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# Initiative and Influence: The Contributions of Virginia Haviland to Children's Services, Research, and Writing

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## ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE FOCUSES UPON THE LEGACY of achievement of Virginia Haviland, whose career was dedicated to youth services, the writing and reviewing of children's literature, and scholarly research. Haviland had an unusually active career within a segment of the feminized profession of library science. This researcher offers an investigation of Haviland's success in mediating her personal desire for a connection with children and child-related interests with a need for professional affiliation.

## INTRODUCTION

In her work *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Carol Gilligan (1993) points out that, for women, there often exists a tension between responsibility and the desire to take control of their own lives. This tension exists between a "morality of rights that dissolves 'natural bonds' in support of individual claims and a morality of responsibility that knits such claims into a fabric of relationship, blurring the distinction between self and other through the representation of their interdependence" (p. 132). Such a situation can create a difficulty for women who desire to pursue a profession, an extension of their personal needs and goals, and yet assist others in a manner appearing more selfless and, in a sense, more "female." Librarianship, a service profession viewed as "feminine" until relatively recently with the onset of technology, has traditionally offered a way of reducing such tension in allowing its female participants to achieve more balance between the two than

would some other professions. Youth services, by its very nature and involvement with young people, has facilitated such a balance even more easily than would other aspects of the profession.

During the mid part of the century, a relatively small group of women were successful, through a genuine bonding with the youth services profession as well as through a personal bonding with each other and respect for the resources and achievements of those who had gone before, in carving out a place which would be ultimately significant and "trailblazing" in youth services. Women, such as Anne Carroll Moore, Louise Seaman Bechtel, and Alice Jordan, made indelible contributions, showing not only a devotion to the field but also a penchant for bonding with, and helping, one another. It is interesting to note that these women seldom, if ever, stated that assistance to other women was based solely upon the fact that they were women. Rather, most of them would probably have argued that it was a matter of circumstance and opportunity. In some instances, men would nurture the careers of women as well, one outstanding example being Frederic Melcher, whose close ties with women like Bertha Mahony served as inspiration and opportunity for them in their careers. One such individual who was part of this "informal" tradition of female bonding, and who distinguished herself in the areas of services, domestic/international literature and research was Virginia Haviland.

This article focuses upon the contributions of Haviland and the manner in which she successfully combined her personal passions for working with youth, both directly and indirectly, through association with their materials. This allowed her to mediate between personal desires and professional goals.

#### EARLY INFLUENCES—UPON THE WAY THAT SHE WOULD GO

The path that one takes in life is all too often influenced by the nature of the upbringing one has had and the circumstances of one's surroundings. If one is fortunate, these influences are positive. During her lifetime, Haviland would be known to say, on more than one occasion, that the opportunities she had been presented with had come as a result of luck and her ability to absorb the various stimuli around her. In her Regina Award acceptance speech of April 20, 1976, for instance, she stated:

I enjoyed reflecting on the supreme good fortune of happening somehow years ago to be sometimes in the right place at the right time, and blessed, perhaps, with a kind of hunger that made me reach out for and absorb stimulation. With all humility I admit that I had a voracious susceptibility to stimulus. (Haviland, 1976a, p. 5)

Indeed, Haviland showed herself fortuitously susceptible to stimulus during her early years. Born in Rochester, New York, on May 21, 1911,

Haviland was the daughter of William J. and Bertha (Esten) Haviland and was related to the Havilands of the prestigious Haviland porcelain firm of Limoges, France, founded in 1842. She was early on favorably influenced by two aunts with whom she spent a considerable amount of time. These two women were fond of entertaining international visitors at their home and had traveled in the Middle East and Palestine. Through them, Haviland was able to meet people from all over the world. Such contacts may have fueled Haviland's later fascination with international literature, an interest which would later distinguish her from among her professional peers.

From an early age, she was also intrigued with the classics in children's literature and was strongly influenced by such books as *Peter Rabbit*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Little Women* (Weeks, 1976, p. G8) as well as by Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*. Of the latter, she would later state: "Whenever I stop to consider the power of this book in representing Switzerland, I think of how Heidi's crusty bread and Swiss cheese made me as a child long to live in Switzerland so that like her I could live on that diet" (Haviland, 1976b, p. 14). Haviland would, during the course of her life, receive many opportunities to live out her fantasies of visiting other places, sampling the diets of diverse cultures in different countries. At some point, her family moved to Amesbury, Massachusetts. Haviland graduated from Amesbury High School in 1929.

