

The Private Library

[Home](#)

21 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part I)

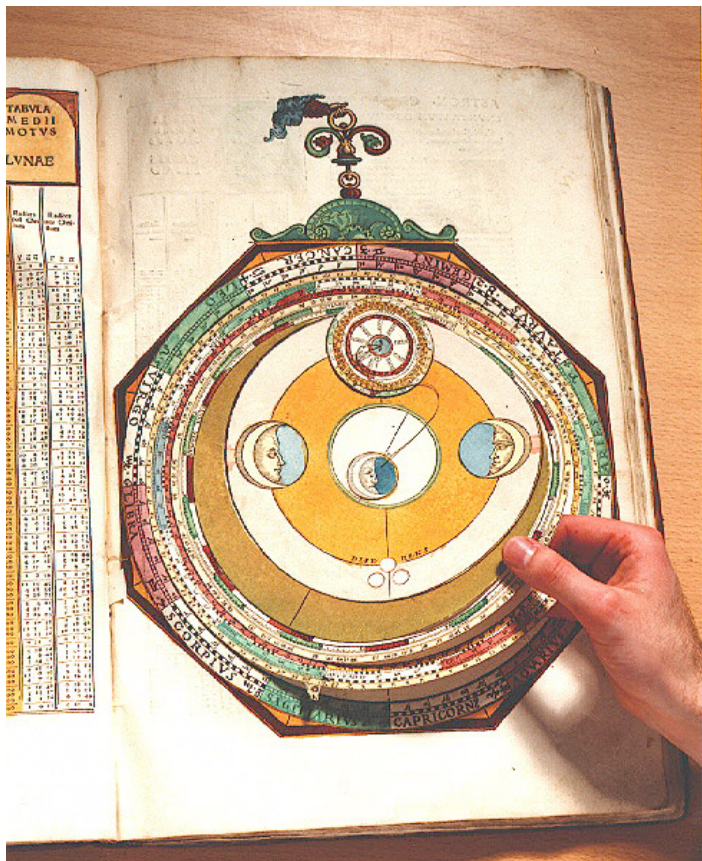
Almost since the codex first came to prominence in the 4th century CE "artists, philosophers, scientists, and book designers have tried to challenge the book's bibliographic boundaries. They have added flaps, revolving parts, and other movable pieces to enhance the text:"



Ann Montanaro, founder of the Movable Book Society, whom we have quoted above (and whose bibliographies about movable books are the standard references for this subject), also notes that

It is not known who invented the first mechanical device in a book, but one of the earliest examples was produced in the 13th century by Catalan mystic and poet Ramon Llull of Majorca who used a revolving disc or volvelle...to illustrate his theories. Throughout the centuries volvelles have been used for such diverse purposes as teaching anatomy, making astronomical predictions, creating secret codes, and telling fortunes. Yet, while it can be documented that movable parts had been used for centuries, they were almost always used in scholarly works. It was not until the 18th century that these techniques were applied to books designed for entertainment, particularly for children....

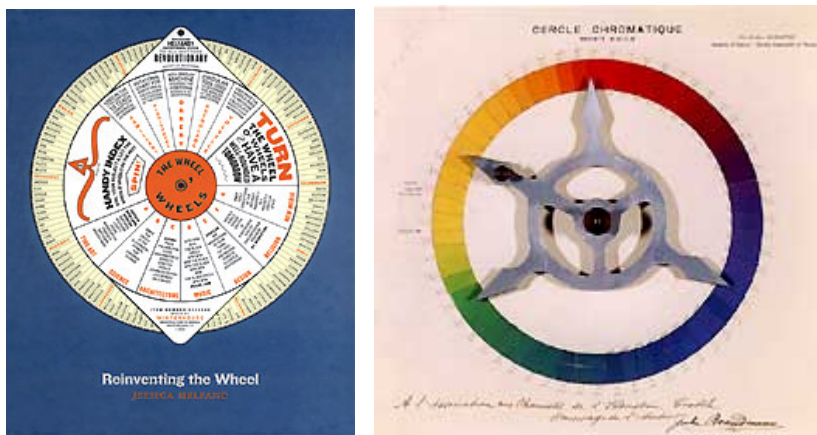
Volvelles (think "early analog computers made of rotating paper parts") most often were found in books on astronomy (the volvelle depicted below is from Astronomicum Caesareum by Petrus Apianus, 1540):



Apianus' *magnum opus*, which explains the use of the astrolabe (for calculating the altitude of stars) and other instruments used to calculate planetary positions, was published with *eighteen* volvelles, with seed pearls attached to the string markers of each. Only about **40** copies of this work are still believed to exist, and very few of these copies still have the original seed pearls attached.

