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"If This Book Should Chance to Roam": the Importance of Children's Marginalia in Rare Books Collections

This article describes why child-created marginalia can serve as an important source within rare books in special collections librarie. Given the general lack of child-created cultural heritage within repositories at large, child-created cultural heritage rare books collections that contain children's marginalia hold a distinctly valuable source for scholars interested in the ideas and lives of children. The authors bring awareness to the complexity of marginalia's status overall, describe the common varieties of child-created marginalia, and provide insight into how to make these sources less elusive to researchers.

Introduction

In an 1877 edition of *Ray's New Practical Arithmetic* housed in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina, young Ruth from Lexington, Nebraska, wrote a message on the inside of the cover: "If this book should chance / to roam just box its ears / and send" (see figure 1). Whether this is the whole message, or if she got interrupted before she could create a rhyme, Ruth's meaning is clear—if this book shows up somewhere, it was not due to lack of the owner's diligence, it was because that pesky little book wandered off on its own. Perhaps Ruth is showing that she is a disciplinarian with her books, or maybe she is urging any finder to throw this dog-eared book in a box and send it back to Lexington.

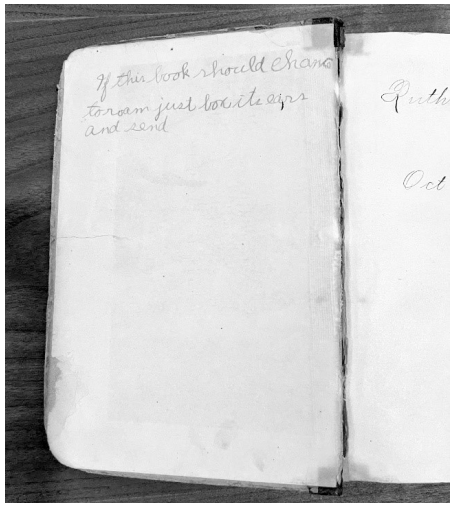


Figure 1. Marginalia within *Ray's New Practical Arithmetic*, 1877, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries.

Ruth's note is an example of important source material created by children. In conducting this study, we were interested in how rare books collections are full of drawings, ownership markings, idle thoughts, and other traces of children. The importance of children's cultural heritage is a burgeoning topic, at large. Though such marginalia are common, special collections work is more dedicated to collecting things created *for* children—evidenced by the numerous children's literature rare books collections across the US—than it is to locating things created *by* children themselves. This is reasonable, as, even if special collections scholarship and practice wanted to be more inclusive of children's perspectives, children do not write and publish their own books, making it difficult to imagine how child-created materials could have a greater presence in collections of books.

Within archival science scholarship and social science research, scholars have pointed out that, even among collections dedicated to youth culture and life, it is still difficult to find materials created *by* children.[1] While there is no such thing as a universal experience of childhood, we conform, here, to the generally accepted use of the term "child" to refer to anyone who is below eighteen years of age, as described by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.[2] Scholars note that using archival research to try to understand the history of everyday childhood relies largely on adult proxies.[3] What we do have that has been created by children is difficult to find because descriptive practices and bibliographic standards are rarely useful for age categorization of the creator or annotator.[4] This difficulty is even more pronounced when attempting to find representation of children across particular intersections, such as region or race. Ultimately, some say that if children are not represented in such collections, it creates a sense that children as a category "have never expressed themselves

1. Melissa Freeman and Elliott Kuecker, "Children's Creations and Archiving Practices: Methodological Matters Special Issue Introduction," *Qualitative Inquiry* 30, no. 10 (2024): 755–763; Mahshid Mayar, "'Playes Print the Letter': American Child(Hoods) as Archival Present/Ce," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (September 2023): 365–367, https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2023.a909986; Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, "Researching Colonial Childhoods: Accessing the Voices of Children in the Gold Coast (Ghana) 1900–1957," *Archives & Records* 45, no. 3 (2024): 258, https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2024.2407789.

2. United Nations, "Convention on the Rights of the Child," adopted November 20, 1989, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child.

3. Freeman and Kuecker, "Children's Creations," 3; Elliott Kuecker, "'Somethings About Me': Slanted Conventions in Children's Letters to Beloved Authors," *Journal of Childhood Studies* 47, no. 2 (2022): 50–67, https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202220256; Kristine Lehew, "Scribbles in the Archives: Records of Childhood in Canadian Archives," Master's thesis, (University of Manitoba, 2020), http://hdl.handle.net/1993/35199; Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "In the Archives of Childhood," in *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, ed. Anna Mae Duane, (University of Georgia Press, 2013), 213; Anna Sparrman and Pål Aarsand, "Children's Cultural Heritage: The Micro-Politics of the Archive," *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidsskrift* 25, no. 3 (2022): 201–17, https://doi.org/10.18261/nkt.25.3.4; Shurlee Swain, "Traces in the Archives: Evidence of Institutional Abuse in Surviving Child Welfare Records," *Children Australia* 32, no. 1 (2007): 24–31, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1035077200011433.

4. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Geographies of Play: Scales of Imagination in the Study of Child-Made Things," in *Reimagining Childhood Studies,* ed. Spyros Spyrou, et al., (Bloomsbury, 2018), 42.

culturally, or for that matter have never even existed."[5] Indeed, we know that childhood is often thought of with a mystique and innocence that does not match the reality of many childhoods, perhaps partially due to this reliance on imagined childhoods rather than primary sources.

