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# Early Children's Literature Collection

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Publishers in Western Massachusetts engaged in a brisk trade in books intended for children during the antebellum years, producing chapbooks to teach reading, didactic works on morals and comportment, and toy books for reward and entertainment. Brief and often simply produced, these books are easily recognized for their diminutive size, stock woodcut illustrations, and characteristic moralistic tone, but they are rich sources for understanding popular conceptions of childhood, education, religious life, and marketing in the book trade, as well subjects.

The majority of the works in the Early Children's Literature collection were products of the antebellum press in western Massachusetts, produced and distributed by printers such as John Metcalf (Wendell and Northampton), Anson Phelps (Greenfield), and A. R. Merrifield (Northampton). There are examples of chapbooks from other printers, most notably Mahlon Day of New York and the American Sunday School Union in Philadelphia.

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## Background

Publishers in Western Massachusetts engaged in a brisk trade in books intended for children during the antebellum years, producing chapbooks to teach reading, didactic works on morals and comportment, and toy books for reward and entertainment.

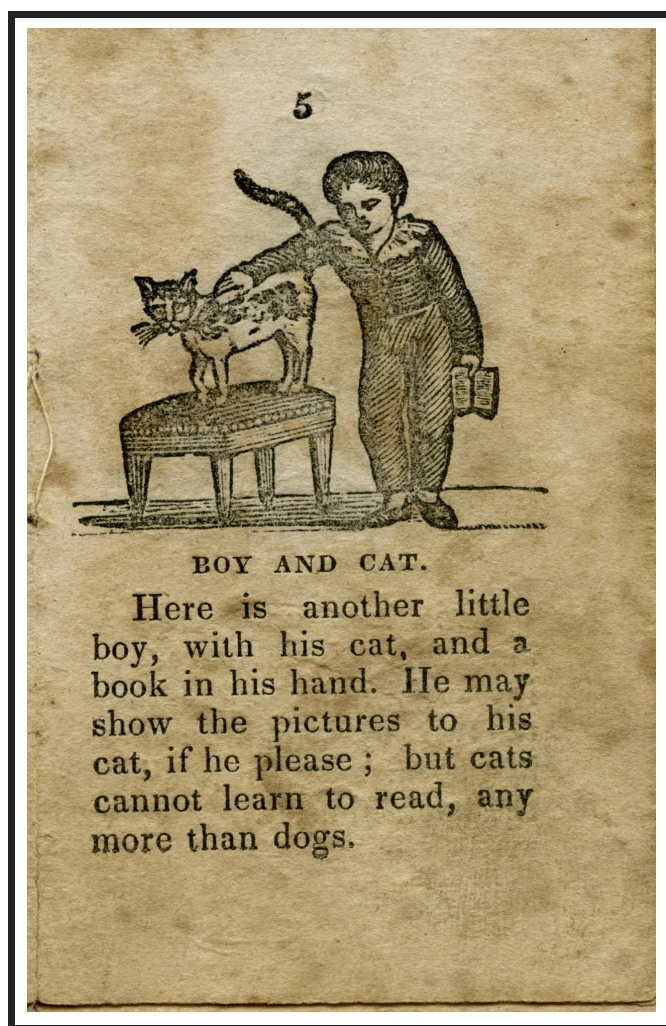
Brief and often simply produced, these books are easily recognized for their diminutive size, stock woodcut illustrations, and characteristic moralistic tone, but they are rich sources for understanding popular conceptions of childhood, education, religious life, and marketing in the book trade, as well subjects. In most cases they were simply and cheaply produced, usually issued in illustrated wrappers and center sewn.

## Scope of collection

The majority of the works in the Early Children's Literature collection were products of the antebellum press in western Massachusetts, produced and distributed by printers such as John Metcalf (Wendell and Northampton), J. H. Butler (Northampton), Anson Phelps (Greenfield), and A. R. Merrifield (Northampton). The collection includes examples of chapbooks from other printers, most notably Mahlon Day of New York and the American Sunday School Union in Philadelphia.

As simply produced as they were, the chapbooks in this collection can be quite complex bibliographically. To begin with, publishers regularly borrowed and stole from one another so that one title can appear in numerous variants: textually, the Metcalf and Phelps editions of *Spring flowers* are nearly identical, though laid out quite differently. Moreover, individual publishers reprinted titles as demand dictated, with variant editions not always clearly distinguished.

