A de Grummond Primer

Highlights of the Children's Literature Collection

Edited by Carolyn J. Brown, Ellen Hunter Ruffin, and Eric L. Tribunella

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Contents

Chapter 2

Fables, Fairy Tales, and Folk Tales

Ruth B. Bottigheimer

Fables, short pithy stories meant to instruct readers in worldly wisdom, existed as exemplary literature for adults and children centuries before the genre became the world's first dedicated literature for children. Fairy tales, longer and more detailed stories, are usually meant to entertain and use magic to help heroes or heroines marry royalty, leave poverty behind, enjoy wealth and privilege, and live happily ever after. When fairy tales were first published in the 1550s, they were aimed at adult readers. Only in the 1700s did published fairy tales begin to be prepared specifically for child readers.

Fables in the modern world have a simple structure. Designed to exemplify a truth about human behavior (such as jealousy or acquisitiveness) or history (such as the habitual emergence of strong arbitrary political leaders), fables are closely related to proverbs. Their minimalist plots have a beginning, such as "There was once a dog in a manger," and proceed quickly to a conclusion, such as "Even though the dog couldn't eat the hay himself, he wouldn't let the cows near it" (the beginning and ending of one of Aesop's fables, "The Dog in the Manger," which illustrates selfishness). Largely dispensing with plot development, fables use animal characters to enact what is presented as natural facts of human behavior.

Title page of a 1549 edition of Aesop's fables in Greek and Latin. Courtesy of the de Grummond Collection.

As "exemplary stories," fables were prominent for over two thousand years. Those associated with Aesop, widely regarded as the genre's founder, are believed to date from the sixth or early fifth century BCE. No single fable can be directly attached to Aesop as author, yet his name is associated with an enormous body of literature, such as "The Fox and the Grapes." In this tale, a fox lusts after luscious grapes hanging just out of reach, but when he fails to reach them, he dismisses them as worthless. Fables were collected or composed by many in the ancient world, subsequently published in Latin and disseminated throughout Europe in the early and high middle ages.

A collection of equally lasting significance was the Indian *Panchatantra*. Translated from Sanskrit first into Persian, and in the seventh century CE from Persian into Arabic, the *Panchatantra* served as a source for reworkings that spread through the Muslim and Christian communities of Asia and Africa, eventually reaching Muslim Spain and from there across Europe as a whole. Tales in the *Panchatantra* and in *Kalila and Dimna*, a derivative Arabic collection, were organized into groups of related stories that were told within a framing tale about telling stories to achieve a goal, such as educating a prince or postponing an execution. Although individual fables remained both brief and simple, the overall frame tale within which they were presented was intriguing and sophisticated. Of all the *Panchatantra* stories, the best known perhaps concerns a frog who accepts a crocodile's invitation to carry him across a snake-infested river, with predictable results: the crocodile eats him during the crossing.

In the ancient world, fables were considered literature for adults, although the *Panchatantra* presented its fables as a painless form of educating a previously ineducable young prince. The early Indian collection prefigured the genre's entry into children's literature, where it remains, now intended largely for the very young. The de Grummond Collection's earliest set of fables is a 1530 edition of Aesop in Greek and Latin, while a contemporary collection of animal fables, *Feathers and Tails* (1992), draws from both Aesop and the *Panchatantra*.

Fairy tales emerged as popular stories in 1550s Venice, where they began to compete with, and eventually to displace, medieval romances among humble readers. Those had often ended with everlasting happiness

