COLLABORATION IN COLLECTIONS

Damaris Alvarenga Agustin, Amy Fader, Madison Gagnon, Mohala Kaliebe, Laurie Langbauer, Mila Mascenik, Caroline Parker, Matt Turi
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

INTRODUCTION

Laurie Langbauer
Professor, UNC Chapel Hill

"THERE is a something, no matter what we call it, in the writing of youth," a Victorian editor reflected as he published the verses that Henry Kirke White (1785–1906) wrote before he was twenty-one, "which will ever be popular with the young" (Todd 13). Offering a class on recovering the creative works of young people asks students to reflect on how youth speaks to youth. What do they think that means? This essay presents a rough outline of the "what, how, and why" of our work in English 425: "Literature, Archives, and Original Research," an intensive research undergraduate course at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the Fall 2024 that focused on juvenilia. We tell our story from the points of view of four students, three librarians, and me, the professor. The projects the class undertook show how young researchers occupy an exceptional position when it comes to considering what young artists and authors care about and why it matters: in the sections that follow, Damaris Alvarenga Agustin reflects on young scientists at UNC a century ago, for instance, from the vantage point of being a young scientist at UNC herself; Mila Mascenik, working in journalism, zeroes in on what it meant for George Cruikshank to be active in the nineteenth-century press when he was around her age.

(cc) Alvarenga Agustin, Fader, Gagnon, Kaliebe, Langbauer, Mascenic, Parker, Turi. This article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Licence (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Journal of Juvenilia Studies 7.1 (2025), pp. 3–35. DOI: 10.29173/jjs141

Our team included a class of thirteen undergraduates (all years, all majors), five PhD students from English and Comparative Literature, one professor from the same department, instructional specialists from Ackland Art Museum, and librarians galore from Wilson Library Special Collections and Davis Library, all at UNC Chapel Hill. We met with two or three museum and four or five library colleagues; but many others, behind the scenes, made our course possible. In our class, we believed in each other as partners—and scheduling in-class research days that asked every class member to share their work as we went along fostered that sense of joint venture. We also reached outside our campus—inviting scholars we had read to video chat with our class. Though all busy people, every one of them said yes.

What brought our research team together? When it came to the librarians, it was their outreach. Almost all my teaching nowadays involves Special Collections because, well over a decade ago, I just happened to get chatting with a Manuscripts Research and Instructional Librarian from Wilson Library, Matt Turi—I don't remember now where or how. By the end of our talk—one of those "small, relevant conversations" (as he calls them) in his section of this essay, that "put a kind, available, collaborative, and deeply interested face on the archive"—we had agreed to teach together an intensive summer course on the figure of the child. In his description here, you can see some of the original sources he brought to the table to aid our discussion of different meanings "the child" could take.

Many years (and many different courses together) later, I've learned—as Matt Turi suggests many like me are "surprised to learn"—that such exchanges don't just happen; librarians seek out those engagements. They are the animating force of library instruction, underpinning its teaching. "Talk to us," was the burden of his remarks years later to a graduate class about how best to use the archive: "Talk to us; teach with us; ask us." That's a lesson that anyone anywhere can apply when they get inside a library. It has really stuck with me every time I do and turning to such colleagues has boosted my own work and my teaching no end.

I'm not sure when Amy Fader joined the team. I hope it was just as soon as she possibly could, because another surprise was how freely and wholeheartedly she was willing to provide the tools I knew the students needed to unlock the research they wanted to do. Locating juvenilia, learning the vocabulary for its study, collecting scholarship on it—those take a certain knack and some specialised knowhow, which Amy Fader's section here outlines for us. She has online repositories and indices at her fingertips, but she starts by sending students on a scavenger hunt into the stacks. As with Matt Turi, who writes of the shared absorption that comes when he strategically places a manuscript between two students to get them discovering it together, Amy Fader taught me the continuing value of hands-on cooperative engagement, students working together in groups in the stacks or at their computers. Thirty years ago, on the first day I opened the doors of the libraries at UNC, I'd found myself in grateful tears to think that for three centuries librarians had been collecting all these works expressly for me and my students. I had the same happy shock when

I realised that here was someone whose job—in which she gloried—was to come into the classroom and just give away her time and expertise to foster the students' skills, her only thought of return to make their work better. She turns them into the "resident experts," as she terms it, while giving them the confidence to see themselves in that role.

What neither Matt Turi nor Amy Fader tells you (but I will) is about their inexhaustible and generous work behind the scenes. As COVID was shutting down campus in March 2020, Matt Turi sped to Wilson before they had locked its doors to make sure the class had copies of our materials from there (we envisioned him under a bare bulb in the basement, working feverishly at the scanner). In course evaluations every year, students single out Amy Fader's one-on-one meetings (hours and hours and hours of meetings) as a support they treasure. Wherever we are, we all know devoted colleagues who play out such stories every day. Finding such partners makes all the difference. They can show us what we don't know we're missing: researching juvenilia means recognising all the other accounts that collections leave out, wittingly or unwittingly (as Matt Turi discusses); Caroline Parker calls these "blind spots" that researchers can work to restore.

Mohala Kaliebe also touches on the rewards that come from making contact and opening up conversations. What *she* doesn't tell you is that, through her own "thoughtful questions" about ways to "examine unpublished materials," it emerged that she had over the last year been conducting her own juvenilia research (very successfully) into an early twentieth-century journal kept by a teenager, a diary she had rummaged out of a pile of old books that she had found for sale. In a trice, I had her in front of the classroom presenting (graciously) her strategies in advancing that research. She taught them to us all—and other lessons too, lessons just as important as any specific strategies: the determination and joy of intellectual curiosity, for one, and how seeking out connection (here was a practicing expert in our midst!) brings to light unexpected rewards once we look for such affiliations, for another. Watch this page—I hope Mohala Kaliebe will soon share her findings on teenage diaries, here or elsewhere, with the larger community.

I'd need a separate essay to describe our partnership with the Ackland Art Museum. That story, and the range of works held, come out a little in the entries by Caroline Parker and Mila Mascenik. The teaching staff at the Ackland has pulled images for classes to pore over in the print room. They have hung teaching galleries of our particular selections. They have led tours through the on-view collection. Seeing works up close with trained art staff has helped students think about images by young illustrators in published volumes (Pamela Bianco, say) that we considered in Rare Books or pictures by young creators that we viewed online (such as the imagined world dreamt up by the Nelson brothers—see the innovative class at Amherst on them taught by Karen Sánchez-Eppler, one of our video-chat visitors—or the Darwin children's marginalia on their father's manuscripts).[1] Identifying works by artists under twenty-one in the Ackland collection will be a continuing process,

and a painstaking one for me, in which I slowly compare image-production dates to artist birth dates, art work by art work. I have discovered a score of works so far, and I know there will be more to come. The excitement of recovering them more than warrants the labour: standing in front of our upstairs gallery, our class had the elation of seeing for the first time works that had never been brought together before. Through their connection, we felt, they could be viewed in new ways; every comment by every student would be a new discovery. For me, as a teacher, that affirmation of each class member's promise and voice is what teaching should impel.

