

# THE WIZARD OF OZ

*An American Fairy Tale*



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Exhibition Sections: [To Please a Child](#) - [To See the Wizard](#) - [To Own the Wizard](#)

## "TO PLEASE A CHILD"

### L. Frank Baum and the Land of Oz

In an inscription in an earlier children's book that he gave his sister, L. Frank Baum (1856-1919) noted : " I have learned to regard fame as a will-o-the-wisp, which when caught, is not worth the possession; but to please a child is a sweet and lovely thing that warms one's heart and brings its own reward." With *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum won the fame that had eluded him in his early careers. By the time he died in 1919, Baum had written thirteen other books set in Oz.

The books were so well loved that Baum's publishers continued the series with other authors to extend the Oz canon to forty books. Although the story seems quintessentially American, the Oz books have become popular world-wide, and the *Wizard* has been translated into most major languages.



### Poster Promoting L. Frank Baum's Early Children's Books

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was L. Frank Baum's biggest success, but it was not his first popular book for children. This colorful promotional poster issued by Baum's first publishers shows the author surrounded by the covers of eight of his early books, including *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.



[L. Frank Baum and His Popular Books for Children.](#)

Chicago and New York: George M. Hill, 1901.  
Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society (1)



L. Frank Baum.

[By the Candelabra's Glare.](#)  
[inside cover.](#)

Chicago: L. Frank Baum, 1898.

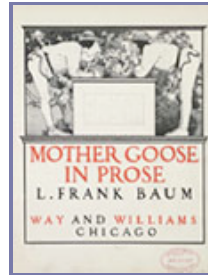
[Rare Book and Special Collections Division](#) (2)

### Book Written and Printed by Baum

In 1898, L. Frank Baum privately printed in his own workshop a book of verse in a limited edition of ninety-nine copies. In the foreword he wrote: "Unaided, I have set the types and turned the press and accomplished the binding. Such as it is, the book is 'my very own'." This copy is inscribed to his sister, Mary Louise Brewster.

## Baum's First Children's Book

This is the first children's book written by Baum and also the first book illustrated by Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966), who became one of America's most popular illustrators. A little farm girl named Dorothy is featured in the last story, and there is some speculation that she is the inspiration for the Dorothy who later became the heroine of Oz.

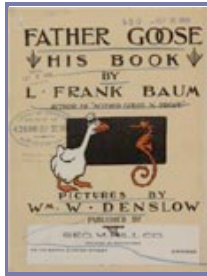


L. Frank Baum.

[Mother Goose in Prose.](#)

Illustrated by Maxfield Parrish.  
Chicago: Way and Williams, 1897.

[Rare Book and Special Collections Division](#) (3)



L. Frank Baum.

[Copyright application and title page deposit](#) for

*Father Goose, His Book*, 1899.

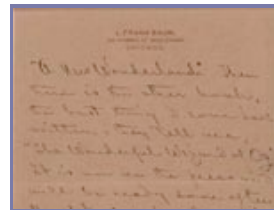
[U. S. Copyright Office Archives](#) (4)

## Copyright Application for *Father Goose, His Book*

Baum personally filed this hand-written copyright application with accompanying title page for *Father Goose, His Book*, the first of his children's books to be illustrated by W. W. Denslow. The title page good-humoredly celebrates the partnership, with Baum's trademark Father Goose meeting Denslow's distinctive hippocampus (sea horse) character face-to-face. *Father Goose* was the best-selling children's book of 1899, selling an estimated 175,000 copies.

## Baum's Letter to His Brother

With several new children's books forthcoming, L. Frank Baum confided his hopes for them in a lengthy letter to his brother Harry. The displayed page concerns the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: "Then there is the other book, the best thing I ever have written, they tell me, 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz'. It is now on the press and will be ready soon after May 1<sup>st</sup>. Denslow has made profuse illustrations for it and it will glow with bright colors. Mr. Hill, the publisher, says he expects a sale of at least a quarter of a million copies on it. If he is right, that book alone solves my problems."



L. Frank Baum.

[Letter to Dr. Harry L. Baum.](#)

[April 8, 1900.](#)

Holograph manuscript.

Arents Collection,

The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (5)



[The Literary News.](#)

pp. 296-297,  
October 1900.