These issues are precisely why children's marginalia are such valuable—though idiosyncratic—source material. Young Ruth's writing demonstrates how books encourage human/material collaboration, manipulations, mutation, and engagement, as well as how a text can be so beloved that it must be claimed with ownership labels, lest it "roam." In this article, we show that rare books collections are already full of children's creations, through the marginalia they left, which we can interpret as a style of child-created cultural heritage. To make sense of this, we first trace some of the discussions surrounding marginalia within rare books and interdisciplinary scholarship, including both the remarkable and the everyday. We move into discussing children's marginalia specifically, noting how scholars have both disparaged and celebrated it. Further, we describe the common tropes of children's marginalia using rare books research at multiple locations, forming themes and characteristics that practitioners can become aware of, which may help in locating the many varieties of child-created marginalia. Finally, we discuss some ideas cultural heritage workers can consider if they would like to help promote child-created marginalia as a valuable and findable source within special collections theory and practice.

Marginalia and Value: A Matter of Context

Special collections libraries have a complex relationship with marginalia. In circulating libraries, marking books is seen as a form of defacement,[6] and how to properly engage with books is part of library policy and informational campaigns.[7] These initiatives help readers avoid improper reader etiquette.[8] Within special collections libraries, marginalia may also be frowned upon for harming a book's condition, or it may increase the value of a book. This is linked to the general tension between a notion that "in the rare books world . . . Condition is all,"[9] and the idea that traces of human activity in a book reveal interesting aspects of ownership beyond the content of the book. Some collectors and curators have preferred pristine condition for books

5. Anna Sparrman, et al. "Archives and Children's Cultural Heritage." *Archives and Records* 45, no.2 (2024): 81–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2023.2289140.

6. Richard Edward Mako, "Marginalia, Value and Meaning: A Study." *Community & Junior College Libraries* 23, no. 3–4 (2017): 68; Marcia D. Nichols, "Marginalia," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 16, no. 5 (2018): 704.

7. Johanna Eliasson, "Between the Lines and in the Margins: Investigating the Attitudes of Library Staff at Swedish University Libraries Toward Marginalia in Library Books," Degree of Master (University of Boras, 2023), 50.

8. Patrick Buckridge, "The Ethics of Annotation: Reading, Studying, and Defacing Books in Australia," in *Marginal Notes: Social Reading and the Literal Margins*, (2021), 11.

9. Sidney E. Berger, *Rare Books and Special Collections*, (Routledge, 2014), 324.

in their collections so much that they have surgically excised evidence of past readers, "re-mounting every page in a frame of new paper."[10] The famous collection of Sir Robert Cotton—which supplied the foundation of the British Museum—was subjected to Cotton's aesthetic preferences for purity; he instructed his book binder to trim off all the marginalia on the pages.[11] Such methods were practiced as styles of restoration. In some cases, marginalia remain, but a collection note illuminates a disdain for such practices, calling a book "soiled" or "piously used."[12]

More contemporarily, scholars and special collections librarians appreciate how marginalia provide insight into the habits and thoughts of readers, making a book valuable in a particular way. This is especially the attitude toward texts owned by people of importance, whose reading habits seem worthy of study to researchers. In the case of Herman Melville's personal Bible and other books, for example, annotations and underlines of a renowned writer reveal his habits as a renowned *reader,* making them "rare . . . because they clarify what often eludes us in manuscripts and letters."[13] Such a peek provides "an intimate dialogue between himself and the great writers."[14] Similarly, marginalia within Shakespeare folios provide insight into how different versions were revised, ultimately informing scholars of what implications these changes may have on particular plays. From a genre standpoint, "plays are by nature unstable, and the history of performance is a history of revision."[15] The changes in performance cannot be experienced due to the ephemeral nature of live theater, but notes in the margins provide a unique kind of evidence that distinguishes the variations of live performance from written text.

Anonymous marginalia, while less obviously valuable, also provide scholars with insight. Though reading is generally seen as a solitary and still activity, scholars have used marginalia to make the point that it is a communal practice that is wrapped up in the process of writing, rather than separate from it.[16] This also provides a counterpoint to the concept that marginalia are arcane or sacrilegious—rather, the universal quality of marginalia shows evidence that they are part of how a reader "imagines an audience" who will later witness their reading.[17] Becoming this witness by being the one who finds embedded marginalia can be a thrill, offering something to be "excavated and explicated" in the present.[18]

10. William H. Sherman, "'Soiled by Use' or 'Enlivened by Association'? Attitudes Toward Marginalia," in *Working with Paradata, Marginalia and Fieldnotes*, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 141.
11. Stephen Orgel, *The Reader and the Book: A Study of Spaces and Traces* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 25.
12. Sherman, "Attitudes toward Marginalia," 135.
13. Walker Cowen, "Melville's Marginalia: Hawthorne," *Studies in the American Renaissance*, (1978): 279.
14. Cowen, "Melville's Marginalia," 279.
15. Orgel, *The Reader in the Books*, 75.
16. Patrick Spedding and Paul Tankard, *Marginal Notes: Social Reading and the Literal Margins* (Springer, 2021), 5.
17. Spedding and Tankard, 13.
18. Nichols, 707.