As at every college and university, the students are the whole point. The four essays that follow speak for themselves—and they speak volumes when it comes to the intellectual excitement and conviction that Matt Turi suggests we should encourage. I wish you could read every essay the class turned in that term. Our class had a handful of graduate student members, central to our team, who are all working to publish their findings; so I hope you *will* be able to read those essays sometime soon. In every class I've taught on juvenilia, every student has had something new to say. Their research, investigating others like them who sought to get down in print or picture something never before expressed, ensures that they do too. Recovery spurs originality—and not just because the texts they choose may be unknown, ignored, or neglected, never studied by anyone else, though that disregard is part of the incitement. For some researchers, it's central to the story: Madison Gagnon, for instance, delves into Nathalia Crane's notoriety at the time (critics scoffed that no real young lady could write in that way) to argue that bringing her *back* into critical awareness lays bare assumptions about young people and gender then, but also that such preconceptions can still be hard to see today.

These essays represent a range of texts or approaches. They share an understanding, however, that seems to me another major factor in ensuring the originality I've come to expect from their concentrated, open-ended, hands-on labour in the archives, which in the middle of it can seem overwhelming in its tasks until they see a way (and they always do) to plait their straw into gold: all these essays zero in on how young creators sought to have a voice because they wanted, first and foremost, to reach out to others. That stands out to me most when I read them. These acute young critics not only hear how youth speaks—they understand that what it wants most vitally is to be heard.

DEVELOPING ARCHIVAL COMPETENCE

Matt Turi
Manuscripts Research and Instruction Librarian, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

MOST OF the archival instructional encounters that I stage have an inherent flaw. Fifty minutes, or even seventy-five—if it happens to be Tuesday/Thursday—is too brief a period in which to instill the skills and manners of thought essential to independently and successfully navigate a special collections library. Of course, this assumes that the burst of odd demands that begin a session—wash and dry your hands!—bags and coats to the shelves!—throw out your coffee and water!—no pens or notebooks!—has only caused us to lose class time and not alienated potential researchers.

Of necessity, these temporal limits as well as the experience of working with new researchers have caused me to radically reconsider which elements of special collections life and work are essential to convey to new researchers within an instructional session. I have become increasingly convinced that developing archival competence is best understood as a continuum that only begins with a formal encounter and continues throughout the library's relationship with a researcher. There is no clear end.

This realisation is liberating and has helped me distill my instructional goals so as to engender feelings of excitement, collaboration, and distrust through the collective examination of archival materials. The direct examination of materials fills most of the session.

Selecting the corpus of material is the central intellectual work of preparing to meet a class. As precursors to selection, there are discussions with the instructor and colleagues, review of the syllabus, and archival description. Once I have developed a mental map of the class's semester, my work is to select letters, diaries, and other texts that convince these new readers that an archive is uniquely revealing about the intimate and hidden lives of others, and that any of the barriers posed by our policies, procedures, hours, and other chicanery are negligible in comparison. Ideally, students should be charmed, shocked, enchanted, enraged, perplexed, and curious to know more. Archival juvenilia and materials reflecting the lives of children readily lend themselves to this instructional project. Two perennially useful late twentieth-century collections are the life-long diaries kept in the Elizabeth Rose Campbell Papers and the children's books and editorial files in the Lollipop Power, Inc., Records. Campbell's diaries, which she began writing at the age of eight, are variously naïve

and child-like (with a will leaving her sister half of a horse), testy about the travails of high school life, and detailed and sexually candid in young adulthood. The illustrated children's books published by Lollipop are visually simple—bold colours with line drawings—but present a series of non-sexist lives and choices that are in sharp conflict with the dominant values and public culture of the 1970s and 80s. The editorial files allow us to construct a narrative (otherwise hidden) of the books' construction. Both these collections are readily accessible, superficially familiar, charming, laugh-out-loud funny, intellectual, and emotionally exciting. In numerous ways, then, these collections speak to the fun and adventure that can happen in the archive.

During a session, there are ideally two library staff available to have small relevant conversations with individuals and groups. Their role at this time is to answer questions, provide context, suggest additional sources, and put a kind, available, collaborative, and deeply interested face on the archive. Many researchers—not just early students—are surprised to learn that their work, their questions, their discoveries, and their interpretations are deeply important to us and inform our work as archivists and librarians. Much of our knowledge about the collections and research trends is derived from these small but significant conversations, and they do impact how we collect and describe materials.

In addition to being present and engaged, another occasional tactic that library staff employ to reinforce the value of collaboration is to conduct a shared common reading. This can be as simple as placing a cursive diary between two seats at a table, thereby encouraging students to interpret together, or it could be the projection of a cursive letter for the entire class to decipher and interpret out loud together.

One very powerful, if fraught, collection that suggests the worth of the archive, the value of collaboration, and the limits and biases of the archive is a collection that is now titled "Mary Tunstall Letter on Enslaved Child Betsy." When I first used this letter in a class on children in the archive it was unhelpfully called "The Tunstall Family Letter." The letter has many pedagogical virtues. A single letter is the entire collection. It is short. It is written in good clear cursive. It is also simple to characterise: it is a thank-you letter from a wife to her husband for the gift of Betsy, an enslaved child.

The title and the letter's original description were terribly distorted in their presentation of the document's content, as they focused not on the central actor of the letter, Betsy, but on the adults, the white adults receiving and writing the letter. The massive disjunction between the content and its archival description is a powerful example for the students of the archival biases that can hinder research. This is especially true for work by or about children, who, like other devalued historical actors, are often treated dismissively by archivists. It is important that students think critically about our work and do not assume that we are omniscient or fair narrators.

If students leave excited by what they have seen, with a conviction that we are partners in the research process, and doubts about the limits of our knowledge and work, they are well placed to begin work in the archive.

DEVELOPING CRITICAL RESEARCH SKILLS

Amy Fader
Humanities Librarian, UNC Chapel Hill

WORKING closely with Laurie Langbauer's classes on juvenilia, particularly "Literature, Archives, and Original Research," has been a rewarding opportunity to deeply engage with students over the course of an entire semester—a rarity in library instruction, which is often limited to a single session. I employed various strategies to support students in developing critical research skills, including leading multiple library instruction sessions, providing one-on-one consultations, and creating a dedicated course page.

My first session begins with an overview of library resources to ensure that all students, regardless of their prior research experience, start on equal footing. To encourage engagement, I then send students into the stacks to locate an item. This increasingly novel experience serves as an icebreaker and introduces the concept of serendipitous discovery. Afterwards, we debrief on their findings and discuss the materiality of sources—how to skim a table of contents, recognise an edited volume, and understand the structure of different types of books. As a result of such an exercise, one student found relevant juvenilia within an edited volume on nineteenth-century periodicals. Such a discovery prompts us to consider how juvenilia is often embedded within broader literary collections and reinforces the value of browsing.

A core activity in my instruction sessions involves students working in small groups to explore different library databases and resources. Each group examines a specific database, identifies its key features, and analyses a selected item. They then share their findings with the class, becoming the "resident experts" on their assigned database. This method fosters collaborative learning and helps students navigate the distinctions between primary and secondary sources. The databases students explore typically reflect a range of library resources, including indexes for secondary scholarship and digital archives for primary sources. Students analyse landing pages to determine the content, time period/coverage, and geographical focus of the database. Often, these landing pages are opaque, presenting students with little more than a search toolbar without any context. I provide suggestions for finding more information (vendor websites, the library's catalogue, or e-resource descriptions) and encourage students to seek out details such as lists of included publications or the

names of the institutions that compiled the archives. I stress this because learning how to critically assess a resource is an invaluable skill that extends beyond the academic setting.