achieved only after death or with renunciation of earthly bliss. In stark contrast, fairy tales offered happy endings here on earth. Giovan Francesco Straparola (c. 1485–c. 1557) crafted this newly secular happy ending in several tales in his *Le Piacevoli Notti* (1551, 1553; *The Pleasant Nights*). More significantly, he added poor girls and boys as possible heroes and heroines to the traditional roster of royal characters. In establishing the fairy tale genre, Straparola created the original plot for "Puss in Boots" in his "Costantino Fortunato." When his mother dies, Costantino, the youngest of three poor brothers, inherits only a cat. She, however, has magic powers (Straparola describes her as *fatata*) and soon gains the king's friendship and then the king's daughter for Costantino. By further cleverness she installs Costantino in a castle, where he lives happily ever after with his wife and children. Straparola also composed the first "Donkeyskin" (his "Tebaldo"), in which a princess flees her royal father's incestuous desire for her and finds eventual happiness as queen in a foreign land.[1] The de Grummond Collection holds the first complete translation of Straparola's tales into English, first published in London in 1894 and translated by W. G. Waters, titled *The Facetious Tales of Straparola* (1898).

Giambattista Basile of Naples (c. 1585–1632), a peripatetic courtier, injected a host of now-classic fairy tale motifs into his *Lo Cunto de li cunti* (1634–1636, *The Tale of the Tales*), enriching the genre with insertions from Ovid's retellings of Greek myths, *The Metamorphoses*, which was still a familiar school text in Basile's boyhood. This high classic material's presence amid the often low humor of his tales probably drew laughter from early listeners.

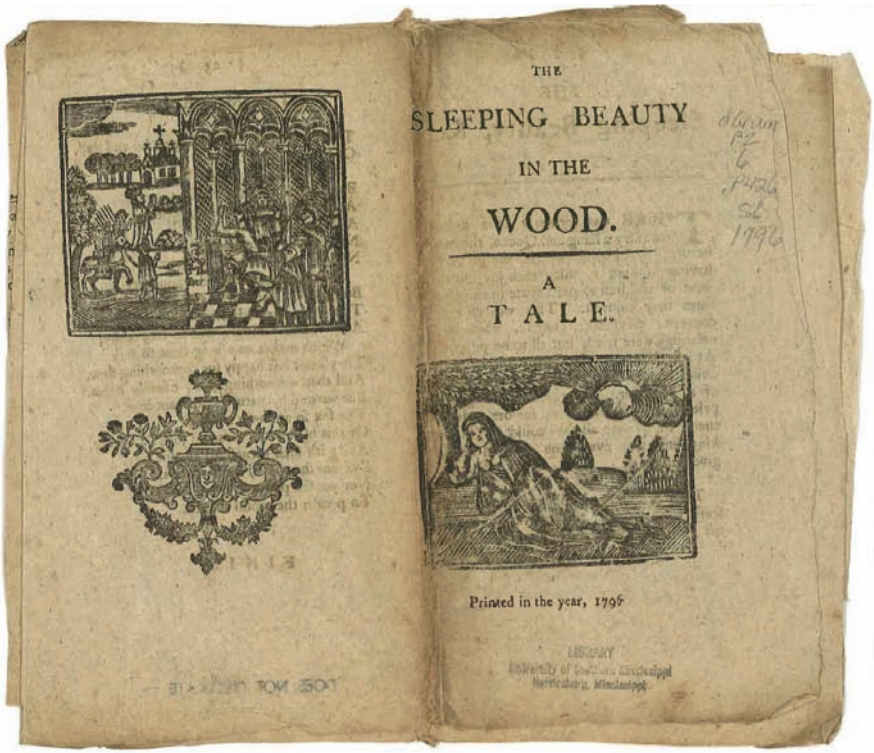
Straparola's and Basile's books with their fairy tales circulated in Paris in the 1690s, where Charles Perrault (1628–1703) reworked Straparola's "Costantino Fortunato" and "Tebaldo" respectively into "Le Chat botté" ("Puss in Boots") and "Peau d'Asne" ("Donkeyskin"). In addition, Perrault reworked Basile's "Sun, Moon, and Talia," "The Cat Cinderella," and "Three Fairies" into his "Belle au bois dormant" ("Beauty in the Sleeping Woods"), "Cendrillon" ("Cinderella"), and "Les Fées" ("The Fairies, or Diamonds and Toads"). He also borrowed elements from Basile's "L'Orsa" ("The She-Bear") for his "Donkeyskin" in his 1697 *Histoires, ou Contes du temps passé* (*Stories, or Tales of Past Time*).