Volvelles make it clear that the more inclusive term for these types of books is **movable** books, *not pop-up* books. (All pop-up books are movable books, but not all movable books--those with volvelles, for example--are pop-up books.)

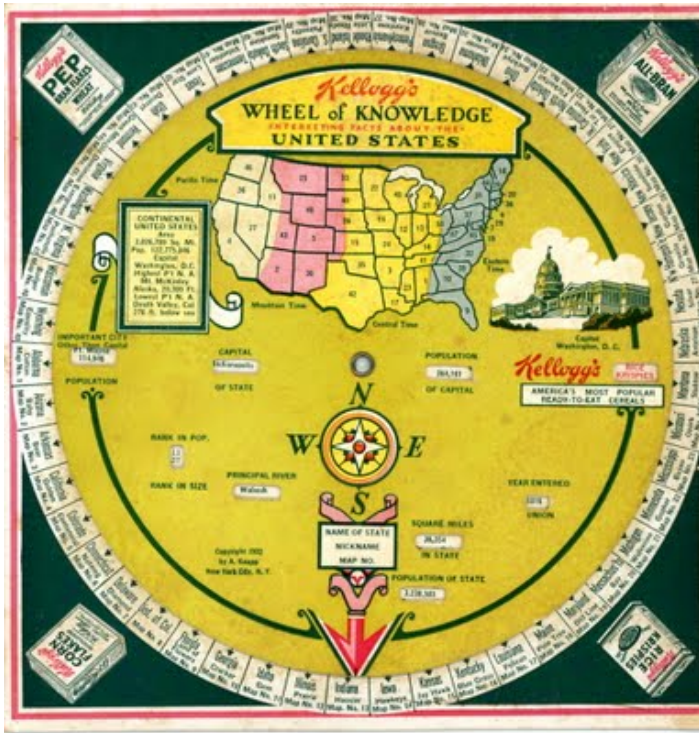
Even with the significant advances in paper engineering that would take place beginning in the 18th century, volvelles continue to find a wide range of uses, as Jessica Helfand makes clear in her 2002 book (which served as the catalog for a 2004 Grolier Club exhibition of the same name), Reinventing the Wheel:



As Ms. Helfand notes in her book,

The twentieth century saw a robust growth in the design, manufacture, and production of a new generation of independent, free-standing volvelles. Categorically, they not only represent an unusually eclectic set of uses, but demonstrate, too, a remarkable range of stylistic, compositional, mechanical, informational, and kinetic conceits. There are volvelles that arrange their data peripherally, centrifugally, and radially; volvelles that use multiple concentric circles with pointers; and

volvelles that benefit from the generous use of the die-cut, a particular technological hallmark of modern printing manufacture. Twentieth-century volvelles — often referred to as "wheel charts" — offer everything from inventory control to color calibration, mileage metering to verb conjugation. They anticipate animal breeding cycles and calculate radiation exposure, measure chocolate consumption and quantify bridge tips, chart bird calls, convert metrics, and calculate taxes. There are fortune-telling wheels and semaphore-charting wheels; emergency first-aid wheels and electronic fix-it wheels; playful wheels that test phonetics and prophylactic wheels that prevent pregnancy:



The advent of movable books designed especially to entertain children would take even this type of paper engineering to a whole new level, as we shall see in tomorrow's post....

Posted by [L. D. Mitchell](#) on 21 November 2009 at 05:55 | [Permalink](#)

Tags: Ann Montanaro, book collecting, book collector, book history, books, home library, Jessica Helfand, movable book, movable books, pop-up, pop-up book, pop-up books, pop-ups, private library, volvelle, volvelles

[Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) | [Twee](#)

Comments

Comment below or sign in with [Typepad](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [more...](#)

The Private Library

[Home](#)

22 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part II)

As you may recall from our series of posts on children's literature (9-14 June 2009), "it wasn't until [John Newbery](#) published [A Little Pretty Pocket-Book](#) in 1744 that children's literature as we know it today came into being." It was not until some years after the appearance of this landmark publication that the first successful *movable* books for children were published.