She went on to receive her undergraduate education at Cornell University and graduated with a BA in economics and math in 1933. These were unusual areas of emphasis for a young woman going to school in the 1930s and speaks to her varied interests which were not exclusively gender affiliated in the traditional sense. Economics, by its very nature, takes into consideration international contexts. One cannot study this field without becoming aware of international affects upon a domestic economy and vice versa. Clearly, Haviland was exposed to an environment both personally and academically which went beyond the local framework.

Such concerns would play a major role in her later activities. Her lifelong love of "classic" status literature for children, combined with her later embracing of some literature (e.g., *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Harriet the Spy*) which would have been designated, at various times, as "radical" as well as interests which lay outside the generally accepted feminine framework of the times (and, consequently, excursions into territory previously untraveled by most women), served to mark Haviland as an extremely interesting and unique woman for her times. These attributes heralded a personal theme for Haviland: her embrace of a curious mix of conservatism and vision, a combination that at first glance seems almost contradictory, yet was manifested through her beliefs and actions at many points during her life.

### THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY: FROM CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN TO READER'S ADVISOR

Haviland's association with the Boston Public Library began in 1934, the year following her graduation from Cornell University. She was hired in the capacity of Probationary Assistant assigned to the Office of the Supervisor of Branch Libraries on September 22, 1934. This became a permanent position on October 30, 1936.

She served as assistant until January 1, 1941, when she was appointed children's librarian at Philipps Brook Branch Library, a position she was to hold until 1948. This offer was particularly noteworthy because research indicates that Haviland did not have a degree in Library Science. Given this fact, it is all the more remarkable that she was able to overcome the lack of this credential and achieve the professional acceptance and international acclaim she won for her later work in service and literature for children. While not nearly as crucial an issue then as it is now, the need for the professional credential was not ignored by either men or women during the first half of the century. Nancy F. Cott (1987) has stated:

Professional ideology also encouraged professional women to see a community of interest between themselves and professional men and a gulf between themselves and nonprofessional women....In initiative, education, and drive, members of the feminized professions were potential leaders among women, but the professional ethos encouraged them to see other women as clients or amateurs rather than colleagues in common cause. (p. 237)

Within such a framework, one in which the concept of the professional credential was to strengthen over time, it was not an easy matter to overcome the lack of a library degree. Rather, Haviland's success in accomplishing this stands as further evidence of her strong abilities to absorb information about the field over time. This was combined with an energetic enthusiasm and an increasingly strongly formulated philosophical approach to various aspects of the discipline, which were to distinguish her as an exemplary individual. During the acceptance speech mentioned earlier, Haviland (1976a) was also to comment: "I do know that I was wide open to the kind of energizing forces that make one willing to say yes and work hard" (p. 5).

Haviland also had the opportunity to study with Albert B. Lord, a recognized authority in folklore. Through this association, she developed a love and appreciation of this discipline and always maintained that this area could be of enormous benefit in developing the imaginations of young people.

However, she attributed her source of greatest inspiration in children's literature and folklore to her association with Alice Jordan, from whom she took two courses in library work with children and children's literature

(Haviland, 1976a, pp. 5-6). Jordan was Haviland's mentor and supervisor at the Boston Public Library and ultimately convinced her to choose children's librarianship as a career. She was also the reviewer of children's books for *The Horn Book Magazine* (Haviland, 1976a, p. 5). Haviland was able to realize the satisfaction of working with young people as well as the acquisition of professional status and was therefore able to negotiate what Gilligan views as the "tension" between a need that many women have with the desire for a profession.

It was at the Boston Public Library, and later through her association with *The Horn Book Magazine*, that Haviland was to form a rich array of female friendships and associations that would continue to foster within her a passion for children's service and the literature of childhood. One cannot help but agree with Haviland's assertion that part of her success lay in being in the right place at the right time (Weeks, 1976, p. G8). During her years as children's librarian, she maintained a close working relationship with young people, her focus being program oriented. In her interview with the *Washington Post* in 1976, Haviland expressed regret that, in her then capacity as Head of the Children's section at the Library of Congress, she no longer had contact with children and that the libraries in Washington, DC apparently did not permit volunteers. Hers was a clearly defined need, one that had been well satisfied through her work for so many years at Boston Public Library. However, by the time she arrived at the Library of Congress, she realized that she would be able to make an impact in an area which spoke to the larger good of the profession and that now, in the course of things, it was no longer possible to mediate both of her desires.