Illustration captioned "Princess Doralice Hiding in the King's Chest," from *The Facetious Tales of Straparola*, from the first English translation in 1898, illustrated by Jules Garnier and E. R. Hughes (1898). Courtesy of the de Grummond Collection.

Perrault's tales were translated into English in 1729 and were subsequently edited into publications specifically for children, but they did not sell well, until they were adopted piecemeal by John Newbery nearly four decades later, and more successfully by his successors in children's book publishing at the end of the eighteenth century. The de Grummond Collection has rich and varied holdings of Perrault's tales, including a 1796 chapbook version of his "Sleeping Beauty" and an extensive collection of beautifully illustrated editions published by McLoughlin Brothers in New York between 1870 and 1920.

Hard on the heels of Perrault's publication of brief fairy tales in 1697, women like Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier (1664?–1734), Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (1651–1705), and Henriette-Julie de Murat (1670–1715) published collections that also included their reworkings of tales from Straparola's collection, but in longer and more detailed versions. Mme d'Aulnoy's work remained widely read in printings edited (in English) specifically for different female readerships: aristocratic, merchant, and artisan—entering the world of children's books in the 1750s. Contrary to general belief, it was the elaborate style of Mme d'Aulnoy's lengthy and complicated fairyland fictions that carried the day in the 1700s in English-speaking lands, rather than the now-iconic Perrault tales. The de Grummond Collection holds the first English edition of d'Aulnoy's *Tales of the Fairies*, printed by John Nicholson in London in 1707. In the 1750s, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780) rewrote "Beauty and the Beast" for girl readers and presented it along with Bible stories and other fairy tales in a book translated into one European language after another, becoming one of the most far-reaching and influential early children's books.

In the Enlightenment-dominated world of early eighteenth-century English children's books, fairy tales were slow to take hold, but the London children's book publisher John Newbery (1713–1767) introduced them in the last years of his life. In the nineteenth century, fairy tales joined English-language children's literature from other countries. These included fairy and folk tales by Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm, Ludwig Bechstein (1801–1860), Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875), and the international collections translated and edited by Andrew Lang (1844–1912) (and his wife) and Joseph Jacobs (1854–1916).

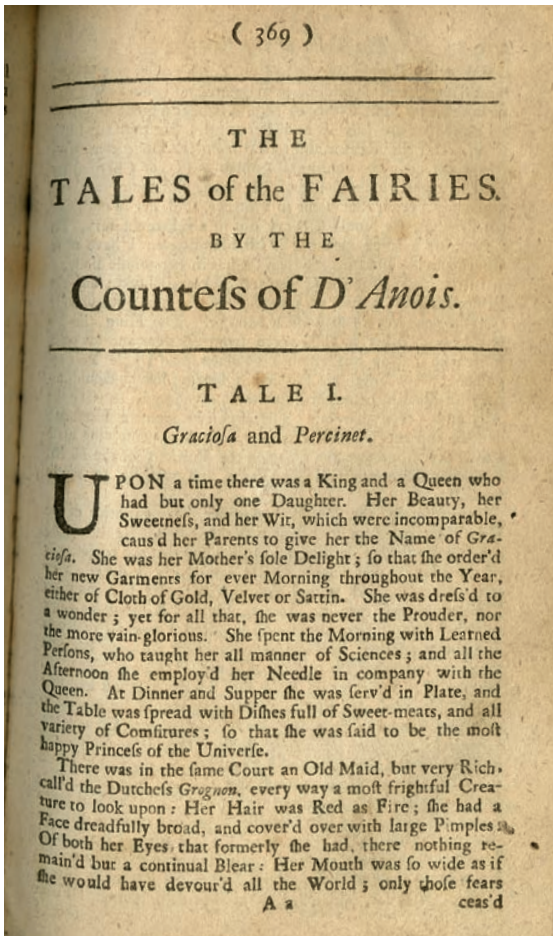


Cover of a 1796 chapbook version of Perrault's *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*. Courtesy of the de Grummond Collection.

