**Special Selections: The J. Whirler and Jean Tyler Pop-Up Books Collections**

By Tom Amos and Samantha Cairo, Head and Coordinator of Special Collections

Why do libraries collect in certain areas? This question is often asked—not only by patrons who visit libraries and discover unusual collections, but by colleague librarians who uncover unexpected resources within the buildings in which they have worked for many years. Such a question occurred recently at Waldo Library when a display of pop-up books piqued everyone’s attention and brought queries as to its purpose and use. One answer, “we bought a bookstore,” didn’t readily satisfy anyone, but did lead naturally to the larger question of collection philosophy.

The University Libraries, given the University’s historical emphasis on elementary education and elementary school libraries, acquired children’s books to support each phase of the institutional development. Beginning almost a century ago with the original Western State Normal School, through the expanded Western State Teachers College and the evolving Western Michigan College of Education to, ultimately, Western Michigan University with its extensive graduate and research mission, there was an emphasis on the study of children’s literature. Our lifelong goal to educate elementary and middle school teachers is part of WMU’s past and future. This goal was further enhanced when it became part of the curriculum of the Department of Librarianship in the 1940s and has continued unabated.

In Special Collections, the ongoing focus on children’s resources led to the acquisition, years ago, of an Historical Children’s Book Collection that consists, among other things, of several items from the original Children’s Collection of the Kalamazoo Public Library. One of its highlights is a complete run of first editions of Horatio Alger’s “rags-to-riches” stories for the young. (Another Children’s Collection, built on the library school’s model collection, with ongoing acquisitions, exists as a separate collection that is also located in Waldo and further supports the pedagogical rational at work in Special Collections.)

In 1998, I decided to add a couple of pop-up books to the Historical Children’s Book Collection. These were spectacular medieval castle pop-up books that would also look good in exhibitions of our other well-established medieval holdings. Another book that seemed most appropriate was Nancy Willard’s *Gutenberg’s Gift* (Baltimore: Wild Honey, 1995) a pop-up book illustrating the invention of the printing press; it included a pop-up version of the first press. In searching for these items, I made the acquaintance of Trevor Blake, who owned J. Whirler Books in Portland, Oregon. Ergo, Special Collections acquired its first seven pop-up books, and the world continued to turn on its axis!

We may think of pop-up books as just another variation on “engineered” children’s books and of little real significance. Indeed, the official Library of Congress subject headings guide calls them TOY AND MOVEABLE BOOKS. That was not always the case. The first such books date from the Middle Ages, and were considered objects of cosmic significance. Philosophers and theologians who sought to classify all human and divine knowledge into systems took ideas and concepts and assigned them into a lettered or numbered key. They placed groups of numbers and letters on wheels, and fitted two or more of these wheels onto the pages of manuscript books. The reader could turn one wheel within one or more other wheels on the page to combine ideas and make new ones from the resulting combinations. Working these volvelles, as the wheels were called, enabled the reader to try and seek the key to all knowledge according to the author’s system. The first author to describe this technique was the Catalan theologian and mystic Ramon Lull in *Ars Magnus*, 1274. He had a small but important number of successors.

The invention of printing saw the volvelles continuing to turn. Vico used them, and Leibnitz’s attempt at a universal cosmology depended heavily upon them. A large number of 16th and 17th century hermetic authors sought the secrets behind our apparent world in the spinning of such wheels. One of the most elaborate pop-up books in history was an English translation of Euclid’s *Elements* printed in London in 1578. Over seventy fold-up representations of the geometric shapes, which Euclid described mathematically, were included in this edition. Each fold-up shape was hand-colored so that its properties could be more easily appreciated. The complexity of these works lead to their demise by 1700. And, some of you may notice that we are now miles (or centuries) away from the acquisition of children’s books.

The application of these book-making techniques to material for younger readers came in the 19th century. Pop-ups began simply with lift-up windows on the page, like Advent calendars, from the 1820s. About mid-century, more elaborate folded constructions on pages could be pulled toward the reader to create a sort of three-dimensional effect. These are known as peep shows, and the technique is still used in the making of both children’s pop-ups and artist’s books, such as Julie Chen’s *Octopus* (Berkeley: Flying Fish Press, 1992).

The man who put pop-ups back on the map of publishers was a Munich author and book designer named Lothar Megendorfer. He made a series of tab books in which the tabs were pulled by readers to make figures on the page move. Just as the pistons of a steam locomotive pushed a rod which turned the wheels of a train, Megendorfer used paper structures to get his tabs to make a dancing master tap his feet and play a violin. Or, in another illustration, he had a maid polish a large mirror while the housekeeper flapped her jaw to keep the work moving along. These books were immensely popular in Germany in the 1870s and 1880s. English translations quickly appeared from London and New York, and other authors tried to equal Megendorfer’s ingenuity. From 1879, not a year has passed without the publication of ten or more pop-up books.

Continued on page 3

Moreover, pop-ups are fun to show and exhibit. Watching the faces of people during presentations as the pop-ups are cautiously opened and put through their paces is always a joy for both demonstrator and the observers. They always establish and capture their own audience. In this academic year alone, seven classes from English, Art, Graphic Arts, and Education have made nine visits to see the pop-up books. Those visits brought over 270 people to the Libraries. Sixty-eight readers have come to use the pop-ups for assignments which range from class papers to making their own pop-up books. Another fifteen have come in for reasons that involve smiles of satisfaction. And, there is no doubt, as word of the collection spreads, that audiences will only grow over time. In fact, in a world of declining library turnstile counts, Special Collections readership has continued to increase every year.

But, in the end, the simplest and most direct response to why the University Libraries should spend money on pop-up books is also obvious: the collection supports the teaching and research missions of WMU. That, as the current television vernacular has it, is our final answer. But, if you only come because they’re fun, we’re here for you!

Blueprints of the Past — II
By Suzanne Husband, Curator, Regional History Collections

In the fall of 1976, Isabel, the widow of WILLIAM ADDISON STONE, JR. donated a large number of his architectural drawings, blueprints, and photographs to the Regional History Collections. In 1978, additional drawings, reports and photographs were added. Most of the material is from the 1930s through the 1960s and there are approximately 300 rolls plus 10 cubic feet of manuscript materials.

William Stone, Jr. was born in 1902 to prominent Kalamazoo physicians, Dr. William A. Stone and Dr. Harriet McCalmont Stone. William Jr. graduated from the Yale University School of Architecture in 1928, and practiced with architectural firms in New York City until 1931 when he returned to Kalamazoo and opened his own office. In 1937, he took as a partner Randall Wagner. During World War II, Stone contributed to the design of munitions factories in Dixon, Illinois. Subsequently he had partnerships with Kalamazoo architects Colbert C. Smith and James L. Parent. In 1967, he became an independent architect again.

Stone’s principal works include the Westnedge Apartments (1949), the J.C. Penny Store on South Burdick Street (1955). Sarah DeWaters Hall at Kalamazoo College (1965), branch banks for the First National Bank & Trust in Kalamazoo (1966, 1967), and the Great Lakes Computer Center in Portage (1968). He designed the First Congregational Church in Kalamazoo; the Congregational Church in Cooper, Michigan; and the Church of the Good Shepherd in Allegan. He also prepared the blueprints for several schools and fire stations in the Kalamazoo area. However his major interest was in private residences and he designed several of the homes in the Orchard Hills development on Long and Short roads. In the collection are a number of unidentified exterior and interior photographs of area homes built during the 1960s.

During the period when Stone was a member of the Gull Lake Country Club, he was involved in planning a new clubhouse and grounds. The collection includes a history of the clubhouses, topographical