

Home for the Holidays

The Depiction of Holiday Themes in Historical Children's Literature

MARY ELIZABETH LAND

“Have me excused if I do not please; My will is good, and lo! my tales are these.”
—*Stories of Whitminster* by Ascott R. Hope, Edinburgh, 1873

Consider for a moment the holiday traditions of classic books for children. Imagine the Christmas holidays as portrayed in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Picture the humble Christmas feast enjoyed with love by the Cratchits in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Now fast-forward to more modern holiday fare for children: *Arthur's Christmas* by Marc Brown, featuring the eponymous Arthur the Anteater, Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, and Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express*, to name just a few. For parents and for librarians, a vital question arises: what do these works have in common with—and perhaps more importantly, how do they differ from—earlier portrayals of the holiday?

Certainly, the holiday books that are shared with children will play a large part in setting their expectations of that special day, be it Christmas, Halloween, Valentine's Day, or even April Fool's Day. As imagery and theme vary in the works, so does the portrayal of what makes a family holiday worth remembering. The portrayal of holidays in children's books must largely reflect the cultural ideals of the authors, parents, and the community as a whole.

What would a chronological examination of children's books, focusing on the portrayal of holiday traditions, images, themes,



The Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature is housed in the Department of Special Collections at the University of Florida's George A. Smathers Libraries.

and values, tell us? I headed to the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, housed at the Smathers Library at the University of Florida, to find out. The Baldwin Collection contains more than one hundred thousand volumes published in Great Britain and the United States from the mid-1600s through 2007. According to the Baldwin Collection website, its holdings of more than eight hundred early American imprints are the second largest such collection in the United States.

The collection is the product of Ruth Baldwin's forty-year collection development efforts, and this vast assemblage of literature printed primarily for children includes many English and American editions of the same work. Other strengths of the collection include “three hundred editions of *Robinson Crusoe*, one hundred editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as fables, juvenile biography, nineteenth-century science and natural history, nineteenth-century alphabet books, moral tales, fairy tales, nineteenth-century juvenile periodicals, nineteenth-century boys' adventure stories, twentieth-century boys' and girls' series, Little Golden Books, and juvenile publications of the American Sunday School Union and other tract societies.”¹

As the 2008 Bechtel fellow, I spent a month at the Baldwin Library, perusing this vast collection of historical children's



Mary Elizabeth Land is the Director of the Abbeville County Library System in Abbeville, South Carolina. She was the 2008 winner of the Bechtel Fellowship to study historical children's literature at the Baldwin Collection at the University of Florida.

literature. One characteristic immediately apparent is that, as years progress, the didacticism of literature for children is replaced by a more fun-loving approach. While perusing an 1870 edition of *An Old-Fashioned Girl* by Louisa May Alcott, I found this review for another work by the same publisher that appears at the back of the book:

Miss [Jean] Ingelow is, to our mind, the most charming of all living writers for children, and "Mopsa" alone ought to give her a kind of pre-emptive right to the love and gratitude of our young folks. . . . The young people should be grateful to Jean Ingelow and those other noble writers, who, in our day, have taken upon themselves the task of supplying them with literature, if for no other reason, that these writers have saved them the ineffable didacticism which, till within the last few years, was considered the only food fit for the youthful mind.²

Lewis Carroll obviously wanted to break from this tradition, and this is certainly the case in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Alice begins her adventure down the rabbit hole because she gets "very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without picture or conversations?'"³

All Fool's Day

It is perhaps easiest to see this change in attitude when looking at the All Fool's Day, or April Fool's Day, holdings at the Baldwin Collection. Though this lesser holiday plays an important role in only a handful of books, this vital change in literature for children is apparent.

The earliest in the collection, *Tales of the Village Children* by Paget, Masters, and Burns, is an 1847 edition. The tale "The April Fool" opens with some boys disagreeing over whether it is wrong to play April Fool's Day jokes on others. One believes strongly that there is no harm, and that only those afraid to be made fools of would have an issue with the practice. However, another boy responds that "there is harm" because "there is generally speaking, some deceit employed. . . . I do not think that we are justified in telling lies under any circumstances." What follows is a lengthy discussion about white lies, fibs, black lies, and such, with the lesson that all untruths are "hateful and offensive to GOD."⁴

Even those pranks that do not center on outright lies—like mailing an envelope with no letter inside to fool the recipient—are seen as wrong because there is a desire to mislead. The boys go on to point out other reasons that April Fools is harmful. It may take place during Lent, when "the less we have to do with laughter and amusement . . . the better."⁵ In addition, causing anger in another is harmful. The danger here, the young reader is warned, is that "many persons are exceedingly provoked at being made April fools; their vanity is wounded; they grow angry at being laughed at; and give way to a temper which is sinful."⁶ And notice the language choice—so unlike the vocabulary we would now employ for a children's book.

Lastly, April Fool's is attached to scripture that, the character believes, shows that it may be dangerous to one's eternal soul:

When the LORD HIMSELF has declared that whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, "shall be in danger of hellfire," I really do not know that we can be too cautious.⁷

In another work from the same period titled *April Fool; or, the Evils of Deception* and published by the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1849, there is no doubt that April Fool's Day is the road to perdition. In fact, the tradition of fooling one's friends on the first of April is seen as the beginning of a path down a lifetime of deception. The book's stated mission is "to exhibit some of the evils of deception" and "to indicate to parents and teachers the decided opposition with which they ought to discountenance" April Fool's Day. "It is from such beginnings," attests this children's book, "that the young too often have their morals corrupted, and their souls destroyed."⁸

What follows are numerous examples of boys and girls whose April Fool's pranks, usually such tame things as "you've dropped something" to make someone look down unnecessarily, bring dire consequences. Because of the pranks of other children, one little boy falls and gets all muddy, and one young girl runs into a lamppost to get away and ends up with a bleeding nose. There is no good-hearted fun here—only the dangers of falsehood. This is underscored from the very title page, which quotes Zechariah 8:19: "Love the Truth."

The deceptions of the day are examined without sympathy in *April Fool*. If the boy had prayed more fervently, he would not have been tempted into evil. When "he found that John was a companion who would entice him to sin, he [should] have left him" and severed the friendship.⁹ And there are seventy-six pages of such! The teachers all moralize on the evils of telling tales, and deception is deception, a lie is a lie, with no room for any sense of fun in the matter.

Playing Santa Claus, and Other Christmas Tales by Sarah P. Doughty was published in Boston in 1865, just sixteen years after *April Fool*, but with a vastly different approach. The story opens with young Arthur excitedly describing to his father the great pranks he plans to pull on his brothers and sisters the next day.

"Mr. Willard smiled a little as Arthur clapped his hands at the thought of [his sister's] vexation," but he goes on to explain to Arthur that "it is poor fun to make others unhappy. I have no objection to your playing jokes or tricks, as you call them, upon your brother and sister and Susan; [what a change from the above!] but I should like to have you think of something which would please them, instead of making them vexed."¹⁰

Arthur's day is then filled with fooling those around him, by filling the milk jug unexpectedly for his sister, by replacing a worn-out thimble with a new one in the sewing kit, by mending a kite for its owner.