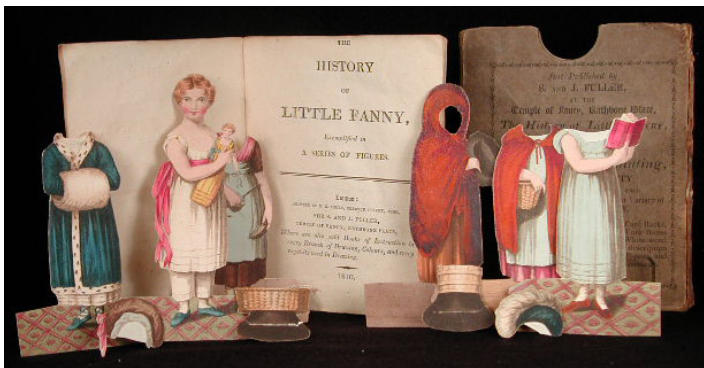
As Ann Montanaro has noted, these books--called variously [metamorphoses](#) books, [turn-up](#) books and/or [Harlequinades](#) (these latter designed by the London publisher and bookseller [Robert Sayer](#) ca. 1765)--were composed of single, printed sheets folded perpendicularly into four. Hinged at the top and bottom of each fold, the picture was cut through horizontally across the center to make two flaps that could be opened up or down. When raised, the pages disclosed another hidden picture underneath, each having a few lines of verse:



A similar type of "life-the-flap book" was developed by the miniature portrait painter [William Grimaldi](#). In [The Toliet](#) (1821), Grimaldi used items on his "daughter's dressing table as representations of specific virtues. The articles served as flaps, which, when lifted up, revealed scenes illustrating each virtue." (The images below are from a later printing of this title, ca. 1845.) He produced a similar book for boys, [A Suit of Armour for Youth](#) (1823), which substituted pieces of armour for tolietry items, to the same moral effect. Both books were published by his son, Stacy:



Another type of movable book for children was introduced by the London publishers [S & J Fuller](#) beginning ca. 1810. Known as [paper doll books](#), each book included movable paper clothes. A recent University of North Texas [exhibition](#) of such books notes that [t]he character wore a specific outfit in each episode of the verse; thus, as the book was read, the doll was supposed to be dressed in the appropriate attire. The books would often tell morality tales aimed at children. Such books were more expensive than regular children's books, and were most likely marketed to the upper classes:



Another early movable book for children was the *peep show* or *tunnel* book, which may have evolved from the traveling exhibits that often accompanied early fairs and festivals. So called because they usually depicted "scenes from famous stories or topical events and were viewed through a small hole in the cover," they became especially popular in the mid-1800s, after the opening of the tunnel under the Thames River in London (accounting for the latter name). A modern example of this type of book, by noted book artist [Carol Barton](#), is depicted below:



It was a publishing firm founded in London sometime before 1800 that would launch the first *mass production* of movable books for children, as we shall see in tomorrow's post....

Posted by [L. D. Mitchell](#) on 22 November 2009 at 05:05 | [Permalink](#)

Tags: book collecting, book collector, book history, books, Carol Barton, Harlequinade, Harlequinades, home library, movable book, movable books, paper doll book, paper doll books, peep show book, peep show books, pop-up, pop-up book, pop-up books, pop-ups, private library, Robert Sayer, S & J Fuller, tunnel book, tunnel books, turn-up book, turn-up books, William Grimaldi

[Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) |

Twee

Comments

Comment below or sign in with [Typepad](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [more...](#)

The Private Library

[Home](#)

23 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part III)