From 1948 to 1952, Haviland served as branch librarian at the Philipps Brook Branch and was promoted to Reader's Advisor in the Open Shelf Department in 1952. This position now consists of responsibility for the General Library Circulating Collection. She was to serve in this role until 1963. It was during this period that she began to review for *The Horn Book Magazine*, which essentially opened a new vista of possibilities for contribution to the field of children's services. This also provided an opportunity for her to work within another dimension with Alice Jordan. Jordan continued in this capacity until 1949. Eulalie Steinmetz Ross (1973) has stated that:

Readers came to depend on Miss Jordan's recommendations and used her Booklists with complete confidence in selecting books for the home, school, or public library. Frequently, and with some wonderment, those who might have read a book before Miss Jordan reviewed it, found their understanding of it sharpened, even changed, by the perceptive "miniature essay" she wrote about it. (p. 180)

Jordan's enthusiasm for her work both in children's services as well as book reviewing left an obvious impression upon a young Haviland.

## BOOK REVIEWING, PHILOSOPHY, AND FOCUS

Upon her introduction to *The Horn Book Magazine* in 1951, Haviland's focus seems to have taken a sharp turn "outward." Book reviewing was proving to be extremely satisfying. It is an activity which keeps a child-oriented person "in the know" in terms of the literature of the child. As a book reviewer, one reads materials and considers them in a way that perhaps would not have been thought of were one not operating within the more public arena of reviewing. Haviland stated in her 1976 *Washington Post* interview:

I do think of the children and know that to overpraise a book does them a disservice. A reviewer must be honest. I sometimes feel very sad about some book I do not consider good enough for review when I think how much effort the author, illustrator and publisher have put into making that book available. It is truly disturbing to realize how many books fail with children....Spending time with children...is the key. Then you know very surely what will reach children. (Weeks, 1976, p. G8)

Alice Jordan had edited the *Booklist* for *The Horn Book Magazine* beginning in 1939. In 1950, Jordan asked to be relieved of the *Booklist* after the July-August 1950 number (Ross, 1973, p. 191). The new editors of the *Booklist* were Jennie D. Lindquist and Siri M. Andrews. The decision was made to have the *Booklist* prepared by a staff of reviewers comprised of the editor of the magazine and area librarians (Ross, 1973, p. 253). Virginia Haviland became one of the reviewing librarians for the magazine at the end of 1951. She had by this time been promoted to the position of librarian of the Phillips Brooks Branch of the Boston Public Library (Ross, 1973 p. 215) and served in this capacity until 1952.

Lindquist was another woman who strongly influenced Haviland's perspective of library service to children. She said of Lindquist: "I'll never cease to be grateful to her for my introduction to the children's book publishing world in New York City...particularly in my memories of her I cherish her encouraging words somewhat later about my reviewing..." (Haviland, 1976a, pp. 6-7).

In the June 1977 issue of *Horn Book Magazine*, Haviland wrote a tribute to the memory of Lindquist who had died earlier that year. Haviland reviewed both fiction and nonfiction materials and had an interest in science. She was quick to point out in her reviewing commentaries both the benefits of a book and also any shortcomings it might have. She succeeded in doing this in a way that was informative to the reader and less as a reprimand to the writer. A review of Lorus J. Milne and Margery Milne's *Because of a Flower*, published in the June 1975 issue, is a case in point. She states:

A most unusual botany book—an ecological study, full of fascinating facts....Singled out as species with ecological significance are the blackberry, water lilies, orchids, grasses, and milkweed; many other flowers are given brief attention. A variety of chain relationships—and how they change with the endangering of a species—is discussed. (Haviland, 1975, p. 284)

She had a strong interest as well in professional materials. In April 1969, she reviewed Anne Pellowski's *The World of Children's Literature*. Her review showed insight and was well supported by details:

The book covers history and criticism of children's literature; allied subjects such as storytelling, periodicals, and folklore; bibliographies; studies of authors and illustrators (but not works related to an individual); and library work with children. There are no subdivisions within a geographical area: 1102 entries for the United States, 342 for England, and 346 for Germany in each case fall into one alphabetical arrangement. About three-fourths of the books, pamphlets, and articles have been annotated, some with the briefest phrase-identification. Many unannotated entries (for works not located by the compiler, but listed from a "reliable source") do not have their foreign-language titles translated.... Many of the unannotated entries are theses. It was inevitable in so vast a project that errors should occur...These considerations will seem small, perhaps, in view of the range of the study and travel engaged in by the compiler, whose competence in languages provided her with a fruitful period of investigation at the International Youth Library and elsewhere. (Haviland, 1969, p. 186)

