
New England Book Women: Their Increasing Influence

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ABSTRACT

THE INTERCONNECTED CAREERS OF FOUR WOMEN of New England origin are examined for their individual accomplishments and their collective influence in developing the fields of library service to children and children's literature. Caroline Hewins, Anne Carroll Moore, Alice Jordan, and Bertha Mahony are notable for their work in numerous areas: children's librarianship, bookselling, teaching, literary criticism, writing, organizing, and leadership of professional associations. Friendship and mentoring are considered as a predominant influence in their work.

INTRODUCTION

"The sign of female friendship is...whether they share the wonderful energy of work in the public sphere" (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 108). In her thoughtful discussion of the relationships that hinder and support women in the process of self realization, Carolyn Heilbrun emphasizes the power of the bonds between "friends who share a passion for their work and for a body of political ideas" (p. 108). Her thesis of women achieving their greatest potential in life as they identify most strongly with other women offers a useful lens for viewing the professional lives of a small group of New England book women whose friendship was a remarkable force in developing the fields of both library service for children and children's literature.

The four women considered here—three librarians and a bookseller—were all very representative of certain demographic/sociological trends in the late nineteenth century. All middle class and native

born, they are typical of the slowly growing stream of women allowed entrance into higher education and the professions. They also made typical career choices. "Occupational redistribution began in the 1890s with growth in the established profession of teaching, the founding of the new professions of nursing, social work, and librarianship....Feminization of these areas also was quick and dramatic" (Scharf, 1980, p. 5).

Though feminists of the day argued against women's economic dependence on men, most women in both the feminized and other professions were unmarried. It was widely accepted that working women were not embarking on careers but filling that interval before they married.

Whatever their expectations of marriage, only one of these notable women ever married. All had unusually long and productive careers; three of them spent several decades working within a single institution, developing and maintaining a long reputation of excellence for these libraries. One of the women was truly a pioneer, charting new territory and serving as a model for the others. Many years later the youngest of them created a journal which gave them a new voice. The professional opportunities and choices of these individuals were undoubtedly affected by the contemporary social climate, but their friendship and their mentoring of one another seems to have been of profound consequence in their personal achievements and the far-reaching influence of their combined efforts.

CAROLINE HEWINS, PIONEER

"What are you doing to encourage a love of good reading in boys and girls?" (Hewins, 1882a, p. 182). In the spring of 1882, Caroline Hewins, librarian of the Hartford Library Association in Connecticut, sent this query to "twenty-five of the leading libraries of the country." Her detailed report of this survey, presented at that year's American Library Association (ALA) conference, reveals how quickly this public library director had become a national leader in children's librarianship.

Hewins had come into the library field through a serendipitous research assignment at that esteemed subscription library, the Boston Athenaeum. Born in 1846 in Roxbury, Massachusetts, then a lovely, almost rural, edge of Boston, she had attended private schools. As a high school graduate she went on to Girls' High and Normal School to prepare for teaching. Though she did teach for a few years, she first spent a year working for William Frederic Poole, renowned indexer and librarian of the Athenaeum. She also did further study at the recently established Boston University, open to both men and women even though this idea was not widely accepted in Massachusetts. Fortified by a childhood rich in books and reading, her formal education, and experience in library work and teaching, Hewins left Boston and a warm family circle in 1875 to

become librarian of the Hartford Young Men's Institute. For the next fifty-one years she would guide a quick evolution of this subscription library into a full blown public library, and she would exert prodigious influence on the development of public library services for children and the publishing, selling, and reading of children's books.

Hartford's library served several hundred adult subscribers, but Hewins, no doubt drawing on her personal family and teaching experience, began almost immediately to promote books for the children of library members. While a few libraries had served children much earlier in the century, their efforts were not so widely known, and Caroline Hewins seems to have been an assertive, outgoing, and personable woman who acted on deep personal conviction in the pleasure and value provided by *good* books. She quickly appraised and weeded her collection, wrote to a local newspaper exhorting parents about popular romance novels of the day, and invited children to come into the library to select their own books and discuss their reading. In her third year in Hartford, the library began publishing a quarterly bulletin to promote books and library use. Hewins was a pioneer in many public library practices. She quickly found ways to extend the library's reach to people who could not afford the yearly subscription fees. As outreach to settlement houses and schools developed, the library began its transition to public funding.