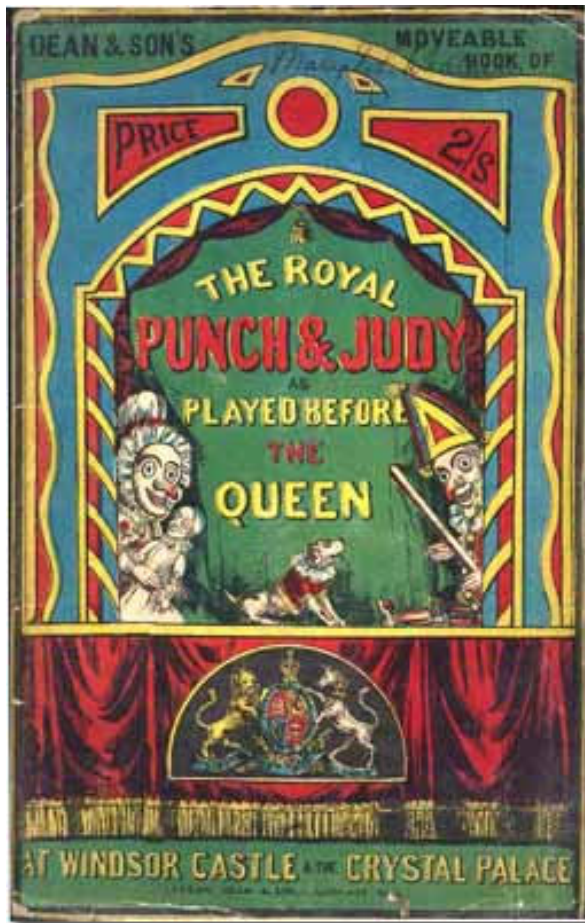
Mass production of movable books for children did not begin until around the middle of the 19th century, when the London publisher Dean & Son began to produce its now famous and coveted series of New Scenic Books.

These were the first movable books that probably would be considered **pop-up** books in the sense that this word is used today. As noted in a recent University of North Texas exhibition of such books,

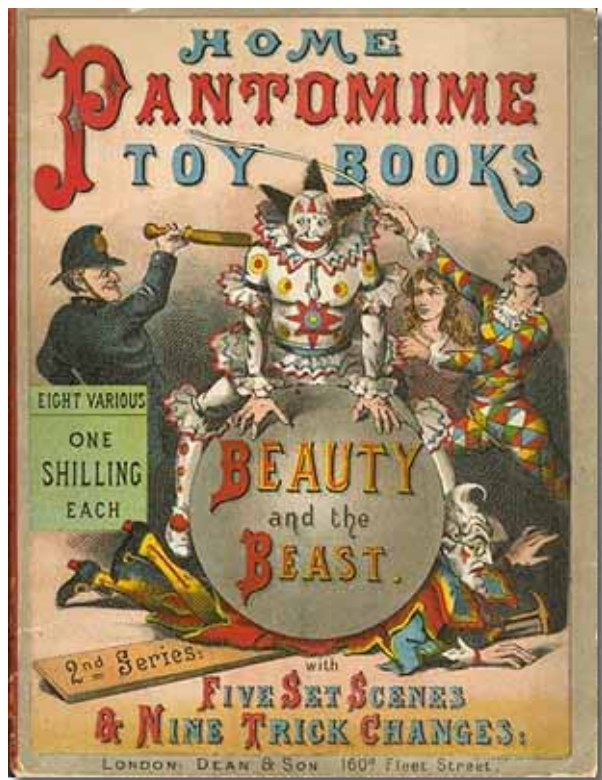
[e]ach was illustrated on at least three cut-out sections. The sections were placed one behind another and attached by a ribbon running through them. This way, they could stay together and be folded flat as flaps, face down against a page. When a reader lifted a flap, a three-dimensional scene would actually pop-up!

During the period from roughly 1860-1900, Dean & Son produced some *fifty* such books, in the process introducing several innovations to the production of movable books.

In the 1860s the company perfected a means of animating parts of a book with a tab mechanism, which they advertised as living pictures. Their *Royal Punch & Judy as Played before the Queen at Windsor Castle & the Crystal Palace* (published in 1861 and based on the somewhat anarchic Punch & Judy puppet shows that were a favorite of Victorian audiences) is a well-known example:



Another popular Dean & Son series, Home Pantomime Toy Books, is almost as famous for its gorgeous *chromolithographs* (see our posts of 14-16 November 2009) as for its animation, which effect was created by layering pages of different sizes upon each other (as the pages are turned, parts of the scene change, "changing the subject matter of the entire scene"):



Ann Montanaro reminds us that these types of innovations are due to the fact that Dean & Son

established a special department of skilled craftsmen who prepared the hand-made mechanicals...[which included] transformational plates based on the jalousie or Venetian blind principle.... The illustrations in these books had either a square or an oblong picture divided into four or five equal sections by corresponding horizontal or vertical slits. When a tab at the side or bottom of the illustration was pulled, the picture "transformed" into another picture.