The picture that emerges of Haviland is that of a competent and meticulous woman. She was a regular book reviewer for *The Horn Book Magazine* until summer of 1981, when she retired from her position as Head of the Children's Book Section at the Library of Congress. At that time she was praised for her nearly thirty years of service of reviewing. Ethel Heins (1981) said of Haviland's work:

she has remained faithful to this magazine and steadfast in her search for the best books for young readers. And countless creators of children's books, too, have been beneficiaries of this persistent loyalty; for, as Virginia Woolf once remarked in a famous essay, "It is a matter of the very greatest interest to a writer to know what an honest and intelligent reader thinks about his work." (p. 383)

While at *The Horn Book Magazine*, Haviland began to make international contacts, meeting such people as storyteller/author Eileen Colwell and author/poet Eleanor Farjeon. Haviland greatly admired Farjeon's extension of traditional tales into literary fairy tales exemplified by *The Silver Curlew* (1953) and *The Glass Slipper* (1955). Later, she would involve herself directly with traditional tales in the form of her own highly successful fairy tale series.

Part of Haviland's progression outward was to manifest itself through professional publications and college teaching. From 1957 to 1962 she was a lecturer at Simmons College School of Library Science. During this time she taught two courses "Library Service to Children" and a seminar in "Reading Guidance of Children" (J. Gearin, personal communication, January 3, 1995). Her earliest publications actually predated her college involvement and generally concentrated upon discipline-related issues, such as her article entitled "Children and Their Friends the Authors" published in 1946 by the Boston Public Library in their quarterly called *More Books* (Commire, 1974, p. 106).

In 1949, Haviland received a stunning invitation from Frederic Melcher, who several years before had established the Caroline M. Hewins Lecture series for research in the history of children's literature. She was asked to deliver the second lecture in the area of nineteenth-century travel books for children. The first lecture had been delivered by none other than her admired supervisor Alice Jordan. Haviland's lecture later evolved into *The Travelogue Storybook of the Nineteenth Century* (1950) and was an illustration of her interest and inclination toward scholarly research. Frederic Melcher wrote the preface to the book and commented upon Haviland's scholarly approach:

This paper, with its fresh research into a fascinating but almost forgotten field, its well-organized presentation of the subject, and its careful linking of the experiences of the past with the needs of the present and future, serves most aptly to represent what was hoped for by its sponsors in planning the series of Caroline M. Hewins Lectures. (Haviland, 1950, p. x)

In the opening chapter of this book, Haviland comments upon the debt we owe to the early missionaries and merchants for the dissemination of their geographical knowledge and speaks of the tourists and reporters who followed in their wake (p. 2). Coincidentally, one of the activities which would mark Haviland's career would be her extensive world travels attending conferences and exhibitions, lecturing, and in effect, representing the United States internationally in the cause of children's books. Perhaps not surprisingly, Haviland was also a member of the Society of Women Geographers, a fact which testified to her desire for an affiliation with like-minded women.

While Haviland was not the first to travel outside the United States in the cause of literature for young people (indeed, Margaret Scoggin had traveled abroad and been involved in ALA international committees and projects [see Batchelder, 1988, p. 113]), she was certainly one of the few to make it a hallmark of her career and to also further the cause consistently through publication.

The international arena in general was not one extensively utilized by women. Previously the domain of men, it has been one essentially

defined by "higher level" politics; a playground composed of males who have assumed the right to define what constitutes influence. In her essay entitled "Gender Makes the World Go Round," Cynthia Enloe (1994) emphasizes the fact that politics is not simply what goes on in the cabinet meetings of essentially male government officials, but rather also, the less formal contacts that women may make in parts of the world within many different contexts. She explains that even the contact that a female tourist may make with a local worker in a hotel has an impact on the concept of "international politics":

Perhaps international politics has been impervious to feminist ideas precisely because for so many centuries in so many cultures it has been thought of as a typically "masculine" sphere of life. Only men, not women or children, have been imagined capable of the sort of public decisiveness international politics is presumed to require....By taking women's experiences of international politics seriously, I think we can acquire a more realistic understanding of how international politics actually "works." We may also increase women's confidence in using their own experiences and knowledge as the basis for making sense of the sprawling, abstract structure known as "the international political economy." Women should no longer have to disguise their feminist curiosity when they speak up on issues of international significance. (p. 169)

Given such a framework, it is possible to see how international interactions in the cause of services for, and literature of, children can create and sustain an international political perspective. Though Haviland might not have seen her role in this light, by interacting within this framework and simultaneously pursuing her personal interests and inclinations, balanced with professional aspirations (using Gilligan's [1993] model), Haviland was, in effect, making an impact on the international scene. Few would argue that the experiences of childhood form the emerging adult, yet many stop short of admitting the possibility of the eventual impact of what one consumes aesthetically upon one's consciousness and overall perspective. Continued publications were to codify Haviland's national and international impact in a more expansive way.