From the outset, Caroline Hewins was energetic in promoting library services in her own community and in larger realms as well. She entered readily into many aspects of life in Hartford, and it is said that not long after she arrived, "she was traveling over the state in horse and buggy advocating libraries for small villages, urging all libraries to work with schools and to pay better attention to children's reading" (Root, 1953, p. 103). The American Library Association was formed the year after Hewins began her work in Hartford and, although she did not attend the founding meeting, from the time of the second, 1877, conference she became an active participant and leader. It would be several more years before Connecticut would have a state library association, but in 1891 Hewins was a founder of that organization and also served as its first secretary. A few years later, in 1897, she presented a paper at the Second International Conference of Librarians, held in London. Finally, when the small band of eight formed the Children's Librarians Club at the 1900 ALA conference in Montreal, Caroline Hewins, very much at the height of her own career, proffered friendly support. One of the New England librarians present, Mary Root of Providence, Rhode Island, had a keen recollection of this pivotal event. "Miss Hewins and R. R. Bowker are inseparable in my thoughts, both holding high the banner of faith and belief in the results of our endeavors. Both great lovers of books, with keen minds, versatility, and wide interests, they were a spur to achievement" (April 15, 1946, p. 550).

The accomplishments of Caroline Hewins—the vigorous scheme of library service in Hartford and her writing, speaking, and involvement in professional associations—were remarkable in number and diversity. She set a fine example, yet Mary Root aptly identifies a more profound element of her influence. Hewins had a great capacity for friendship and generous interest in the efforts of others, from the boys and girls of Hartford to librarians, book creators, and publishers. Her mentoring is widely acknowledged in the professional literature of librarianship. The sum of its effect can scarcely be imagined, but it set in motion a special synergism among a notable set of New Englanders who built on her pioneering efforts.

ANNE CARROLL MOORE: ASSOCIATION, INSPIRATION, INNOVATION

Two of the most prominent women who drew inspiration and practical guidance from Hewins were almost exact contemporaries throughout their long lives. Anne Carroll Moore, born and raised in Limerick, Maine, first encountered Caroline Hewins as lecturer during student days at the library school of Brooklyn's Pratt Free Institute in the mid-1890s. With family ties in Maine and personal associations in Boston and at the Bradford Academy for Women in Massachusetts, Moore began to explore opportunities for library work in New England upon completing her studies at Pratt in 1896. When she was recruited back to Pratt, almost at once, to direct the recently established Children's Library she turned to Hewins for guidance. Their professional association and friendship would last until Caroline Hewins's death in 1926.

Anne Carroll Moore likely drew on the work of Hewins and of children's librarians leading the way in other parts of the country as well as on her own inclinations as she set about acquainting herself with the children and neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The strong scheme of service she established at Pratt resembled that of the Hartford Library Association in many respects. Like Caroline Hewins, Anne Carroll Moore created a warm and lively environment in the library and forged strong connections between the library and city schools. Each of the two women gave special hours of personal attention to the children. From the outset, Anne Carroll Moore "had taken advantage of every opportunity to talk to children about reading and to speak to them out of her own enthusiasm and discoveries in the evening when the room was closed to the circulation of books" (Sayers, 1972, p. 77). In Hartford, Caroline Hewins personally befriended many children, and she was fond of celebrations and outings. She organized a nature club "that met for years out of doors on Saturday mornings, through the spring, early summer and autumn....Usually our winter meetings were in the library..." (Hewins, 1917, p. 50).

In many respects, the library and the community's children seem to have been surrogate home and family to Hewins and Moore. Each was very fully engaged both personally and professionally in the library and

the community. They were also evidently well matched in energy and in the skills and capacity for leadership. Like Hewins, Anne Carroll Moore was quickly recognized as an expert in the library field and invited to lecture and teach at Pratt in New England, and as far away as Iowa, where she taught at the Iowa State Library Commission Summer School for three years, beginning in 1902 (Sayers, 1972, p. 85). And only four years after assuming her position at Pratt, Anne Carroll Moore was elected as the first president by the group Caroline Hewins encouraged in forming the Children's Librarians Club, soon to become the Section on Library Work with Children of the American Library Association.

