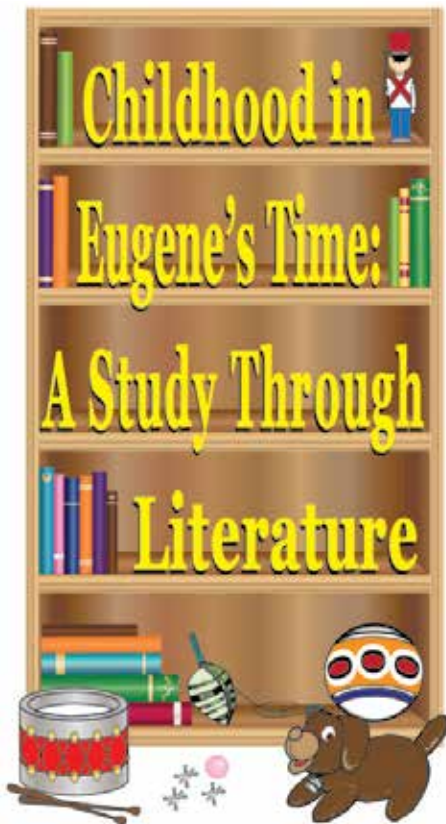


Field Notes

Volume 3 - Number 1

Spring 2018

Childhood in Eugene's Time: A Study Through Literature



Our newest library exhibit, *Childhood in Eugene's Time: A Study Through Literature*, showcases how novels and poetry can be used to understand the past. By using some of Eugene Field's poetry, and novels by other authors of Field's lifetime, our curator-led exhibit engages discussion about themes of Victorian literature and how childhood is reflected within it.

On display are five works by the Poet of Childhood, Eugene Field, each describing a toy or aspect of childhood in the Victorian Era. To better understand each poem, the curator has gathered modern representations of the toys found in each poem. With a little bit of luck, you might even be able to see a demonstration of a spinning top, like the one in the poem "The Humming Top."

Poems are not the only form of literature that has endured from Field's lifetime. Novels by authors such as Louisa May Alcott and Charles Dickens depicted

childhood in more intimate ways. A rare serialized copy of *Oliver Twist* will be on display within the library. Published in 1889, the edition is a paperback from the Cosmopolitan series. Eugene Field likely did not have such a copy, as he believed the only books worth reading were those that were nicely hard-bound. The middle-class people of his day would have read and owned hard-bound books, not paperback editions.

Using poems, books, and toys, *Childhood in Eugene's Time: A Study Through Literature* takes an all-encompassing look at the life of youth from yesteryear. Find out how different or similar life was for children in the Victorian Era versus the modern day. There will be something on display for everyone, as well as toy demonstrations (upon request). This new exhibit runs until the end of July.

Make sure to regularly check our calendar of events, as new events and activities for children and adults will be added while the exhibit is on display.



A Special Day of Giving

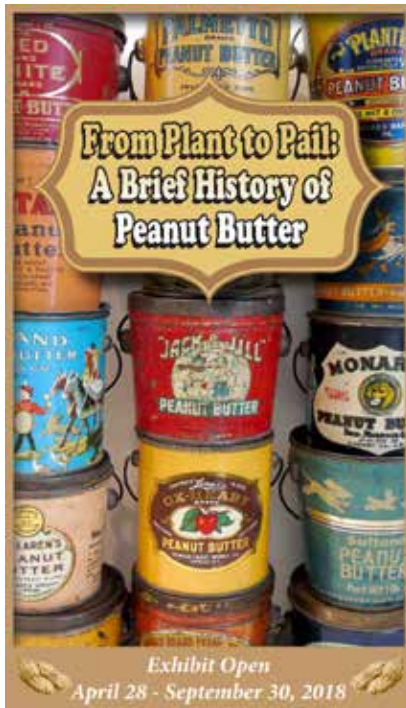
Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Give STL Day our best so far! Every May, the Saint Louis Community Foundation hosts an online day of giving that highlights nonprofits within our community. This year, your donations helped to raise money for new exhibits. We want to give a special thank you to all who donated to the Field House Museum during Give STL Day:

Anonymous
Robert Compton
Hillary Gerling
Maureen Kavanaugh
Karen Klohr
Richard McMullin
Taylor McMullin
Maurice Quiroga
Caira Rudesill

In memory of Anna Angier-Butler:
Stephen Butler

If you missed Give STL Day and still want to donate to the Field House Museum, visit our website at www.fieldhousemuseum.org/donate or call us at 314-421-4689.

From Plant to Pail: A Brief History of Peanut Butter



It starts out as a tiny legume, planted in the cold days after the last frost. Slowly, with sunlight and water, a plant looking like a low-lying weed begins to grow. Yellow flowers bloom at the base of the green plant and then drive themselves into the ground, where the peanut will form. From seed to harvest, it takes 150 days for the peanut plant to reach maturity. It is recommended when growing peanuts for personal consumption to plant ten plants per person. Two cups of roasted peanuts, when processed in a food chopper, are required to make one cup of peanut butter. Typically, it takes over 500 peanuts to yield one jar of peanut butter.