Researchers actively seek out marginalia to learn about social reading practices and literacy needs. For example, historians used a copy of a midwifery book by Elizabeth Nihell to study how male physicians discredited female midwives' intelligence and character. The text studied was shared among doctors at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. In this communal text, "the white spaces become the location of a drama of embattled masculinity."[19] The men "held a conversation in the margins that worked to discredit not Nihell's critiques, but her character and intelligence, casting doubt on her very ability to write."[20] Thus, the anonymous marginalia creators told us something about how women in healthcare were perceived by their male colleagues. In other cases, through communal reading materials like schoolbooks, scholars can learn about classical education and student opinion. Jensen studied how early modern readers understood the history of ancient Rome by examining the physical volumes they handled alongside their reading practices while undergoing their classical education.[21] This kind of study is made possible only by tracing the marks of past readers on the source texts to which their schoolwork referred.[22]

Some marginalia are not as informative about the reader's ideas related to the text—such as inscriptions, signs of ownership, and family bookplates—and have been subsequently more neglected by scholars. Equally, marginalia showing that the reader used books as scrap paper to form to-do lists, recipes, and crude drawings[23] also receive less positive attention. In such instances, the marginalia may not tell us anything about how a reader responded with a text's contents, but instead illustrate how a book's owner exercised possessiveness and how book-collecting families and networks mark their territory.[24] Marking the pages with mundane information about life may reveal how a book serves as a blank space, or what else is on someone's mind as they read. Bale has called these practices "belligerent literacy" because they are more "acquisitive, assertive, aggressive."[25] A reader "converts the book from one state to another."[26] Annotation like this is "a 'separate' text"[27] from the book entirely. It is similar to graffiti, in that something already created becomes invaded by a new creation.[28]

19. Nichols, 704.
20. Nichols, 707.
21. Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England*, (Brill, 2012), 89.
22. Jensen, 89.
23. William H. Sherman, "What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books?" in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).
24. Lisa Tallis, "Bibliomania and Marginalia: Unexpected Histories in the Margins of the Salisbury Library, Special Collections and Archives at Cardiff University," *The Welsh History Review* 31, no.1, (2022).
25. Anthony Bale, "Belligerent Literacy, Bookplates, and Graffiti: Dorothy Helbarton's Book," in *Book Destruction from the Medieval to the Contemporary*, (Springer, 2014), 100.
26. Bale, 100.
27. Bale, 105.
28. Bale, 105.

The Trace of the Child in the Book

Given the discussions surrounding taboo reading practices, book etiquette, and what constitutes valuable marginalia, children are at a disadvantage. While much has been said about children's literature collections within special collections libraries, such things do not have that much to do with children themselves—they are created by adults for children. Special collections materials contain annotated children's books, but scholarship on the topic is scant, other than when the child who created it later became a famous adult. For example, the schoolbook containing a poem written in the margins by the thirteen-year-old Charlotte Brontë sold for ninety-two thousand pounds in 2013.[29] Even some who study the marginalia of children are not eager to celebrate it. For many working in childhood studies, however, the markings of the everyday child provide insight into the child's own voice in history and life.

Children are frequent annotators in books, despite being just as frequently instructed not to write in books. Fischer, a literacy scholar, has suggested that children are aware of this taboo, and thus we can look at their annotations as "preconventional communication."[30] Observing how books sitting in libraries and dental offices are always adorned with the marginalia of children, Fischer sought to make some sense of this common practice. Her research involved handing crayons and books to a three-year-old and an eighteen-month-old, filming their marginalia practices, and asking them some questions about it. She found that even these young preschoolers, who are not practiced readers in the conventional sense of the skill, loved engaging with books. Their scribbles were kinesthetic and aesthetic experiences with the text, in which they exchanged information and interacted, just as anyone else does when reading. Fischer argued that what children produce during these moments are "artifacts that should be preserved above all others in commemoration of a child's rich and pleasurable reading experience documented within their pages."[31] Similarly, Lerer, a childhood historian, studied marginalia created by children, fascinated by the fact that such marginalia can be found within book collections regardless of the time period or social context. This suggests that children making marginalia is, in fact, a characteristic of human experience. As Lerer points out, children's annotations are evasive, often illegible, unrelated to the text itself, and weird.[32] In any case, such marginalia show a relationship between the child and the book, which becomes not only content to read, but a reading object to be adorned.

29. Alison Flood, "Charlotte Brontë Poem Manuscript Sells for £92,000," *The Guardian*, April 10, 2013.
30. Sarah Fischer, "Reading with a Crayon: Pre-Conventional Marginalia as Reader Response in Early Children," *Children's Literature in Education* 48, no. 2 (2017): 135.
31. Fischer, 135.
32. Seth Lerer. "Devotion and Defacement: Reading Children's Marginalia," *Representations* 118, no. 1 (2012): 127.

Advocates of children's marginalia are working against what Lerer describes as the "modern culture of librarianship . . . shaped as part of a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideology of cleanliness and citizenship."[33] Scholars like Jackson have argued that, while children do love to create marginalia, their marginalia are not legitimate in a scholarly way. She writes that while children tend to make ownership marks with their name, home address, and school address,[34] most of what they create is just part of the early stages of literacy development. She writes, "Before they can read, children may scribble—pretending to write—or draw pictures in books that come their way."[35] Importantly, the notion that children are *pretending* to write reveals the way in which adultism prevails in many interpretations of children's creations. Jackson expresses the point further, saying, "On the whole, preschool children are not real annotators,"[36] arguing that their coloring in printed illustrations "does not count."[37] What they make, in her view, amounts to using books as random paper. Rather, a generous view toward children as creators would be to say that children are indeed *writing*, in ways that make sense to them.

Interestingly, the child's desire to mutate and interact with texts is well-known as a reading practice among those who make books. In the Victorian era, moving books were created to enhance the "physical, embodied practice"[38] that children and people of all ages enjoy when interacting with texts. These still exist today as flap books, pop-up books, and other varieties. Field has written that when these are found in rare books collections, they are damaged, reflecting how much children loved the "ripping, tearing, coloring-in, and more."[39] She notes that we are often urged to read for the purposes of absorbing information, but that books can also be physical toys.[40] These book makers knew that books are not merely containers for information, but also objects that serve functional play purposes. When such things make it into a special collections library, they typically have served their first lives as reader's objects and will contain the traces of past readers.

