e. the price you would see the book advertised for in the dealer's catalog). If the book is not desirable to them, they may offer as little as 20% of the expected price or they may pass altogether.

Antiquarian book fairs are great places to check out current prices, meet dealers and even show them some of your books. They are usually happy to give you an idea of what they are worth and may even offer to buy them from you on the spot. Be sure, though, to show your books to dealers who specialize in children's books, and show your books to several dealers as their estimates can vary widely based upon the factors described at left.

Remember that expertise is everything: at an antiquarian book show once I saw a dealer buy a first edition of Taro Yashima's *Crow Boy* (Viking, 1955) from another dealer for \$40 and then immediately put it out on his own table for \$75 dollars! The original dealer hadn't realized that *Crow Boy* was a Caldecott Honor Book.¹⁹

Selling *on consignment* can yield a higher return to you, but not every dealer will do it. The more valuable the book, however, the more likely that a dealer will accept it on consignment. The dealer's fee for selling on consignment is negotiable, but usually runs 20% to 30% of the final asking price of the book.

See chapter VI for a list of rare and out-of-print children's book dealers.

Selling At Auction

Auctions set useful benchmarks for what the open market is willing to pay and their catalogs are fascinating to study, but they should be taken with a grain of salt.

Prices can fluctuate widely depending on a variety of factors: timing of a sale relative to general economy; the appearance of important children's books in a fine literature sale driving up prices because they seem so cheap to collectors accustomed to paying extraordinary prices; the presence of two buyers competing for the same book, sending the price through the roof. It can also be difficult sometimes to determine the condition of a book from auction catalogs.

Specialists at auction houses will sometimes give you an estimate over the phone and it can be interesting to com-

pare their estimates to those of dealers—my experience has been that auction houses tend to estimate on the high side and dealers on the low side and that the final price lies somewhere in between. Auction houses sometimes have free appraisal clinics (see California Book Auctions).

Sotheby's and Christie's in New York and London, Swann Galleries in New York, Waverly Auctions in Baltimore and California Book Auctions in Los Angeles and San Francisco all handle children's books, but with differing frequency and catering to very different clienteles. See the following descriptions before contacting them to see if what you want to sell is appropriate for the markets they handle:

California Book Auction Galleries

(a division of Butterfield & Butterfield)

220 San Bruno Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 861-7500

7601 Sunset Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90046

Tel: (213) 939-6202

California Book Auctions accepts individual books with a minimum value of \$500, but they also handle estates and collections with less expensive books. They have free appraisal clinics every two weeks in both their San Francisco and Los Angeles offices (in San Francisco the first and third Monday of every month, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and in Los Angeles the first and third Tuesday of every month, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.), as well as in different parts of the country. They have rare book and manuscript sales three times per year (very expensive items), mid-

price sales once a month (items \$50 and up) and shelf and book case sales every 2 weeks (usually from estates).

Christie's Fine Art Auctioneers

502 Park Avenue at 59th Street

New York, NY 10022

Tel: (212) 546-1000

and

Sotheby's Inc.

1334 York Avenue

New York, N.Y. 10021

Tel: (212) 606-7000

Both Sotheby's and Christie's auction houses handle children's books in their New York and London offices, but unless you have something very rare (i.e. minimum value \$1,500 for Sotheby's and \$5,000 for Christie's) or a major collection this is not the right venue for you. It is interesting, though, to see catalogs and prices from sales they've held in the past, especially the landmark H. Bradley Martin sale at Sotheby's in January 1990. On June 14th & 15th, 1993, Sotheby's also had the sale of the estate of Richard W. Hansen, a major collector who supported his love of books by working as a chauffeur!

Swann Galleries

104 East 25th Street

New York, NY 10010

Tel: (212) 254-4710

Swann Galleries handles books, maps, atlases, autographs and anything on paper. They require a minimum of \$1,000 worth of material from a consigner to include them in an auction. Their minimum price at auction is \$100. They hold book auctions every week from September to June.

