

I visited the World of the Child, Two Hundred Years of Children's Books from the University of Delaware. The content includes: early works; fables and fairy tales; books of instruction; primers; poetry; stories before 1850; stories after 1850; pop-ups and movables; and a bibliography.

In the Early Works section, there aren't many pictures of the books being discussed. The format is chronological. This format continues throughout the site. I was delighted to see the History of Goody Two Shoes, written by Oliver Goldsmith. His play, She Stoops to Conquer is one of my favorite plays I've ever read. There is no picture available of this work, however. The pictures that do exist are usually rather small, and sometimes blurry.

Fables and Fairy Tales are two separate sections, with a much smaller collection of fables before a larger collection of fairy tales. It would be logical that the fable collection would be much smaller than the fairy tales, but I'm a bit saddened that of the three fables, two are different variations of Aesop's Fables. There is redundant information such as the explanation that tales of mother goose means an old wives tale appearing at the introduction of fairy tales, and then again under the specific book description. Some of the book descriptions only mention the illustrator and nothing about the summary of the book, or vice versa.

The Books of Instruction section has a small section of varied books. There are history books, travel books, math books and science books. While there are more pictures per entry than I'd say the previous two sections, only two of the four pictures open to a larger view. This is especially a shame, since the last entry with a picture is a booklet illustrated by W.W. Denslow who made the drawings for The Wizard of Oz. It's very difficult to see what the picture is, and it does not open to a larger view.

The Primers section displays mainly works that are the alphabet or mathematical tables. A bit better selection of pictures, but the descriptions are the least informative and wordy of previous sections. I was startled to see The Kewpie Primer, which has images of cherubic children from the 1900's. I have seen this image before, on Kewpie Mayonnaise when I lived in Japan. It's a very soft plastic bottle with a large Kewpie, with it's over large head, eyes and round belly. It's a very popular brand and now I know where it's from.

Works mentioned in the Poetry section seem varied. They mention Slovenly Peter, or, Cheerful Stories and Funny Pictures for Good Little Folks. The description is that it is a book of cautionary tales in verse with grotesque pictures. Howard Pyle's Yankee Doodle: An Old Friend in a New Dress has very historically accurate clothing, evident in the accompanying picture. Again, I am disappointed by the lack of pictures of the book described by it's delicate illustrations and highly imaginative fantasy illustrations.

The Pop-up and Movable Books section is unlike the previous section. It starts with a description of Harlequinades, a type of simple movable books where an image is revealed when folded up. Then they move on towards Pop-ups. I feel that this is a slightly confusing format and I question the rationale behind twisting the two and also using a different name to title the movable books section. The "movable" section is very small and doesn't show many before and after pictures. The pop-up book section has lots of detailed instructions on how the pop-up functions, but only one picture. This would be a wonderful area to show detailed pictures of how these very old books actually pop-up in inventive and interesting ways. I can't help but feel disappointed that they chose to not document this.

Stories: Before 1850, which at this point seems like a redundant grouping, since the other sections focused largely on works from this time frame. This is, surprisingly, new information. However, it's very small, there are only three pictures, two are thumb nail size only, and the one that can be viewed larger is blurry.

The Stories: After 1850 section includes more recognizable titles, such as Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Tom Brown's School Days by Thomas Hughes. That particular title is accompanied by a picture that is large and not blurry. There are seven pictures for twenty-two entries, making this one of the most under visually represented sections thus far. There is also a section afterward called Adventure Stories, which mention works like The Lone Ranger, and Tarzan. These nine entries don't even have a plot description, merely the author, the title, the publisher and the year.

The bibliography section is a small selected bibliography which doesn't seem to be all that inclusive or helpful.

My overall reaction to the site is fairly lukewarm, if not verging on cold. While I did read some interesting new information, which I mentioned above, I was very disappointed by the lack of consistent information. The introduction mentions that they have not put this collection on exhibition since 1998, and the site hasn't been updated since 2010. Perhaps that's to blame for the inconsistent nature of the collection, from the general organization scheme they used for the collection, to the variant entry details, to the pick and choose nature of the pictures and to top that off, the pictures don't even have a uniform size or quality. I was not entertained, I was actually pretty disappointed that there weren't more picture examples of the things they were discussing, from renowned illustrators, to how an ancient pop-up book functioned. I would not recommend this site to anyone researching this topic.