ALICE JORDAN: THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Another New Englander, also born in Maine and educated in Massachusetts, sought professional counsel from Caroline Hewins and Anne Carroll Moore just a few years after these two became cohorts. Alice Jordan's seafaring and bookloving family had educated their two daughters at home until they moved from Thomaston, Maine, to Auburndale, Massachusetts, in 1880. Jordan seems to have had less formal education than the other two women, but at the age of twenty-five, in 1895, she became a teacher in the Carroll School of West Newton, Massachusetts. In 1900 she left teaching for a position as library assistant in the Boston Public Library. Two years later she became the first children's librarian of the Children's Room, which had opened much earlier in 1895 (Holbrook, 1939, p. 606). Apparently Boston already had several branch libraries with children's rooms as well. Alice Jordan had a large job ahead of her, but by this time there were experts to whom she could turn. "One morning in May, shortly after my appointment as Children's Librarian in the Boston Public Library, I set forth at the behest of my trustees, armed with letters of introduction to three librarians, not too far distant, all distinguished in our part of the country for their wise, forward-looking service to children" (Jordan et al., 1953, p. 29).

The Massachusetts librarian in this group, Hiller Wellman of the Springfield Public Library, did not achieve such lasting renown. The other two, Caroline Hewins and Mary Wright Plummer of Pratt Institute, continue to be held in distinction. Plummer was the library director who had hired Anne Carroll Moore as Pratt's children's librarian.

Alice Jordan did not actually meet Caroline Hewins during this trip, but she made early use of Hewins's well known list, *Books for Boys and Girls* (ALA, 1904) and was apparently favorably impressed by the Hartford library. Her friendship with Hewins began at an ALA conference, where the gracious older librarian was a notable presence. "Her name on a program in those early days promised a fresh, unhackneyed address, lightened by touches of wit, shrewd comment and keen insight into children's likes and dislikes" (Jordan et al., 1953, p. 29).

The visit to Mary Wright Plummer apparently brought an immediate acquaintance with Anne Carroll Moore that was to be mutually satisfying

for well over fifty years: "[E]ver since she walked into my children's room in the Pratt Free Library in Brooklyn, Miss Jordan and I have enjoyed a friendship at once spacious and firmly rooted in mutual recognition of unchanging values in children and literature" (Moore, 1961a, p. 27). Later, when Anne Carroll Moore was appointed in 1906 to organize children's services for the New York Public Library, she would in turn consult Alice Jordan and Caroline Hewins as they all became even more interconnected.

Alice Jordan became supervisor of all Boston Public Library's services to children in 1917. By then she had followed the productive pattern of professional leadership and accomplishment established by Caroline Hewins and Anne Carroll Moore. In 1906 she invited "thirteen women from ten public libraries in Greater Boston" to meet in the children's room of the Boston Public Library to discuss mutual concerns about serving children (Jordan, 1946, p. 3). The group called itself The Round Table of Children's Librarians and, although it became recognized as an affiliate of the Massachusetts Library Club (later the Massachusetts Library Association), it maintained a quite independent program of quarterly meetings and annual functions. Within a few years, round table members represented the other New England states, and the organization exists today as the New England Round Table of Children's Librarians, a section of the New England Library Association. In reflecting on the history of the organization, Jordan (1946) noted that, in addition to practical matters in operating children's rooms and the reviewing of new children's books, "the Round Table has always felt concern as to the place of the children's room in the community" (p. 4). Annual luncheon meetings featured distinguished librarians and creators of books. "Very early in the history of the Round Table, Caroline M. Hewins, the friend and guiding spirit of a host of children's librarians, brought the wise counsel of her broad experience and the refreshment of her inimitable humor to her younger colleagues" (Jordan, 1946, p. 5). Anne Carroll Moore was also among the pantheon of guests.

Jordan's appointment in the central children's room of the Boston Public Library occurred simultaneously with the opening of the School of Library Science at nearby Simmons College. Soon after it opened, the school responded to the emerging field of library work with children by inviting Alice Jordan to present lectures. By 1911 she began to teach a whole course, and her responsibilities as "an integral member of the teaching force" (Brotherton et al., 1961, p. 35) continued until 1918. Jordan broke off teaching at this point since her responsibilities at the library had become much more demanding when she was made Supervisor of Work with Children in 1917. Her association with Simmons was enduring, however. From 1919 to 1922, Simmons students met at the library for classes with her.

