

An edition of *Alice in Wonderland* with illustrations by Bessie Pease

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Illustrated by Bessie Pease. London: J. Coker & Co., [1931?]. 9 3/4 inches x 7 5/16 inches (248 mm x 185 mm), 164 pages, 8 color plates + 14 additional illustrations.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a classic text that appeals to all ages and to almost every nation. What began as a tale told by an Oxford lecturer to amuse three young daughters his college's master became first a manuscript volume (titled *Alice's Adventures under Ground* and illustrated by the author) and then a printed book illustrated by the foremost British political cartoonist of the day, Sir John Tenniel. Despite the fact that Macmillan expressed interest in the book, Carroll financed its printing himself, a calculated risk that brought him 90 percent of the royalties. The printed book in turn spawned translations in several dozen languages and versions with diverse illustrations, including this edition illustrated by Bessie Pease, who under her married name of Gutmann created popular depictions of young children sold as art prints, postcards, and calendar illustrations.

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898) — the English mathematician, logician, amateur photographer, and writer — is known by most as Lewis Carroll, the pen name he adopted in 1856. This was a transformation of his birth name, Lewis being an anglicization of Ludovicus, the Latin for “Lutwidge,” and Carroll an anglicized form of the Latin for “Charles” (Carolus). Carroll was educated at home until age twelve, when he was enrolled in a private school in Richmond; he moved the following year to Rugby, where he succeeded academically, and remained there until 1849. At the beginning of 1851, he matriculated at Christ Church college, Oxford (his father's alma mater), was granted a degree with top honors the following year, and secured the Christ Church Mathematical Lectureship. Carroll was to hold the post for nearly three decades despite his complaints of its tedium and the financial independence that *Alice* brought.

Carroll's first telling of *Alice* reportedly took place on a boat trip up the Thames from Oxford to Godstow on 4 July 1862. The author was accompanied by three daughters of Christ Church dean Reverend Henry Liddell — Lorina, Alice, and Edith — and Reverend Robinson Duckworth, later to be canon and sub-dean of Westminster. All in attendance that day were immortalized in the story, with Alice in the title role, Lorina becoming the Lory, Edith appearing as the Eaglet, Duckworth represented by the Duck, and Dodgson himself as the Dodo — a reference to the author's stammer.

Alice's 1872 sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, like *Alice in Wonderland*, was illustrated by Tenniel and published by Macmillan in its first edition. The acrostic derived from its concluding poem ("ALICE PLEASANCE LIDDELL") clearly identifies the author's inspiration for his central character. A zincographic facsimile of Carroll's self-illustrated holograph *Alice* manuscript, *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, was published by Macmillan in 1886. The original manuscript now resides at the British Library; it was donated in 1948 by an anonymous group of Americans at the instigation of Librarian of Congress Dr. Luther Evans, as a tribute to Britain's early opposition to Hitler.

This copy of *Alice in Wonderland* is from the collection of Mark Burstein, who has expanded the Carroll collection of his father, Dr. Sandor Burstein. Both father and son are former officers of the Lewis Carroll Society in North America, and Mark was managing editor of the society's *Knight Letter* for more than a decade.

This edition is bound in gray boards backed with red cloth, and a color plate of Alice and the White Rabbit is mounted on the front. The front free endpaper of this copy is inscribed "To my darling little | Yvonne | from her | Dad | X'mas 1931." The text block is surrounded by a decorative, illustrated border.

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