Common Children's Marginalia

We have claimed that marginalia created by children is a somewhat common source within special collections units. We have also claimed that despite being common, it is difficult to find when purposefully seeking it out. Thus, our study focused on locating large amounts of this type of marginalia so that we could thematize child-created

33. Lerer, 128.
34. Heather Joanna Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*, (Yale University Press, 2001), 24.
35. Jackson, 19.
36. Jackson, 21.
37. Jackson, 21.
38. Hannah Field, *Playing with the Book: Victorian Movable Picture Books and the Child Reader*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 4.
39. Field, 4.
40. Field, 9, 27.

marginalia into broad areas that would show common format types and characteristics. Thematizing further helps professionals make sense of how these marginalia may be useful to certain types of researchers and research questions. As standard descriptive practices create a findability issue for locating materials annotated by children, the themes we have identified in this paper may help professionals better understand how to approach and engage in research using children's marginalia. Our method of research, major themes, and recommendations to professionals follow in this section.

Research Method

Locating marginalia is a slow research process, given that it requires requesting hundreds or thousands of books from repositories and then browsing them page-by-page to locate any potential marginalia. Our goal was to collect several hundred instances of marginalia that were—or likely were—created by children. Those sources were then analyzed and tagged to form the themes that make up the common forms of child-created marginalia. Our research was done across four special collections units: Wilson Special Collections Library at the University of North Carolina; the Rubenstein Library at Duke University; the North Carolina Collection at the Durham Public Library; and Irvin Department of Rare Books at the University of South Carolina.[41]

The books that we browsed for marginalia were identified in several ways, largely related to provenance:

1. School textbooks within textbook collections or family papers collections
2. Sunday school books
3. Children's literature, within broad collections, family collections, and writer's collections
4. Books that rare books librarians suggested we look within, because of their familiarity with the collections
5. Books that rare books librarians located, based on internal notes that mentioned markings, drawings, and other marginalia (this was the least common method of locating books with marginalia)

Further, we did not include marginalia in our study that was likely to have been created by adults. While it is sometimes impossible to know who marked within a book, we only included marginalia which contained numerous clues that the markings were, in fact, child-created. Thorpe addressed this issue in her research at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, where she tried to determine ways for ensuring that drawings in the manuscript collection were indeed made by children.[42] She concluded

41. The latter of these was funded through Kuecker's Karen Alane Robinson Children's Literature Fellowship.

42. Deborah Ellen Thorpe, "Young Hands, Old Books: Drawings by Children in a Fourteenth-Century Manuscript," *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1–18.

that provenance is the most helpful measure of determining the likely creator of marginalia; however, she also claims that when provenance is not known, there are other ways to tell. Particularly for marginalia that include drawings, there are stylistic choices children have made across centuries and cultures.[43] Our research followed such clues to verify the young creators of the marginalia we include.

For analyzing the marginalia we accumulated, we followed basic qualitative, inductive, thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis involves allowing the themes to emerge from the data itself, rather than using a set of predetermined themes.[44] This is a way to help create a sense that, while each instance of marginalia has its own distinct qualities, children's marginalia at large can also be seen as having particular patterns. These patterns help professionals comprehend what they are seeing and understand the significance of various types of traces a child might leave within a book. To make this workable, we photographed all marginalia that we located, and then digitally deposited the images into a collective folder. Each researcher labeled their own findings using themes they selected, and then the lead author analyzed all the findings to settle on a few overall themes that sufficiently described the varieties of marginalia that might commonly be found: drawings; imaginative play; coloring; books within books; short, original writing; and homework notes.

Themes Discussion

Drawings and illustrations were the most common findings among child-created marginalia. In many cases, children's drawings can be detected by the stylistic choices that have been said to be distinct among child artists. For example, a common thing to look for is what known as "tad pole figures," which are human figures reduced to their core parts; large heads; elongated limbs; stiff poses; frontal perspective imagery; and other aesthetic qualities.[45] Drawings featuring tad pole stylistics are quite common, and in most cases, these drawings are located in the inside covers of the book, or on the first few leaves of blank pages, meaning that these drawings are often not related to the text of the book itself. They are also sometimes drawn upside down to the page orientation of the text within the book. An example of this is a drawing found inside an early twentieth-century textbook called *New World Speller: Grade Four to Seven* (see figure 2.) The illustration here, shown directionally oriented toward the way a reader would read the text within the book, exhibits an emphasis on core human body parts and a big head, similar to many other human figure drawing marginalia created by children.

43. Thorpe, 5.
44. Victoria Braun et al., "Thematic Analysis," in *Handbook of Research Method in Health Social Sciences*, ed. Pranee Liamputtong (Springer, 2019), 843–860.
45. Thorpe, 5.