The origin of the peanut began in South America. Peanut crops spread across the world by the Spanish Conquistadors after the colonization of the native peoples. To better regulate fields in the United States, plantation owners would rotate cotton plants with peanuts. During this time peanuts were used to feed livestock and the poor. However, many entrepreneurs saw peanuts as a good source of protein that could be used as a meat substitute.

The creation of peanut butter, like most popular foods, has an unclear origin. One origin is attributed to Henry Kellogg, who boiled peanuts and made a paste from them. Another origin belongs to George Bayle, who roasted peanuts before mashing them into a paste. Regardless of who invented peanut butter, it made its big debut in St. Louis at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also known as the 1904 World's Fair.

To learn more about the history of peanut butter, visit our new exhibit, *From Plant to Pail: A Brief History of Peanut Butter*. It will be worth the trip to see part of a one-of-a-kind collection of peanut butter pails, generously on loan from Don and Shirley Zork. From the plant to the pail, the exhibit will take you on a journey through the history of an American food staple.

On display is a vast collection of peanut butter pails, containers made of metal that were used to store and sell peanut butter. When it was first invented, the peanut oils would sit atop the butter and quickly spoil, and the metal helped to slow the spoiling of the product. The pail design also allowed for the containers to be reused as children's play buckets or to hold lunches. The pails on display range from tiny samples to extremely large 25 pound pails, showcasing both current peanut butter manufacturers and those that are no longer in business.

Accompanying the collection of peanut butter pails will be a look at the history of the peanut plant and how peanut butter has transformed over the years. Come see how the popular food became a staple within American culture and follow our time-line of brands. Learn when Skippy Brand peanut butter was first created and when Planters Peanuts first sold and stopped selling peanut butter in the United States. History, science, and culture come together for this wonderful exhibit.

Eugene Travels to the Maplewood Library



The Field House Museum was excited to continue our partnership with the Maplewood Public Library this past December and to bring patrons a new exhibit, *The Children's Poet: Eugene Field and his Verse*. The exhibit showcased Eugene's poetry alongside toys from the museum's collection. Presenting many famous characters from Eugene's most popular poems, such as the "Gingham Dog and Calico Cat," and with highlighting toys like our tin toy soldiers and spinning tops, helped to bring Eugene's works to life for almost 3,500 library patrons. Several beautifully illustrated books were on display; the books were recently donated to the museum by John Field Foster, grandson of Eugene's youngest daughter, Ruth "Sister Girl" Field Foster.



WELCOME MEMBERS

The Eugene Field House Board of Trustees and staff thanks the following members who have continued to support the mission, preservation, and programming of the foundation with their generous membership donations:

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October 2017 - April 2018

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Raise Your Glass to History

Grab your friends, co-workers, and history aficionados for our very first History Happy Hour at the Field House Museum! Join us on Thursday, June 14, 2018 from 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm as we mix and mingle over beer, wine, and light hors d'oeuvres. Relax in the back yard, take a "10-Minute Tour" highlighting our mini-exhibit *Prominent Pieces: The Golden Age of Board Games*, or challenge others to a spirited game from our hands-on collection! Admission is free for members and \$10 for non-members. Tickets are limited and available at squareup.com/store/field-house-museum, so get yours today!



*Young Julia Field from the
Field House Museum's Photo Collection*

10,000 KISSES *Coming Soon*

The staff and board of the Field House Museum are pleased to announce the upcoming publication entitled *10,000 Kisses*, the title being a quote from several of Eugene Field's love letters to his adored Julia. The book comprises more than fifty never-before-published letters written in Eugene's hand, each with its own transcription. Two of the letters are from the collection of the Field House Museum and a third letter was loaned from Julia Foster Harris, Eugene and Julia's great-granddaughter. The remaining fifty-plus letters are from the collection of Marianne and Peter Gleich.

10,000 Kisses will be published at the end of 2018. The initial printing will be limited to 250 numbered copies, which will feature the names of subscribers. An order form for subscribers will be mailed in the coming weeks. All proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the Field House Museum.

The first of these charming letters was written by Eugene in 1872, prior to the couple's marriage. Eugene's heartfelt correspondence with Julia continued until a few weeks before his death in 1895. The letters offer readers the opportunity to enjoy Eugene's eloquence, and also provide a better understanding of the man and his unabashed adoration for his dearly beloved wife.

Typical of the young lover's writings, Eugene signed a letter written in 1873: Ten thousand kisses, darling.



Congratulations to Our New Executive Director Stephanie Bliss

The Board of Directors of the Eugene Field House Foundation is extremely pleased to announce the selection of Stephanie Bliss as the new Executive Director of the Field House Museum. All of you familiar with the Field House Museum have probably already been greeted by, talked to, or worked directly with Stephanie, who has been fulfilling the role in an acting capacity for the past several months, and who had been our Assistant Director for the past several years.