The publication of *William Penn: Founder and Friend* (Haviland, 1952) grew out of a request made to Haviland by an editor at Abingdon and represented a very different kind of approach for her. She traveled to England to do the research in an effort to re-create for herself, to the extent possible, the life that William Penn might have lived before he left England. The book was marked by a strong sense of accessibility in terms of presentation. Designed to be read by third grade students, Haviland successfully presented her subject in clear and interesting prose, following the tradition of fictionalized dialogue, a characteristic of early biographical writing for the young.

There followed during the 1950s a period of very active participation in service and award related activities. Haviland served as chair of the Newbery-Caldecott Award Committee of the American Library Association from 1953 to 1954, considered to be one of the highest honors in service to the children's book world. She was also judge of the *New York Herald Tribune* Children's Spring Book Festival Awards from 1955 to 1957 and a member of the Executive Board of the International Board of Books for Youth as well as a member of the jury of the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1959 and president of that jury in 1972 and 1974. With such activities, Haviland was establishing herself as a national and international advocate for the literature of childhood.

#### SETTING THE PACE: A PILGRIM ON A ROAD UNTRAVELED

In 1952, Frances Clarke Sayers, librarian with the New York Public Library, had prepared a paper for the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Entitled "Children's Books and the Library of Congress," the paper emphasized the need for a national research center in children's literature. While ten years were to elapse between the writing of this paper and the fruition of the vision of Sayers and others, the Appropriation Act of Congress, which provided for the development of such a section at the Library of Congress, was finally approved by President Kennedy on October 2, 1962, and in the following spring, five months later, the section began to offer its services (Haviland, 1966b, p. vii).

Haviland was at the time serving as Reader's Advisor at the Boston Public Library. She was asked to assist in establishing the children's section at the Library of Congress and on April 15, 1963, took a leave of absence from her position to do so. She was, at this point, recognized as someone who had tremendous interest in international books for children and was extremely knowledgeable in the area of book selection for young people. A woman of strong abilities and strong opinions, she did not hesitate to share her views regarding books for youth and the professional process needed for their selection.

An article by Haviland (1961) entitled "Search for the Real Thing: Among the 'Millions and Billions and Trillions' of Books" had appeared in the December 15, 1961, issue of the well circulated *Library Journal*. Haviland was serving as Reader's Advisor. Here, she outlined her thoughts and concerns regarding book selection and followed up the article with a set of key questions headed as "Quiz Yourself: How Good is Your Book Selection Policy?" In the article, she shared her joy over the fact that there was now an increase in the number of fine books available for young people which showed that there was "no lack of creative vigor in the writing of fiction, biography and history" (p. 8). However, she also expressed concern regarding the number of books which were part of series, commenting upon the issue of series integrity. She warned librarians that

they could not assume that all of the members of a series would necessarily be as strong or as creditable in their writing as individual books, and that selectors must beware. While a librarian cannot possibly read every book he or she orders, the answer, she suggested, was to be found in carefully perusing multiple selection tools and making the crucial decision to buy or not to buy as a result of recommendations.

She was also concerned about the large number of books being written to order; those books which were written around simplified vocabulary lists, those on popular subjects needed by teachers for assigned reading, and books which presented "simplified" versions of popular classic texts. She cautioned:

We must all recognize that factors other than word count—the look of the page, the space between lines, the amount of illustration and size of margins—contribute to making a book easy to read.

Again we may ask whether we are being attracted to fool's gold by a false snob appeal of the term "classic," if we accept abridgements and watering-down of texts because we believe that the slow or lazy child must read *Alice in Wonderland* or *Treasure Island* in one form or another. Is it not dishonest to allow children to *think* they are truly reading the classics when they read them in abbreviated form? (Haviland, 1961, p. 9)

Such presentations convey the meticulous nature of her approach to the field. She was an individual whom one might call upon as the organizer of a national collection, and indeed, the Library of Congress did call upon her. On December 5, 1963, Haviland resigned her position as Reader's Advisor at the Boston Public Library, ending her nearly thirty year career there to become Head of the Children's Book Section, General Reference and Bibliography Division, Reference Department of the Library of Congress.