To streamline the classroom experience, I pre-select sample items from each resource for students to examine. This allows for a productively structured discussion when students are early in the research process and are still refining their topics. Students consider factors such as authorship, publication context, narrative voice, and omitted perspectives. For instance, while working with an article from Gale's Nineteenth Century Collections Online: *Juvenile Journalists: Selected Amateur Newspapers*, students are encouraged to zoom out and examine the entire newspaper issue to gain a broader understanding of its historical and cultural context. By looking beyond a single article, students can identify patterns in amateur journalism (social commentary, literary experimentation, peer feedback) that speak to the nature of juvenilia as a body. Similarly, using Adam Matthew's digital archive *Nineteenth Century Literary Society*, students explore "Letters of Lord Byron to His Mother, Catherine Gordon Byron (1799–1809)."[2] Engaging with personal correspondence can add another layer of meaning to an author's familiar writings and provide insight into the societal context of the time (familial relationships, gender norms, educational practices). Additionally, working with digital archives provides a low barrier of entry to engaging with archival materials and provides exposure to finding aids, library metadata, and the use of search functionalities to find relevant sections within a larger document or collection.

This initial exposure to library resources benefits students by familiarising them with diverse research materials, building confidence in their research abilities, and fostering peer learning. By engaging in hands-on research before finalising their topics, students gain an appreciation of the variety of sources available and the complexities of the research process.

Subsequent sessions and one-on-one consultations focus on individual research needs. A workshop-style session covers keyword formation and search strategies, emphasising the use of synonyms, historically relevant language, and discipline-specific discourse. Students then practise navigating the library's catalog and databases while paying close attention to subject headings and controlled vocabulary. Working in pairs or small groups, they conduct searches in multiple databases, compare results, and refine their research questions.

Students researching juvenilia often struggle with terminology because works by young writers are not always labelled as such. For example, research on George Cruikshank may begin with just an author or title. To narrow scope, author/title may need to be coupled with other terms (political caricatures, Victorian satirical prints, nineteenth-century British illustrators), but it may also be necessary for students to research these broader concepts in material that is not directly related to their chosen work. Specifically, when there is limited scholarship on a particular author or title, students can expand the scope of their research and supplement this with their own

analysis of a primary text. A shift as simple as this can uncover new resources and highlight the importance of maintaining flexible search strategies.

At this stage of the research process, students learn to differentiate between repositories and indexes and understand how search results differ in the two. For example, JSTOR is a repository that provides full-text articles across disciplines, but lacks subject headings or controlled vocabulary, making keyword searching the primary means of discovery. This may result in irrelevant hits (search terms may appear in an article even if it is not the main topic of discussion), so precision searching using advanced search tools will yield better results in this resource. In contrast, MLA International Bibliography is an index that curates and provides metadata for literary criticism and related disciplines. As a result, students can use some of the same research skills they practised in the library's catalogue, using subject headings and controlled vocabulary. It provides more extensive coverage (essential for students researching at this level) and introduces students to using Interlibrary Loan for items where full text is not available online. Understanding these distinctions helps students refine their research strategies and leverage these resources to discover the most suitable materials for their project.

As students progress in their research, source evaluation becomes critical. In instruction sessions as well as in consultations, we reflect on how to vet the credibility and relevance of materials, strategising how to determine which sources best enrich their theses and how to identify gaps in existing scholarship. This process is particularly important for students researching niche topics with limited academic coverage, and we discuss how we can cast a wider net, for instance by using ILL and ArchiveGrid.[3] For example, one student researching Mary Wollstonecraft and Percy Bysshe Shelley's travel writings used ArchiveGrid to locate digitised manuscripts and letters. Many libraries have extensively digitised archival collections, so searching further afield using this method can be productive.

To further support students, I create a dedicated course page (LibGuide) of curated resources such as databases, digital archives, reference materials, and information about library services. The guide consolidates content from our instruction sessions as well as more specialised resources that come up during consultations. While most of the databases are subscription-based and available through the library, I also include open access materials from outside of our library's collection.

Throughout this process, I aim to foster students' confidence in research and their ability to critically engage with library resources. Our library is fortunate to provide access to a wide variety of databases, but my goal is to equip students with transferable skills. By emphasising critical thinking, source evaluation, and strategic searching, this process prepares students for future research in any context, whether at another institution or in their professional and personal lives.

Finding Juvenilia in the Archive

Mohala Kaliebe
Research and Instructional Services Graduate Assistant, the UNC Chapel Hill

English 425 was among the first classes I worked with as a graduate student assistant on the Research and Instructional Services team at the Wilson Special Collections Library. In many ways, helping instruct these sessions served as a learning experience for me as much as for the students taking the course. The texts requested by Laurie Langbauer for the four themed days that her class visited Wilson—Manuscripts, Rare Books, Young North Carolina Writers, and Amateur Journalism—sent me throughout the building, cart in hand, to pull boxes and books and slim newspaper volumes from the Southern Historical Collection, the Rare Book Collection, and the North Carolina Collection. During each class session, I learned alongside the visiting students from my colleague, Matt Turi, what these collections contained and when and by whom they were created. As students read and instructors circulated to discuss their observations and answer questions, I learned from Laurie Langbauer about relevant historical context for these materials—for example, that there had existed a vibrant youth newspaper culture in the nineteenth-century US. The volume and variety of the materials explored during these classes helped introduce me to the breadth and depth of the materials held in Wilson Library. I chose to use many of the materials pulled for this course again for other classes visiting Wilson.

Further, working with English 425 introduced me to the particular challenges of juvenilia studies research. How does one find materials based on the age of the author at the time of writing, information not generally highlighted in a catalogue entry or finding aid? The Library of Congress subject headings attached to the James Spencer Love Papers, 1851–1980, from which we pulled Love's boyhood diaries, include "Children—North Carolina—Social life and customs" and "Diaries." No tag links the children to the diary writing. The subject headings for another collection we used, the Elizabeth Rose Campbell Papers, 1961–2004, refer to "Women—North Carolina—Diaries" and "Women—North Carolina—Social life and customs." Yet Campbell wrote many of her diaries as a girl, not a woman. In the absence of universal and clearly defined practices for identifying child writing, researchers and librarians who assist them must take other approaches to find the juvenilia of the unfamous. Pay attention to recorded biographical details, the age of the authors compared to the creation dates of their writing. Seek out material types designed for children's writing,

such as primers, cipher books, creative publications produced in schools. Recall previous findings for future researchers.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of assisting with this course was conversation with the students. They asked keen questions about the materials before them, which led to broader discussions about archival materials in general. Are these original materials, or copies? *Why* does Wilson Library have them? The students and I delved into the nuances of acquisition, discussing the scope of what the university collects, whether such materials might be donated or purchased, and how patrons may use them. Students also raised the potential issue of self-consciousness—or self-censorship—in authors. Does it matter that Elizabeth Rose Campbell curated and chose to donate her diaries to her alma mater, while James Spencer Love's children donated his after his death? How might scholars examine unpublished materials differently from materials that the author produced for public consumption? Such thoughtful questions suggest to me that students are equipped to think critically about primary sources they encounter in their research, rather than accepting their contents at face value. The English 425 students inspired me to address more of the hows and whys of archival practice in class sessions I have conducted since then.