"When evening came, and Mr. Willard was at leisure to sit down with his children, Arthur had many funny stories to tell of the pleasant jokes which he had played through the day."¹¹

Tricking another is not nearly the evil it was earlier portrayed, if the intent is pleasant fun. "It was such fun to see him turn it over and over and look for the hole [in the kite]!" says Arthur.¹² One can't help but think, however, that the author of *April Fool* would be not at all amused.

By *Laura's Holidays* (1898), six-year-old Laura is told that "although there is no harm in a little fun on the first of April, it is very hard to have it without getting rude. I do not approve of All Fool's Day very much."¹³ Nevertheless, Laura and her mother find a nice way to fool their maid. Laura offers the maid a package, knowing that the maid will refuse, thinking it an April Fool's joke. Then it really will be a joke because the present will be a real one.

Then didn't Laura laugh, and shout, "Oh, Maggie! Maggie! I've caught you sure enough! For it is a present, really and truly." . . . And Maggie said: "Sure, then, I'd be pleased to be fooled in that same way every day of the year!"¹⁴

Ethel Morton's Holidays, by Mabell S. C. Smith, is intended for an older audience, and tells the tales of teenagers celebrating throughout the year. Published in 1915, it gives only slight mention to April Fool's Day, which the teens celebrate by attending a party:

The April Fool Party might have been named the Party of Surprises. There were no practical jokes; "a joke of the hand is a joke of the vulgar" had been trained into all of them from their earliest days; but there were countless surprises. The opening of a candy box disclosed a toy puppy; a toy cat was filled not with the desired candy but with popcorn and such.¹⁵

No pranks are pulled on any one individual, and whimsical surprise rather than intentional misdirection, is the name of the game.

The Child Life Book of Adventure (1948) includes the story "Archie and the April Fools" by B. J. Chute. In this story, there is no sense at all that these deceptions are negative. Instead, the tradition is presented as a good-hearted way to make fun, and the idea that one would try to fool a brother is taken completely in stride. Not only does no one end up ashamed, covered in mud, and bleeding—such as in *April Fool*—no one is even surprised that such foolery would occur. The story begins when Jimmy tells his brother Ted that there's a giraffe in the backyard.

His brother roused himself . . . gave Jimmy a puzzled look, then glanced at the calendar. A peaceful smile dawned upon his face. The calendar unquestionably proclaimed the fact that it was April first. . . . You can't catch me on those old April Fool gags.¹⁶

Of course, it turns out that there is a giraffe, escaped from the local zoo, in the backyard. The story ends—after much giraffe wrangling—with Ted telling Jimmy that now "there's a rhinoceros in the backyard." As Jimmy runs out wildly screaming, Ted



Laura's Holidays by Henrietta R. Eliot was published in 1898 by the Lothrop Publishing Company.

looks "affectionately at the calendar, which still proclaimed unmistakably that it was April Fool's Day, [and] smiled again."¹⁷

Valentine's Day

In the Baldwin Collection there are just a few books dealing with Valentine's Day. The earliest is the *Poetic Garland* (1805), and the most recent is the Tomie dePaola valentine craft book *Things to Make and Do for Valentine's Day* (1976). In this 168-year span we see a change in the attitudes toward not only the nature of the holiday itself, but also particularly how it has slowly become a holiday for children as much as for sweethearts.

Poetic Garland, one of the most valuable holdings in the Baldwin Collection, includes the poem "Valentine's Day," which is written in couplets and describes the joys of the holiday as felt throughout all types of bird life. The poem says little about Valentine's Day as it is celebrated by humans—instead it focuses on the joy with which all the birds of the world experience this day.

The poem begins with the admonition to "Arise from your sleep, to the meadow repair; / It is *Valentine's Day*, and the morning is fair."¹⁸ The birds all flock together and sing the praises of love: "E'en the RAVEN and KITE now contend with the DOVE, And tune their hoarse throats to the music of love."¹⁹

The volume ends with “Valentine’s Day,” a poem in quatrains (ABAB CDCD, etc.) in which the animals all switch their voices to attract a mate:

XX.

Each thought that to secure a mate
Upon that famous morning
He’d better change his common state

Without the slightest warning

XXI.

And so these birds and beasts you see
Chose this strange way of wooing,

Which threatened very soon to be

All Nature’s work undoing.²⁰

Owl, the wise creature, teaches the moral:

XXX.

A lesson all may learn from this,

So list to me, my brothers—

Don’t think your own good gifts amiss,

*Or envy those of others.*²¹

Another title, *Moonshine: Fairy Stories* by Baron E. H. Knatchbull-Hugessen Brabourne is held in the Baldwin Collection in the third edition, published in 1872. Its intended audience is most certainly young children, as we can see from this excerpt from the author’s dedication:

Some of the wise people who write in newspapers and reviews want to persuade me that there are no such things as Ogres, and that the days of Fairies are past and gone. I have not seen an ogre very lately, so perhaps they may be right so far; but they must be poor, dull, heavy-brained people not to believe in the dear little Fairies!²²

Fitting for the stated audience, there are illustrations by William Brunton and a decorative cover. There is a pen-and-ink frontispiece and several full-page illustrations throughout the book. The content and the author’s dedication and preface are whimsical, though there is no doubt that the styling of the book is still more “adult” in appearance than our modern versions would be.

The Valentine’s Day story in *Stories of Whitminster* by Ascott R. Hope, published in Edinburgh in 1873, describes the crush

that a schoolboy at Whitminster has on a young, attractive, and cheerful, but older (he expects that she is at least twenty!) widow. He spies a valentine at her home that she has not yet delivered to its intended. He assumes that the valentine must be meant for him and prepares his own valentine poem for the widow, at last ready to declare himself. After he has delivered the poem, he walks home, only to spy her walking in the arms of another. When he arrives the next day to chastise her, he finds that his rival is none other than his most detested schoolmaster! The schoolmaster and the widow go on to marry, he comes often to tea at their home, and quickly learns to love another.²³

The Brownies at Home (1893), written and illustrated by Palmer Cox, describes the month-by-month activities of a group of mischief-loving imps. Like Puck in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, these brownies look to the romantic affairs of mortals as a source of amusement. In February, they draw and write valentines “until the ardent declaration / Was bound to start a palpitation.”²⁴

On Valentine’s Day, they deliver the missives, with many misadventures along the way, all described in rhyming couplets. Interestingly, when the recipients are adults, the valentines are intended to show the true nature of the recipients: whether kind to others, self-serving, or misanthropic. They are not at all our modern idea of love letters. Children’s valentines reflect their wishes and desires rather than their natures (perhaps because these natures are not yet fully formed?).²⁵

Holiday Entertainments (1896) includes “short dramas, dialogues, tableaux, stories, recitations, etc. adapted to all holidays.”²⁶ In the Valentine’s Day entertainment, one character, the maiden, eschews love. She believes that friendship is what should be valued. Cupid, disguised as friendship, captivates her. She bargained for friendship, but the play states, like so many maidens, she got romantic love instead.

