

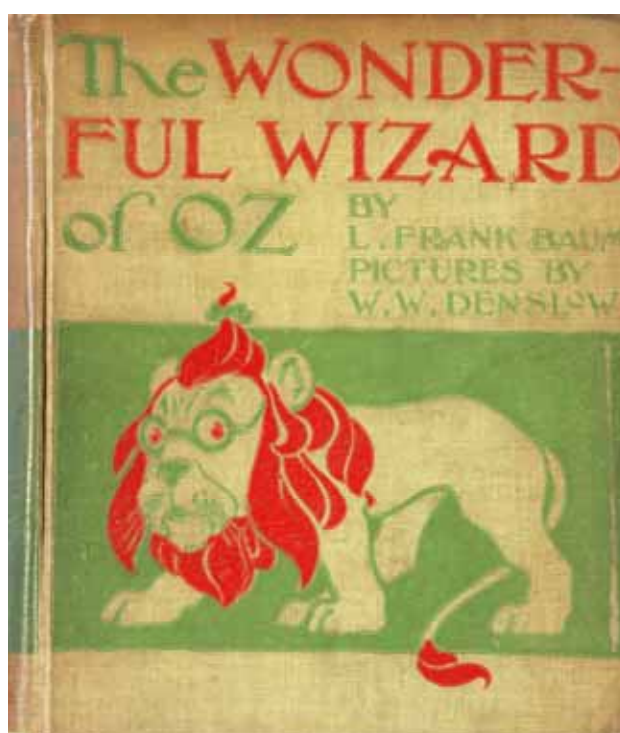
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Special Collections featured item for November 2007 by Pat Hanby, Acquisitions Manager. With technical assistance by Fiona Barnard, Rare Books Librarian.

L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Chicago : George M. Hill, 1900.

Item held in the Wizard of Oz Collection. University of Reading Library Special Collections.

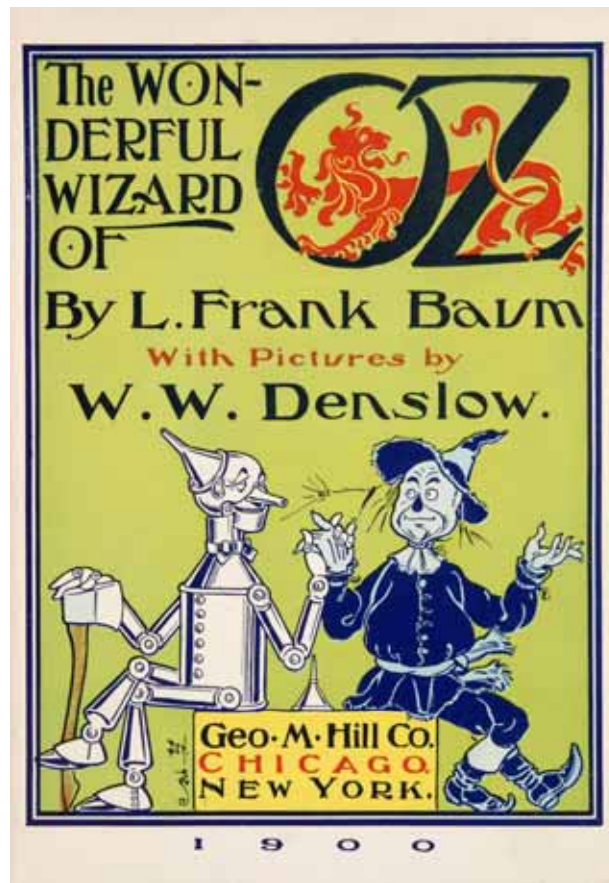
The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum has been a well-loved children's story since its first appearance in 1900. There have been many different editions and adaptations since this date, in a variety of formats, including easy readers, story tapes, pop-up books and other novelty versions, games, and spin-offs. The University Library was fortunate to receive a bequest in 2004 of a large collection of Baum's books and other Oz-related material on the death of Brian Baker, who had been an Oz collector for many years. The collection includes around 800 items, ranging from the original set of 14 Oz books by Baum in several editions, through the official continuations, many unofficial continuations, abridgements, adaptations, translations and 'fanzines', to other books by Baum, including a number written under various pseudonyms, and some secondary critical material.