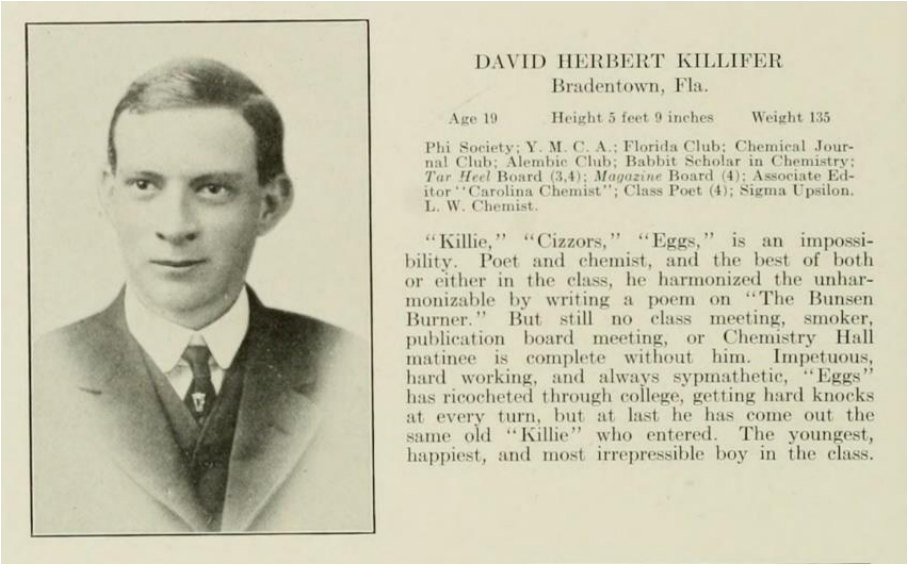
D. H. KILLEFFER AND *THE CAROLINA CHEMIST*

Damaris Alvarenga Agustin
double major in Biology and English, UNC class of 2027

THE CAROLINA Chemist began as a news source for the Chemistry Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Originating with the Journal Club of the Department of Chemistry, it ran from 1915 to 1922. It helped connections grow among the students, faculty, and alumni of the department. Over the years, as the journal grew in readership, it became more professional and began to be distributed in more places, especially once it added a "High School Department Section" in March 1919. This publication, as well as subsequent student publications, helps highlight how young people could—and continue to—contribute to making the scientific community more accessible to the general public and other youth through their writings.

One of my first steps in researching *The Carolina Chemist* was to look into who was involved with the publication.[4] I believed that the identity of the students involved could reveal a lot about what the purpose of the publication was, what was important to youth at that time, and what impacted them. The "Seniors" section of UNC's yearbook *Yackety Yack* for 1915 has an entry on "David Herbert Killifer" (*i.e.*, David Herbert Killeffer, 1895–1970, also known as D. H. Killefer), who was uniquely

involved as a writer and editor of *The Carolina Chemist* while a student and maintained a close involvement with science writing even after graduating (Fig. 1). The entry identifies Killeffer as an Associate Editor, and he is listed as being part of the editorial committee in the first issues of the publication (see, e.g., Fig. 5). That role, as well as others listed, appear to have made him an important part not only of the journal but also of the school's community: he was part of the Journal Club, the *Tar Heel* Board, and the Magazine Board as well (*Carolina Chemist*, Jan. 1915, 62). Of these roles, some were related to chemistry and others to writing. Killeffer was also a senior class officer with the position of Class Poet (*Yackety Yack* 62; Fig. 2), an interesting position considering his background in chemistry: his peers call him "an impossibility" because of this combination (ibid.). This shows how, even a century ago, mixing humanities and science could be seen as a sort of anomaly.



DAVID HERBERT KILLIFER
Bradentown, Fla.

Age 19 Height 5 feet 9 inches Weight 135

Phi Society; Y. M. C. A.; Florida Club; Chemical Journal Club; Alembic Club; Babbit Scholar in Chemistry; *Tar Heel* Board (3,4); *Magazine* Board (4); Associate Editor "Carolina Chemist"; Class Poet (4); Sigma Upsilon. L. W. Chemist.

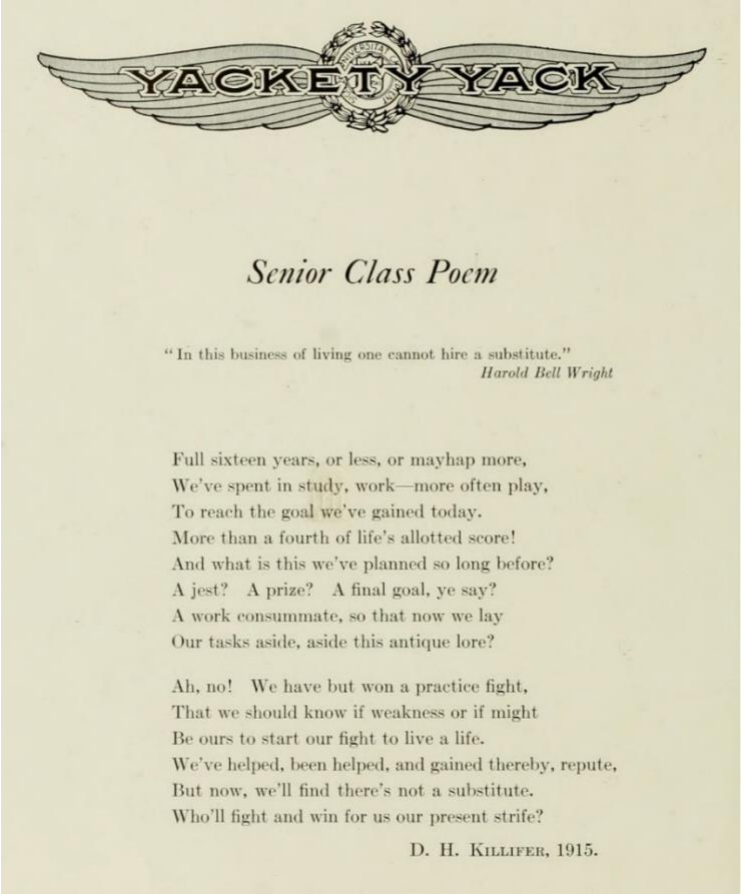
"Killie," "Cizzors," "Eggs," is an impossibility. Poet and chemist, and the best of both or either in the class, he harmonized the unharmonizable by writing a poem on "The Bunsen Burner." But still no class meeting, smoker, publication board meeting, or Chemistry Hall matinee is complete without him. Impetuous, hard working, and always sypmathetic, "Eggs" has ricocheted through college, getting hard knocks at every turn, but at last he has come out the same old "Killie" who entered. The youngest, happiest, and most irrepressible boy in the class.

Figure 1: "David Herbert Killifer." Yackety Yack*, 1915, vol. 15, p. 62 (www.HathiTrust.org).*

Through my research, I found in the May 1922 edition of *The Carolina Chemist* an article titled "The Chemist's Paymaster" by Killeffer, who at that point was in his late twenties and an alumnus of the Department of Chemistry (11). I also found him writing for another science club that he became a member of after graduation called The Chemist's Club. He wrote a book on the club's history entitled *Six Decades of the Chemist's Club* (1957), as well as a few other writings on chemistry that were not related to his work with the Chemist's Club, including *Eminent American Chemists* (1924) and *The Genius of Industrial Research* (1948).