In general, Valentine’s Day and romantic love itself are portrayed by these nineteenth-century works in moral terms—prize friendship above love, fear the entrapment of cupid, prize your own individuality, be kind in heart and true to one’s fellow man.

In 1904, Virginia Gerson produced *The Happy Heart Family*, and in 1905 *More Adventures of the Happy Heart Family*.²⁷ In this early picture book, we see a departure from earlier works for children. This is really a precursor to the modern picturebook in both format and approach. The volume is highly illustrated, with full pages given over to color illustration and multiple line drawings sprinkled among the text. The book itself is larger in dimension and thinner in size, much more the equivalent of today’s picture books. White space is abundant on each page, making it easier for young readers. The text is large, and many important words are set completely in capital letters, allowing beginning readers to learn to inflect as they read.

The Baldwin Collection also owns a 1939 reprint, in which both books are combined into one volume simply called *The Happy Heart Family*.

In chapter 10, “The Valentines,” their cousins, the Valentines, visit the Heart family on February 14. The Valentines “were a very elegant family because their Grandpa was a Saint, so Mrs. Fancy Valentine always wore white lace.”²⁸

The story is full of whimsy, and the illustrations greatly reflect this. There is no moral here, no lesson about future mates or knowledge of the self—just silly fun. In this, we see the approach of more modern interpretations of Valentine’s celebrations for children.

Another aspect of the 1939 edition, which sets it apart from the 1904 and 1905 editions, is the book jacket. A full-color (pink, no less) illustrated book jacket covers this edition, and the flaps include characteristics still seen on many modern versions. The back flap, for example, trumpets two other books for children: *The Black Cats and the Tinker’s Wife* and *The Dog, the Brownie, and the Bramble Patch*, both by Margaret Baker. *The Black Cats and the Tinker’s Wife* is described as having

62 Drawings in Silhouette by Mary Baker, A delightful, whimsical fairy tale for little children, concerning a Tinker and his wife, and very much concerning some particularly enchanted cats. Grown-ups will find themselves reading it through before the children get a chance.²⁹

The Dog, the Brownie, and the Bramble Patch, with silhouettes by Mary Baker, is described as

a deliciously whimsical fairy story, which has the same simplicity, humor and interest of a folk tale, irresistibly illustrated in silhouette. The Bakers have struck a new note in books for children, and their genius is liberally recognized by parents and librarians.³⁰

Note the ideas employed in the reviews to grab interest: delightful, whimsical, enchanted, delicious, humor, irresistible. No heavy-handed moralizing here.

The front flap contains another marketing approach still used today: a positive review to hook readers and help sell copies. “There is just one picture book that has the feel of a lace-paper valentine” effuses Anne Carroll Moore. The front flap goes on to specify that the book is intended “for the youngest children—and their families.”³¹

The use of the term “youngest children” underscores the novelty of this approach in targeting an audience so young. For decades, children had learned to read from the Bible, from *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and from other “adult” materials. Now we see the purposeful targeting of young children as the intended audience, and the changes in format, illustration, and layout that must accompany this change.

By the 1922 publication of *Man in the Moon Stories Told Over the Radio-Phone*, romantic love had entered the scene. In “A Valentine Story,” a princess is told that it’s time for her to marry. She may choose whichever prince she likes and announce her choice at the Valentine’s Day masquerade ball: “But I don’t like

any of the princes,’ quoth the Lady Caramel. ‘You’ll have to like one of them,’ said the King firmly.”³²

The princess chooses a thoughtful, polite man, whom “everyone liked at once.” When it is revealed, however, that he is a knight of a good family, but not royal, the ladies-in-waiting begin to gossip. The king allows the match because of his “kind and courteous” nature, and yes, they live “happily ever after.”³³

Modern works on Valentine’s Day focus far more on the fun of the holiday—making cards, having class parties, eating cupcakes. Having pushed the age of marriage considerably since the early nineteenth century, children are able to view questions of mating as far removed.

By the 1950 publication of *The Bobbsey Twins: Merry Days Indoors and Out* by Laura Lee Hope, the celebration of the holiday by children is more familiar to modern readers: the twins save their money to buy valentines, fill a table with paper and magazine cutouts to make valentines, count the number of cards sent versus those received, and count the number they receive versus the number everyone else receives. “Some were comical, but the most of them were beautiful and contained very tender verses.”³⁴

By the 1960s, the books started to take an approach with which we are even more familiar. Clyde Robert Bulla’s *St. Valentine’s Day* (1965) gives a history of the holiday from the Greeks and Romans through Victorian England, and then to the United States. He describes how children might experience the holiday in 1965:

Once only sweethearts gave valentines to one another. Now we all give valentines to people we like. We give them at home and at school. We take them to neighbors. We send them in the mail. Some have verses like this:

“Days will all be fair and fine

As long as you’re my valentine.”³⁵

Other valentine verses are jokes, like this one from a girl to a boy:

Roses are red

Violets are blue

I pity the girl

Who marries you.³⁶

By the 1970s we see that works for children have completely changed from earlier times. For example, *Things to Make and Do for Valentine’s Day* by Tomie dePaola has bright illustrations, easy vocabulary, and lots of white space, which combine to provide a volume clearly intended for the modern young reader. The book includes directions for making valentines, throwing a valentine’s party for young friends, baking valentine treats,



Johnny Gruelle's illustration of a scarecrow from *Man in the Moon Stories Told Over the Radio-Phone* (1922).

playing valentine games, and even a valentine's joke: "How can you tell an elephant from a valentine card? I don't know. Then don't get a job with the post office."³⁷

Even humor has now made its way into the holiday celebration, clearing the path for such modern Valentine's Day offerings as *Froggy's First Kiss* by Jonathan London, Lillian Hoban's *Silly Tilly's Valentine*, and even Eileen Spinelli's *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch*.

Halloween

Many of the traditions still associated with Halloween can be found in the materials at the Baldwin Collection, but it doesn't become a popular subject until the 1920s. "The Scarecrow's Hallowe'en Party" appears in Lawrence's *Man in the Moon Stories Told Over the Radio-Phone* in 1922. Numerous traditions of Halloween are highlighted in this story, in which a scarecrow throws his own Halloween party because "I've never been to one. Not one party! I've stood in the hot sun and the cold rain, in thunder-storms and winds. And no one has ever asked me to come to a party."³⁸ The story includes references to "ducking" for apples in a tub of water, pumpkin carving, blind man's bluff, and ghost tag.

The 1924 edition of *Uncle Wiggily's Apple Roast* features text by Howard R. Garis and illustrations by Lang Campbell. This picture

book describes ducking for apples, making jack o'lanterns, and trying to bite apples swinging from the doorway. There also is a mystery pie, which is baked with numerous Halloween favors inside, including a cap, balls and balloons, and a tiny trumpet. The book also references the night as one in which "to make merry when the elfs, fairies, and goblins [sic] flitted about the mystic wood" and the party-goers use their pumpkins to scare away intruders.³⁹

The Uncle Wiggily stories, first published in the Newark, New Jersey, newspaper *The Evening News*, were still being reprinted in book form in 1939, when *Uncle Wiggily's Automobile* included the story "Uncle Wiggily's Halloween Fun." In this story, the emphasis is all on dressing in costume—an aspect of celebration missing completely in the 1924 story.