An example of this type of *transformational* book can be seen in the right-hand column of this blog by clicking on *Moving Animal* under **Bookish Podcasts and Webcasts** (for the full effect, make sure your sound is on). [For other video samples of movable books, click on *Always Jolly* or *Cock Robin* or *Robert Sabuda* under **Bookish Podcasts & Webcasts**. For an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at the actual *mechanisms* that animate such books, be sure to click on the video *Preservation of Movable Books*.]

Dean & Son's pre-eminence as publishers of moveable books for children would not be seriously challenged until the 1870s, as we shall see in tomorrow's post...

Posted by [L. D. Mitchell](#) on 23 November 2009 at 05:24 | [Permalink](#)

Tags: Ann Montanaro , book collecting, book collector, book history, books, Dean & Son, home library, Home Pantomime Toy Books, movable book, movable books, New Scenic Books, pop-up, pop-up book, pop-up books, pop-ups, private library

[Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) |

[Twee](#)

Comments

Comment below or sign in with [Typepad](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [more...](#)

The Private Library

[Home](#)

24 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part IV)

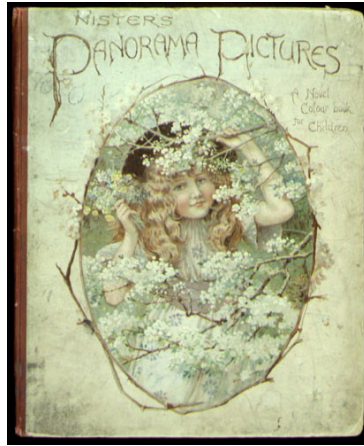
Dean & Sons pre-eminence in publishing movable books was not seriously challenged until [Rafael Tuck](#) founded (in 1870) his London enterprise to produce luxury paper items like puzzles, valentines and paper dolls. Although better known for his firm's production of exquisite chromolithographed postcards (printed in Germany), the firm also published *Father Tuck's Mechanical Series* (1890), which featured several different mechanisms over the course of the series (e.g., *transformationals*, such as [Pleasure Pages](#), depicted below), and a series of *pop-ups* like [Fun at the Circus](#), also depicted below:



At about the same time (1877), [Ernest Nister](#) founded a publishing firm that would find a way to create pop-ups that stood up *automatically* (scenes would not have to be lifted up or pulled down manually). These were the firm's celebrated [Panorama Picture Books](#), one of which--[Wild Animal Stories](#)--is depicted below. His firm also refined the transformational book with its [dissolving picture books](#), which featured "a mechanism that would reveal pictures in a circular form, creating a kaleidoscope effect," as in [Magic Windows](#), also depicted below:



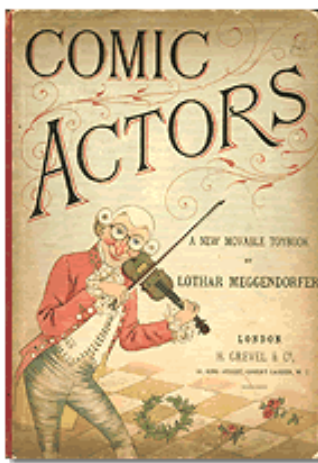
Even more than for their mechanical innovations, though, Nister's movable books are renowned for their "exquisite sentimental beauty," a sentimentality that was quite popular with Victorian book buyers:



Nister published movable books for the continental European market from his firm's headquarters in Nuremburg, and for the English book market from his firm's headquarters in London and through a partnership with the American publisher E. P. Dutton.