Finding Killeffer's yearbook photo helped humanise the writers of *The Carolina Chemist* and helped me see just how young the people involved with the publication were. Killeffer was one of the most significant of the undergraduate chemistry students at that time, because of the positions of Associate Editor and Class Poet that

he held and because of the extent of his involvement as a young person within the Department of Chemistry and on campus. It was also interesting that his passion for writing about science and the chemistry industry continued past graduation and into adulthood in The Chemist's Club.



YACKETY YACK

Senior Class Poem

"In this business of living one cannot hire a substitute."
Harold Bell Wright

Full sixteen years, or less, or mayhap more,
We've spent in study, work—more often play,
To reach the goal we've gained today.
More than a fourth of life's allotted score!
And what is this we've planned so long before?
A jest? A prize? A final goal, ye say?
A work consummate, so that now we lay
Our tasks aside, aside this antique lore?

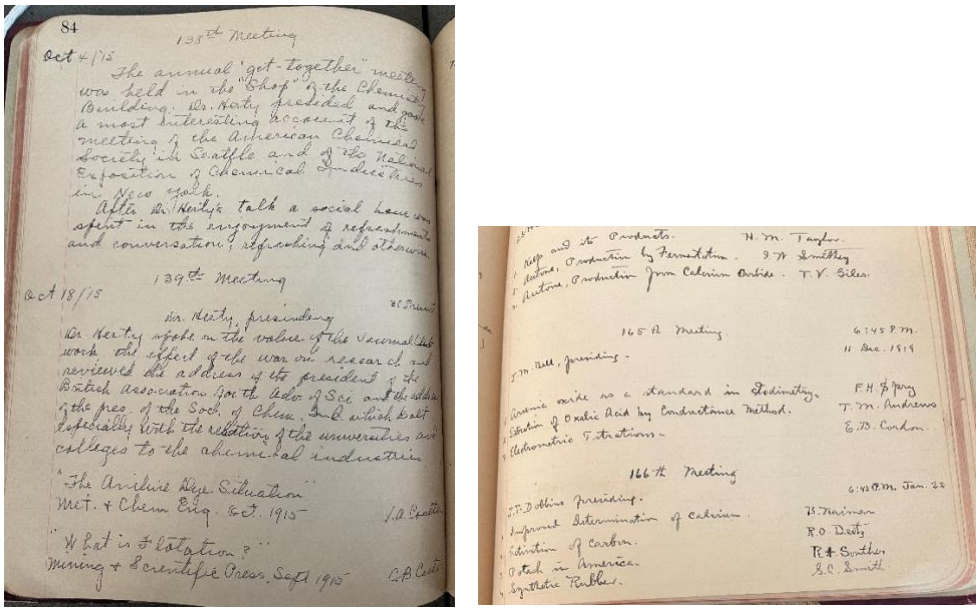
Ah, no! We have but won a practice fight,
That we should know if weakness or if might
Be ours to start our fight to live a life.
We've helped, been helped, and gained thereby, repute,
But now, we'll find there's not a substitute.
Who'll fight and win for us our present strife?

D. H. Killifer, 1915.

*Figure 2: "Senior Class Poem" by D. H. Killifer[*sic*].* Yackety Yack*, vol. 15, p. 38 (www.Hathitrust.org).*

It was also important to look into the origins of *The Carolina Chemist*. In the first issue of January 1915, the section titled "Journal Club Notes" states that the journal is published by the Journal Club (known in later years as the Alembic Club) of the Department of Chemistry, which had recorded meeting minutes starting from 1901 (pp. 2–3; see Fig. 6). I tracked down the physical records of the Journal Club's meetings: each entry contains the date when the meeting took place, the names of the presenters, and the titles of the papers being presented. Some entries also contain a short description of what happened during the meeting. I found that many of the people who were involved with the Journal Club were also involved with writing or editing *The Carolina Chemist*—for example, R. O. Dietz and R. H. Souther. I found both Dietz's and Souther's names in one of the records of the Journal Club meetings

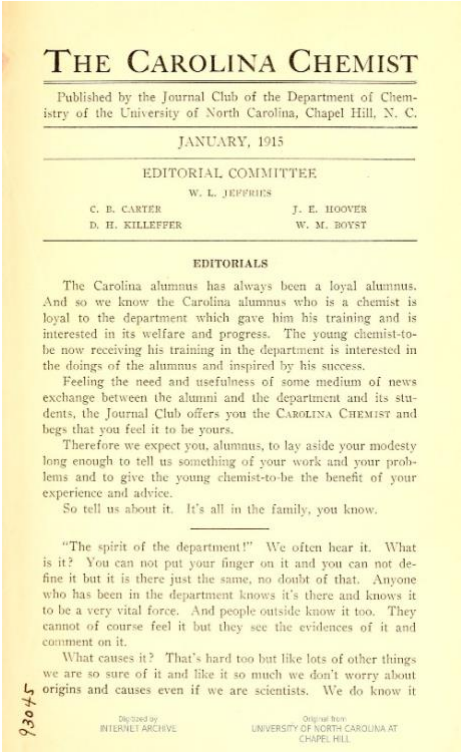
and used the date of that entry to choose editions of *Yackety Yack* to look through, which I had also done with Killeffer. *Yackety Yack* provided information on other clubs and organisations the students were involved in. One of the most common links I found among the undergraduate students was their involvement with the Journal Club, *The Carolina Chemist*, and Alpha Chi Sigma, which was (and still is) a chemistry fraternity. They, as well as many of the other chemistry students, were all much involved in the activities of the Department of Chemistry.



Figures 3and 4: Meeting notes from the Journal Club of the Department of Chemistry at UNC, p. 84 (Fig. 3, left) and p. 97 (Fig. 4, right), with entries including the names of members of The Carolina Chemist. *Alembic Club of the University of North Carolina Records, 1901–1928, #40187 (courtesy of University Archives, The Louis Round Wilson Library, UNC Chapel Hill).*

Such close connections suggested the exclusivity of the scientific community at the time. These were university students, all educated by the Department of Chemistry, who could understand scientific information shared between peers and through this same understanding gained connections to the rest of the scientific community. The community created by the Department of Chemistry was similar to the larger scientific community in that it was based on a shared interest and understanding. In this case, however, the community's exclusivity was based not just on its members' education but on other aspects of their identity as well. It was not common at the time for women or minorities to receive higher education, leading to white men being the majority of the students in this department. It is also important to note that some of the relationships between members of the department were even more exclusive. I found, for instance, that two students, C. H. Herty Jr. and F. B. Herty, were the sons of Charles Holmes Herty, a professor of chemistry who helped

oversee the Journal Club and *The Carolina Chemist*. In Volume 3, F. B. Herty is listed as a class representative (1); and in the next volume, C. H. Herty Jr. is listed as the Editor in Chief (1). Their connection to the department was stronger than that of other students because of their father, giving them better access to these positions.



THE CAROLINA CHEMIST

Published by the Journal Club of the Department of Chemistry of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C.