Waverly Auctions

4931 Cordell Avenue

Bethesda, MD 20814

Tel: (301) 951-8883

Waverly Auctions handles books, autographs, maps, prints and ephemera. They have ten auctions per year, nine of which include books, and their prices tend to be quite reasonable, often under \$100. They take individual books and collections. In a series of six auctions from September 17, 1992 to November 17, 1993 they auctioned off the collection of Jean Targeson which included many twentieth century children's books.

Selling Through Advertising

Selling directly to other collectors has the potential of bringing the highest possible return, but it requires more homework. Get an idea about price from several dealers (keeping in mind what their mark up will be). Check recent auctions to see if there have been any comparable sales of the book that could help in assessing its market value (keeping in mind factors that may distort auction prices, as described on p. 50).

You might try to contact collectors you know directly. Be prepared to back up the rationale behind your price. Otherwise you can advertise directly through the following publications:

AB Bookman's Weekly

P.O. Box AB

Clifton, NJ 07015

Tel: (201) 772-0020

The publication of the antiquarian bookselling trade. It

has a special children's edition every year in November which is also a useful source for finding dealers.

Firsts: Collecting Modern First Editions

4445 N. Alvernon Way

Tucson, Arizona 85718-6139

Tel: (602) 529-1355

A magazine on collecting modern first editions with occasional articles on children's books. The January – April 1991 issues had a particularly helpful four part series on how to sell collectible books.

Martha's KidLit Newsletter

For Antiquarian and Out of Print Children's Booklovers
Box 1488

Ames, Iowa 50014

Tel: (515) 292-9309

An informative newsletter that specializes in children's literature.

Also see **Bibliophile Online** and **Interloc** on page 41.

Appendix C

Notes

1. (p. 6) From a letter on the joys and pains of book collecting that Petrarch wrote to a monk named Giovanni dell'Incisa circa 1346. It appears in its original Latin form, in the third volume of a four volume set of Petrarch's letters, *Le Familiari*, edited by Vittorio Rossi and Umberto Bosco, 1933-1942. As translated in Morris Bishop's *Letters from Petrarch* (Indiana University Press, 1982, pp. 40 – 41), the letter continues: "Perhaps now I have more books than I need, but it is with books as with other things: the more one gets the more one wants. Yet there is something special about books. Gold, silver, gems, purple robes, a marble palace, broad lands, paintings, a horse with rich trappings and all such things bring only a mute, a superficial pleasure. But books thrill you to the marrow; they talk to you, counsel you, admit you to their living, speaking friendship . . . They introduce other books; each one creates a desire for another. To give some examples, Cicero's *Academicus* made Marcus Varro my beloved friend; in the *De officiis* I first heard the name of Ennius; I first fell in love with Terence in the *Tusculan Disputations* . . . So, if you love me, lay this charge on a few trustworthy scholars. Let them scour Tuscany, turn out the cupboards of the monks and other learned men, to see if anything will emerge fit to slake my thirst—or better to whet it."
2. (p. 9) Helen S. Canfield, "Historical Societies, Private Libraries and Museums," *Library Trends*, Spring 1979, p. 469.
3. (p. 9) "What Was the Bid? At Auctions in 1992, the Sky Was Often the Limit," by Rita Rief, *The New York Times*, February 4, 1993, p. B4.
4. (p. 11) From Cotton Mather's *A Family Well Ordered, or an essay to render parents and children happy in one another*, (Boston, 1699), as quoted by Motoko F. Huthwaite in "The Library of Congress," *Library Trends*, Spring 1979, p. 476.
5. (p. 14) "Tiny Wonders—Thumbnail Size Classics Have Huge Following Among Collectors," by Bob Pool, the *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1993.
6. (p. 15) From the article by Nancy Roberts, "Collecting Nancy Drew," in *Martha's KidLit Newsletter*, Spring 1992, Vol.4, #3.
7. (p. 15) "Nancy Drew: 30's Sleuth, 90's Role Model," by Patricia Leigh Brown, an article that appeared on the front page of the April 19, 1993 edition of *The New York Times*.

