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Frederick Lock's Scrapbook: Patterns in the Pictures and Writing in the Margins

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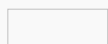
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Frederick Lock's Scrapbook:

Patterns in the Pictures and Writing in the Margins

In 1990 there appeared on the antiquarian market a scrapbook of engravings assembled around 1791. Its twenty-two pages, bound in light-yellow wrappers, are filled with neatly arranged images of plants, animals, and people cut out of late eighteenth-century prints. Many of the prints had been daubed with watercolor by an amateur, and a fair number have facetious captions written in at least two different hands in pencil or ink. Frederick Lock, the youngest child of William Lock of Norbury Park, made the scrapbook when he was about five years old. His name is written in another hand on the inside of the front wrapper ([figure 1](#)). By the time of the appearance of Frederick's book on the market, all artifacts created by children—poetry, copybooks, or scrapbooks—as well as objects manufactured for their exclusive use, had begun to attract the attention of both serious collectors and scholars.¹ Thus the sale of this unique item by a leading antiquarian bookseller to a major private collector of children's books, manuscripts, and educational toys fully reflected the sea change that had taken place in the status of juvenilia.²

Scrapbooks present an especially interesting case. So few assembled by young people before the Victorian era had survived that it was taken for granted that scrapbooking was virtually unknown before the manufacture of ephemera printed especially for this activity. Frederick Lock's scrapbook not only belies that assumption, but also raises a number of important questions. Where did he find the images he assembled? Why was he making a scrapbook? Are there discernable patterns underlying the selection and arrangement of the materials, and, if so, are they similar to those in an adult's scrapbook, or do they conform to those of children's writing? Would the discovery of information about Frederick's identity, circumstances, and childhood significantly enhance the analysis of the scrapbook's contents? This essay will try to answer these questions in [\[End Page 65\]](#) order to suggest just how much a handmade object like Frederick Lock's scrapbook can reveal not just about its young compiler's interests and milieu, but also about the roles print could play in a child's acquisition of literacy during the late eighteenth century.



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Figure 1

Frederick Lock's name, possibly in the hand of his older sister Amelia. All illustrations reproduced courtesy of the Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University Library.

I. The Prints in the Album

Let me address the first question: where did Frederick find the images? Since he did not have at hand the gorgeous array of scraps available to Victorian children—heavily embossed chromolithographed sheets depicting subjects as diverse as shells, birds, animals, Christmas scenes, characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes, Her Majesty's cutlass-wielding sailors, floral arrangements, and decorative letter forms—what sorts of printed materials did he sacrifice to this project?³ Luckily, identifying his sources is not as formidable a task as finding the origins of the illustrations Jane Johnson clipped to make the educational aides for teaching her children in the early 1740s (Alderson 180). The majority of the images Frederick used came from prints published by Bowles & Carver, the third generation of an important family firm of London print- and mapsellers.⁴ Their stock, like that of their predecessor Carrington Bowles, included so-called "lottery sheets," a type of print for children that had been on the market since at least the late seventeenth century. Lotteries were small engravings covered with little pictures laid out in [\[End Page 66\]](#) rows, depicting such subjects as the social ranks, trades and professions, caricatures, humorous subjects, animals, birds, fish, plants, the seasons, and sports and games ([figure 2](#)). According to the printsellers' catalogues, lotteries were "chiefly intended for children to play with" (Sayers 150). Frederick must have had a stack at hand because...



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