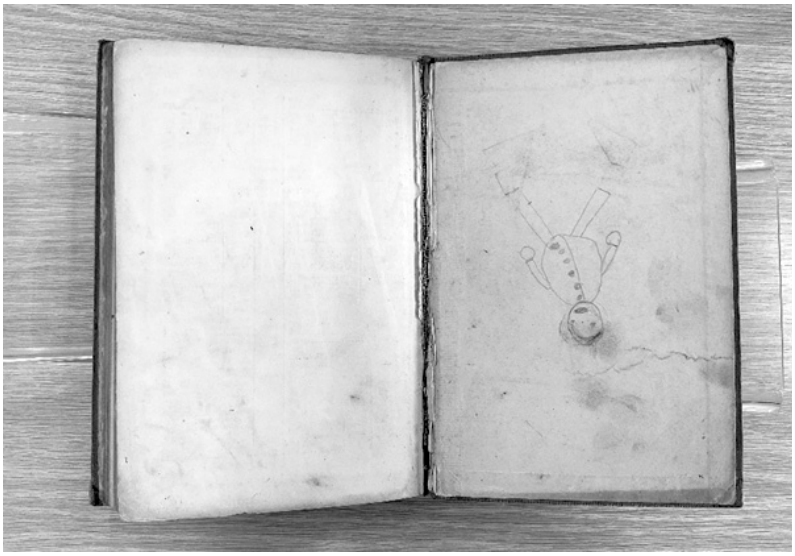


Figure 2. Marginalia within *New World Speller: Grades Four to Seven*, World Book Company, unknown date, The North Carolina Collection, Durham Public Library.

Beyond images of people, children draw a variety of other subjects. A children's book from the early twentieth century called *Good Times* reveals complementary flowers on both the front and back covers, complete with stem and coloration (see figure 3). Like the example from figure 2, these illustrations utilized the covers of the book, rather than the pages within. In another instance, a child created a pencil drawing of a creature in a first-edition copy of *The Book of Mormon,* from 1830 (see figure 4).

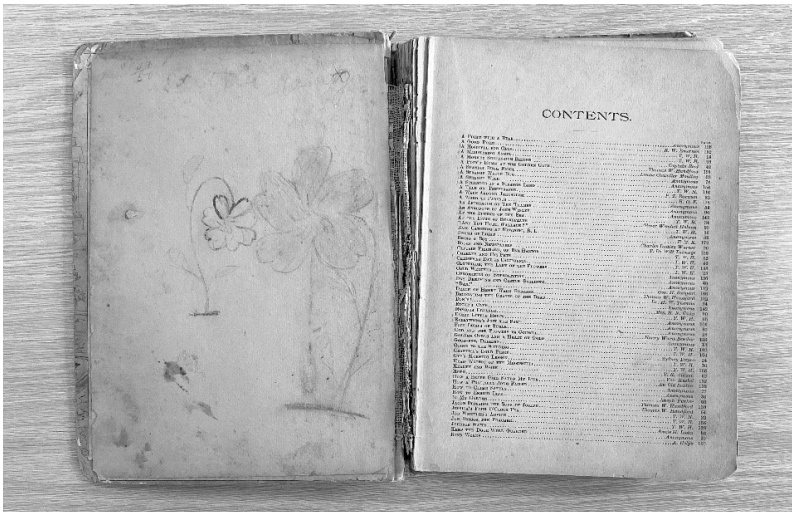


Figure 3. Marginalia within *Good Times*, undated, Belford, Clarke, & Co. Mangum and Latta Family Papers, North Carolina Collections, Durham Public Library.

Figure 4. Joseph Smith, *The Book of Mormon*, 1830, Rubenstein Library, Duke University Libraries.

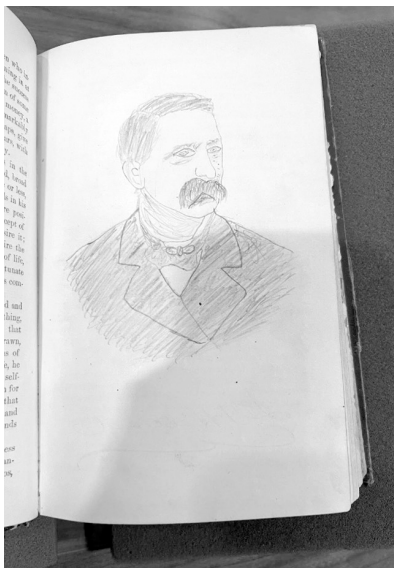


Figure 5. Marginalia *New Normal Fifth Reader*, Albert Raub, 1878, University of South Carolina Libraries.

Drawings formed by tracing was another form of drawing located three times within our marginalia samples, at different repositories. In each case, rare books librarians identified these instances of marginalia as likely being from a child, from what they knew of the provenance and acquisition of the books. Each time, the child utilized the fact that an illustration was featured on one side of a page, but the other side of that page was empty, allowing them to trace the illustrations onto the empty side. Figure 5 shows an example of this, in which a child used the opposite side of a page that had an illustration of the novelist J. G. Holland to fashion their own portrait of him.

These drawings may count as instances of playing with books, and in some cases, marginalia showed direct evidence of exactly that. Lerer notes that simply because the child marks up a book does not mean that she is irreverent toward the literature, but instead that she is invested in the book.[46] In our research, we found that children often played with books in ways that revealed how seriously they took the book itself and its related cultural magnitude. In several instances, children mimicked the norms of librarianship in their marginalia, creating "due date" slips in the books that they personally owned. In a 1938 copy of *Gang Busters in Action!*, a child named John created a due date column in anticipation of possibly loaning his book, or perhaps to make it more like familiar library books (see figure 6).