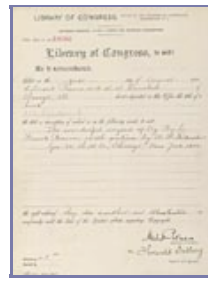
[Page 2](#)

## Early Review of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

L. Frank Baum's classic American fairy tale was an instant success and received positive reviews in numerous publications of the day. This review, (reprinted from the *New York Times*) hails the book for having "a bright and joyous atmosphere" and "not dwell[ing] upon killing and deeds of violence" and claims that "it will indeed be strange if there be a normal child who will not enjoy the story."

## U. S. Copyright Office Record for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Because of its role as the nation's copyright depository, collections contain many rare or unique items related to the *Wizard of Oz*. Through copyright record books like this one, it is possible to trace the career of L. Frank Baum from the 1882 registration for his first play to the 1919 registration of his last book, *Glinda of Oz*. The Library also has copyright records for the later Oz books, as well as related products. These records and items demonstrate the influence of the *Wizard of Oz* on American popular culture.



[Entry for Registration](#)  
[Number A 19092.](#)

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 1900.

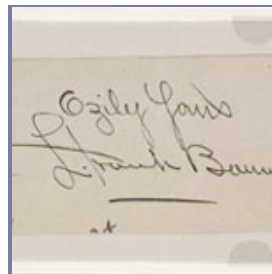
[Page 2](#)

[U. S. Copyright Office Archives \(8\)](#)

## Copyright Application for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

On August 1, 1900, the Library's Copyright Office received from L. Frank Baum this hand-written copyright application with required title page deposit showing the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman. Baum filed the copyright papers for many of his works personally and showed an appreciation of the importance of protecting his intellectual property rights. After the success of his books, Baum frequently signed autographs "Ozily yours."

L. Frank Baum.  
[Copyright application and title page deposit](#)  
for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 1900.  
[Page 2 - Page 3](#)  
[U. S. Copyright Office Archives \(7\)](#)



L. Frank Baum.  
[Autograph](#), n.d.  
[Manuscript Division \(102\)](#)



L. Frank Baum.

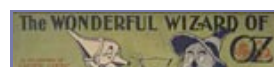
[The Wonderful Wizard of Oz cover.](#)

[Page 1 - Page 2 - Page 3](#)

Chicago and New York: George M. Hill, 1900.

[Rare Book and Special Collections Division \(9\)](#)

Advertising Poster for



## ***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, 1900***

This is one of two known complete, surviving posters printed by the Carqueville Litho Company to promote L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. With the exception of a few minor line delineations, the image is a faithful depiction of Denslow's colorful title page from the book. The book sold for \$1.50 per copy, and the first edition of 10,000 sold out immediately.



*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Chicago: Carqueville  
Litho Company, 1900.  
Poster.

Private Collection (10)

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## **W. W. Denslow and L. Frank Baum**

W. W. (William Wallace) Denslow (1856-1915) was a well-known newspaper cartoonist and poster designer when he illustrated Baum's *Father Goose, His Book* (1899). Following its success, the two men teamed up for Baum's next work, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Because Baum and Denslow each thought that his own contribution was the main reason for the success of the book, their relationship deteriorated. Denslow illustrated only one more Baum book, and after he designed costumes for the 1902 stage version of the *Wizard* his collaboration with Baum ended. He published several children's books of his own, including *Denslow's Mother Goose* (1901). A stylized hippocampus or seahorse was Denslow's trademark and appears on his artwork.

W. W. Denslow.

*Dorothy gazed  
thoughtfully  
at the Scarecrow*, 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing.  
Print Collection, Miriam  
and Ira D. Wallace  
Division of Art, Prints and  
Photographs,  
The New York Public  
Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations  
(11)



Tilden Foundations (14)

W. W. Denslow.

*Exactly so, I am a  
humbug*, 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing.  
Print Collection, Miriam  
and Ira D. Wallace  
Division of Art, Prints and  
Photographs,  
The New York Public  
Library, Astor, Lenox, and

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## **Denslow's Original Artwork for the *Wizard***

W. W. Denslow's original artwork consists of black-and-white line drawings, but the illustrations were printed in color. Some appear in full color and others in only one. Each locale of the story has its own color scheme: Kansas is gray; East, blue; West, yellow; South, red; the Emerald City, green; and, the areas between sections, brown. Because their publisher was concerned about the expense of producing the book, Baum and Denslow paid the cost of including the full-color plates.

