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## Did You Know? Moveable Books

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# Did You Know? — Movable Books

by Eleanor M. Heldrich (Prospect Hill Press, 216 Wendover Rd., Baltimore, MD 21218)

**M**ovable is the name that has been given to books that are interactive; that is, it takes an action by the reader to produce movement on the pages. Most of us, however, just call them pop-up books.

The first movable books were not intended for children. They offered special effects to help illustrate a point. One of the most famous, and very rare in its first edition, features an explanation of Euclidian mathematics. Another rare and wonderful example is by Humphry Repton, the famous English landscape architect, who created a book of garden designs with overlays to show the changes that would be made by new plantings. Veterinarians and surgeons also developed books with successive overlays to show the position of bones, the circulatory system, and organs in animals and human beings. Fashion magazines used plates with ovals cut out where a face would be to show different outfits for the modish lady on the final page whose face appeared above all the dresses.

In the 1860's in England, Dean and Company began to mass produce movable books for children with transformations — where one picture is seen to disappear and another take its place by pulling on a ribbon — and figures that rose from paper surface in layers when the page was opened. Another English printer Raphael Tuck produced a "Mechanical series," also with stand-up pictures. Most of these books were printed in Germany because the German printers were more advanced at printing in colors. And it was a German artist, Lothar Meggendorfer, who introduced in the 1880's pictures with complicated between-the-pages mechanics activated by a pull tab such as one that allowed a fiddler to draw a bow across a violin while keeping time with a tapping foot. Ernest Nister is another German printer who produced quality books in many fields but is known primarily for his movable books for children depicting idealized Victorian themes. McLoughlin Brothers of New York began producing movable books in the 1880's, but by and large movable books disappeared from the market after the end of the century.

In 1929 a British publisher S.L. Giraud began a Bookano series of large collections of stories with five to seven "living models" inserted between the pages. These are brilliantly-colored figures that stand up straight from the page and can be viewed from all sides. But it fell to an American publisher, Blue Ribbon, to first use the designation "pop-up" for a group of books they developed for children in conjunction with Walt Disney in the 1930's.

An artist named Julian Wehr began illustrating a series of already famous stories with pull-tabs that caused multiple movements on the page. These books are extraordinary in that they are printed on regular paper rather than

the usual light cardboard. Jolly Jump-ups became a popular series in the 1930's and 1940's, but not much new happened in movables until the 1960's.

Enter a remarkable man named Voiteck Kubasta in Czechoslovakia. Working behind the Iron Curtain, he produced more than sixty titles — fairy tales, original stories, series tales — on cheap paper with poor printing, but of great popularity. Several titles were printed in England and admired by an American graphic artist named Waldo Hunt who tried to gain permission without success to reproduce them here. He decided to try to produce successful pop-ups in the USA with local talent. Starting in a small way by persuading advertisers to try pop-ups in their ads, he then worked with Hallmark to produce a long and successful string of books. Then came a numbered series of Pop-Ups for Random House, running to fifty. The movable book craze was on its way! Mr. Hunt says the thing he looks for in any pop-up book is the "wow" factor.

Today hundreds of new movable books appear each year produced by many and varied publishers. They range in size from miniature to folio, and from simple flap books to amazing action. A famous one among collectors is *The Earth in Three Dimensions* published by Dial in 1994 that has a single pop-up — a 12" model of the earth springs up from

the page when the cover is opened, unfurls to become perfectly round, and begins rotating on a string! The paper engineer for this production was David Hawcock.

Most modern pop-ups are created by a team of people. First comes the concept, fleshed out by an artist with suggestions for some kind of action, then to the publisher to determine the sales potential and to set a budget on production. If the idea gets a preliminary go-ahead, a paper engineer perfects the movable actions, then sketches the required parts on paper, often having to fit them together on the paper layout like jigsaw

puzzle pieces. A mock-up of the book showing the action is put together. If everything is still go and the project can be completed within budget, the sheets sketched for the mechanics are sent to the artist to be painted to match the art on the rest of the pages. The

book is then printed. Cutting, assembling and

gluing the pieces into the pages of a book is labor intensive and is done, usually by young women, in either South America or the Far East.

All movable books are works of wonder and delight but when a movable book combines a story, art, movement, scale, color and balance with elegance and flair, it becomes a treasure! 🐾



## Adventures in Librarianship — "This Space Under Construction"

by Ned Kraft (Smithsonian Institution Libraries)  
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The letter said, "Please send anything you have touching Nematodes or related category." Well. Nematodes. Hmm. Now is that vegetable or mineral?

The letter came from a Gift & Exchange librarian in the Baltic trying to build her sadly underfunded collection. I imagined her in ruined, cramped quarters, a museum library just trying to get back on its feet after decades of neglect, begging help from "rich," Western institutions. All right, I thought, I've got some exchange resources.

Let's see if I can send her a box of something. First off, what are Nematodes?

Just as I dug in for a round of research, the jackhammer started. "Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah" beyond my wall but feeling as though my skull was its real target. I work in an old building, the National Museum of Natural History, circa 1910. For years, it seems, the renovation hasn't paused, from major new additions to fancy new interior space. I sometimes expect to see the library staff with hammers hanging from their belt loops.

Last Spring the nearest (and therefore

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