In her lectures one could not help but admire the charm of her presentation of material, her intimate acquaintance with children's

literature, old and new, and her rare insight into the mind of the child, from the tiny children to the junior high school age. (Craig et al., 1961, p. 41)

Through her teaching and her selections for the college library, Alice Jordan created a firm presence for library service to children and children's literature which endures many decades later in the curriculum of the library school.

BERTHA MAHONY: THE WEIU AND THE BOOKSHOP FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

One very special student came to Alice Jordan independently of the library school courses. Bertha Mahony was already an experienced working woman when she entered a mentoring relationship with Jordan in 1916, and her future work would richly entwine with that of children's librarians as well as publishers and creators of books for children. Mahony had been a student at Simmons College in its opening year, but her family had been unable to afford the four-year program in library science. Having completed a year of teacher training after her high school studies in Rockport, Massachusetts, Mahony was accepted into an advanced one-year program in secretarial studies at Simmons. She took a library course as part of her academic program, but one of her extracurricular activities was to have a much more profound effect on her career.

The Women's Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU) had been providing women with a variety of services and programs for twenty-five years by the time Bertha Mahony became a member as a Simmons student. Born of the early reform and feminist movements, the WEIU has a lower profile in the late twentieth century but continues operations in the same beautiful location across from Boston common. Bertha Mahony availed herself of free classes and lectures and affordable meals during her student year and also later when she was employed at a nearby privately owned lending library/bookstore. Then, in what was surely a providential stroke, she was hired to work as a secretarial assistant at the WEIU in 1906.

As with the other New England book women noted here, the career influences of Bertha Mahony are well documented, and with her their professional accomplishments gain an energetic new synthesis. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union was a forward looking, entrepreneurial organization. Mahony had worked there for nine years and was already thirty-three years old when her childhood love of books and stories and her adult interest in libraries and bookstores burst into a bold idea which was to be enormously fruitful. Her source of inspiration was a 1915 article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and written by educator/lecturer Earl Barnes. Writing of "A New Profession for Women," Barnes noted that, as more women were becoming educated, the fields of teaching, librarianship and social work were becoming filled. His thesis

was that women should become proprietors of bookstores, and he offered detailed instruction on desirable training and business practices for successful bookselling (Barnes, 1915).

Bertha Mahony proposed that the WEIU should establish a bookshop for children, and she must have been astute and persuasive in presenting a plan to the union's governors. Earl Barnes's article had appeared in August, and by late fall, Bertha Mahony was undertaking a year of preparation for the 1916 opening of the Bookshop for Boys and Girls. The bookshop was to join some very inviting characteristics of public library service to children with the business of selling books. As creator and manager of this illustrious enterprise, Mahony drew from the expertise of children's librarians, and in turn she was to provide great service as well as influence to libraries.

Before losing sight of Earl Barnes, it is interesting to note that he had earlier initiated one other stunning event of far reaching consequence for libraries. Sometime around 1900, he fell under the sway of Marie Shedlock when he heard her tell a story at a London dinner party. Shedlock had been a teacher in a public day school for girls as well as a performer, and Barnes wrote a letter of recommendation to an influential New York friend who subsequently introduced Marie Shedlock to diverse American audiences of parents, teachers, and librarians (Mason et al., 1934, p. 146). The captivation of Anne Carroll Moore by Marie Shedlock is, of course, well known, and Shedlock would spend years lecturing and storytelling in many parts of the United States. Early in her American travels she had told stories at the Boston Public Library. A few months after the opening of the Bookshop for Boys and Girls, more than a decade later, Bertha Mahony presented Marie Shedlock in a series of programs for adults interested in storytelling (Ross, 1973, p. 61).

During her year of preparation for the bookshop, Mahony undertook a study of children's books under the guidance of Alice Jordan. It is said that "Miss Jordan used two lists to guide Bertha's reading: *Books for Boys and Girls*, compiled by Caroline M. Hewins (published by ALA in 1897), and *The Bookshelf for Boys and Girls*, prepared under the direction of Clara Whitehill Hunt, the Superintendent of Work with Children at the Brooklyn Public Library" (Ross, 1973, p. 50). Mahony used the lists in ordering books for the shop, and she also prepared an extensive list of her own, *Books for Boys and Girls—A Suggestive Purchase List*, printed to publicize the shop and to guide customers in their selection. From the outset, Bertha Mahony was determined that the shop would carry and promote only books of literary and artistic quality. Apparently she was every bit as ardent in this belief as the women, led first by Caroline Hewins, who were shaping public library philosophy.