JANUARY, 1915

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

W. L. JEFFRIES

C. B. CARTER — J. E. HOOVER

D. H. KILLEFFER — W. M. BOYST

EDITORIALS

The Carolina alumnus has always been a loyal alumnus. And so we know the Carolina alumnus who is a chemist is loyal to the department which gave him his training and is interested in its welfare and progress. The young chemist-to-be now receiving his training in the department is interested in the doings of the alumnus and inspired by his success.

Feeling the need and usefulness of some medium of news exchange between the alumni and the department and its students, the Journal Club offers you the CAROLINA CHEMIST and begs that you feel it to be yours.

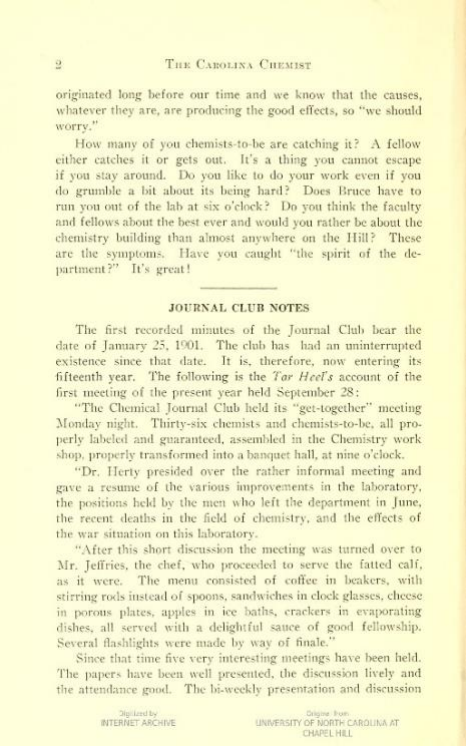
Therefore we expect you, alumnus, to lay aside your modesty long enough to tell us something of your work and your problems and to give the young chemist-to-be the benefit of your experience and advice.

So tell us about it. It's all in the family, you know.

"The spirit of the department!" We often hear it. What is it? You can not put your finger on it and you can not define it but it is there just the same, no doubt of that. Anyone who has been in the department knows it's there and knows it to be a very vital force. And people outside know it too. They cannot of course feel it but they see the evidences of it and comment on it.

What causes it? That's hard too but like lots of other things we are so sure of it and like it so much we don't worry about origins and causes even if we are scientists. We do know it

Digitized by INTERNET ARCHIVE — Original from UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL



2 THE CAROLINA CHEMIST

originated long before our time and we know that the causes, whatever they are, are producing the good effects, so "we should worry."

How many of you chemists-to-be are catching it? A fellow either catches it or gets out. It's a thing you cannot escape if you stay around. Do you like to do your work even if you do grumble a bit about its being hard? Does Bruce have to run you out of the lab at six o'clock? Do you think the faculty and fellows about the best ever and would you rather be about the chemistry building than almost anywhere on the Hill? These are the symptoms. Have you caught "the spirit of the department?" It's great!

JOURNAL CLUB NOTES

The first recorded minutes of the Journal Club bear the date of January 25, 1901. The club has had an uninterrupted existence since that date. It is, therefore, now entering its fifteenth year. The following is the *Tar Heel's* account of the first meeting of the present year held September 28:

"The Chemical Journal Club held its "get-together" meeting Monday night. Thirty-six chemists and chemists-to-be, all properly labeled and guaranteed, assembled in the Chemistry work shop, properly transformed into a banquet hall, at nine o'clock.

"Dr. Herty presided over the rather informal meeting and gave a resume of the various improvements in the laboratory, the positions held by the men who left the department in June, the recent deaths in the field of chemistry, and the effects of the war situation on this laboratory.

"After this short discussion the meeting was turned over to Mr. Jeffries, the chef, who proceeded to serve the fatted calf, as it were. The menu consisted of coffee in beakers, with stirring rods instead of spoons, sandwiches in clock glasses, cheese in porous plates, apples in ice baths, crackers in evaporating dishes, all served with a delightful sauce of good fellowship. Several flashlights were made by way of finale."

Since that time five very interesting meetings have been held. The papers have been well presented, the discussion lively and the attendance good. The bi-weekly presentation and discussion

Digitized by INTERNET ARCHIVE — Original from UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Figures 5 and 6: The Carolina Chemist *(January 1915), p. 1 (Fig. 5, left) and p. 2 (Fig. 6, right).*

Nevertheless, evidence of a strong sense of community and connection, even family, is present across the department. "The Spirit of the Department" is a phrase that is emphasised throughout all of the publications, so one would need to be part of the department to "catch the spirit." This relationship between members of the Department of Chemistry is brought up in the first page of the first issue of *The Carolina Chemist* (Fig. 5). After asking alumni for advice, the editors write, "So tell us about it. It's all in the family you know" (Jeffries et al. 1). Finding that the chemistry students were often part of the same groups, such as clubs and fraternities, also meant finding that they had the same limited connections to other students, faculty, and alumni. As Catherine Sloan cautions, "Understanding youth periodicals includes attending to the impact of these school collective cultures, and their shared values and habits" (174). *The Carolina Chemist* offers a good example of a group that showed this kind of collective culture, and by extension, the exclusivity of the "shared values" of a group limited by scientific understanding and education in the Department of

Chemistry. They emphasised the "Spirit of the Department" and wrote about information or events that were meant only for chemistry students.

However, as the publication continued and became more professional, the young writers saw the need to expand their audience. The journal decided to also focus on giving high school students more information about chemistry, rather than just those in the department. By volume 5, issue number 1 (1919), the writers make a clear plan to expand their publication: "There is a feeling of dissatisfaction with this narrow sphere of activity and this fall *The Chemist* will invade a new field to demand a larger audience and a bigger opportunity for usefulness. Therefore, it turns to the High Schools and Preparatory Schools of North Carolina with a challenge to a contest of scholarship in chemistry" (20). The community and the "spirit of the department" first emphasised could no longer be kept within the "narrow sphere" of the department. It needed to go outside of it to have a greater purpose. This plan also includes young women, rather than just focusing on young men, because women attended the high schools. Not only is *The Carolina Chemist* striving with this "contest of scholarship" to make an education in chemistry more accessible but they are also making it more inclusive.

The Carolina Chemist was an important publication because it was written by young people to spread scientific knowledge to other young people. This goal is important, as even today publications similar to it are still being produced, such as UNC Chapel Hill's current undergraduate science journal *The Carolina Scientific* (founded in 2008). The main goal of this student publication is to "educate and stimulate" other undergraduate students and introduce new research in science (*Carolina*). Student publications like this make information accessible and digestible to students outside of scientific disciplines. This is especially important in science periodicals, where complex concepts may be difficult for students to understand. Using these publications as a way to encourage other young people, just as *The Carolina Chemist* did with their contest, also helps to encourage and increase engagement with science among its young readers. Making knowledge and information accessible can help break the barrier of exclusivity in the scientific community, allowing young people to thrive in scientific fields and make contributions of their own.

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK'S *AN ELECTION BALL*

Mila Mascenik
double major in Journalism and English, UNC class of 2025

AT THE age of twenty, renowned British caricaturist and illustrator George Cruikshank (27 September 1792–1 February 1878) produced his 1813 political

caricature print *An Election Ball* (Fig. 7). Caricatures can serve as a medium to explore electoral culture (Burlock), and Cruikshank does just this in his print, which depicts a ball following the 1812 UK general election. The print's usage of text to convey political messages and the rich imagery showcasing the dancing spectacle illustrate Cruikshank's extensive knowledge of politics in his time. As a youth, he was already inserting himself into political discourses, developing as he did so a keen awareness of societal issues that carried into his artwork.