The first edition of the book that most people know as *The Wizard of Oz* was published in 1900 by George M. Hill as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* [front board shown above], with illustrations by W.W.Denslow. It has a complicated publishing history, and there are many variants, even within editions. The first printing of the first edition contained a few spelling mistakes, and these were corrected in the second printing. The second edition was published in 1903 by Bobbs-Merrill as *The New Wizard of Oz*, which was shortened on the cover to the more familiar title of *The Wizard of Oz* for the second printing. This edition had fewer illustrations than the original, and later ones reduce these still further, in particular changing the colour plates to black and white full page illustrations. The text illustrations were also printed in black and white, rather than in colour, and were separated from the text rather than being closely linked as in early editions. A notable later edition is the 1939 MGM movie edition, which includes colour stills from the film. Another is the Hutchinson edition of 1947 which has very few of Denslow's illustrations - mainly the chapter headings and a small picture at the end of each chapter, - but does have five colour plates by H.M. Brock [see frontispiece below], which add to its interest. From 1939 onwards there were many rewritten versions with illustrations by other authors.



The University of Reading Library edition appears to be the second printing of the first edition as the spelling mistakes are corrected, though it may contain some colour plates from the first printing. As production was in three separate components - the text, the colour plates, and the binding case - copies containing elements of both printings are often found. The partnership of Baum and Denslow produced a book which is exceptional in many ways. It is an extremely lavish production, with an innovative combination of text and illustrations. Baum and Denslow had already collaborated on *Father Goose; His Book* in 1899, and in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, they produced a landmark classic which has become the most popular and successful children's fantasy ever published in America, with a deserved popularity overseas as well.



The first edition has 24 tipped-in full colour plates, including a delightful title-page [see above]. All the memorable events of the story have their own picture, including Dorothy's meeting with each of her three companions. First there is the Scarecrow, then the Tin Woodman [see below],



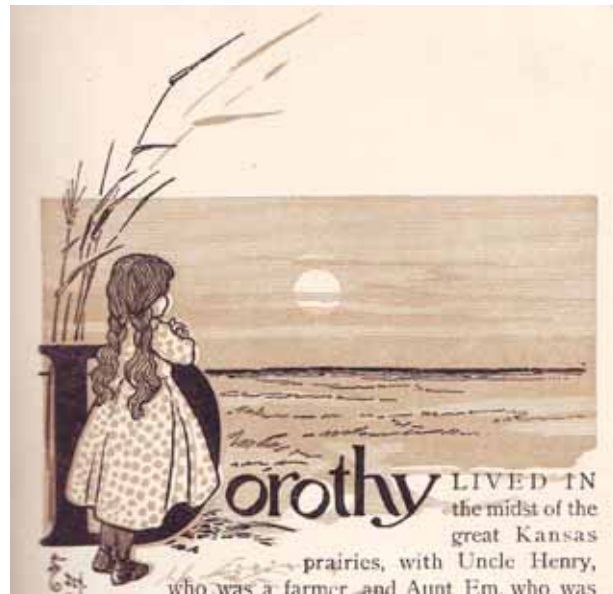
and lastly the Cowardly Lion [see below]. In this plate there is an instance of part of the picture overspilling the frame, which adds to its interest, and occurs in other plates as well,



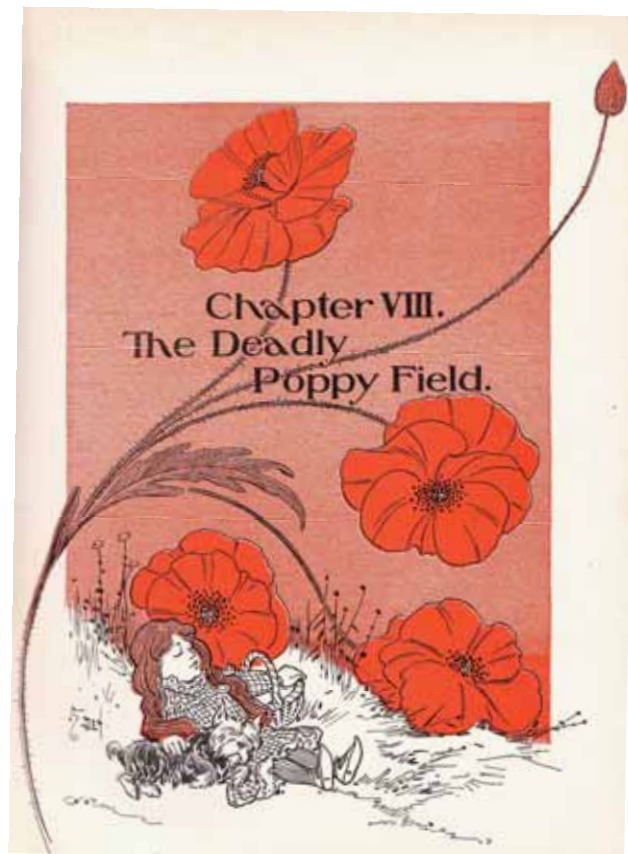
including the meeting with the field mice where there is a mouse sitting on top of the frame, and another in the bottom corner, with his tail linked into the picture [see below].