Alice Jordan, along with Anne Carroll Moore and Caroline Hewins herself, was to develop both strong professional ties and a deep personal

friendship with Bertha Mahony. Yet another such association, begun during the months of shop preparation, involved a New Englander whose professional efforts also intersected those of each of these women. Like Caroline Hewins and Anne Carroll Moore, Bertha Mahony was willing to travel in pursuit of her professional interests. Her visionary scheme for the shop led her to become acquainted with children's book specialists far from Boston. She visited the public libraries in Hartford and New York, and she ventured all the way to Indianapolis to meet a special bookseller. Frederic Melcher was managing the Stewart Bookstore, having spent eighteen years working in progressively more responsible positions at the Lauriat Bookstore in Boston, where he had also come under the influence of Caroline Hewins. He had used her booklists to guide his selection and subsequently became notably successful at promoting children's books.

Frederic Melcher (1962, p. 192) was later to say that he learned as much from Bertha Mahony as he was able to teach her in the week she spent under his tutelage in Indiana. Most importantly, the following week he took her to the annual meeting of the American Booksellers Association in Chicago. Her entry into the profession of bookselling acquired swift momentum, and the following year she was a speaker at the association meeting. She would soon be featured at American Library Association meetings too. At this first booksellers convention, Mahony also became acquainted with another sort of book woman who would become a firm associate in the publishing field. In 1916, May Masee had been a children's librarian and was now editor of ALA's book reviewing journal, *Booklist*. A few years later, in 1922, she became editor of children's books at Doubleday, Doran. Frederic Melcher, May Masee, and Bertha Mahony would all make incalculable contributions to the development and promotion of children's books over the next two decades.

As she shaped the operations of the Bookshop for Boys and Girls, Bertha Mahony was also remarkably like Caroline Hewins in energy, vision, and personal warmth. There are many accounts of the hospitable atmosphere which invited browsing and celebrated the artistry of children's books. Like Hewins, Bertha Mahony believed in good conversation about books, programs to enhance reading, education of parents, work with schools, and outreach services. There were storytelling and puppetry performances, and eventually the store enlisted publisher support to send storytellers free of charge into the schools. Among the many programs were art exhibitions, poetry series for high school students, and Saturday morning book conferences for school librarians. Deposit collections to schools and other institutions were sent as far away as Hawaii. And for two years, in 1920 and 1921, there was a mobile Book Caravan which traveled all over New England to sell books and provide programs. Some of the staff of this traveling bookshop had library degrees,

and the van was exhibited at library conferences—surely influencing the development of bookmobile service among libraries. From its inception, the shop served the children of the Boston area and libraries and schools far and near.

Bertha Mahony's spirited guidance shaped the ambitious scheme of shop services, and she attracted and trained talented staff members. In the third year of the bookshop's illustrious history, she acquired an assistant who was to be a full partner, collaborator, and lifelong friend. A former student of Alice Jordan's, Elinor Whitney had worked in the library at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and then taught English at the Milton Academy, south of Boston, for several years before Jordan sent her to the shop in the busy Christmas season of 1919. Whitney brought familiarity with children and their books and a warm personality which made her an immediate success with customers and staff. She was seven years younger than Bertha Mahony and, though Mahony generally seems to have held the lead—even in marriage, which each undertook happily many years later—the two women sustained a fine camaraderie in their professional and personal lives for the next fifty years.

THE IMPACT OF THE BOOKLISTS

Among the many shared projects of Bertha Mahony and Elinor Whitney—and sometimes other staff as well—were an array of booklists. Mahony's (1916) original *Books for Boys and Girls—A Suggestive Purchase List* was a book-length publication of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union; three revised editions were prepared, and the two women collaborated on a 1924 supplement to the fourth edition. As the publishing of children's books expanded in the 1920s, the fifth edition of this widely used list evolved into a landmark compendium of list and commentary nearly 800 pages in length, edited by May Masee and published by Doubleday, Doran in 1929 as *Realms of Gold in Children's Books* (Mahony & Whitney, 1929).