The Children's Book Section provided a rich resource for librarians, scholars, authors, illustrators, and other interested members of the public to consult on the entire history of children's literature. One of Haviland's first tasks was to organize a reference collection on English and foreign-language children's books. This collection consisted of:

history, criticism, basic catalogs and indexes, selective and special subject lists, works on writing and illustrating children's books, studies of folklore, storytelling, children's reading, and book selection. A complete collection of the H.W. Wilson "Children's Catalog" back to 1909 and complete bound files of the "Horn Book Magazine" and "Junior Bookshelf" are shelved in the section. Its periodical shelves contain review media and professional journals related to children's reading and library service, among them several which regularly review new children's books published abroad. Pamphlet boxes house a wide range of special lists and bulletins related to reading interests, including many from foreign countries. (Haviland, 1966a, p. 9)

In this description of early collecting emphasis, it is apparent that many of Haviland's areas of interest and expertise were represented. The task seemed a perfect match to her abilities.

During her work at the Library of Congress, which continued until her retirement in 1981, Haviland promoted the cause of the collection through her travels and publications. She authored and co-authored many publications with her colleagues at the Children's Book Section, including Elisabeth Wenning Davidson, reference librarian and bibliographer, and Barbara Quinnam, who succeeded Davidson. In 1968, Haviland was joined by Margaret N. Coughlan, reference librarian and bibliographer of the Children's Book Section. Coughlan and Haviland collaborated on a number of projects, including *Yankee Doodle's Literary Sampler of Prose, Poetry, & Pictures: Being an Anthology of Diverse Works Published for the Edification and/or Entertainment of Young Readers in America Before 1900* (1974).

Haviland was intrigued and deeply appreciative of old and rare books for children, recognizing them as important artifacts of the past. This was an interest fostered through her association with Frederic Melcher and Alice Jordan. Jordan (1948) had also authored *From Rollo to Tom Sawyer and Other Papers*. In the conclusion of the book, she stated her overall belief about the legacy of the past, a legacy which became part of the philosophy of Virginia Haviland:

The decade of the 1880's saw the awakening to the richness of folklore, felt the inspiration drawn from classic hero tales, experienced the leavening of humor and fantasy. The field was being prepared for the influences, dimly discerned by the far-sighted, of those invigorating currents of literature brought to bear by many people coming from other lands to America. But as the nineteenth century closed, it could not be known what great wealth of art and color and life the newcomers would bring to American children's books. (p. 160)

The didacticism of these early texts did not escape Haviland. Rather, she saw this as a reflection of a past; a "marker" to note the evolution of the literature and allow us to appreciate the achievements of the present and the future. This without repetition of characteristics inappropriate for our time. Haviland's appreciation for the past was addressed in a number of her own publications. For example, in her article "The Terraqueous Globe," published in the Fall 1981 issue of *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, she explored the world of the didactic geography of the eighteenth century, its evolution into the travelogue storybook of the nineteenth century, and manifestations of the concept during the twentieth. She states in conclusion:

Geography today addresses itself to more than land and water—or maps, winds, tides, and clouds—and books for children “fond of acquainting themselves with the world” are many and varied. There should be something that “promises satisfaction...to the young votaries of Science...[and] to every one who wishes to read histories, voyages and travel, with advantage and pleasure.” (p. 241)

However, the most important scholarly contribution Haviland engaged in while at the Library of Congress was her three volume work *Children's Literature: A Guide to Reference Sources* (1966a, 1972a, and 1977). This was a singular achievement and a major service to the profession.

#### INNOVATION AND IMPACT: *CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: A GUIDE TO REFERENCE SOURCES*

Implied in the concept of any discipline is a history and a recognition, on the part of those who are thus engaged in its study, that a field has evolved *over a period of time* from one state or condition to the position that it currently occupies. In order to gain a true appreciation of that discipline, one must study its history. Children's literature is no exception. It is perhaps ironic that the formal study of this area in library schools around the country is quickly becoming a past phenomenon. While books continue to be written on various aspects of the history of children's literature, it is a rarity indeed to be able to formally and directly (in terms of the stated goals of a course) study this area.

Virginia Haviland always maintained that the study of the history of children's literature was essential. In 1979, two years before her retirement, she recommended through a *Library Trends* article: “Increased opportunities for the study of the history of children's literature in library schools and literature departments should be made available” (Haviland, 1979b, p. 488). This is a recommendation which unfortunately has not come to fruition.

*Children's Literature: A Guide to Reference Sources* (1966a) was an attempt to not only provide a tool for individuals interested in the history and study of this field, but also was, through implication, a way of “legitimizing” this area in a public context. The three volumes which ultimately resulted were especially helpful because they were annotated, which allowed the researcher to immediately decide whether or not a particular tool was exactly what he or she wished to access. The first book was divided into eight sections and further subdivided into subsections. In her introduction, Haviland provides the reader with a brief rationale as to why she selected certain area designations. Not surprisingly, she maintained her specific areas of interests as area headings. Of folklore she stated: “Folklore follows naturally upon storytelling, as the storyteller's primary source of stories. Studies of the origin, transmission, variants

and values of folk literature are included because they are a necessary part of the study of storytelling" (Haviland, 1966a, p. ix). There are major sections on national and international literature. Library of Congress call numbers are given. In some instances, where items are not part of the LC collection, the locations are noted.