Most notably, the illustrations present a bibliographic challenge. Since printers purchased printing blocks in lots from



The New Picture Book (1837)

wholesalers, the same illustration can appear in books by different publishers and put to different ends, while a single publisher may substitute illustrations within a single title quite eclectically, and not always aligned to the meaning of the text: the 1840 edition of John Metcalf's *Red Squirrel* rather logically features an illustration of squirrel on the front wrapper, however the 1837 edition includes a temperance image of a man with a glass of water, standing by a well. The text can vary from edition to edition of what is ostensibly the same work: compare the Wendell and Northampton editions of Metcalf's *A,B,C, with pictures and verses*.

## Inventory

American Sunday-School Union

1827

American Sunday-School Union: *The glass of gin ; or, when it is safest to run. -- When it is safest to run*. Philadelphia :American Sunday-School Union

1827

24p.

PZ6 .G533

Daniels, George Pond

1845

Daniels, George Pond (Providence, R. I.): *Nine pleasing tales for children : [four lines of verse]*. Providence [R.I.] : Geo. P. Daniels

1845

16p.

PZ6 .N62 1845

Day, Mahlon (New York, N.Y.)

1825-1830

Day, Mahlon: *Book of riddles. : [Four lines of verse]*. New-York :M. Day

1825

8p.

PZ6 .B66 1825

Day, Mahlon: *The History of curious and wonderful beasts*. New-York :M. Day

1825

16p.

PZ6 .H57

Day, Mahlon: *The Scripture alphabet in verse. : [Four lines from 2 Tim. iii. 15]*. :M. Day

1830

16p.

PZ6 .S275 1830

Denio and Phelps (Greenfield, Mass.)

1821

Phelps, Ansel: *Poems: moral and religious for children and youth by the father of a family*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps

1821

30p.

Massachusetts Sabbath School Society

1839

Massachusetts Sabbath School Society: *Ellen asking about prayer*. Boston :Mass. Sabbath School Society

1839

8p.

PZ6 .E45 1839

McLoughlin Brothers (New York, N.Y.)

1894

McLoughlin Bros.: *Monkey tricks*. New-York : McLoughlin Bros

1894

14p.

PZ5.3 .M6 1894

Merrifield, A. R. (Northampton, Mass.)

1842

Merrifield, A. R.: *The seasons*. Northampton, [Mass.] : A. R. Merrifield

1842

10p.

PZ6.S43 1842

Merrifield, A. R.: *Poetic present*. Northampton [Mass.] : A. R. Merrifield

1842  
10p.  
PZ6 .P65 1842  
Metcalf, John (Wendell and Northampton, Mass.)  
1830-1845  
Metcalf, John: *A, B, C, with pictures and verses*. Wendell, Mass. : J. Metcalf  
1830  
8p.  
PZ6 .A2 1830  
Metcalf, John: *A, B, C, with pictures and verses*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1837  
8p.  
PZ6 .A2 1837  
Metcalf, John: *Book of letters*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1837  
8p.  
PZ6 .B655 1837  
Metcalf, John: *Duties of children*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1836  
18p.  
PZ6 .D88 1836  
Metcalf, John, and J. H. Butler: *The good boy*. Northampton : John Metcalf  
1839  
18p.  
PZ6 .G5909 1839  
Metcalf, John: *The good girl*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1837  
18p.  
PZ6 .G66 1837  
Metcalf, John: *The good girl*. Northampton, Mass. : J. Metcalf  
1840  
18p.  
PZ6 .G66 1840z  
Metcalf, John: *The good girl*. Northampton : John Metcalf  
1842  
18p.  
PZ6 .G66 1842  
Metcalf, John: *The good girl*. Northampton : John Metcalf  
1845  
18p.  
PZ6 .G66 1845  
Metcalf, John: *Juvenile poems - Wrapper title: Shepherd boy*. Wendell, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1832  
18p.  
PZ6 .J99 1832  
Metcalf, John: *Lessons for Laura*. Northampton : John Metcalf  
1836  
24p.  
PZ6 .L49 1836  
Metcalf, John; and J. H. Butler: *Little Harry, and the apples*. Northampton : John Metcalf  
1836  
18 p.  
PZ6 .L582 1837  
Metcalf, John: *The little present for a good child*. Wendell, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1832  
8p.  
PZ6 .L583 1832  
Metcalf, John: *A little present*. Northampton, [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1837