8. (p. 15) "A Ghostwriter and Her Sleuth: 63 Years of Smarts and Gumption," by Patricial Leigh Brown, *The New York Times*, May 9, 1993.

9. (p. 16) Helen S. Canfield, "Historical Societies, Private Libraries and Museums," *Library Trends*, Spring 1979, p. 461.

10. (p. 16) Bill McCullam of Cattermole 20th Century Children's Books, page 33, item #406, 1993 catalog.

11. (p. 17) Hendrik Willem Van Loon, winner of the first Newbery Medal in 1922 for *The Story of Mankind*, has one of the best descriptions of color pre-separation I've ever come across in the Postscript to a book he did with his wife, Grace Castagnetta, *The Songs We Sing* (Simon & Schuster, 1936):

"Look!" she said, 'something must have gone wrong with this picture. It is supposed to be Little Boy Blue, but in the picture he has become Little Boy Green.'

"I had known all along that that was coming. I shall probably hear the same thing from 134,756 other readers during the next six months (why not be optimistic about it?) and so I hasten to state in the most emphatic terms that I know that the Little Boy Blue should really be a Little Boy Blue and not a Little Boy Green, but I really could not help myself. You see, all books are subject to a dreadful affliction which is a sort of literary measles and which in publishing circles is known as 'costs.' In case the attack of 'costs' is very severe books quite often die in infancy and even when the attack is mild, they have to be nursed with great care.

"Therefore in order to protect this small infant as much as possible, we decided to raise it on a diet of very simple color and at no time was the little creature to have more than three colors. That of course did not include the black, for black plays about the same role in the artist's kitchen the potato does in the kitchen of an everyday household. It is so much one of the essentials of life that it is completely taken for granted.

"Now with three colors we could only get 1 x 2 x 3 or 6 different color arrangements. And we had to use 'flat colors,' which means the colors are as they are when they come pouring out of the tubes, for mixing them might bring on a serious attack of costs, and then of course nobody could foretell what would happen. To be perfectly honest, it was great fun to have so restricted a palette, for it put the matter squarely up to the artist and he had to do as good a job as he could possibly do under the most unfavorable of circumstances. But alas! occasionally, as with Little Boy Blue, the child suffered from color-malnutrition and became a Little Boy Green. I am sorry this was the case, but there it was and nothing could really be done about it."

12. (p. 23) Thanks to Jane McCullam of Cattermole Books for this price comparison. As Jane points out, this is an extreme example because *Make Way for Ducklings* is such a popular

book and the first edition is so scarce. But it does give an idea of how it can really pay off to take a moment and check the printing of a recently published book before you buy it.

13. (p. 27) The only exception to the rule that I have been able to find is that first printings of Random House's adult books say "First Edition 2 4 6 8 9 7 5 3." But this doesn't apply to first printings of Random House's children's books, which are numbered in the normal manner.

14. (p. 29) Margaret Coughlan, "Individual Collections," *Library Trends*, Spring 1979, p. 436.

15. (p. 29) A penciled inscription signed "Lizzie Pohl" in an 1875 edition of *Peter Parley's Universal History*. From item #94 in Catalog No. 25 of Hobbyhorse Books.

16. (p. 29) According to Robert A. Wilson in *Modern Book Collecting*, p. 40, "Within the existing framework of book collecting, there are several gradations of desirability. At the bottom is an ordinary unsigned copy of a book. One that the author has signed is definitely a notch higher in the scale, while one that bears some writing in addition to the mere signature is even more desirable. At the top of the scale is a presentation copy—that is, one actually given by the author to someone, with an inscription in his hand attesting to this. And within this top category, there are still further refinements. Copies inscribed to other well-known authors are particularly desirable, as are copies inscribed to mothers, wives, or lovers."

17. (p. 39) "The Book Sleuth of Stockbridge—Marion Adler's business is finding lost books—and childhoods," by Carol Cioe, *The New York Times*, April 3, 1988.

18. (p. 49) The January, February, March & April 1991 issues of *Firsts: Collecting Modern First Editions* ran a very good series of articles exploring all three ways (see Appendix B, under Advertising, for how to contact *Firsts*). This section is based in part on those articles.