46. Lerer, "Devotion and Defacement," 129.

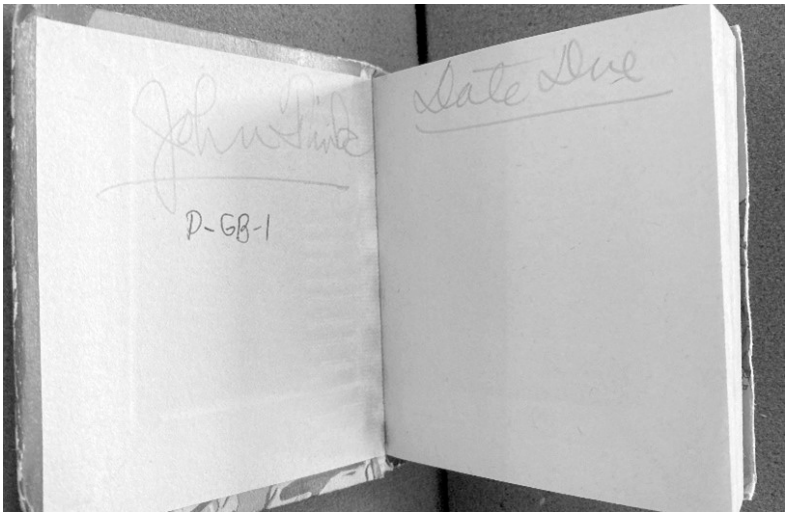


Figure 6. Marginalia within McAnally, Isaac. *Gang Busters in Action!* 1938 Whitman Publishing Company. Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

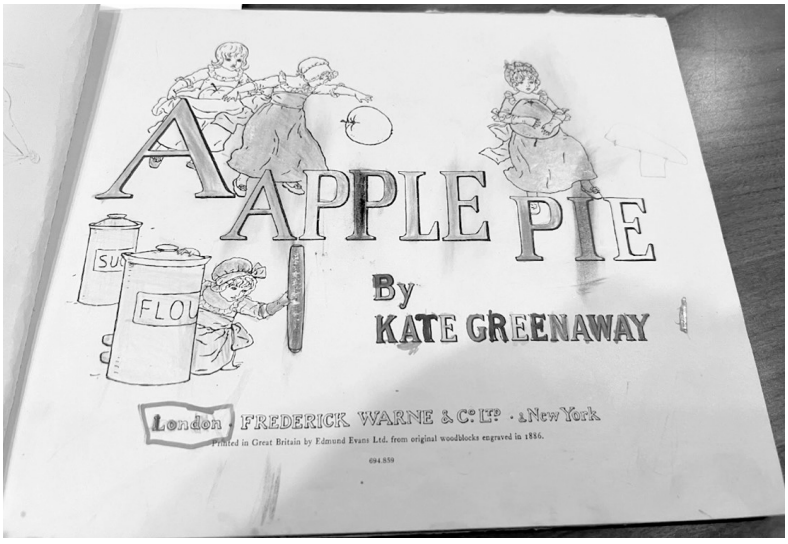


Figure 7. Coloring, using pink, green, orange, red, and yellow, in *A for Apple Pie*, Kate Greenaway, 1886, Irvin Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries.

In many cases, children also will enhance illustrations within books by coloring them. Walter Benjamin, the celebrated German cultural critic, noticed this himself and pointed out that children love black and white woodcuts in books, a common illustration style in the nineteenth-century. He writes, "Unlike the colored pictures, the

surface of the black-and-white illustration seems to be incomplete and hence in need of additions . . . children imaginatively complete the illustrations."[47] One of the most common themes among child-created marginalia are instances of children completing illustrations with color, similar to the one shown in Figure 7.

In a few cases, children utilized the form of the bound book to create their own books within a book. Figure 8 shows portions of a child-created flipbook, within a copy of *Mac of the Marines in China*.[48] The child's story, titled "The Pole Vault," is more than ten pages long, and when flipped, accurately animates a pole vaulter getting ready to make his launch, executing it, and landing. There is a big display of splashing sand at the end, when the pole vaulter crashes back to land. This dramatic telling is entirely drawn, other than the written title. Another child-created flipbook was created within a bound book of the same series as this and depicted a Western-style gun fight.

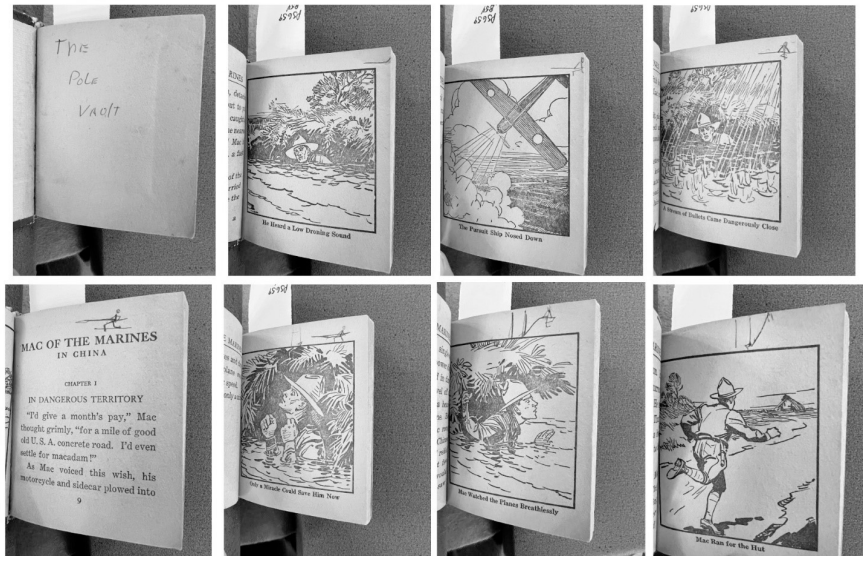


Figure 8. Marginalia in Mark Smith and Frank J. Hoban, *Mac of the Marines in China* (Racine: Whitman Publishing Company, 1938), Wilson, Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In some cases, children's marginalia utilize the book space to report on true stories, like those about love and relationships. In the early twentieth century, a thirteen-year-old boy, Walter, used a grammar textbook's back page to record a bachelor-for-life sentiment: "When you and [I] / are married and living / at your ease. / Remember

47. Walter Benjamin, "A Glimpse into the World of Children's Books," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, Vol 1(Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1926), 436.
48. Mark Smith and Frank J. Hoban, *Mac of the Marines in China* (Whitman Publishing Company, 1938).

that I am single / and doing as I please" (see figure 9). Perhaps this was some fun Walter had with a grammar lesson, or just a warning for any hopeful brides. Short poems such as these were common among our marginalia findings, especially within schoolbooks. In another, Audrey Hamlett confessed, "Mr. Charlie Markham is my little sweetheart," in her grammar book. This kind of marginalia, which is poetry or writing unrelated to the books themselves, tends to read like the recording of idle thoughts or important confessions.