8p.  
PZ6 .L583 1837  
Metcalf, John: *Little rhymes for little readers*. Northampton :John Metcalf  
1836

18p.  
PZ6 .L585 1836  
Metcalf, John: *Little verses, for good children*. Wendell, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1831

8p.  
PZ6 .H6244 1831  
Metcalf, John: *Little verses, for good children*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1833

8p.  
PZ6 .H6244 1833  
Metcalf, John: *Little verses for good children*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1840

8p.  
PZ6 .H6244 1840  
Metcalf, John: *New picture-book*. Northampton :John Metcalf  
1837

8p.  
PZ6 .N59 1837  
Metcalf, John: *The red squirrel*. Northampton [Mass.] : John Metcalf  
1837

8p.  
PZ6 .R4 1837  
Metcalf, John: *The red squirrel*. Northampton [Mass.]. : John Metcalf  
1840

8p.  
PZ6 .R4 1840  
Metcalf, John: *The seasons*. Northampton, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1839

18p.  
Metcalf, John: *The shepherd boy*. Wendell, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1832

18p.  
PZ6 .S54 1832  
Metcalf, John: *Spring flowers, or, Easy lessons for young children -- Easy lessons for young children. -- Spring flowers*. Wendell, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1831

23p.  
PZ6 .S67 1831  
Turner, Elisha: *Stories from the Bible*. Northampton, [Mass.] : Elisha Turner  
1840

18p.  
PZ6 .S758 1840z  
Metcalf, John: *A story for Charles*. Northampton, Mass. : John Metcalf  
1837

8p.  
PZ6 .S76 1837  
Phelps, Ansel (Greenfield, Mass.)  
1835-1849  
Phelps, Ansel: *Little George and his hatchet, or, The book of pictures. -- Book of pictures. -- George and his hatchet*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1847

26p.  
PZ6 .L58 1847  
Phelps, Ansel: *Little George and his hatchet, or, The book of pictures. -- Book of pictures. -- Little George and his hatchet*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps

1849  
26p.  
PZ6 .L58 1849  
Phelps, Ansel: *Milk for babes*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1846  
18p.  
Phelps, Ansel: *The Miller's wife*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1844  
24p.  
PZ6 .M55 1846  
Phelps, Ansel: *My little book*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1845  
10p.  
PZ6 .M9 1845  
*The soldier turned farmer*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1835  
10p.  
PZ6 .S64 1835  
Phelps, Ansel: *Spring flowers, or easy lessons for young children*. Greenfield [Mass.] : A. Phelps  
1847  
26p.  
Shepley, S. and C. (Fitchburg, Mass.)  
1846  
Cummings, A. I. et al.: *The teacher's parting gift, or, Advice to the young on the subject of education and the formation of a virtuous character*. Fitchburg, Mass. : S. and C. Shepley  
1846  
62p.  
LB1556 .C85 1846  
Turner, Elisha (Northampton, Mass.)  
1800  
Turner, Elisha: *The primrose*. Northampton [Mass.] : E. Turner  
1800  
18p.  
PZ6 .P75 1800z  
Werden, Elias Irish (Pittsfield, Mass.)  
1847-1848  
Werden, Elias Irish: *The Child's picture book*. Pittsfield, Mass. : E. Werden  
1847  
8p.  
PZ6 .C45 1848  
Werden, Elias Irish: *A Story book about birds. : [Five lines of verse]*. Pittsfield, Mass. : E. Werden  
1848  
8p.  
PZ6 .S759 1848  
Wood, Silas (New York, N.Y.)  
1810  
*A New-Years gift*. New-York :S. Wood  
1810  
32p.  
PZ6 .N49 1810

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired variously.

### Related Material

SCUA contains chapbooks and other materials produced by chapbook publishers in its general rare book collections and in the



Rural Massachusetts Imprints Collection (RB 012).

## Digitized content

A number of the chapbooks have been digitized and may be viewed online through SCUA's digital repository, Credo.

## Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Nov. 2017.

## Language:

English

## Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Children's literature--Massachusetts

Toy and moveable books

### Contributors

Metcalf, John, 1788-1864

### Genres and formats

Books

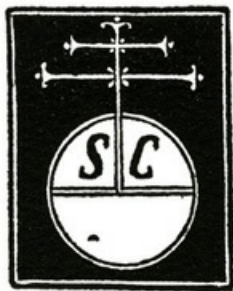
### Link to similar SCUA collections

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