Another story in the same collection, "Uncle Wiggily's Jack-o-Lantern," incorporates step-by-step instructions on pumpkin carving, including the statement that "if you can't do it yourselves, perhaps some of the big folks will help you."⁴⁰ None of the Uncle Wiggily stories includes moralizing or teaching of any kind—except, of course, how to make a jack o' lantern with an adult's help.⁴¹

Thanksgiving

The move away from didacticism in children's literature is perhaps no more obvious than when researching the Baldwin Collection's holdings on Thanksgiving. The oldest Thanksgiving work in the Baldwin Collection is "Try": *A True Temperance Story*. A fascinating little book of forty-two pages and only 4.7 inches published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society in 1842, it recounts the story of the alcoholic father who is slowly killing himself, and his family, with "demon rum."

The little boy, Johnny, has grown pumpkins, four of which he is saving for Thanksgiving. He must sell two of these, however, to raise money to buy things for his sick baby brother. "I don't suppose Thanksgiving-day was made so much for poor folks, as for the rich people, who have enough to eat," he laments.⁴² He goes to the fancy houses in town, trying to sell his prized pumpkins:

"The boys who live there . . . I should think they had a great deal to be thankful for," said little Johnny; "they must be glad to have Thanksgiving-day come," he added. . . . Thanksgiving-day is a day which every New England boy anticipates with no small degree of happiness, and it was uppermost in John's mind, for he had heard the boys talk over and over again their plans for fun and frolic, on that day.

"Mother, what shall we do on Thanksgiving-day?"

"Perhaps we shall have something to eat, Johnny."

"Yes, mother, you said you were going to make some pies of the two pumpkins that are left."⁴³

The drunkard is convinced to sign the temperance pledge before the Thanksgiving, but not before the death of the baby.

Pretty harrowing stuff, and certainly written for the moral lesson, not for any enjoyment by children.

Another of the earliest is the 1847 story *Kate and Charlie; Or, Thanksgiving-Day*, published by The American Sunday-School Union. When a little girl asks her teacher, “Miss C., why is tomorrow called Thanksgiving-day?” the question is a jumping off point for the tedious, didactic story of Kate, who chooses not to go to church on Thanksgiving, and of Charlie, who gives up his fun to take her punishment on himself.

Kate and Charlie often addresses the reader directly: “Think, whether you most resemble Charlie or Kate? . . . I hope you will be like Charlie.” “If you love Charlie for being willing to suffer . . . how much more ought you to love Jesus Christ for not only suffering, but dying for you!” What follows is basically a harangue against the “sinful world,” “sinful men,” that sins cannot “go unpunished” by God, and the warning that “if you continue to do wrong you can ever hope to reach heaven.”⁴⁴ Again, pretty dire offerings for a child’s psyche.

In *Winnie and Walter: Or, Story-Telling at Thanksgiving* (1861), the holiday is featured as a time of family. The children are portrayed thus:

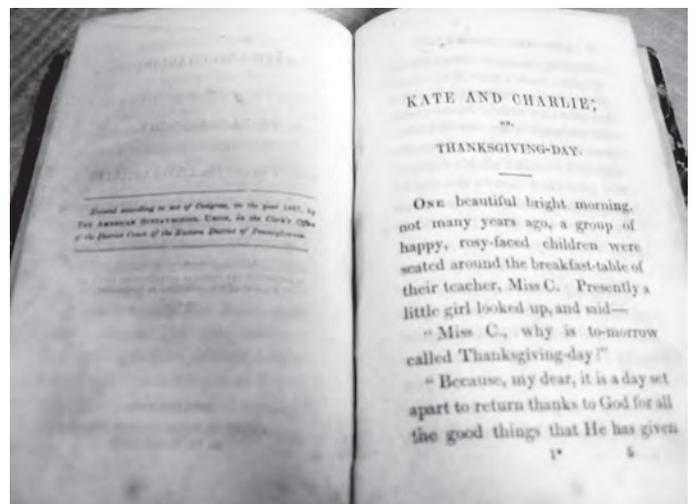
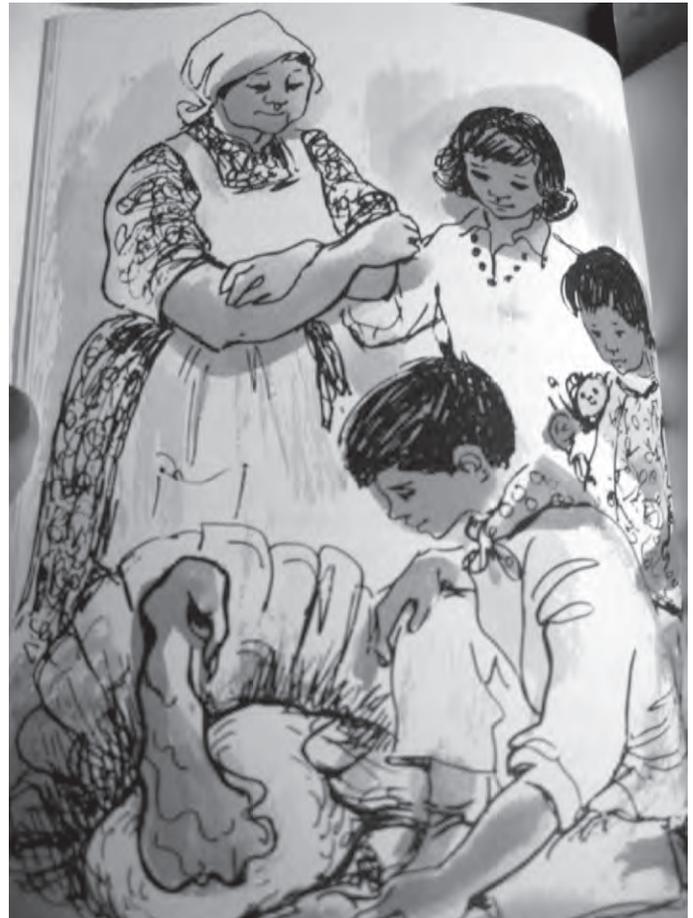
I do not pretend that they were the best children that could be found in the world. I think they were pretty much like a great many other happy children—no better and no worse. They dearly loved to hear stories, and what bright and happy child does not?⁴⁵

The longed-for day finally arrives, and the house is filled with aunts, uncles, and cousins. “The little folks played together, and the old folks went to church—and how much they all enjoyed their Thanksgiving dinner.”⁴⁶

This image of Thanksgiving stands in sharp contrast to the 1847 *Kate and Charlie*. What follows for the rest of the 127 pages is really a story collection. Each family member tells a story from his life, and the children sit spellbound. Thus the joys of the holiday serve as a type of framing story to allow the characters each to tell his tale.