The de Grummond Collection holds many of these important fairy tale collections, including one of the very first English editions of Andersen, translated by Caroline Peachey and published in 1846, as well as a first edition of Jacobs's *English Fairy Tales* from 1890.

"Fairy stories," highly developed in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century England, differ from "fairy tales." Beautifully illustrated with often tiny gauzy figures among garden or woodland flowers, fairy stories detail the lives and actions of "the little folk" in books for children. Some of the stories in Lang's *Red Fairy Book* (1890) qualify as fairy stories.

Another fairy-tale-related genre emerged in the later twentieth century when a wave of rewritten traditional fairy tales for young adult readers began to appear. They remain an important component of twenty-first-century children's literature. Jane Yolen's young adult (YA) novel *Briar Rose* (1992), for example, retells the Sleeping Beauty story in the context of



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THE

TALES of the FAIRIES.

BY THE

Countefs of *D'Anois.*

TALE I.

Gracioſa and *Percinet.*

UPON a time there was a King and a Queen who had but only one Daughter. Her Beauty, her Sweetneſs, and her Wit, which were incomparable, caus'd her Parents to give her the Name of *Gracioſa*. She was her Mother's ſole Delight; ſo that ſhe order'd her new Garments for ever Morning throughout the Year, either of Cloth of Gold, Velvet or Sattin. She was dreſs'd to a wonder; yet for all that, ſhe was never the Prouder, nor the more vain-glorious. She ſpent the Morning with Learned Perſons, who taught her all manner of Sciences; and all the Afternoon ſhe employ'd her Needle in company with the Queen. At Dinner and Supper ſhe was ſerv'd in Plate, and the Table was ſpread with Diſhes full of Sweet-meats, and all variety of Comfitures; ſo that ſhe was ſaid to be the moſt happy Princeſs of the Univerſe.

There was in the ſame Court an Old Maid, but very Rich, call'd the Dutcheſs *Grognon*, every way a moſt frightful Creature to look upon: Her Hair was Red as Fire; ſhe had a Face dreadfully broad, and cover'd over with large Pimples. Of both her Eyes, that formerly ſhe had, there nothing remain'd but a continual Blear: Her Mouth was ſo wide as if ſhe would have devour'd all the World; only thoſe fears

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Title page of the first English translation of the fairy tales by the Countess d'Anois (1707). Courtesy of the de Grummond Collection.

the Holocaust, while Malinda Lo's *Ash* (2009), a fantasy novel, retells the Cinderella story.

Folk tales differ fundamentally from fairy tales, and those differences are recognized by the way in which the Aarne-Thompson-Uther *Types of International Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* is organized: "tales of magic" are numbered from 300 to 745; folk tales are scattered through separate listings for religious tales, realistic tales, animal tales, tales of the stupid ogre, anecdotes, jokes, and formula tales. Folk tales often end unhappily, with poor boys and girls, men and women, returning to poverty at the end. In contrast, happy-ever-after endings and an association with achieving happiness by means of a wedding remain closely associated with fairy tales. Nonetheless, terminologies often confuse the issue, with some authors (inaccurately) calling all the tales in the Grimm collection "fairy tales," while others call all of those tales, including fairy tales, "folktales."

Scholars are still arguing about whether fairy tales originated with and were spread by illiterate country people or were first composed by skilled writers like Straparola, Basile, and their literary descendants. New in the last thirty years are book-history-based studies that utilize the (newly discovered) presence of fairy tales in nineteenth-century elementary school textbooks, as well as in cheap pamphlets, colorful posters, and widespread newspapers as evidence to demonstrate print pathways for large-scale distribution of identical tellings of a core body of fairy and folk tales.[2] Studies of private and public reading practices in the nineteenth century add to the sense that printed fairy tales played a huge role in acquainting nineteenth-century city and country dwellers with traditional fairy tales.[3]

Notes

1. "Donkeyskin," widely believed to be a more ancient form of "Cinderella," is classified as such in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther *Tale Type Index*.