Staff of the bookshop prepared many shorter lists along the way for particular events or topics. In 1929 they joined a list-making venture with a group of booksellers, all Massachusetts women, who were dissatisfied with the Christmas booklists of the American Booksellers Association. Together they published *Company of Books* for several years. "The content of the lists was a pleasant and informal mixture of essay, quotation, book reviews, lists, and illustrative matter from current publications" (Ross, 1973, p. 93).

As Bertha Mahony had used the lists of librarians to order her first stock of books, so they used hers to select for their collections and also to advise parents. Librarians of all types had always felt a need to be selective, and as the profession of children's librarianship developed, many important lists became widely available. An early list by Caroline Hewins,

Books for the Young: A Guide for Parents and Children (Hewins, 1882b), was "considered staple fare for building library collections" (Wiegand, 1986, p. 36). A revised edition of this list became the first section of the *ALA Catalog*, published in 1893 as a core collection for libraries. The listing of children's books for the second edition of the *ALA Catalog*, published by the Library of Congress in 1904, was a first project of ALA's Children's Librarians Section.

The *ALA Catalog* had been many years in the making, and selections and format had often generated heated discussion and even political squabbles at ALA meetings. The book discussions and listmaking of the children's librarians, however, earned them wide credibility. Mary Root (1946), looking back, reported that "doubting Thomases began to show confidence in our judgments; publishers, editors, booksellers, even bookbinders, camped on our doorsteps" (p. 1422). Save for the bookbinders, this situation continues more than ninety years later at discussions of the Notable Children's Books Committee of the Association for Library Service to Children, the descendant organization of the Children's Librarians Section.

A few years after the second edition of the *ALA Catalog* appeared, library lists were used as the basis for a commercially produced catalog of recommended children's books. *Children's Catalog*, first published in 1909 by the H. W. Wilson Company, drew from the second edition of Caroline Hewins's (1904) *Books for Boys and Girls* and the *ALA Catalog* along with some twenty-two other lists from selected libraries. The second edition of the *Children's Catalog* in 1916 was based on a longer set of lists, three of which had been variously published by Caroline Hewins, Alice Jordan, and Anne Carroll Moore. By the time the *Children's Catalog* appeared in a third edition in 1925, Boston's Bookshop for Boys and Girls was also attributed as an authority. It is interesting to note that, as more librarians became involved in the construction of the *Children's Catalog*, the list became more selective, decreasing from an original 3,000 titles to just 1,200 in the third edition. Future editions would increase substantially along with the rapid rise in children's book publishing.

THE MOVE TOWARD LITERARY CRITICISM

Librarians had been discussing children's books and reading for nearly fifty years by the time Bertha Mahony and Elinor Whitney completed *Realms of Gold*. The third meeting of the American Library Association, held in Boston in 1879, long before children's librarians were a noticeable presence, featured a sometimes heated symposium on fiction and children's reading (Wiegand, 1986, pp. 23-24). As the years of discussion and listmaking moved into the twentieth century, several of the women from New England played a vital role in deepening the discussion of children's books and articulating standards for evaluating the literary and artistic merits of books.

Published criticism of children's books was plentiful in the United States during the late nineteenth century, scattered across many publications, most of which did not emphasize this type of material or even feature it consistently (Darling, 1968). Alice Jordan (1948) was to note the 1870s as the time of "the first widespread awakening to the need of critical appraisal, the first wholehearted liberality towards children's tastes and interests, admitted without boundaries, without propaganda—in short, it was the beginning of a new era" (p. 14). It was the era in which Caroline Hewins began to be heard. "Her voice in favor of discerning criticism was one of decision and leadership" (Jordan, 1948, p. 27). The philosophy of Hewins and some of her contemporaries and followers, articulated abundantly in their meetings, writings, and lists, would evolve into some very influential critical efforts during the final years of her long lifetime in another new era following World War I.

In this era, children's book publishing took a new turn with the establishment of separate, specialized departments starting in 1919. Promotion and criticism also gained in stature and audience. Both Alice Jordan and Anne Carroll Moore reviewed children's books for *The Bookman*, a literary monthly published for just a few short years between 1918 and 1927 and cited by Frances Clarke Sayers (1972) as "the chief American literary journal of its day" (p. 184). Anne Carroll Moore was given responsibility for the criticism of children's books in this journal and, in 1924, when New York's *Herald Tribune* began its weekly supplement, *Books*, she became editor of its page of criticism of children's books. She would use the page for her own critical commentary and invited reviews by librarians and other critics. The *Herald Tribune's Books* scaled back its production six years later as a result of the Depression, but "The Three Owls" would live on for many years in other guises.