By the 1922 *Man in the Moon Stories Told Over the Radio-Phone* collection, Thanksgiving had lost its religious and moral overtones and become simply the tale of a very vain turkey. The turkey feels that he is far too special to be eaten by the family, which he describes as “such a common ordinary fate.”⁴⁷ When he realizes, however, that only the best of the best will be served for Thanksgiving—the best apples, the best corn, the best serving dishes—he amends his view, and the story ends with “I really am the largest and the plumpiest and the tenderest of all the turkeys. I hope I will be eaten for the Thanksgiving Day dinner.”⁴⁸ He gets his wish.

By the more modern 1965 work *Thanksgiving Day*, written by Robert Merrill Bartlett and illustrated by W. T. Mars, the didacticism of earlier works has given way to a historical overview of the holiday. The story of the pilgrims and of the first Thanksgiving make up most of the book, with mention of ear-



Top: An illustration from *Peg-Leg Willy* by Margaret Embry (1966). Bottom: *Kate and Charlie* was published by The American Sunday-School Union in 1847.

lier harvest ceremonies by the Greeks at the shrines of Demeter and of the Romans, who “honored [Ceres] with parades, dancing, sports, and feasting.”⁴⁹ The Jewish Feast of the Booths and the Christian prayers of blessing on the planting and harvest also are mentioned: “At harvest time the farmers decorated themselves with ribbons and flowers. They sang as they walked home beside their wagons full of grain.”⁵⁰ This particular work discusses the national holiday in America, first declared by Abraham Lincoln. The book ends by clearly stating how it wants children to think of their own celebrations of the holiday:

Today Thanksgiving is a happy time when families gather together. Like the Pilgrims, they dress in their best clothes and go to church. They sing harvest hymns and prayers. Then they hurry home for the feast. Grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends meet around the long dinner table. The huge roasted turkey is carved. Then come dressing and gravy, scalloped oysters, potatoes, squash, turnips, onions, cranberry sauce, pickles, and jelly. Last of all are the pumpkin and mince pies. They eat and eat. And talk and talk. They are almost as noisy as the Pilgrims and Indians at the first Thanksgiving. Sometimes a little boy falls asleep at the table. But no one tickles his nose with a feather to wake him up. Instead his grandfather takes him in his arms and carries him off to bed.⁵¹

Going to church is still seen as a characteristic of the day, but so is food and family, and all of it should be done in one's "best clothes." The illustrations, too, are reminiscent of the time: the all-white, well-coiffed family, in which the men all wear suits and ties and the women wear dresses, jewelry, and smiles.

In *Peg-Leg Willy* (1966) by Margaret Embry, the most memorable aspects are not the Thanksgiving references, but the inclusion of Spanish terms throughout. The story, which takes place in New Mexico, centers on the desire of the children to keep their beloved one-legged turkey from becoming Thanksgiving dinner. The story ends happily when they dine on roast trout instead of on Willy. The family goes around the table stating what they are thankful for. The title includes a glossary of Spanish words at the front and is one of the earliest in the collection to purposely incorporate a multicultural perspective.⁵²

The most modern Thanksgiving book in the collection, *Thanksgiving Is—* by Gail Gibbons, was published in 2004 and is still in print. It is larger and brighter than any other Thanksgiving book in the collection. It also is the most direct in its approach: "Thanksgiving is—" appears at the top of each page, and the answers include games, history, food, and being

grateful. It covers the pilgrims, the Native Americans, even the harvest celebrations of ancient times.

In many ways, it seems like a more modern version of *Thanksgiving Day* (1965) by Robert Merrill Bartlett. In this book, however, there is no direct mention of the modern holiday as a religious one, only as a national one. While the titles from the 1800s often used Thanksgiving as a jumping off point to other topics, from sinfulness to temperance, *Thanksgiving Is—* is truly an exploration of the holiday from a very modern perspective. By now, both diversity and multiculturalism abound, as do bright colors and a far simpler vocabulary.⁵³

Christmas

Perhaps no other holiday invokes images of children and childhood as much as Christmas. The holiday plays a starring role in *Little Women*, one of the classics of American literature for young readers. The Baldwin Collection has a first edition, published in 1869 by Roberts Brothers in Boston and illustrated by May Alcott. Louisa May Alcott's sister, May, was the youngest of the four Alcott girls and the model for Amy in the book.

What we now know as *Little Women* was originally published in two volumes: *Little Women* contained through chapter 23, "Aunt March Settles the Question," and the book *Good Wives* contained the rest. Both are now commonly published as one volume under the title *Little Women*.

In terms of holiday expectations, *Little Women* is one of the most influential books for readers. The very first line of the book, in fact, alludes to the fact that we all have expectations for a holiday experience, and for Christmas that expectation is often, quite frankly, for gifts: "'Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents,' grumbled Jo, lying in the rug."⁵⁴



Images of Christmas in various works from the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature.

Chapter 2, “A Merry Christmas,” relates stories we now know well. “Jo was the first to wake in the gray dawn of Christmas morning. No stockings hung at the fireplace, and for a moment she felt as much disappointed as she did long ago, when her little sock fell down because it was so crammed with goodies.”⁵⁵

Each girl receives a Bible under her pillow, which she determines to read every day. They give their Christmas breakfast to a poor family as a Christmas present:

That was a very happy breakfast, though they didn't get any of it; and when they went away, leaving comfort behind, I think there were not in all the city four merrier people than the four hungry little girls who gave away their breakfasts, and contented themselves with bread and milk on Christmas morning.⁵⁶

The rest of the day is filled with putting on a play for a dozen neighborhood girls and then receiving a surprise luxurious dinner from the neighbor next door. The day has been filled, then, with neighbor treating neighbor, and Beth's parting thought in the day is that “I wish I could send my bunch [of flowers] to father. I'm afraid he isn't having such a merry Christmas as we are.”⁵⁷

Not surprisingly, most holiday works at the Baldwin Collection deal with Christmas. There also are many more early picture books covering this holiday. Some, like *The First Christmas for Our Dear Little Ones* by Miss Rosa Mulholland and with pictures painted by Leonhard Diefenbach, are completely religious in nature. This particular volume, published in the 1870s, tells the story of Jesus' birth through illustrations. No mention whatsoever is made of children celebrating the holiday other than to “pray, That you will be like Him!”⁵⁸

Many others, though classed as juvenile fiction, have strikingly strong religious agendas. Titles like the didactic *He Loves Me—Hump and All* and *Christmas Eve: Or the Story of Poor Anthony* reflect the mission of these volumes—to edify.

Many collections marked “Christmas” were actually end-of-the-year issues of children's magazines.

The Baldwin Collection houses a particularly lovely 1875 copy of *Old Christmas* by Washington Irving with illustrations by Randolph Caldecott. Like *Little Women*, its opening lines attest to the lasting importance of holiday traditions in one's lifetime:

There is nothing in England that exercises a more delightful spell over my imagination than the lingerings of the holiday customs and rural games of former times . . . and they bring with them the flavour of those honest days of yore, in which, perhaps with equal fallacy, I am apt to think the world was more homebred, social, and joyous than at present. . . . Of all the old festivals, however, that of Christmas awakens the strongest and most heartfelt associations.⁵⁹

Christmas Roses, written by Lizzie Lawson and Robert Ellice Mack and published in the 1880s, is a collection of verses—only some of which actually have to do with Christmas—but was likely

meant to be given to young readers as a Christmas present. The first poem in the collection states that because the flowers are not blooming in this winter season the child cannot be given flowers. Instead, the poems that follow will serve as “Christmas Roses.”