The above innovations notwithstanding, it was the comic vision of the great Munich artist Lothar Meggendorfer that would have the greatest influence on the development of movable books. His movables feature some of the most complex mechanisms ever devised for such books, actuated by an innovative series of rivets and levers. (To see one of his firm's movable books *in action*, click [here](#).) As Ann Montanaro has noted, [*Meggendorfer*] used *tiny metal rivets, actually tight curls of thin copper wire, to attach the levers, so that a single pull-tab could activate all of them, often with several delayed actions as the tab was pulled further out. Some illustrations used more than a dozen rivets.*

Meggendorfer created his first movable book, Living Pictures (1878), as a Christmas present for his son, Adolf. While his earliest movable books often were hand-painted (such as Immer Lustig, depicted below), later movables usually featured exquisite chromolithography (such as Comic Actors, also depicted below):



All of the movables from this *first golden age* of movable books are understandably quite rare, especially in anything like *Fine* condition. Decades of hard use by children have taken their toll, as Meggendorfer's movables often cautioned children that it would, as in these lines from Comic Actors:

*The men and creatures here you find
Are lively and amusing,
Your fingers must be slow and kind
And treat them well while using.*

All movable books, even today, require an enormous amount of *hand* labor, and the coming of World War I would remove most of that skilled labor from the marketplace....

The Private Library

[Home](#)

25 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part V)

At the conclusion of World War I, over a decade passed before movable books for children began to again be published in any quantity. British publisher [S. Louis Giraud](#) began publishing in 1929 a series of movable books that he labeled living models. These were true pop-ups, moderately priced (unlike their predecessors of the 19th century), and over the next two decades Giraud would publish sixteen *annuals*, each of which included at least five pop-ups:



The first American movable books had been published during the 1880s by [McLoughlin Brothers](#) of New York in what they termed their Little Showman's Series:



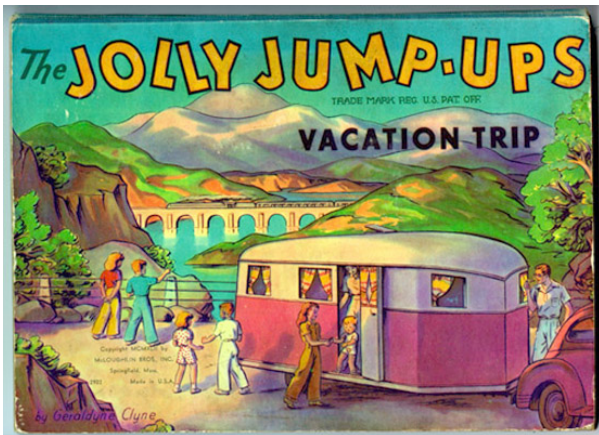
The firm is perhaps better known, though, for pirating Dean & Son's *Pantomime Toy Books* (see our post of [23 November 2009](#)). The firm had little more to do with movable books until 1939, as we shall see shortly.

The worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s sent book buying, like most other economic activities, into a long and precipitous decline. Seeking to resurrect their fortunes, the [Blue Ribbon Publishing Company](#) of New York hit upon a

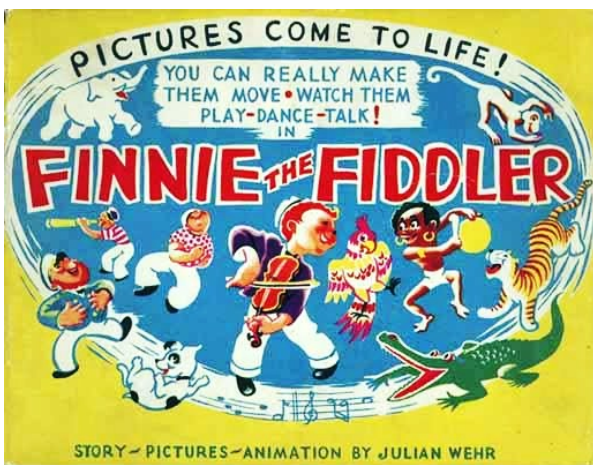
winning combination: a series of movable books for children inspired by traditional fairy tales, as well as by the animation of the Walt Disney Company:



It was near the end of this decade that McLoughlin Brothers re-entered the market for children's movable books, publishing their famous Jolly Jump-Up Series. As a recent exhibition at the University of Virginia observes, this series' *themes of family life--buying a new home, going camping, visiting the farm--trace the family from the end of the 1930s through the post-World War II boom. Over time, the Jump-Ups came to encapsulate the American dream:*