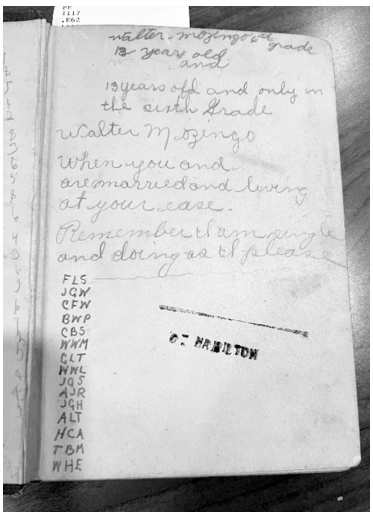
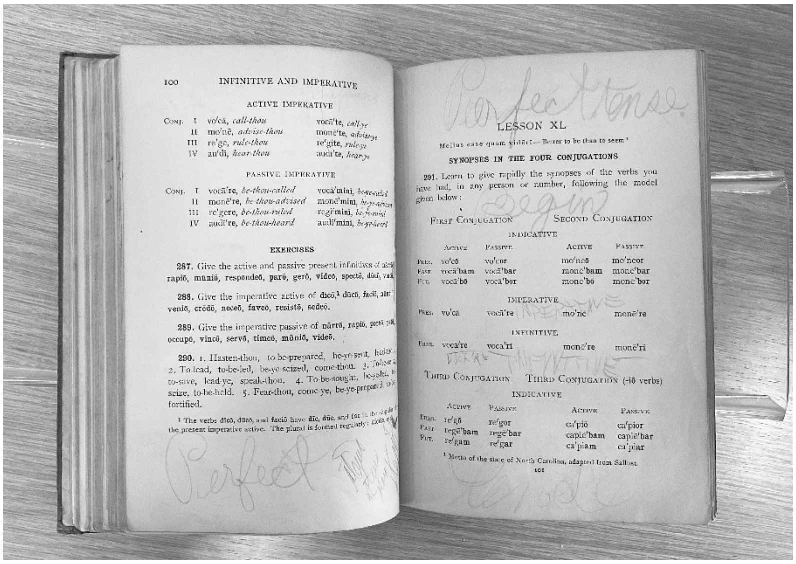


Figure 9. *Elson Grammar School Reader*, Book Two, 1909, Irvin Rare Books and Special Collections Library, University of South Carolina Libraries.

In many cases, though, the marginalia left *is* related to the content of the books. Particularly with children's marginalia, we can find evidence of school curriculum, homework assignments, lesson notes, and the ways children reminded themselves of things or emphasized aspects of the text. Textbook collections are often full of children's notes. Audrey Hamlett, for instance, did not just use her grammar books for declaring her love of Mr. Charlie Markham; she also took notes on where to begin a lesson, perhaps for homework (figure 10). Audrey also recorded things like schedules for her spelling tests, including marks next to certain words in the book's word list, perhaps indicating words Audrey had trouble spelling. Textbook marginalia like these are easy to locate when browsing through related collections, and they serve to inform us of aspects of educational history and notions of literacy. In this way, children's marginalia serve some of the same purposes that adult marginalia serve.

Considerations for Professionals

What did children of the past think about? What did they know? What kinds of things did they do and how did they play? These are difficult research questions to answer because of the obstacles facing those who wish to understand children more on their own terms, rather than through adult proxies. There is simply less children's cultural heritage, and what does exist was often created by adults. While toys, books, and other things created by adults for children may contribute to our understanding of the history of childhood at large, they do not represent the child's making of their own world.



100 INFINITIVE AND IMPERATIVE

ACTIVE IMPERATIVE

Conj. I vo'cā, *call-thou* vocā'te, *call-ye*
II mo'nē, *advise-thou* monē'te, *advise-ye*
III re'ge, *rule-thou* re'gite, *rule-ye*
IV au'dī, *hear-thou* audī'te, *hear-ye*

PASSIVE IMPERATIVE

Conj. I vocā're, *be-thou-called* vocā'minī
II monē're, *be-thou-advised* monē'minī
III re'gere, *be-thou-ruled* regi'minī
IV audī're, *be-thou-heard* audī'minī

EXERCISES

287. Give the active and passive present infinitives of ... rapiō, mūniō, respondeō, parō, gerō, videō, spectō, dūcō, ...

288. Give the imperative active of dīcō,[1] dūcō, faciō, ... veniō, crēdō, noceō, faveō, resistō, sedeō.

289. Give the imperative passive of nārrō, rapiō, ... occupō, vincō, servō, timeō, mūniō, videō.

290. 1. Hasten-thou, to-be-prepared, be-ye-sent, ... 2. To-lead, to-be-led, be-ye-seized, come-thou. 3. ... to-save, lead-ye, speak-thou. 4. To-be-sought, be-ye-... seize, to-be-held. 5. Fear-thou, come-ye, be-ye-prepared, ... fortified.