Two poems in the collection deal with Christmas specifically. “The Christmas Stocking,” in which “little crippled Nell” worries that Santa will not come because they are too poor and their “chimbley” isn't wide enough for him. Of course, he does enter Nelly's room while she sleeps and leaves a golden orange (a monkey on a wooden stick in her stocking), proving “that Santa Claus loves every one however rich or poor.”⁶⁰

Nell is the only one in the collection who seems to have such fears, as the other children have numerous toys and their clothes portray them as well off. The other poem about Christmas, “Hie for Christmas,” is really just a celebration of the season and the joys of Christmas. Its first two stanzas give a sense of the feeling:

Bring Frost, bring Snow,

Come Winter,

Bring us holly,

Bring Joy at Christmas,

Off with Melancholy!

Sing hie, sing hey,

Sing ho,

Sing holly,

Sing hie for Christmas!

Isn't winter jolly?⁶¹

Interestingly, this particular work, while celebrating the season of snow, mistletoe, and holly, makes no reference at all to either religious aspects or to Santa Claus traditions.

Of course, some of the differences in holiday traditions depend less on chronology than on geography. For example, was the book published in New York or in London? Those in London tend to uphold the glories of the Christmas pudding and the Christmas goose, such as the Cratchit Christmas in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

In *Christmas Morning* by Clifton Bingham, published in the 1890s, the children decorate the house with holly, engage in snowball battles, make snowmen, and go sledding (one boy adorned in traditional Scottish plaid). They also take part in more specifically British traditions like playing crackers and “hunt the slipper,” and eating the blazing pudding.

Sometimes, the marked differences in editions reflect a cultural change. For example, the Baldwin Collection has both a 1905

edition and a 1930 edition of *More Adventures of the Happy Heart Family*. In the last story in the 1905 edition, a happy family secret is revealed. Papa-Good Heart comes out of the house, dons his fur suit and black belt, and puts bags of toys in a great sleigh—yes, Papa-Good Heart is Santa himself!

Interestingly, the wording of the last two paragraphs is altered in the 1930 edition of this story, and what's more, there is a final chapter added, of only one page, in which Mother-Heart wakes the children. Papa Good-Heart stands there, just the same as always. Apparently, we are to assume that the children only dreamt he was Santa Claus. Why the change? The 1905 edition omits any mention of dreams—Papa Good-Heart is, quite simply, Santa Claus. The secret has been revealed.

Why in the 1939 edition is the magic of the discovery replaced by the much more prosaic idea that it was all merely a dream? There is no move to change the idea that the cousins, the Valentines, ride off on Cupid's darts. The front jacket, of which we've spoken earlier, however, also strives to move the text toward realism: "*The Happy Heart Family* was really a real family. Only their name was *Chase* and not *Heart!* And the house they lived in was not in *Contenticut* but way down in the Shinnecock Hills by the blue sea. The little *Mother-Heart* was real, too, and so were all the loads of children—dark and light, and big and small and every size. But Cookie was really just Mary and Delia, and Hans-Fritzie Heart and the Coachman were only Timothy! And all the little white deers were just Jim, the runaway horse. So you see they were all the same and quite different."⁶² The 1939 edition obviously strives to put the stories in a more realistic context for readers, perhaps because of the time period.

With *Three School Friends: A Tale for Girls* by Edith Awwsby, published in the 1880s, we see how the moral lessons of the day can be more artistically achieved when mixed with a well-devised plot. This is the story of three schoolmates as they celebrate the Christmas vacation from boarding school. The girls take part in numerous activities, including caroling, gift exchange, visiting, and play-acting (tableaux). Though it obviously shares the goal of uplifting young women to be honest, humble, and devout, it is far more readable than, for example, the Sabbath Union publications. The story has a narrative that is of at least equal importance to the lessons taught. For example, one can get caught up in the question of whether Dora will admit to her role in the broken vase or let the servant take the undeserved blame. The lessons are certainly there, but they feel much more palatable going down.

When the girls go caroling, the Christmas tradition is seen as more than the chance for a little holiday fun. The minister, for example, exhorts the teens to "raise your hearts as well as your voices in songs of praise, and very likely you may do more good with your singing tonight than I shall with my sermon tomorrow, and perchance you may bring to some weary, sin-laden hearts sweet memories of a long ago, better and purer than the present."⁶³

Not surprisingly, this is just what happens, as two listeners are moved by the Christmas hymns sung outside their door to

forgive an old family wound and welcome back an estranged brother.⁶⁴ The carolers have had not only amusement but have "brought joy and peace."⁶⁵ One of the girls goes to sleep with the mission of correcting her "pride and overbearing ways, so that, when another Christmas Eve comes round, I may be more worthy to proclaim the good tidings of Christ's birth."⁶⁶

Interestingly, the dramatics and tableaux that cause such a tempest in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (for example, Sir Thomas's return to the house unexpectedly) are met with no such complications in *Three School Friends*. Some cousins tell the girls what fun they used to have and ask if they'd like to take part. The girls agree enthusiastically, and the aunt, rather than throwing them out as in Austen's novel, matches their enthusiastic response. She offers to get a stage set up for their holiday endeavors and to invite all the young people of the neighborhood. The evening will be a celebration of the season, including dramatics, tableaux, dancing, games, and the like.⁶⁷ Here we see clearly the merging of expectations of the holiday season: it is to include spiritual aspects, certainly, but also to emphasize amusement for its own sake.

Randolph Caldecott's "Graphic" Pictures (1883) is a beautifully illustrated collection of stories by the illustrator for whom the Caldecott Medal would later be named. The illustrations are most certainly the heart of the volume—almost a precursor to the modern graphic novel because the text that tells the story is truly in the form of annotations to the illustrations. The illustration is far more important than the text.

"Mr. Carlyon's Christmas as noted in his Diary Pictured by his Grandson (RC)" is the tale of Mr. Carlyon's adventures from December 21, when he is invited to spend Christmas at Marley Hall and starts "at once" through January 8. His Christmas visit to Marley Hall includes being beset by highwaymen (whom he overtakes and leaves with the local justice of the peace), feasting, fox hunting, falling in love with a Miss Diana Wood, and dueling with whips against her other suitor. He leaves "to avoid becoming a maker of strife" (although, really, how much more trouble could he get in to?) and is pleased that the "squire asked me for next Christmas." Once back in Fleet Street, he dines, still gazing admiringly at Diana's miniature portrait. This book is truly a treasure, and the power of the retelling is all in the illustrations.⁶⁸

In the exuberantly illustrated *Christmas Every Day* by W. D. Howells, published in 1908 from an 1892 copyright, it is "the old Christmas Fairy" to whom the little girl writes, asking that it be Christmas every day. The book employs the format of a frame story: a little girl sits on her father's lap and listens to him tell the story of a girl who asked that it be Christmas every day. As you can imagine, when the wish is granted, all kinds of unexpectedly unfortunate things occur: no children ever get enough sleep and are cranky and overexcited all the time, and there is no Fourth of July, Valentine's Day, or Thanksgiving because it is always Christmas. The presents pile up so that they lose all their special qualities. Finally there's not a single person who wants Christmas for even one more day. This is really a story about the dangers of greed and an explanation for children about why scarcity makes something valuable, even something like Christmas.⁶⁹

A Christmas Party for Santa Claus is the charming 1912 book by Ida M. Huntington in which a young girl, Dremia, who is friends with the fairies, decides to host a party for Santa Claus.