The 1940s saw the advent of a number of remarkable paper engineers such as Julian Wehr, who designed books with tabs that were located at the *sides* of books (not just at the *bottom*, as in previous decades), and which could often be moved back and forth as well as up and down:



In the 1950s Bancroft & Co. (London) began marketing an innovative series of movable books produced by, believe it or not, a state-run import/export agency (Artia) in Czechoslovakia. These books were largely the work of the extraordinarily talented paper engineer and artist Vojtěch Kubašta:



The *second golden age* of movable books for children was about to begin....

Posted by [L. D. Mitchell](#) on 25 November 2009 at 04:56 | [Permalink](#)

Tags: Artia, Blue Ribbon Publishing Company, book collecting, book collector, book history, books, home library, Jolly Jump-Up Series, Julian Wehr, Little Showman's Series, living models, McLoughlin Brothers, movable book, movable books, pop-up, pop-up book, pop-up books, pop-ups, private library, S. Louis Giraud, Vojtěch Kubašta

[Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) |

Comments

Comment below or sign in with [Typepad](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [more...](#)

The Private Library

Home

26 November 2009

Movable Books and The Private Library (Part VI)

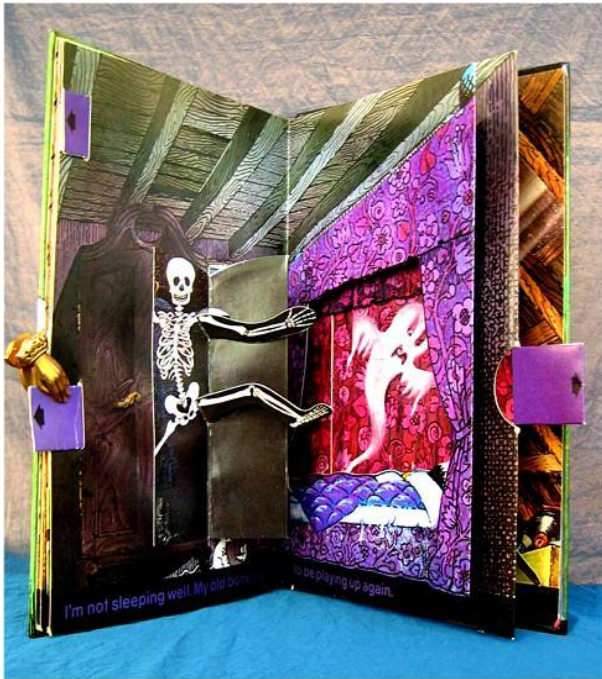
In the 1960s a Los Angeles-based print brokerage firm, **Graphics International**, which had been creating pop-up magazine ad inserts for company's like *Dodge* and *Wrigley's*, tried to market **Atria's** pop-up books in the USA (see yesterday's post). Thwarted from doing so by Czechoslovakia's Communist authorities, the company's president, Waldo Hunt, had the firm begin publishing its own line of pop-up books. Thus began the *second golden age* of movable books....

Hunt's firm moved to New York in 1964 and began producing books for Random House. The first publication produced by this partnership was Bennett Cerf's pop-up riddles (1965), a promotion for *Maxwell House Coffee* (which the company's customers could receive "by sending in two can labels and \$1"). Some **thirty** additional movable books were published for Random House within the next two years:



Hunt had developed a considerable number of international contacts as a print broker, and he was able to use these contacts to have his movable books assembled in countries where the enormous **hand labor** required to produce such books was less expensive than in the United States. Initially, he had this work done in Japan, then later in Mexico, Colombia and Singapore.

Hunt sold Graphics International to *Hallmark* at the end of the 1960s, and Hallmark moved the firm to Kansas City (Missouri), where the firm produced an additional forty+ movable books. In 1974, Hunt left the company and returned to California, where he founded the book packaging company *Intervisual Communications* and the publisher *Intervisual Books* (now part of Dalmatian Press). Over the next quarter century Hunt's companies would dominate movable books, marketing over **25 million** copies, available in over 1000 titles (including some 150+ titles for Disney). Among Hunt's personal favorites of these titles was Haunted House, a 1979 bestseller for children featuring six complicated pop-ups designed by famed paper engineer Jan Pienkowski:



Hunt also was largely responsible for the renaissance in *adult* movable books, and among his personal favorites was Andy Warhol's Index (1967):



A collector, as well as a publisher, of movable books, Hunt donated some 500 antique movable books to UCLA. Sadly, Waldo Hunt passed away earlier this month (6 November 2009), just three weeks shy of his 89th birthday. You can read a tribute [here](#).