Stephanie received her B.A. in Historic Preservation from Southeast Missouri State University and began her career at the Field House Museum seven years ago as the Education and Outreach Coordinator. She transitioned into the role of Assistant Director in 2014. As Assistant Director, Stephanie gained a wealth of experience in the various facets of museum operations and she provided critical "behind-the-scenes" support of our successful expansion in 2016.

As Executive Director, Stephanie will oversee all aspects of the Field House Museum including fund development, staff management, education, marketing, and communications. Her enthusiastic commitment to sharing our unique and remarkable history has us all excited about our future.

Congratulations Stephanie!

Schnucks **Calling All Schnucks Shoppers!**

You can help the Field House Museum just by shopping at your local Schnucks store. It's free and easy! All you do is pick up a "My Schnucks Card" and register your card under the Eugene Field House. Schnucks will contribute up to 3% of your purchases to our organization every time you shop and swipe your card!

Treasures From The Collection

The Bird in the Cage

As a mature man, Eugene Field was fascinated with collecting innumerable items and especially toys, as evidenced by his large collection of unique items he acquired as an adult, from



mechanical wind-up toys to large dolls with moving parts. Sadly, the majority of Eugene's collection was lost in a fire years ago. A few treasures survive, however, including Eugene's moving acrobats and his soldier "dancing" on a drum. These, along with the mechanical bird in the once-gilded cage, are on display in the Museum.

This type of caged bird automaton originated long ago as mankind attempted to make mechanical

objects imitate real life, with mechanical chirping birds being extremely popular. According to *Art and Antiques* magazine, a Greek inventor, Ctesibius, constructed a metal owl in the 3rd century B. C. that would whistle with a lifelike sound. In the 17th and 18th centuries, attempts were made to prove that there was actually no great difference between living things and automata. Inventors attempted to outdo one another with clever, whimsical, chirping creatures, many with magnificent jewels and real feathers attached to give the object a lifelike appearance. During this period, Swiss-born Pierre Jaquet-Droz, by profession a clockmaker, began producing exceptional mechanical devices as a marketing tool to sell his watches but the devices themselves soon became his major focus.

The Golden Age of these handcrafted automata was from the mid-1800s to approximately 1910. It is believed that Eugene's "bird box" dates from the early years of this period. The tiny bird, sitting proudly on a tree branch in its small cage, comes to life opening its beak, chirping and flapping its wings when the key at the rock-like base is turned. This charming treasure and several additional mechanical toys from Eugene's original collection are on rotating display in the Museum's central gallery.

A Note from the Editor:

The restoration of the Dutch Marquetry Cabinet in the last edition of Treasures from the Collection was acquired through a grant by Susan Favazza, past President of the Eugene Field Chapter of Questers 151.



A Special Donation: Eugene Field's 1891 Diary

The Field House Museum recently received a very special donation. Mr. Norwood Faust of Georgia discovered a diary



among a collection of books purchased from an estate sale. He soon realized the mysterious diary belonged to the famous "Children's Poet," Eugene Field, and donated the book to the Field House Museum for others to enjoy. This

wonderful surprise came in the daily mail and we immediately began scouring its contents. Eugene kept this diary during 1891, writing short records of important daily events. Most daily notations consist of recording visitors, documenting travels, and even noting when Jessie, the family dog, caught a mouse. Another entry records the burial of the Field's son, Melvin G. Field, who died while studying abroad, and who was laid to rest at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. We are very grateful to Mr. Faust for thinking of us and look forward to transcribing and displaying the diary.

Stay Connected with Us

Don't miss out on all the latest news and events at the Field House Museum! Join our social media pages or head to our website to learn about everything from current exhibits to fun facts about the museum's several collections. Connect with the museum on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.



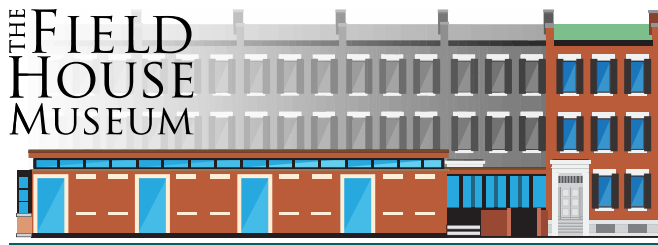
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From Caricature to Celebration: A Brief History of African-American Dolls

Toys are constant companions throughout childhood and beyond. Today's children can find themselves represented in their toys, but this hasn't always been the case. Mass-produced toys of the past traditionally presented a homogenous face that failed to represent children who were different from the narrow "majority" in control of that homogeneity. Children of color were especially ignored and even degraded by the toys produced before the Civil Rights movement.

From Caricature to Celebration: A Brief History of African-American Dolls takes you on a tour of dolls spanning more than a hundred years. More than 80 dolls are in the collection, which includes traditional African dolls, dolls that reflect stereotypes and perceptions held by doll designers and buyers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and dolls of the present day that embrace the diversity and character of African-American children.

From Caricature to Celebration: A Brief History of African-American Dolls is on display now, and will remain open through July 15, 2018.



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