19. (p. 50) It was also interesting that the buying dealer didn't buy another, later printing of *Crow Boy* that the selling dealer also had. This later printing was in very good condition and had an original watercolor illustration and signature by Yashima. But the buying dealer ignored it entirely, instead buying the unsigned, first edition, without original illustration and with yellowing pages (because it was printed on acidic paper).

Appendix D

Further Reading and Reference

Books

Ahearn, Allen, ***Book Collecting: A Comprehensive Guide***, New York, G.P. Putnam, 1989.

Aliki, ***How a Book is Made***, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1986. A book for children, but very informative for adults, too.

Bader, Barbara, ***American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within***, New York, Macmillan, 1976. My favorite book about children's books. Comprehensive, analytic, personal, brilliant and beautifully produced. Out-of-print now, it can be found in most libraries and the dealers listed chapter VI sometimes have a copy for sale.

Field, Carolyn W. Field, ***Special Collections in Children's Literature***, Chicago, American Library Association, 1982. A survey of special collections that is updated periodically.

Greason, Rebecca, ***Tomart's Price Guide to Golden Book Collectibles***, Dayton, Ohio, Tomart Publications, 1991.

Hawkins, Rosemary & Szabla, Elizabeth, editors, ***The ABA Children's Bookselling Resource Handbook***, Tarrytown, NY, American Booksellers Association, 1993. This 145 page paperback is written for children's booksell-

ers, but it contains invaluable information and resources for anyone interested in children's books.

Jones, Dolores Blythe, ***Children's Literature Awards and Winners: A Directory of Prizes, Authors, and Illustrators***, Third Edition, Detroit, Gale Research, Inc., 1994. A comprehensive reference source for awards in children's literature.

Opie, Iona and Robert, and Brian Alderson, ***The Treasures of Childhood: Books, Toys and Games from the Opie Collection***, New York, Arcade Publishing/Little, Brown and Co., 1989.

Quayle, Eric, ***The Collector's Book of Children's Books***, New York, Clarkson N. Potter, 1971. Focuses on nineteenth century and earlier books.

Santi, Steve, ***Collecting Little Golden Books: A Collector's Identification and Value Guide***, 2nd edition, Florence, Alabama, Books Americana, 1994.

Sutherland, Zena, ***Children and Books***, 6th edition, Glenview, Illinois, Scott, Foresman & Co., 1981, and 8th edition, New York, HarperCollins, 1991. A standard reference work that is updated every five years, this book is the most comprehensive overview of children's literature I've ever come across. Highly recommended.

Wilson, Robert A., ***Modern Book Collecting***, New York, Knopf, 1980.

Zempel, Edward N. and Verkler, Linda A. (editors), ***First Editions: A Guide to Identification***, 2nd edition, Peoria, Illinois, Spoon River Press, 1989.

Periodicals

Besides *AB Bookman's Weekly* and *Firsts: Collecting Modern First Editions* (see pp. 53 – 54) which specialize in collectible books, it's useful to follow periodicals that focus primarily on children's books being published today. These include *Bookbird* (see p. 16), *The Five Owls*, *The Horn Book*, *Library Trends*, and *School Library Journal*. They have reviews and articles about the history and study of children's books. You can find them in the children's section of your local library. *Publishers Weekly*, the trade magazine of the publishing industry, also has reviews, articles about children's books, best-seller lists and polls of children's booksellers' favorite titles.

The Spring 1979 issue of *Library Trends* deserves special mention. Devoted to "The Study and Collecting of Historical Children's Books" and edited by Selma K. Richardson, it contains the following articles:

"Introduction" and "Research Collections" by Selma K.

