

## Page from the Past: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" — a book that has never been out of print since its original publication 150 years ago—did not get off to a good start.

The classic tale of a little girl who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by an odd cast of characters was first published in 1865. Displeased with the quality of the printing, illustrator John Tenniel persuaded the author, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898)—who would become famous under his pen name, "Lewis Carroll"—to recall that edition of 2,000 copies, except for about 50 copies that had already been distributed to friends. The still unbound sheets of the 1865 "Alice" were sold to the American firm of D. Appleton and Co., which published the work in New York in 1866 with a new title page. A copy of the "Appleton Alice" came to the Library in the personal book collection of Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, following his death in 1935.

Even rarer than the Appleton edition of "Alice" is the Library's copy of the first approved edition of "Alice," published in November 1866 in London by Macmillan & Company. The Library's copy, which it purchased in 1924, has two original pencil drawings by Tenniel (sketches of the "Seven and Five of Hearts" and "Alice, the Duchess, and the Flamingo") tipped in. These drawings most likely were commissioned from Tenniel subsequent to the book's publication.

"Alice" grew out of a fanciful tale that Carroll told the three daughters of Henry Liddell, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, during a boat trip in the summer of 1862. Several years later, he presented one of the daughters—Alice—with his handwritten and self-illustrated manuscript copy of the story titled "Alice's Adventures Under Ground," which she had urged him to put in writing for her. Purchased by Eldridge Reeves Johnson, inventor of the Victor Talking Machine, the manuscript was exhibited at the Library of Congress from October 1929 to February 1930. After Johnson's death in 1945, the manuscript was purchased at auction by a group of Americans led by Lessing Rosenwald, A.S.W. Rosenbach and Librarian of Congress Luther Evans. On Nov. 13, 1948, Evans presented the manuscript to the British Museum as a gift to Great Britain from a group of anonymous Americans in gratitude for Britain's heroic efforts in holding Hitler at bay until the United States entered World War II.

When the Alice books were published, they were copyright protected for 42 years after the first publication or seven years after the author's death, whichever was longer. Thus, the work itself entered the public domain in 1907, thereby inspiring numerous illustrated editions, comic books and adaptations for film, stage and television over the past century. Most notable are the 1951 Disney film and Tim Burton's 2010 film. Most recent is an online version with annotations from 12 Carroll scholars offered by The Public Domain Review to mark the 150th anniversary of the timeless tale.

Perhaps the rarest Carroll treasure owned by the Library is a scrapbook he kept from 1855 to 1872. Carroll spent his whole adult life at Christ Church, Oxford—first as an undergraduate and later as a mathematics lecturer. The scrapbook consists of more than 100 items, mostly of clippings from newspapers and periodicals, which offer an interesting window into Carroll's mind.

Frederic Louis Huidekoper, an American undergraduate at Christ Church, purchased the scrapbook at a sale of Carroll's effects shortly after his death in 1898. Col. Huidekoper, who distinguished himself in World War I and was awarded the Chevalier de Legion of Honor, became a respected and prolific military and naval historian. In 1934, he donated Carroll's scrapbook to the Library just six years before his death in a trolley car accident in Washington, D.C.