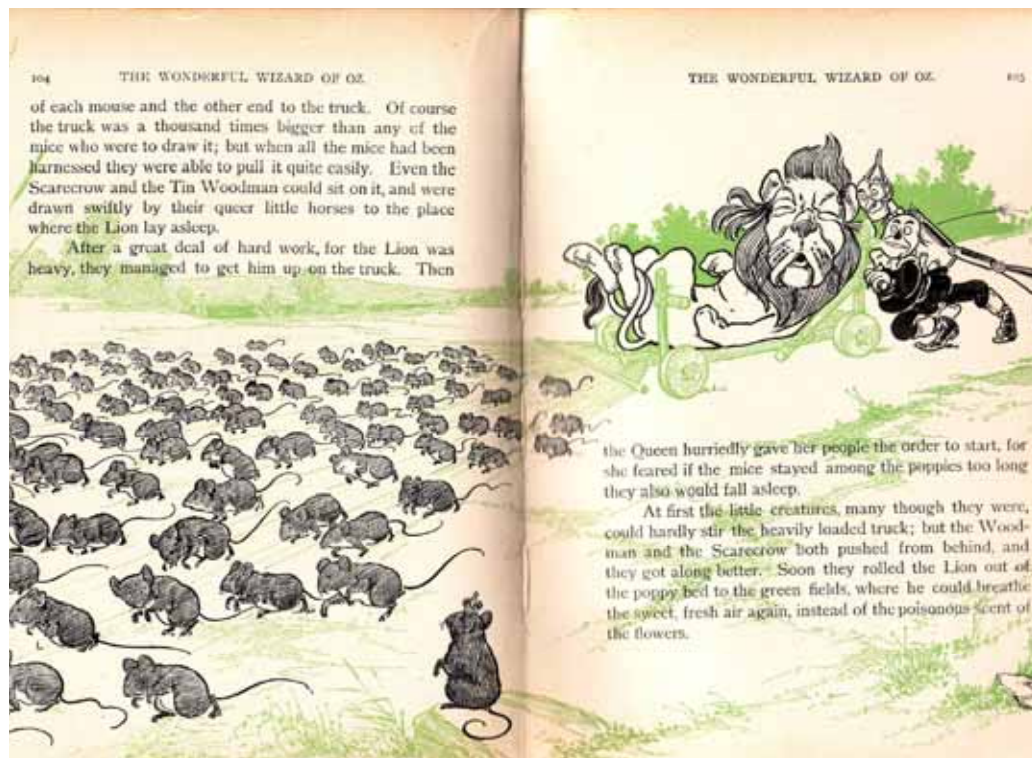
However, the most innovative illustrations are those in the text, where words and images intertwine with one another, with text printed over pictures, or formatted in odd shapes to fit around them. Many chapters begin with an illustrated first letter in the style of an illumination, so that at the very beginning we have Dorothy leaning on the capital letter 'D' [see below],



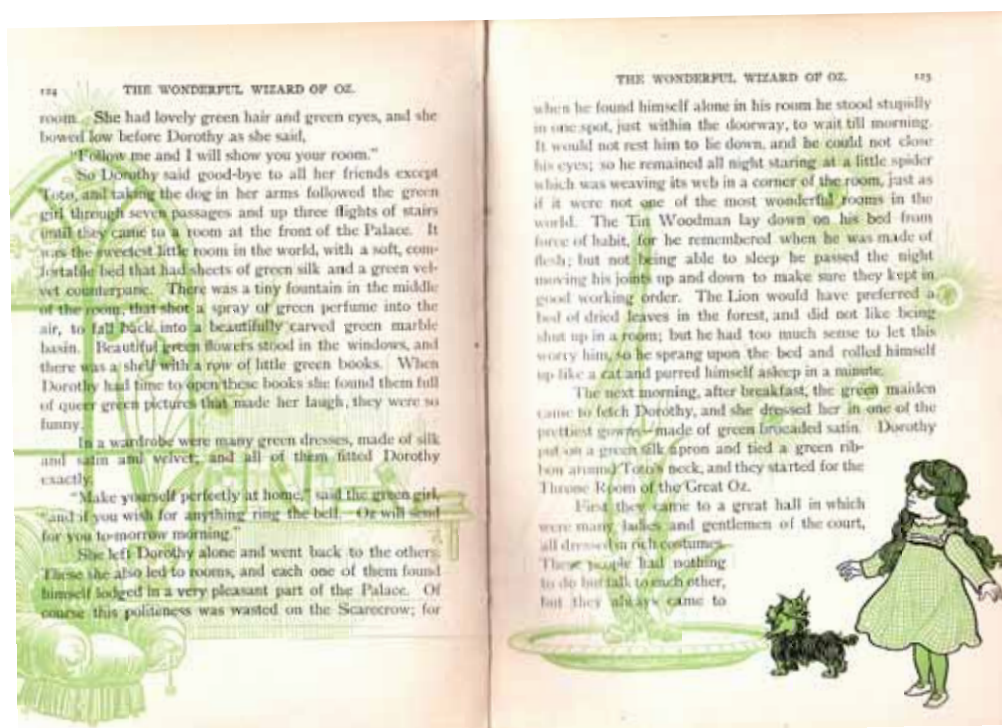
and throughout the text there are large and small illustrations scattered under, over, around and through the text. There is hardly a page, except those facing and after the colour plates, that has no decoration, usually in a single colour. Each chapter begins with a full page colour illustration, for example chapter 8, The Deadly Poppy Field [see below], which is in shades of orange and brown, with Dorothy and Toto lying asleep under giant poppies.