A "MODEST" PROPOSAL: *THE HORN BOOK MAGAZINE*

The year 1924 marked the beginning of yet another literary publication, this one entirely devoted to children's books, which would have a long future. Bertha Mahony and Elinor Whitney had decided that the Bookshop for Boys and Girls should add to its impressive array of services and publications a modest quarterly magazine, and again the Women's Educational and Industrial Union agreed to this project. The first issue of *The Horn Book* contained just eighteen pages, but its annotated lists of books and two articles along with the cover picture of Randolph Caldecott's three huntsmen laid a foundation for a handsome, intelligent literary journal that would achieve worldwide distinction. Bertha Mahony's wide associations with librarians, artists, writers, and publishers yielded a distinguished pool of contributors from the outset. Alice Jordan, Anne Carroll Moore, and Louise Seaman Bechtel were among early writers, and all served as associate editors for many years.

Bertha Mahony and Elinor Whitney published *The Horn Book* from the Bookshop for Boys and Girls for ten years, and it quickly developed from a promotional organ for the shop to a full-blown magazine carrying news of the book world and advertising in addition to a diversity of articles and larger numbers of book reviews. The magazine remained a quarterly until 1933 when it began the bimonthly schedule which continues to the present. By 1934, Mahony and Whitney had been compiling their books, *Realms of Gold in Children's Books* (Mahony & Whitney, 1929) and *Contemporary Illustrators of Children's Books* (Mahony & Whitney, 1930), in addition to doing the journal, and they found that publication had become full-time work. Bertha Mahony had also married William D. Miller in 1932 and moved from Boston to suburban Ashburnham. (Elinor Whitney would marry another Will—William L. W. Field—in 1936.) The two women gave up their work at the bookshop eighteen years after its opening, and the Women's Educational and Industrial Union kept the store for just two more years before selling it to the Old Corner Book Store in 1936. At this juncture Bertha and Elinor and their husbands incorporated *The Horn Book* as the separate entity it remains today.

There can be little doubt that the merging of experience and wisdom of the stellar band of women in *The Horn Book's* editorial group contributed handsomely to the success of the journal. They surely achieved the discernment in criticism which Caroline Hewins had urged so early in their careers. Their scope of influence was broad and deep, extending to the creation, design, and publishing of children's books, the evaluation and selection of books for library collections, and the establishment of other literary and reviewing magazines in the United States and abroad. Had this renowned effort been the culmination of their several strong careers, the realm of children's literature would have been greatly enriched. But these were book women of energy and longevity. Their *Horn Book* efforts would lead each of them to further publishing projects which continue to illuminate our understanding of children's books.

CONTINUITY OF COMMITMENT

Two years after leaving the Bookshop for Boys and Girls, Bertha Mahony Miller and Elinor Whitney Field completed a supplement to *Realms of Gold* titled *Five Years of Children's Books* and published by Doubleday in 1936. Still later they collaborated with one another and with others as compilers or editors of other children's literature volumes published by The Horn Book, Inc. Books published by this company included three reprints of works by Caroline Hewins, Anne Carroll Moore, and Alice Jordan. *Caroline M. Hewins: Her Book* (Lindquist, 1954) combines Hewins's small autobiographical volume *A Mid-Century Child and Her Books*, first published by Macmillan in 1926, with a substantial article by Jennie Lindquist (1953), "Caroline M. Hewins and Books for Children," which

first appeared in the February 1953 issue of *The Horn Book*. When Anne Carroll Moore died in 1961, *My Roads to Childhood*, a compilation of Moore's critical essays from *The Bookman*, first published in collected form by Doubleday, Doran in 1939, was re-issued as a memorial. *From Rollo to Tom Sawyer and Other Papers* (Heilbrun, 1948) assembles lectures and articles by Alice Jordan which form a well honed commentary on nineteenth century children's books. In addition to their many writings of history and criticism, each of these women also did some writing for children. Elinor Whitney (1928) won particular distinction for one of her five children's books, *Tod of the Fens*, which was published by Macmillan and cited as a Newbery Honor Book in 1929.