“Who ever heard of such a thing!”

“I don’t ‘spect any one ever did, Fairy Godmother. And that is why I thought it would be fun.”⁷⁰

Once the Fairy Godmother is convinced, it is the work of a moment to get all the help they need: Jack of the Beanstalk cuts down the Christmas tree for the party, Mother Hubbard takes care of refreshments, and Puck and Ariel fly to deliver invitations.

All the inhabitants of Fairyland, Toyland, Dreamland, Make-believe Land, and Santa Claus Land are to be invited, so it should be a heck of a party! In Peter Pan fashion, Titania, Queen of the Fairies, touches Dremia with her scepter so that Dremia “may’st ever be able to see [the fairies] as we play in the forests or among the flowers, and never grow too old to care for us. Forget not through thy whole life this visit to the fairyland of childhood.”⁷¹

Dremia flies with Puck through Broken Toyland, “where all the good broken toys go after they leave Mortal Land.” I love that the toys are “very sensitive, so if thou dost notice anything peculiar in their appearance, do not speak of it.” Dremia promises to be careful, saying, “I know I don’t like to have people notice my pug nose and freckles.” In Broken Toyland, the military hospital cares for “valiant tin soldiers by the dozens . . . lying on the white beds, battered and forlorn.” There are “Jacks-in-the-, vainly trying to find their boxes” and all the “balloons that got away” fly overhead. These toys are especially invited to the party as “reminder of happy Christmases gone by, when [Santa Claus] was the giver of happiness.”⁷²

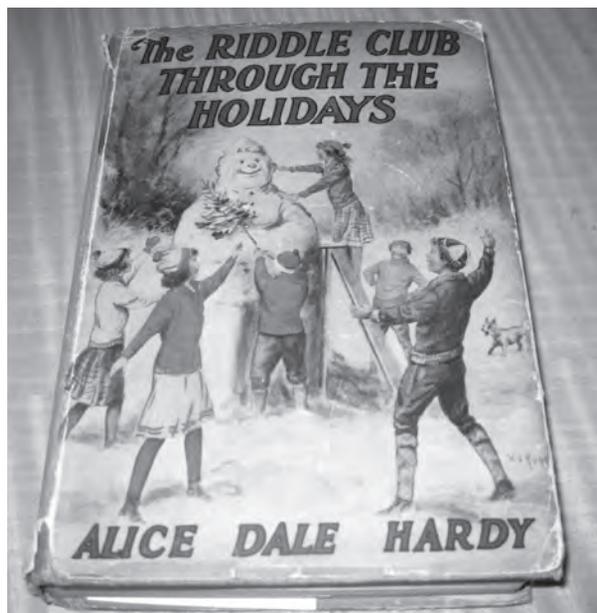
The party, of course, is a huge success, with presents in the stocking and on the tree for Santa Claus. King Cole and his Fiddlers Three provide the music, accompanied of course, by the Cat with his fiddle. All of the Mother Goose characters attend, and Cinderella even gets to stay out past the strike of twelve! The gifts each gives to Santa are reflective of the rhyme that made them famous: a lamp from Aladdin, house slippers from Cinderella, a pipe from King Cole, mittens from the three

little kittens, and an armchair from the three bears. The Old Lady who Lived in the Shoe? She gives Santa one of the children!

And it wouldn’t be a party without food, so everyone brings a little something: Alice of Wonderland brings mock turtle soup, Tiny Tim sends a Christmas goose, Peter Piper brings his pickled peppers, and Miss Muffet brings a “big bowl of curds and whey, and says that the spider did not come anywhere near her while she was preparing it.” The Queen of Hearts brings her tarts, the King brings a blackbird pie, and “Jack Horner says [it’s] the best . . . pie he has ever eaten.”⁷³ The party ends after much toasting, dancing, and games of blind man’s bluff. All the sundry characters head home in Santa’s new sleigh, which is always magically big enough for whatever he needs to haul.

The Christmas Ball (1917) by Florence Notter includes several aspects of the Santa Claus story that would appear unusual to modern readers. For example, Santa and the reindeer don’t fly, they go “whirling through snow drifts and spinning all along” most definitely on the ground through the snow, so fast that “the North-wind whistled and wondered at their speed.”⁷⁴

Also in this volume, Santa himself is linked with decorating the Christmas trees: “Many Christmas trees he trimmed with balls of every shade.”⁷⁵ Again, the tradition of the tree magically appearing decorated on Christmas morning is invoked.



The Riddle Club through the Holidays by Alice Dale Hardy (1924) describes the adventures of a group of young adults throughout the holiday season.

Apparently, it would be years before children would grow up watching dad struggle to untangle the Christmas lights!

The opportunity to use Santa’s visit as a chance to better children’s behavior and comportment was, apparently, used by parents in 1917 as it is today and shows clearly in *The Christmas Ball*. The emphasis on the children’s responsibility for letter writing was one interesting example and comes through in such phrases as:

He always wants to please you and Santa always tries

And if you're disappointed I'm going to advise

That next year when you're writing

you'll try your very best,

To write a nice neat letter, and he

will do the rest.⁷⁶

Parents also can hope for behavior modification through the idea that "When looking in the play-rooms Santa Claus repeated, "I want to see how the toys left last year are treated."⁷⁷

Chapter 7 of *Man in the Moon Stories Told Over the Radio-Phone* is titled "A Christmas Party." This story begins much like the Laura Lee Hope series of books, the Make-Believe Stories. In the Make-Believe Stories, toy animals like the White Rocking Horse, the Bold Tin Soldier, the Monkey on a Stick, and the Lamb on Wheels are simple toys in a toy shop—until the clerks all go home for the evening, at which time they come to life and engage in all manner of races, adventures, and mishaps. In *Man in the Moon Stories*, the Christmas party begins with the same premise: the toys in a toy shop remain completely still and silent until the last janitor leaves, at which time they are free to talk and move about.

In this story, the hobby horse points out the irony that, though children let loose in a toy shop at Christmas would "have a party and play with everything in sight," all the toys do "is to stay in our boxes and wait for someone to buy us." What to do instead? Have a Christmas party, of course. During the course of the party, the hobby horse wants even more fun, this time in the form of candy, and ends up stuck on top of an elevator shaft. The how of it all is less important than the moral, apparently, which is tidily summed up for the young reader: "the hobby horse missed his own Christmas party, because he wasn't contented with what he had."⁷⁸

In another Christmas story in the same collection, "Nehemiah's Christmas Present," gifts, and the intelligence of the family cat, are at issue. From under the "big Christmas tree in one corner of the room and the bundles piled around it that Santa Claus had left," Nehemiah the cat opens only the one that had his name on it. The older brother knows that the cat was simply drawn to the one package that held catnip inside. The little girl, however, exclaims, "Not every cat is able to read his own name and pick out his own Christmas present from a table full of packages."⁷⁹ For her, the magic of Christmas is secured for another year.