There are some delightful double page spreads, such as pages 104-5 [see below] where the field mice are dragging the sleeping lion from the poppy field. Looking carefully at the mice, one can see that they have individual faces, obviously struggling with their heavy load. The field mouse queen sits on her haunches watching regally.



Chapter 11, The Wonderful Emerald City of Oz has many green illustrations, to match the text where the word "green" is constantly repeated. Pages 124-5 are a good example of text and picture matching perfectly. The text is overprinted on the green background illustration, which includes a nice row of books.



As a story for children, it works on several levels. At the beginning there is a detailed description of the very ordinary house where Dorothy lives with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry – all very humdrum and everything seems grey. There is Dorothy’s pet dog Toto [see below] – animals feature in all the best children’s stories.



Then there is the cyclone which picks up the house with Dorothy and Toto in it and puts them down in a strange country. From then on, a series of magical episodes leads Dorothy through strange lands with fairy-tale companions, climaxing in the arrival at the Emerald City of Oz.



They are then sent on a quest by the Wonderful Wizard of Oz and their success is rewarded in gaining what they most desire. Oz turns out to be a humbug [see above], but he is still able to satisfy three of the four companions. The scarecrow gets brains – his head is stuffed with

bran and pins and needles so that he has “bran-new brains” and is very sharp. The Tin Woodman gets a beautiful heart made of silk and stuffed with sawdust, which Oz tells him is a kind heart. The Cowardly Lion is given courage – Oz makes him drink the contents of a square green bottle. Each believes he has what he wants. However, Oz fails in his attempt to send Dorothy back to Kansas, going up himself in the air balloon never to be seen again.

The many magical elements to the story are fittingly illustrated. The wearer of the Golden Cap can call upon the Winged Monkeys three times to fulfil a request, which can be either good or evil. The Wicked Witch of the West calls on them to destroy the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow, and to bind up the Cowardly Lion [see below].



However, when Dorothy calls on them [see below], she and her companions are rescued and are flown back to the Emerald City. However, even the Winged Monkeys cannot fly Dorothy back to Kansas, although they are able to rescue her and her companions from the Hammer-Heads and take them to the land of the Quadlings, where they find the Good Witch of the South. Glinda, the Witch, is given the Golden Cap and her three wishes transport three of the company to places where they can use the gifts given to them by Oz. The Scarecrow returns to rule the Emerald City, The Tin Woodman goes back to rule over the Winkies, and the Lion goes back to the forest to become King of the Beasts.



Finally Glinda tells Dorothy the secret of the Silver Shoes, which she has been wearing since the beginning of the journey, having taken them from the feet of the Wicked Witch of the East who was killed when Dorothy's house landed in the country of the Munchkins. The shoes take her safely home to Kansas and the story ends with her happy return home "And oh, Aunt Em! I'm so glad to be home again!"

As well as presenting a satisfying story, the lavish production would have delighted the many children who received it at Christmas in 1900. It was followed by 13 sequels from Baum, though the illustrator after the first book was John R. Neill. Following Baum's death, several others continued the series until the final official sequel, no 40. *Merry Go Round in Oz*. John R. Neill continued as illustrator until the 36th book, and in fact wrote three books himself, so the format remained consistent, and their popularity continued. Most people now know the story from the MGM film, starring Judy Garland, which still gets shown regularly on television, or as a modern retelling. There are many enthusiasts who collect early editions avidly, who continue to write 'fanfic' and contribute to the several magazines, of which the most significant is *The Baum Bugle*. The value of first and early editions continues to increase, but the magic of the story can still captivate a child.

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