Figure 7. George Cruikshank, British, 1792–1878, An Election Ball*, published 1813, hand-coloured etching (Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund, 70.31.4).*

My research process for my semester-long project on this political broadsheet began with me locating and consulting several digital biographies of the nineteenth-century artist, such as Corryn Kosik's biographical entry on Cruikshank in *Illustration History*, a digital research database by the Norman Rockwell Museum, and Joan Lynn Schild's 1958 article "George Cruikshank, Caricaturist." Kosik's biography provided me with a solid foundation of knowledge about Cruikshank's childhood and his early artistic career, such as descriptions of the types of caricatures he produced, many of which were political. Schild's biography touches on the period in English history Cruikshank was positioned in and the influence of his times on his work. Once I familiarised myself with Cruikshank's artistic background as a youth and the historical context in which his works were created, I sought through further research to enhance

my understanding of the vital role the caricaturist played in English society during Cruikshank's day. John Wardroper describes him as "an illustrator and observer of the passing scene" (quoted by Hunt 5), which was a particularly exciting finding as I strove to make connections between Cruikshank's involvement in the political scene and discourse of the day and his acute observations about them in his youth, as evidenced by the impeccable details in his *An Election Ball*.

Biographies serve as a jumping-off point for much of my research on historical figures, and my project on George Cruikshank was no exception. Without comprehensive background on Cruikshank's early life and his renowned artistic predecessors in Britain's golden age of caricature, such as James Gillray, I would not have fully grasped the significance of his contributions to his country's blossoming youth culture.

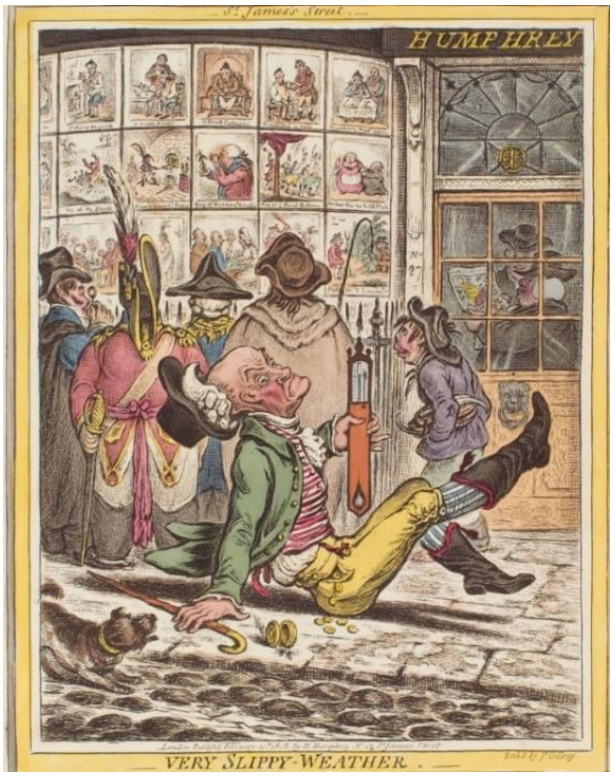


Figure 8. Gillray, James. Very Slippy Weather*, 1808, hand-coloured etching and engraving on wove paper (@ National Portrait Gallery, London).*

James Gillray's 1808 depiction of Hannah Humphrey's print shop is titled *Very Slippy Weather* (Fig. 8). In print shops of the day, print sellers such as Hannah Humphrey, the publisher of *An Election Ball*, "papered their entire windows with their newest prints, effectively turning the street into a public gallery" to promote them (Simpson 35). Interestingly, a couple of the members of the crowd appear to be of a

high status based on their attire, but one looks like an unsophisticated young countryman, suggesting that while Humphrey's shop may have primarily attracted customers of status and wealth, other classes and age groups, including youth, may have frequented it as well. In this way, print shops allowed for the mass dissemination of news among various audiences. For a discussion of Cruikshank regarding the circulation of racist imagery, see Odumosu and Schwittek for his role in the 1819 print *The New Union Club*, produced approximately six years after *An Election Ball*.

This image symbolises my research after I moved past the biographical research stage. Coming into this project, I believed my topic would concentrate on England's newspapers during the nineteenth century and, more specifically, how satirical prints like *An Election Ball* helped make news more accessible to a wider audience. I learned for the first time about print shops and about which shops (like Humphrey's) Cruikshank was familiar with, and I learned that his works were published there during his lifetime. My interest in mass production and news dissemination remained the same; now, however, it had a unique angle, with an exploration of how the early nineteenth-century print shop aided in the distribution of news among Londoners. Discovering this Gillray print allowed me to see the diverse audiences that print shops attracted, both in terms of status and age; it is a piece of cultural history recorded by the caricaturist. I began piecing together the media landscape in which *An Election Ball* was produced. I hoped by doing so to understand where youth fit in, and this image of Hannah Humphrey's shop was particularly advantageous in situating my research.

At first, I was unsure of youth's relevance to my research; however, it became clear after I located *An Election Ball* in the context of English politics in 1813. As Cruikshank's prints were filling print shop windows, youth under thirty were filling the seats of Parliament—the 1812 election returned over a hundred members of parliament under age thirty (Thorne). Before that, as a youth, Cruikshank had seen Great Britain's youngest prime minister come to power—William Pitt "The Younger" (1759–1806) in 1783. I conducted research on the UK general election of 1812, its issues, and its election balls, which was necessary to learn how Cruikshank inserted himself into the political discourse in his youth.

These findings led me to research contemporary youth's reception of Cruikshank's and other caricaturists' political cartoons. I got excited about this information after locating sources such as Tamara Hunt's dissertation about English caricature, especially after learning from Hunt that youth had received this art form positively. She quotes English novelist and illustrator William Thackeray remarking in 1840 about how much he missed the "coarse humor of Regency caricature" of his youth: The printshops were "bright enchanted palaces, which George Cruikshank used to people with grinning, fantastical imps and merry harmless sprites …" (quoted in Hunt 385). Thackeray's reaction exemplifies what Cruikshank meant to youth. British teenage artist Richard Doyle echoes Thackeray's sentiments toward caricature prints displayed in print shop windows in the late nineteenth century when he describes them as "celebratory image[s]" (Langbauer, "Fiction Factory" 60n29).

These accounts detailing Doyle and Thackeray's positive reception toward print shops' wares offer critical insight into how other young audiences may have interpreted these prints, including Cruikshank's *An Election Ball*. At only twenty years old, Cruikshank's voice as a youth was carried through the streets of London through his political cartoons; for me, this research project ties into something I strive to do in my writing, especially when I write news articles, which is to uplift the voices of youth, and over 200 years later, I strove to uplift Cruikshank's in this project.