In the second volume (referred to as the first supplement) which appeared in 1972, Haviland attempted to reflect current professional and social and political changes. She included materials which were published between 1966 and 1969 (929 items) and any which were not included in the first volume. Two additional sections were added as well—those of The Publishing and Promotion of Children's Books and The Teaching of Children's Literature. These changes reflected the growth in the publication of children's books as well as the addition of courses in the teaching of the discipline during the early 1970s.

She stated as well a growing strength in the area of internationalism, therefore a corresponding growth in this area of the bibliography. Other areas cited include greater concern for minority groups as seen in the increasing availability of literature and what Haviland refers to as a "renaissance" in children's book illustration (Haviland, 1972a, p. iii). From a historical point of view, it is interesting to consider the changes from era to era socially and politically and see how these changes are reflected in Haviland's bibliographies. While, for example, minority issues are mentioned in the preface, these issues are not mentioned first but rather follow that of foreign children's books. The civil rights movement had, by this time, gained full strength. However, literature is rather conservative, particularly children's literature, reflecting the trends somewhat *after* they have assumed a status of "acceptability" within mainstream culture. Therefore, the full impact of what was to come in terms of the presence of literature more representative of the minority populace had yet to be felt.

In her second supplement (1977), Haviland listed 929 items. She mentioned that works in the area of nonprint materials had increased. As we consider this trend, one realizes that in the nineteen years which have lapsed since the publication of this book, nonprint materials in the more specific form of software and video materials are presenting increasingly serious competition for the printed word, both among young clientele as well as in selection emphasis in libraries. Haviland stated in the preface to this book: "New emphases in the field have required sections for selected bibliographies and critical works on nonprint materials and for citations on research in children's literature" (p. v).

Special issues of journals devoted to children's literature are also included in this volume reflective of the increasing popularity of the discipline as a focus of academic research. However, this is a circumstance subject to periodic changes, whether it be for economic and/or political

reasons. In the early 1980s, Haviland had compiled (with the assistance of Margaret N. Coughlan) what was intended to be a third supplement to *Children's Literature: A Guide to Reference Sources*. This resource, dated 1982, remains unpublished. It consists of 730 citations for publications appearing from 1975 through 1979. In her preface to the unfinished manuscript, she indicated that she had detected

a diminution in the number of significant new reference sources, covering a similar period, which were available to bibliographers in the Children's Literature Center of the Library of Congress. The smaller number appears to represent a decrease in that burst of publishing which followed upon the availability of federal monies in the late 1960s and to reflect the general lowering of the economy felt in the late 1970s.

Despite the age of the first three volumes of the guide, the commentaries prepared by Haviland and Margaret Coughlan are so thorough that these volumes remain a valuable tool for children's literature research.

#### IMAGINATION UNBRIDLED: THE FAIRY TALE COLLECTION

In her later years at the Boston Public Library, preceding her Library of Congress position, Haviland moved directly into the world of the imagination. She actually had begun to make the transition earlier with her publication of *William Penn*, but in the sixteen volume fairy tale series, she made a more well-defined commitment to literature of the imagination. At this point, she still had access to young people. She was still able to mediate between the profession itself and her personal response to the heart of the child. Her stories were retellings of old traditional tales, many of which were in a format less "user friendly" to contemporary young children, containing archaic and sometimes convoluted language. The late 1950s and beyond were different times, far more child oriented in approach. There was recognition on the part of educators and librarians that effort had to be made to communicate with the young child in an accessible manner rather than insist that the child meet an adult on adult terms. Haviland's retellings of old tales reflected this emphasis.

Beginning in 1959, while employed at the Boston Public Library, Haviland launched her very successful fairy tales around the world series, which has continued to endure as classic retellings of fairy tales. The series has recently been reprinted.