[1] The verbs dīcō, dūcō, and faciō have dīc, dūc, and fac in the singular of the present imperative active. The plural is formed regularly: ...

LESSON XL

Melius esse quam vidērī.—Better to be than to seem.[1]

SYNOPSES IN THE FOUR CONJUGATIONS

291. Learn to give rapidly the synopses of the verbs you have had, in any person or number, following the model given below:

	First Conjugation		Second Conjugation	
	INDICATIVE			
	Active	Passive	Active	Passive
Pres.	vo'cō	vo'cor	mo'neō	mo'neor
Past	vocā'bam	vocā'bar	monē'bam	monē'bar
Fut.	vocā'bō	vocā'bor	monē'bō	monē'bor
	IMPERATIVE			
Pres.	vo'cā	vocā're	mo'nē	monē're
	INFINITIVE			
Pres.	vocā're	vocā'rī	monē're	monē'rī

	Third Conjugation		Third Conjugation (-iō verbs)	
	INDICATIVE			
	Active	Passive	Active	Passive
Pres.	re'gō	re'gor	ca'piō	ca'pior
Past	regē'bam	regē'bar	capiē'bam	capiē'bar
Fut.	re'gam	re'gar	ca'piam	ca'piar

[1] Motto of the state of North Carolina, adapted from Sallust.

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Figure 10. *Elements of Latin*, Audrey M. Hamlett Textbooks and Other Materials, North Carolina Collection, Durham Public Library.

We hope that readers come away from our study seeing that, through the marginalia within book holdings, rare books and special collections units already have much to offer those of us inquiring into what the ideas of children. In conducting our research and spending our own time as both scholars and practitioners in libraries, archives, and special collections positions, we conclude this article with a few ideas for continuing to construct children's marginalia as a valuable style of cultural heritage, particularly by collecting it with greater purpose, and making it more accessible.

Those who find our arguments compelling may allow considerations of children's marginalia to influence acquisition and collection processes, particularly in juvenilia collections. Many children's literature collections already do this by seeking out books used by children, rather than pristine copies; this practice could be more intentionally adopted as part of collection policies to ensure that we have such content for researchers to work with. One option could be for rare books units to specifically build collections of books that have been annotated by children, constructing their "rarity" status on the bases of distinctness and volume of markings made by children within the books. Unconventional in the rare books world, this kind of acquisition could even involve working with area schools and circulating libraries to facilitate donations of well-loved books related to existing collecting areas—such as textbooks, regional fiction, or authors of note—precisely because they are so marked up by children. This would be a new donor/repository relationship that looks different than the kind many are used to within special collections.

In our study, we found that, even when special collections units do house marginalia, researchers face obstacles in identifying source material for study. While cataloging standards exist to help both internal professionals understand their own inventories, and for external users to readily locate books of interest, marginalia researchers are at a disadvantage with these systems as they exist currently. Some researchers will not necessarily be interested in who wrote the book or even the title or year of the book, all of which are assumed as the access points for catalog records. If a researcher is largely interested in who *read* and marked in the book, then our standards are not terribly helpful. The most prominent obstacle, without a doubt, is that our researchers cannot browse rare books collections' stacks, nor can they use most catalog records to locate marginalia. For books that are included within manuscript collections, as some in our study were, the same obstacles remain true within archival description. The name of the creator of a collection is unlikely to be a child, other than in instances of a famous adult whose collection includes items from their childhood. Again, archival description does not emphasize annotation, marginalia, and sometimes does not even include mentions of the age status of those who are implicated within the collection.

Because of these standard cataloging issues, as well as with this particular type of source, alternative measures must be taken to indicate marginalia. In our research, we found that some institutions do indicate marginalia within their internal records, but not within public-facing records. Some places do not indicate marginalia in any records. Many repositories rely on the memories of staff who may have seen marginalia during job tasks. It seems that one of the easiest changes we could encourage is for repositories to record, either internally or in public records, that books contain marginalia. From here, when it is suspected that a child has created the marginalia, professionals might use some of our themes to help better describe the type of marginalia they noticed. In many cataloging systems, a free-text metadata field indicating markings could suffice. Physical markers on pages within the books themselves could also be a low-tech option, as well. Cultural heritage repositories interested in generating more access to child-created records should consider revisiting their existing collections to note where marginalia appear, especially if someone working there has knowledge of instances of marginalia that are not currently recorded anywhere.

We feel that energy is best spent acquiring and cataloging marginalia, rather than an option like digitizing existing marginalia. Marginalia research, like many kinds of research involving rare books or special collections, often requires the researcher to appear in person to handle the materials. Of course, this can only happen if the researcher has been able to identify materials in the first place. In many cases, the children's marginalia appear in such creative, tactile, and dynamic ways—such as the flipbook shown in Figure 8—that it requires in-person research to fully experience. Thus in-person research would remain as best practice for this style of rare books

research. Reliable online catalog records would allow researchers the opportunity to climb into the child creator's world and understand it from the child's perspective, relatively unmediated by additional adult interference.

Overall, we all benefit from more awareness of age status issues in cultural heritage and how they impact special collections. There's a lack of child-created materials being preserved at large, but we have an opportunity to provide traces of past children, on their own terms, to researchers who are after the mundane thoughts and practices of children. Children deserve more than for their cultural heritage to be relegated to traces or breadcrumbs. Our collections should represent children's experiences more wholly, and the mechanisms we develop to access those collections should be aligned with both the specifics of the materials and the needs of researchers interested in engaging with them.

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