Richardson (p.421)

"Individual Collections" by Margaret Coughlan (p.431)

"Public Libraries" by Barbara Maxwell (p.443) "College and University Libraries" by Margaret Hodges (p.453)

"Historical Societies, Private Libraries and Museums" by Helen S. Canfield (p.467)

"The Library of Congress" by Motoko F. Huthwaite (p.473)

"Summary and Proposals for the Future" by Virginia Haviland (p.485)

"Trends in Collecting and Prices" by Milton Reissman (p.489)

"Secondary Sources for the Study of Historical Children's Books" by Joyce I. Whalley (p.503)

"Facsimiles of Historical Children's Books" by Ina Robertson and Agnes Stahlschmidt (p.513)

"Scholarly Research about Historical Children's Books" by Sara Innis Fenwick (p.529)

"Encouraging Scholarship: Courses, Conferences and Exhibits" by Anne Scott MacLeod (p.551)

On the third Monday of every February and every July, *Publishers Weekly* has a special issue devoted to children's books for the coming season, with lists of all the books being published and in-depth articles about the children's book industry. Call (800) 278-2991 to buy an individual copy or try to find it at your local library.

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series books)

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Tel: (916) 331-7435

The Yellowback Library

(boys' series books)

P.O. Box 36172

Des Moines, Iowa 50315

Articles

Cameron, Phil, "Caring for Books In a Home Library," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1987.

Cioe, Carol, "The Book Sleuth of Stockbridge—Marion Adler's business is finding lost books—and childhoods," *The New York Times*, April 3, 1988.

Donahue, Richard, "Books Big and Small," *Publishers Weekly*, February 12, 1992.

Gross, John, "Pop-Up Books: The Magical Art of Making Movable Pictures Over the Years," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1988.

Pool, Bob, "Tiny Wonders - Thumbnail Size Classics Have Huge Following Among Collectors," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1993.

Rief, Rita, "Pop-Up Books Aren't Just Kid Stuff," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1987.

Rosen, Jan, "Treasures in the Attic: Stalking the Good Stuff," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1993.

Stern, Dan, "Money in the Bank," *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, June 20, 1993.

Stern, Dan, "A New Lease on Life for O.P. Books," *Publishers Weekly*, July 20, 1992.

Vandergrift, Kay E., "Collecting: Passion with Purpose," *School Library Journal*, October 1986.

Afterword

I'll be updating this book periodically, so feel free to write to me with any comments or suggestions you may have. I can be reached c/o DMS Publishers, P.O. Box 1972, Santa Monica, CA 90406, e-mail: montaigne@earthlink.net.

Let's enjoy and preserve these wonderful books for generations to come!



Photo illustration © 1995 by Dan Stern

Dan Stern's love affair with books began the moment he finally deciphered those mysterious black marks: standing outside his elementary school, proudly reading to his parents a sign, "No Parking 9 A.M. – 6 P.M." The son of a sculptor and a painter, he has always sought to combine words and images and considers children's books the highest form of art.

Growing up in Santa Monica, California, he spent most of his free time devouring Santa Monica Public Library where he later worked as a page (and now serves as "Page Emeritus" and President of the Friends of SMPL). While in college he took classes on illuminated manuscripts and "Topics in Book Illustration" and worked as a "book doctor," healing sick books in the bindery of the college library.

After graduating in 1982 from Haverford College with a major in music, and six months teaching English in Japan, he made his way to New York City. There a chance comment while visiting a friend who worked at Doubleday ("I just got a call from the children's book editor; she's looking for an assistant. Are you interested?") led to a revelation ("Oh, yeah! Children's books. *That's* what I want to do!"). He worked for two years in Doubleday's Books for Young Readers department, including six months as acting director. It was there that he began to amass his children's book collection, which he still adds to with alarming frequency.

Since that time he has continued to be involved in every aspect of children's books as a writer, illustrator, reviewer and People Editor of *The Bulletin of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators*. His work has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times* Book Review, *Publishers Weekly*, on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," and he has been a consultant and lecturer for the National Conference of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts.



Did you know that Franklin Delano Roosevelt
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About the Author:

Dan Stern is a writer, illustrator, reviewer and former children's book editor. His work has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times* Book Review, *Publishers Weekly*, on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," and he has been a consultant and lecturer for the National Conference of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and The Getty Center for Education in the Arts.



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