2. Ingrid Tomkowiak initiated the exploration of school books as sources of fairy and folk tale knowledge for children. Ruth B. Bottigheimer and Caroline Sumpter have written about other avenues of fairy tale distribution. Fairy tale posters are ubiquitous in library and rare book holdings, especially in Germany.

3. Rudolph Schenda described and analyzed public and private readings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that acquainted city and country dwellers alike with fairy tales.

Contributors

Ann Mulloy Ashmore is an associate professor of library services at Delta State University. Her interest in the lives of the Reys began in 2000 as a collection specialist at de Grummond. She has published articles about the Reys in both scholarly journals and popular periodicals. Most recently she collaborated on *Monkey Business: The Adventures of Curious George's Creators*, a 2017 documentary film about H. A. and Margret Rey.

Rudine Sims Bishop is professor emerita of education at The Ohio State University, where she taught children's literature. She is the author of several books, including *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* (1982), *Presenting Walter Dean Myers* (1990), *Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K–8* (1994), and *Wonders: The Best Children's Poems of Effie Lee Newsome* (1999).

Ruth B. Bottigheimer, research professor in the Department of English at Stony Brook University and a historian of European fairy tales, has published *Magic Tales and Fairy Tale Magic from Ancient Egypt to Renaissance Italy* (2014), *Fairy Tales Framed* (2012), *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009), *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (2002), *The Bible for Children* (1996), *Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (1987), and *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (1987).

Jennifer Brannock is professor and curator of Rare Books and Mississippiana at the University of Southern Mississippi. She has a BA in art history and a MSLS from the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include popular culture, special collections outreach and reference, and gender and sexuality in midcentury sleaze publications.

Carolyn J. Brown is a writer, editor, and independent scholar, whose publications include articles in *Notes on Mississippi Writers*, *College Language Journal*, *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*, and the *Eudora Welty Review*, as well as three biographies: *A Daring Life: A Biography of Eudora Welty* (2012), *Song of My Life: A Biography of Margaret Walker* (2014), and *The Artist's Sketch: A Biography of Painter Kate Freeman Clark* (2017).

Ramona Caponegro is an associate professor of children's literature at Eastern Michigan University. Drawing from archival research, she has published articles about the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, early readers, and representations of juvenile delinquency in children's literature. She is the chair of the 2019 Pura Belpré Award Committee and the 2019–2021 Phoenix Picture Book Award Committee, and is actively involved in the University of Southern Mississippi's Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival.

Lorinda Cohoon is an associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Memphis, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in children's literature. Her research focuses on children's periodicals. She completed her PhD at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she made use of the rich resources of the de Grummond Collection on an almost daily basis.

Speaker and author Carol Edmonston is the niece of Syd Hoff. Since Hoff's passing in 2004, it has been her mission to preserve his rich and diverse legacy by creating the website www.SydHoff.org, and establishing the Syd Hoff Research Fellowship Endowment at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Paige Gray approaches the study of children's and young adult literature as a means to explore questions of voice, agency, and creative expression. Her book *Cub Reporters: American Children's Literature and Journalism in the Golden Age* (2019) considers the cultural and historical intersections between books for young people and newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She teaches at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta.

Laura Hakala is an assistant professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, where she teaches composition and American literature. Her articles on Southern girlhood have appeared in *Children's Literature*, *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, and the *Southern Quarterly*.

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Wm John Hare is the co-owner with his wife Jill of Cellar Door Books in Bow, New Hampshire, and coauthor with Priscilla Hare of *Tasha Tudor: The Direction of Her Dreams*.

Dee Jones (Dolores Blythe Jones) was curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection for nearly twenty years, beginning in 1986.

Allison G. Kaplan is faculty associate in the Information School, University of Wisconsin–Madison. She was the recipient of the 2017 Ezra Jack Keats/Janina Domanska Fellowship for which she conducted research on Tana Hoban using Hoban's papers in the de Grummond Collection. Her research includes the history of children's literature, mindfulness in children's literature, and early literacy.