Today's movable books, which utilize sophisticated, systematized construction techniques (though still very much reliant on hand labor for the final product), has made superstars of paper engineers like David Carter...



...John Strejan (who passed away in 2003)...



...[Robert Sabuda](#)...

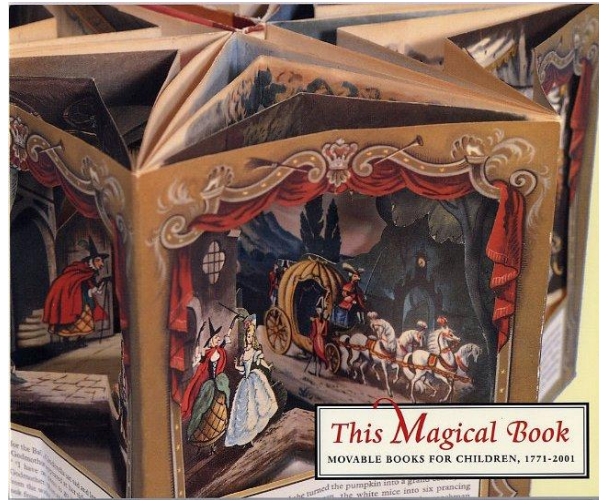
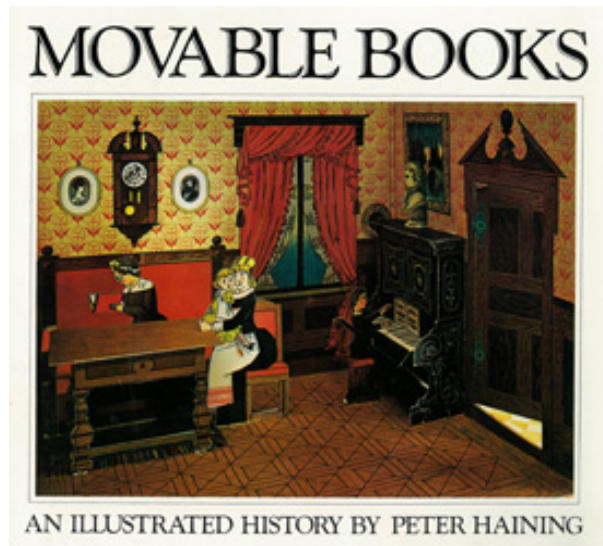


...and a host of other talented paper engineers from around the world (*Fernando Ferreras Arguello*, a sample of whose work is depicted below, is from Spain):



The earliest movable books, from the *first golden age* of such books in the 19th century, are very rare, especially in anything approaching *Fine* condition (as noted previously, hard usage by generations of children has taken its toll). On the infrequent occasions when these movables become available in the marketplace, they nearly always command substantial premiums.

On the other hand, **today's** movables can frequently be picked up for just a few dollars at your local yard sale, garage sale, friends-of-the-library book sale and the like. The caveat here is *condition, condition, condition*....make sure the book you're purchasing has **all** its moving parts, and that all such parts are in working order. To help you in your quest for such treasures, you may want to arm yourself with Ann Montanaro's [bibliographies](#), as well as one or more of the following titles...



Whether you collect movables for children, or movables for adults, or both, your private library will likely be a much happier place....

Posted by [L. D. Mitchell](#) on 26 November 2009 at 05:33 | [Permalink](#)

Tags: Ann Montanaro, book collecting, book collector, book history, books, home library, Intervisual Books, Jan Pienkowski, movable book, movable books, pop-up, pop-up book, pop-up books, pop-ups, private library, Waldo Hunt

[Reblog\(o\)_](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) | [Twee](#)

Comments

Comment below or sign in with [Typepad](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [more...](#)