My favorite of the Christmas stories in this collection is "Greedy Dick—A Christmas Story," perhaps because the main character's plan to receive extra Christmas gifts is clever, though certainly self-interested:

"How many stockings are you going to hang up?" Dick asked Marjorie on Christmas Eve.

"One," said Marjorie. "What a silly question!"

"Well, it isn't silly at all," retorted Dick. "I am going to hang up four stockings, and when Santa Claus fills them, you will be sorry."⁸⁰

Santa, however, thinks that because there are four stockings, they most belong to the four-footed family horse, and he fills the stockings with oats and horseshoes. Dick spies Santa, explains the confusion, and learns to control his avarice.

At this point, we certainly still see a strong lean to the didactic ending lesson—a moral that each reader can take away with him. On the other hand, we also are starting to see a greater sense of fun, silliness, and whimsy than is evident in the nineteenth-century works for children.

Those who feel Christmas has gotten too commercial in recent years, and that children see the holiday as only a time of getting presents, might be surprised by the 1950 *The Bobbsey Twins Merry Days Indoors and Out*. In one chapter, the children spend much time discussing what they hope to get, what they do get, and how they wish it were Christmas every week. All the trappings of Christmas we are used to are here: saving money to buy presents for elders, awaiting the holiday with bated breath, hanging up stockings, and trying to stay awake on Christmas Eve to catch a peek of Santa at work.

One striking difference, however, is the tradition of keeping the decorated tree hidden from the children until Christmas morning, which occurs here but is rarely, I think, a tradition found in modern American households. It is the one aspect of the 1950 celebration that would be unfamiliar to the children of today, who often have ornaments, and perhaps even a tree, specifically for them.

Where's Prancer, with story and pictures by Syd Hoff, was published in 1960. The story focuses on Santa getting back to the North Pole only to learn that Prancer hasn't made it back from the worldwide trip. Though "He was with us in Australia, . . . in Sweden . . . in the Philippine Islands . . . and in Sioux City, Iowa," he apparently was left in Philadelphia.

The reindeer return to Philly to search for their lost reindeer, walking up and down Market Street, Broad Street, and past Independence Hall (which Comet calls "A fine structure") before a kindly policeman tells Santa that a reindeer has just been spotted on Chestnut Street. All the reindeer enjoy getting to see the children play with their toys on Christmas morning, which they don't usually get to do ("We always get here the night before" complains Prancer). My favorite moment might be the annoyed look Santa has when answering a phone call that turns out to be a wrong number. Here, the emphasis is on fun, whimsy, and the "happy faces" that are occasioned by Santa's presents.⁸¹

The most modern Christmas works at the Baldwin Collection tend to incorporate modern trends. Many of these modern volumes are multicultural Christmas works, including *Santa's Kwanzaa*, *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales*, *The Gullah Night Before Christmas*, *The*

Christmas Gift = El Regalo de Navidad, Federico and the Magi's Gift: A Latin American Christmas Story, and Pancho's Pinata. Others are modern versions of *The Night Before Christmas*, including the Gullah version, *The Cajun Night Before Christmas*, the pop-up *Night Before Christmas* by Robert Sabuda, and even the *Redneck Night Before Christmas* by David Davis.

The modern Christmas tale *O Christmas Tree* by Vashanti Rahaman (1996), with folk art illustrations by Frané Lessac, is a great example of the melding of holiday traditions from several cultures. The story, set in the West Indies, follows Ansem as he wishes for a Christmas tree. At the start of the story, he sees Christmas only in terms of traditional English aspects: the tree, snow, fireplaces, sleds, and snowmen—things that are completely foreign to his experience.

From the start, though, we see the mix of cultural traditions. Illustrations portray the brightly colored island buildings decorated with Santas, lights, ivy, and trees. Text describes the music of the community, with radios playing both Caribbean music and traditional Christmas carols. The ships do, however, bring in evergreen trees at Christmas time, and that's "all I was hoping for . . . just one time, to touch it and smell it and get a feel and a smell of real Christmas."⁸²

What Ansem learns is that the smells of Christmas in the Caribbean of Christmas ham, of black cake with molasses and raisins, and of ginger and sorrel drink, are his traditions. The melding of the language, from Caribbean dialect to Standard English, reflects the melding of the cultural traditions. Poinsettias blooming red take the place of the evergreen tree as the harbingers of the season, and "them is Christmas tree for true!" An author's note states, "Many of the Christmas traditions I grew up with were really European. They often had more to do with winter than with Christmas. But West Indians do not give up traditions easily—even traditions like Christmas trees and carols about snow that seem a little out of place on tropical islands."⁸³

* * * * *

Holidays, from April Fool's Day to Christmas, are times of great excitement for children. Circulation of holiday books at public libraries is particularly heavy, and, like the child who starts her Christmas wish list in July, many children will check these books out year-round.

Examining trends in holiday books can improve our appreciation of these materials, which can significantly impact the services we provide children at the library. A stronger sense of the traditions involved in children's holiday materials will allow us to make better collection development decisions, both in purchasing new materials and in maintaining older volumes. It can improve the choices we make for holiday storytimes, which are a staple of our library service to children. Lastly, it can increase our own enthusiasm for these works—enthusiasm that children who are served at the library will feel and respond to in kind.

Perhaps these materials also can help adults to celebrate a bit more like children. As author Ascott R. Hope laments in the

preface to the 1873 *Stories of Whitminster*, "When we grow up, we don't have so many holidays as we had at school, and don't enjoy them half so well."⁸⁴ ☞

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Home for the Holidays is a 1995 family comedy-drama film directed by Jodie Foster and produced by Peggy Rajski and Foster. The screenplay was written by W. D. Richter, based on a short story by Chris Radant. The film's score was composed by Mark Isham. The film's narrative follows Claudia Larson, a young woman who, after losing her job, kissing her ex-boss, and finding out that her daughter has plans of her own for the holiday, departs Chicago to spend her Thanksgiving with her dysfunctional family. This page contains the choices in Home for the Holidays and their outcomes. This game revolves around the choices you make. They can improve or decrease relationships with the characters. This walkthrough is made to assist others in helping them make their right choice for the game. Good luck and happy playing! Choices that have no outcome on the side have not been explored yet, please help this page by contributing those answers! Home for the Holidays movie reviews & Metacritic score: Claudia Larson (Hunter) is a divorced single mom who just lost her job and now has to fly home for th...Â Your score has been saved for Home for the Holidays. Would you like to write a review? Write a review. No, thank you. Review this Movie. There is a 75 character minimum for reviews. If your review contains spoilers, please check the Spoiler box.