The original series began with *Favorite Fairy Tales Told in England* (1959). Expressively illustrated by Bettina Ehrlich, the six stories originally collected by Joseph Jacobs and published in *English Fairy Tales* (1892) were clearly and simply conveyed by Haviland. These consisted of "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Johnny-Cake," "Tom Thumb," "Molly Whuppie," "Dick Whittington and His Cat," and "Cap O'Rushes." The tonality was often dramatic, often humorous, but always accessible. They had about them the "air" of the storyteller. Recently, a radio announcer quoted an

attorney-turned-storyteller, who stated that “the power of stories is that they bypass your thinking and go directly to the heart” (Osgood, 1995). Haviland’s retellings do just this, allowing the child to freely enter into the storytelling experience. In fact, her retellings have about them the sense that the storyteller is personally conveying the story to individual members of the audience. The senses of sight and sound and even touch are tapped invitingly through simple though appropriately conversational and colorful narrative. In “Jack and the Beanstalk,” Jack encounters the giant’s wife:

Well, the giant’s wife was not half so bad after all. She took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a chunk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn’t half finished these when—*thump! thump! thump!*—the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming. “Goodness gracious me! It’s my old man,” said the giant’s wife. “What on earth shall I do? Come along quick and jump in here.” She bundled Jack into the oven, just as the giant came in.

He was a big man, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels. He threw them down on the table and said, “Here, wife, broil me two of these for breakfast....” (Haviland, 1959, p. 11)

This first book in the series was followed by *Favorite Fairy Tales Told in France* (1959); *Germany* (1959); *Ireland* (1961); *Norway* (1961); *Russia* (1961); *Scotland* (1963); *Spain* (1963); *Poland* (1963); *Italy* (1965); *Sweden* (1966); *Czechoslovakia* (1966); *Japan* (1967); *Greece* (1970); *Denmark* (1971); and *India* (1973).

Haviland seems to have become increasingly concerned about the acknowledgment of original sources. Though each of her fairy tale books indicated the source from which it came, there were no introductions offering the reader information about the storytelling traditions of the respective countries and their people. It was not until the publication of *North American Legends* (Haviland, 1979) (not part of the fairy tale series) that Haviland provided the reader with additional material about the traditions of American Indian folklore and European American folklore. Further, she added:

Most of the stories are given here just as they were recorded by early collectors: some have been retold later by skillful storytellers and ethnologists; a few have been retold by myself with only minimal changes in style. Regional idioms have been kept where their meaning is clear, to retain the local flavor. There is still some disagreement about the proper way to present folklore. [E]thnologists and anthropologists have been mainly concerned that the material should be accurately recorded, while storytellers and editors for young people are interested most of all in folklore as literature. But fortunately some ethnologists are able to present their material attractively as well as accurately. I have tried to choose versions which are both true to the origins and enjoyable to read....(p. 17)

*North American Legends* was written during a time when sensitivity to the issue of "attribution" was becoming a growing concern to those involved in literary enterprises. In this and other areas, Haviland attempted to respond to some of the major concerns of the day, but she had strong feelings about certain issues and made certain that she did not betray her personal concept of "standards" as it applied to children's literature. She also felt strongly that children's literature should be well illustrated. The fairy tale series was illustrated by talented and established artists in the field of illustration. The rich resources of individuals like Adrienne Adams, Barbara Cooney, Roger Duvoisin, Leonard Weisgard, Evaline Ness and Trina Schart Hyman, etc. were tapped for this extensive project. The end products were successful harmonizations of text and illustration. In an article published in *International Library Review*, Haviland commented upon the thoughts of the judges critiquing illustrated books for the Children's Book Council's "Children's Books Showcase-1972." Through her comments, we hear her own voice, the communication of a woman in agreement with the judges' apparent strong feelings about respect for the child and what is done for him or her: "The child himself was not overlooked. A strong comment was made about the importance of the growing child and his growing taste, it being felt that children *are* aware of aesthetics. Further, it was said that distinguished art in children's books may be for some children the only way they can behold beautiful art" (Haviland, 1972, p. 266). Indeed, Haviland seemed determined to maximize the experience of children's literature for the child and work toward convincing adults of the validity of that literature. For her, childhood was that stage of life to be revered and encouraged. She felt that part of this reverence could be manifested through caring about a major artifact of childhood, namely, the child's literature.

#### A LEGACY OF ACTION

Virginia Haviland retired from the Library of Congress in 1981. She died of a stroke on January 6, 1988 in Washington, DC at the age of seventy-six. Haviland will be remembered for her lifelong dedication to services for young people and the deep respect she held for their literature. This respect was manifested not just through active service, but also through the creative venues of writing of, and about, the literature of childhood. She was a woman who positively utilized professional opportunity and collegial affiliations. She was open to the creative influence of women who, like herself, shared a devotion to the field of children's services, and she was successful in mediating her personal desire for affiliation with children and their cause with professional aspiration. Energetic and proactive in her approach to the field, she felt that her objectives could best be met through these multiple routes of service, literature, and scholarship. All of these components constitute major contributions to the field and a notable legacy for children and adults alike.

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