All of these women wrote an abundance of articles throughout their professional lives, and long years of involvement with children and their books informed the books which capped their careers. Caroline Hewins, who seems to have influenced all who came after her, was still working at the Hartford Public Library when she died in 1926 at the age of 80. Alice Jordan (1960) and Anne Carroll Moore (1961) died within a year of one another, each at the age of 90. Bertha Mahony Miller, who retired from her editorial responsibilities in 1950 and continued as president of The Horn Book, Inc. until 1962, died in 1969 at the age of 87. Elinor Whitney Field served as associate editor of *The Horn Book* until 1957 but continued to edit books and write for the magazine into the 1960s; she died in 1980 at the age of 91. Long before, Anne Carroll Moore (1934) celebrated the notion of longevity: "There is romance and high adventure in a long term of service in library work with children and I who absorbed so much at first hand from Miss Hewins and other librarians of the Golden Age assure you the end is not yet" (p. 5).

THE IMPACT OF THE LEGACY

It seems unlikely that there will ever be an end to the influence of these remarkable women, whose work was so long, so multifaceted, and so suffused by their friendship with one another. Along with some of their contemporaries from other regions, these New England book women were impressive pioneers. A noted library educator aptly summarized their accomplishments.

Children's librarians, children's library work, and children's literature owe them an immeasurable debt for their vision and wisdom, their vitality and initiative. They dignified and professionalized library work with children; they formulated and stated fundamental and permanent aims and objectives; they developed and established sound methods of work; they instigated specialized professional education; above all, they recognized literature for children to be a vital part of all literature, and they evolved criteria for the selection and use of children's books which are eternally valid. (Nesbitt, 1969, p. 388)

The broadening influence of these New England book women had complex ramifications which continue to enrich and also to vex children's librarians and book creators and critics. As editor of *Publishers' Weekly*, Frederic Melcher (1929, pp. 5-10) examined the growth and interconnections of children's librarianship, bookselling, criticism, and children's book publishing—in effect, all of the arenas in which these women were so influential—in the first three decades of the twentieth century. He concluded that their combined efforts had vastly expanded the market for children's books. Many years later, in the fiftieth anniversary edition of *The Horn Book*, John Rowe Townsend (1974), children's book writer and critic, also spoke in tribute of these women and with concern for some of their legacy. Paul Heins, then editor of *The Horn Book*, had posed Townsend a question about children's books as a late Victorian invention. Townsend (1974) replied:

The late Victorian invention was not, I suspect, children's books but rather children's literature—the specialized concern of a number of adults in related professions...But the children's book world, the children's literature industry, surely was the creation not of writers or publishers but of the band of American ladies in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries who built up library work with children and started a mission that was to extend itself into the education and publishing fields: Miss Hewins, Miss Moore, Miss Jordan and many other distinguished women. There were also the magazine editors, especially Mrs. Dodge of *St. Nicholas*, the early reviewers, and eventually the pioneer children's book editors—Louise Seaman, Helen Dean Fish, May Masee. Miss Mahony's Bookshop for Boys and Girls and *The Horn Book Magazine* itself were part of this movement. (pp. 34-35)

These integrated efforts made possible greatly expanded possibilities in the writing and publishing of children's books. The notion of the children's literature industry, however, becomes perplexing. According to Townsend (1974, p. 36):

It has resulted in the setting up of a machine that has to be fed and of an apparatus which has removed or at least distorted the usual workings of supply and demand. For many years it has been possible for books to do well on the children's list which are not strikingly popular with children and which are ploddingly worthy rather than vital or perceptive. (p. 36)

And so the discussion comes back around to those lists of books. How many of the books lauded by librarians, critics, awards committees, *The Horn Book*, are truly read and loved by children?

All of the New England book women were passionate in their belief that children must take pleasure in books. Alice Jordan (1931) reiterates their mutual credo:

If young people do not see prospects of present satisfaction there is little hope that they will read far in a book. In this pure pleasure a child may find the spring for some quickening of the emotions, some strengthening of imagination or enlargement of ideas. This is what the librarian hopes. (1931, p. 9)

In the late twentieth century, surely an age of a full blown children's literature industry, is it even possible to hold fast to critical acumen and to utter faith in children and books? The libraries served by enterprising women Caroline Hewins, Alice Jordan, and Anne Carroll Moore were all places of fun and celebration, of reading and discussion shared with children. Their legacy is complex, but these famous careers do convey durable truth and wisdom.

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