W. W. Denslow.

*The Lion ate some of the  
porridge*, 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing.  
Print Collection, Miriam  
and Ira D. Wallace  
Division of Art, Prints and  
Photographs,  
The New York Public  
Library, Astor, Lenox, and  
Tilden Foundations (12)



Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations  
(13)

W. W. Denslow.

*The Monkeys caught  
Dorothy in their arms and  
flew away with her*, 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing.  
Print Collection, Miriam  
and Ira D. Wallace  
Division of Art, Prints and  
Photographs,  
The New York Public

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## Original Artwork for the *Wizard*

W. W. Denslow's vibrant color plates and line drawings for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* helped to make the book an immediate success. An early reviewer of the book praised Denslow's "delightful draughtsmanship." An unusual and innovative feature of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is the way in which portions of the text were printed over Denslow's drawings, a feature soon copied in other children's books. Most of Denslow's original artwork for the book is now in the collections of The New York Public Library.

W. W. Denslow.

[These People were all made of china](#), 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing. Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallace Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (15)



W. W. Denslow.

[Mice pulling lion](#), 1899.

Pen-and-ink drawing. Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallace Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (16)

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## Manuscript for Baum's Last Book

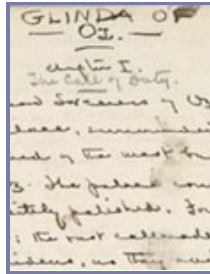
This is L. Frank Baum's hand-written manuscript for *Glinda of Oz*, L. his last book. *Glinda* was Baum's fourteenth book in the *Oz* series and was published posthumously. The miscellaneous notes and references to earlier books Baum jotted on the binder indicate that he may have used it to hold manuscripts for some of his earlier works.

L. Frank Baum.

*Glinda of Oz*.

Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1920.

[Rare Book and Special Collections Division](#) (17)



L. Frank Baum.

[Glinda of Oz, 1919.](#)

Holograph manuscript.

[Page 2 - Page 3](#)

[Manuscript Division](#) (18)



L. Frank Baum.

["To the Readers of \*The Show Window\*."](#)

*The Show Window*,

October 15, 1900. p. 170.

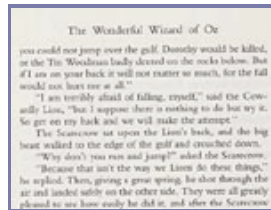
[General Collections](#) (103)

## Baum Becomes a Full-Time Writer

During the five years preceding the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum earned his living by editing *The Show Window*, a journal devoted to the art of shop window display. Because of the success of his children's books, he felt able to step down as editor to devote more time to his writing. Published only a few weeks after the *Wizard* appeared and became a children's best-seller, this issue contains Baum's letter of resignation.

## New Edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

In 1956 the copyright on the book expired, opening the way for a stream of new editions of the book in which illustrators created their own visual interpretations of the Oz characters originally portrayed by W. W. Denslow. This recent edition features artwork by Charles Santore (b. 1935), who is well known for his children's book illustrations, as well as other forms of art.



L. Frank Baum.

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, p. 54.

Illustrated by Charles Santore.

Avenel, New Jersey: dilithium Press, 1994.

[General Collections](#) (21)

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## Worldwide Appeal of the *Wizard of Oz*

Although the story, with its heroine from Kansas and its con man Wizard from Omaha, may seem quintessentially American, the Oz books have become popular worldwide. The Library of Congress collections include editions of the *Wizard of Oz* in most major languages, including the Spanish, Hebrew, Russian, and Polish editions shown.

L. Frank Baum.  
[El Mago De Oz](#) (The Wizard of Oz).  
Translated into Spanish by José Mallorqui Figuerola.  
[Page 2](#) - [Page 3](#)  
Barcelona and Buenos Aires: Editorial Molino, 1941.  
[General Collections](#) (23)



Talma Alyagon-Roz.  
[Ha Kosem M'Erets Uts](#) (The Wizard of Oz).  
(Adapted from L. Frank Baum. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.*)  
Illustrated by Yiftah Alon.  
[Ramat-Gan, Israel], Kineret, 1988.  
[Hebraic Section](#) (25)

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