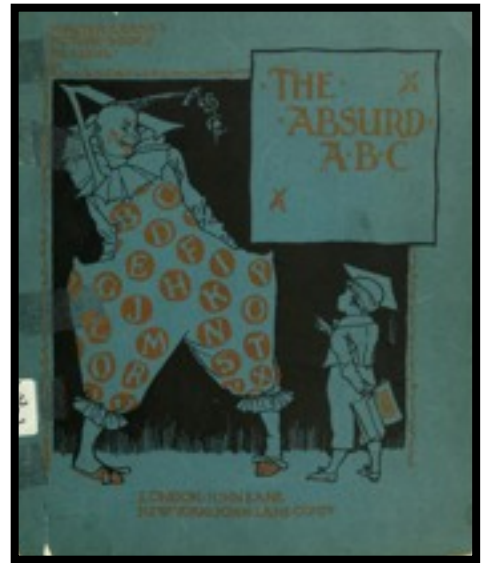
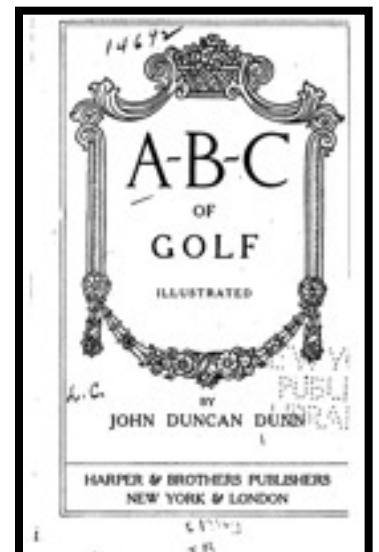


Mary Mullineaux
Final Project
The History of the Alphabet Book Backstory

From the second Apex in which I chose to explore chapbooks, I came across several that were strictly ABC books or included the alphabet in the first pages. As I have long been obsessed with the alphabet but mostly in the sense of decorative wall samplers, my interest was piqued. Later, researching illustrators for a subsequent Apex I came across Walter Crane's *The Absurd ABC* and I thought it was quite clever and then I suddenly remembered Christmas 1987 when I had the pleasure of working part-time at a bookstore in the mall (remember when there were Waldenbooks in malls!) That year, the only book anyone wanted was *Animalia* by Graeme Base. We had stacks of requests and shipments could not keep up with demand. From that I just started thinking about what ABC books were published in between the two I mentioned. Not having children, nor working much with children, I really had no idea and so I started the process.



Through Archive.org I was able to gather a nice assortment of early works but there wasn't always the information available in order to do an in-depth study of many of the publications. Also not all were aimed at children. Another consideration of the materials I located, is that some authors and publishers use the 'abc' device as a way to organize and offer information on a variety of subjects from gardening to housekeeping.



While I found information in reference materials like encyclopedias and online sources like Biography in Context through Gale, I did not locate any useful scholarly articles regarding the history of the alphabet book. There were many on the usefulness of alphabet books in the educational process but none that focused on the history of the book, the art work, the sizes, the audience etc. For that reason alone, I think that my project filled a need if only for me. There has to be someone else who found the links between the continents, the techniques and the rhyme as interesting as I did!

In reading biographical sketches of the author/illustrators, it brought to light the other artists that had influences on each other. I had never heard of C. B. Falls but found his book through a search on Archive.org. But when reading his sketch, the writer of his biography speculated that he had been influenced by William Nicholson, so that mere mention of Nicholson lead me to find out more about him. I was really blown away by Nicholson's work and can see how Fall's may have been influenced by him. I think that Nicholson's work was a nice addition to the project but I might not have found him if I hadn't read that particular biography sketch of Falls.

A limitation to my approach of creating a video was the sheer time it took to "talk" versus "write". A lengthy paragraph was more than a minute long to record and I feared that my video may have gotten a bit lengthy. And while there were several more books I would have liked to have included such as Tasha Tudor's *A is for Annabelle* which is such a classic from the 1950's and also Bill Martin's *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, I felt like I had to streamline the presentation for a more focused approach.

"Kate Greenaway." Encyclopedia of World Biography. Vol. 18. Detroit: Gale, 1998.

"William (Newzam Prior) Nicholson, (Sir)." St. James Guide to Children's Writers. Gale, 1999.

"Brian Wildsmith." Contemporary Authors Online. Detroit: Gale, 2001.

"Graeme (Rowland) Base." Major Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults. Detroit: Gale, 2002.

"Wanda (Hazel) Gag." Contemporary Authors Online. Detroit: Gale, 2003.

E. L., H. "Abc (Book Review)." *Horn Book Magazine* 39.(1963): 278. *Book Review Digest Retrospective: 1903-1982* (H.W. Wilson).

Hearn, Michael Patrick. "Wanda Gág (11 March 1893-27 June 1946)". American Writers for Children, 1900-1960. Ed. John Cech. Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 22. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983. 179-191. Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online. Gale.

Hoyle, Karen Nelson. "Gág, Wanda 1893-1946." Writers for Children: Critical Studies of Major Authors since the Seventeenth Century. Ed. Bingham, Jane M. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988. 241-46.

Joseph, Michael Scott. "William Nicholson (5 February 1872-16 May 1949)". British Children's Writers, 1880-1914. Ed. Laura M. Zaidman. Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 141. Detroit: Gale Research, 1994. 217-229. Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online. Gale.

Lundin, Anne H.. "Kate Greenaway (17 March 1846-6 November 1901)". British Children's Writers, 1880-1914. Ed. Laura M. Zaidman. Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 141. Detroit: Gale Research, 1994. 103-117. Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online. Gale.

Silvey, Anita. Children's Books and Their Creators. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Trafton, Melissa Geisler. "Abc Books." Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society. Ed. Fass, Paula S. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 3-5.

Waggoner, Diane. "Greenaway, Kate (1846?1901)." Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society. Ed. Fass, Paula S. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 399-400.

<http://www.graemebase.com/publish/index.html>

<http://www.brianwildsmith.com>

<https://archive.org/stream/abcwithchurchofe00churiala#page/n1/mode/2up>

<https://archive.org/stream/gallopingguideto00banbiala#page/n0/mode/2up>

<https://archive.org/stream/babysownaesop00craniala#page/n7/mode/2up>

<https://archive.org/stream/orbispictusofjoh00come#page/2/mode/2up>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15809/15809-h/15809-h.htm>

<https://archive.org/stream/abcbook00fall#page/n1/mode/2up>

<http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/abcbunny.pdf>

<https://archive.org/stream/mcguffeyselecti00mcgurich#page/n0/mode/2up>

Photos from Wikimedia Commons and the Library of Congress

All copyrighted materials are used in accordance with Section 107, Fair Use, of the United States Copyright law.