Megan Norcia is an associate professor at SUNY College at Brockport whose research and teaching interests focus on empire and nineteenth-century children's literary and material culture. She has written about imperial geography in *X Marks the Spot: Women Writers Map the Empire for British Children, 1790–1895* (2010) and imperialism in children's games in *The Imperial Agenda of Children's Board Games* (2019). She is happiest when up to her elbows in archives.

Nathalie op de Beeck is an associate professor of English at Pacific Lutheran University and is the author of *Suspended Animation: Children's Picture Books and the Fairy Tale of Modernity* (2010) and cocreator of *Little Machinery: A Critical Facsimile Edition* (2009). Her scholarly interests include picture books, graphic narrative, and environmental studies.

Amy Pattee is an associate professor in the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons University in Boston, where she teaches courses related to children's and young adult literature for students in the university's graduate program in library and information science as well as in its graduate programs in children's literature. She is a lover of series fiction and is especially fond of Trixie Belden.

As executive director, Deborah Pope has focused the work and mission of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation on increasing diversity in children's literature and enriching the quality of public education. In partnership with the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, she has extended recognition of the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award as an imprimatur of quality children's books for a diverse audience, nationally and internationally.

Ellen Hunter Ruffin, associate professor, has been the curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection since 2006. She has chaired the Arbuthnot Lecture Committee and served on the Newbery Medal Committee, the Children's Literature Legacy Award Committee (previously the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award), the Phoenix Picture Book Award Committee, and the Schneider Family Book Award Committee of the American Library Association.

Anita Silvey is the former editor of *Horn Book Magazine* and publisher of children's books at Houghton Mifflin. She has published six critical volumes about children's books, including *Children's Books and Their Creators*, *100 Best Books for Children*, *Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Children's Book*, and the *Children's Book-a-Day Almanac*. She teaches history of children's book publishing at Simmons University.

Danielle Bishop Stoulig is currently a children's librarian in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is a former assistant curator at the de Grummond Collection, where she was a member of the staff for eighteen years. She always said that the best part of her job at de Grummond was being able to hold in her hands the original manuscripts and artwork from children's books. Now, being able to place the published version of these books into the hands of young readers on a daily basis makes her feel pretty special.

Roger Sutton has been editor in chief, The Horn Book, Inc., since 1996. He has an MA from the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, and worked in public libraries through the 1980s. With Martha V. Parravano, he is the author of *A Family of Readers*, published in 2010 by Candlewick Press.

Deborah D. Taylor joined the Enoch Pratt Free Library in 1974 and recently retired from there as coordinator of school and student services. She has served on numerous book and library services committees, including the Sibert Award Committee for Outstanding Informational Books, the Printz Award Committee, and the Newbery Award Committee. She also chaired the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee. In 2015 she received the 2015 Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement from the American Library Association.

Eric L. Tribunella, professor of English, teaches children's and young adult literature at the University of Southern Mississippi. He is the author of *Melancholia and Maturation: The Use of Trauma in American Children's Literature* (2010), coauthor of *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction* (2013, 2019), and editor of a critical edition of Edward Prime-Stevenson's *Left to Themselves* (1891/2016).

Alexandra Valint is an associate professor of English at the University of Southern Mississippi. She researches and teaches Victorian literature, children's and young-adult literature, and narrative theory. She is the author of *Narrative Bonds: Multiple Narrators in the Victorian Novel* (2021), and her publications have appeared in journals such as *Victorian Literature and Culture*; *Dickens Studies Annual*; *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*; and *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*.

Laura E. Wasowicz is curator of children's literature at the American Antiquarian Society. Since 1987 she has worked to acquire, catalog, and provide reference service for the AAS collection of 27,000 American children's books issued between 1650 and 1899. She is the coauthor of *Radiant with Color & Art: McLoughlin Brothers and the Business of Picture Books, 1858–1920* (2017).