J. M. W. Turner's *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*

Caroline Parker
double major in English and American Studies, UNC class of 2025

For my project, I chose Joseph Mallord William Turner's (1775–1851) *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*, which he produced—both the original underdrawing (Fig. 9) and the completed watercolour (Fig. 10)—while on a sketching tour as an eighteen-year-old student at the Royal Academy of Arts. The Royal Academy, founded in London in 1768 under the patronage of King George III, provided "practical and theoretical artistic training ... free of charge" and "was an important shop window for his [Turner's] works" (Archer), introducing him to fellow artists—both young and old

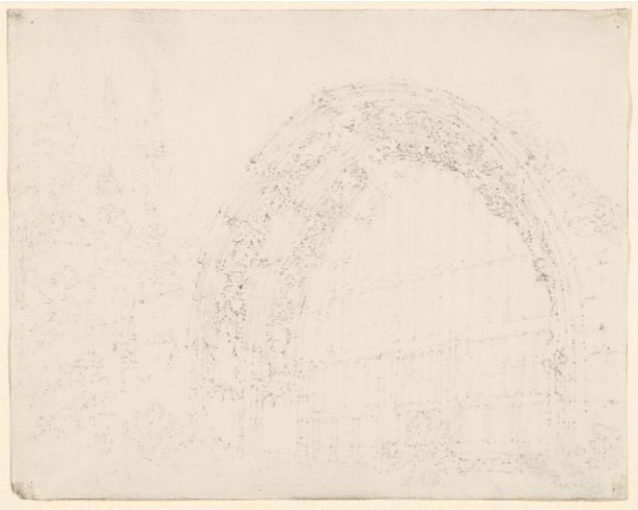


Figure 9. J. M. W. Turner, British, 1775–1851, Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham, *1793, graphite, image 8 7/16 x 10 5/8 in. (21.4 x 27 cm), sheet: 12 15/16 x 16 9/16 in. (32.8 x 42.1 cm)*

(Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Ackland Fund, 68.9.1).

(Hutchinson x–xi). Its free training allowed for "a new breed of artist" (Moyle 30): students like Turner who had wanted to become painters from an early age and who were often the sons of cobblers, bricklayers, butchers, and barbers. Or, as Mark Archer put it in his recent headline for the *Wall Street Journal*, "J. M. W. Turner Was a Hustler." Turner's *Arch* reflects how his education at the Royal Academy allowed him to master the tools he needed both to make money and to have self-determination as a young artist, unsettling our inclination to only categorise youth as unintentional creators or apprentices.

Ackland Art Museum was integral to my research this semester. Not only did it hold the piece that I researched but it also provided a physical space where I could see the piece, think deeply about it, and view it alongside the other works displayed there. Our class's gallery, held on the second floor and situated beside galleries from other courses held at UNC that semester, created a space where youthful creation and youthful research could meet. It was the only space in the museum dedicated to both displaying young people's artistic creation and promoting undergraduate research.

Figure 10. J. M. W. Turner, Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*, 1793, watercolour (courtesy of the RISD Museum, Providence, RI).*

I saw the effects of this exhibition most clearly the time I visited Ackland so that I could look closely at *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham* in preparation for writing my interpretive focus. As I was looking at the piece and taking notes on its composition, a couple walked through the upstairs gallery, paying particularly close attention to our class's display. As they went through each piece, they read the descriptions, pointing out familiar artists whose works were also part of our gallery, such as the pointillist Georges Seurat's (1859–1891) *Study after a Plaster Cast of Praxiteles' "Apollino"* (c. 1875–79, Fig. 11) and American illustrator William Meade Prince's (1893–1951) *Four Men Seated around a Table* (c. early 1900s, Fig. 12).

Prince's drawing caught their attention the most, especially when they realised a child of (perhaps) around eight or ten years old had created it. Afterwards, they looked at these works by young people in a new light. Being able to see other people engage and interact with the pieces that many of us had spent months researching was amazing for me. At that moment, it showed me that people are interested in the kind of research we did, and it motivated me to work on honing my interpretive focus.

Figure 11. Georges Seurat, French, 1859–1891, Study after a Plaster Cast of Praxiteles' "Apollino," *c. 1875–79, black chalk, 25 1/2 x 19 in. (64.8 x 48.3 cm) (Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund, 79.3.1).*

Because of this experience where I saw the real-life effects of our work, Ackland became integral to the formation and evolution of my thoughts on *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham* and why it matters in the context of youthful creation. I found Ackland's focus on engaging the public—they provide families and children with do-it-yourself art kits and interactive activities inspired by their collection—to indicate that they were aware of the importance of young peoples' creations. By introducing young people to art and inspiring them to create, Ackland shows an institutional awareness and appreciation for youthful creation. Not only do they hold young

people's work, and display it in the upstairs gallery, but they are also encouraging similar creativity in young people who visit.

However, it should also be acknowledged that, before our class, Ackland did not know they held works created by people under twenty-one years old. I think that their acknowledgement of this in their description placard about our class's topic—where they state that the works were "discovered through the professor's research"—is an important step in the right direction. By acknowledging their previous shortcomings and blind spots, Ackland will be able to better give the young creators held in their collection the attention and respect that they deserve. As we discussed in class, archival spaces are rarely, if ever, sorted according to the age of the creator. Perhaps through this class, the research we have done and will continue to do, and the research and work of others in the field, young artists will one day get the archival recognition they have always deserved.

Figure 12. William Meade Prince, American, 1893–1951. Four Men Seated around a Table*, early 1990s, hand-colored etching, graphite, brush and black ink, and gouache on thin cream paper (Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gift of Mrs. William Meade Prince, William Meade Prince Collection, 62.27.1547).*

In his will, Turner bequeathed all the unsold work in his studio at Queen Anne Street West, both finished and in progress, to the British Nation. This donation, which later became known as the Turner Bequest, was "the largest ever donation of works of art to the National Gallery" and "comprises nearly 300 oil paintings and around 30,000 sketches and watercolours, including 300 sketchbooks" ("The Turner Bequest"). Most of this collection is currently held at Tate Britain and can be viewed in their Clore Gallery, which periodically rotates displays.

Turner's will also stipulated that his work would only be donated to the Nation under the conditions that a gallery be created to display his work and that his paintings

were to be displayed beside two paintings by Claude Lorrain (1600–1682). This would, he thought, signify and cement in public opinion his position as an equal of the old masters. Furthermore, in their gallery, the Tate Britain displays Turner's *Fishermen at Sea*, which is the first oil painting he ever exhibited at the Royal Academy's Annual Summer Exhibition in 1796 when he was just 21 years old (*Exhibition* 10). Turner's wish for his work, including this early piece, to be held—and displayed—in the same gallery as Claude shows Turner's own belief in the power and importance of youthful creation.

By making it so that all his work—even early paintings—was owned by the Nation and therefore free to view, Turner was able to posthumously encourage the next generation of artists, especially if they came from lower-income families as he did. I would love to know what he would have thought about Ackland's encouragement of young artists and how he would have responded if they had put out a do-it-yourself kit inspired by his work. In any case, I believe that Turner's will shows his confidence in himself as a young creator—not only did he keep his juvenilia but he also donated it so that it could be exhibited. As a teenage student, he went on numerous sketching tours, during which he created pieces like *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham* that he would either eventually sell or submit for exhibition, showing that he always valued his work and recognised that they showed his skill. Furthermore, he did not destroy his early work like many young creators, such as Frances Burney, have done, but instead kept a meticulous record of it through his sketchbooks and in his studio (Clark 27). It is because of these two facts—that he produced much work at an early age and kept almost all of it—that I was able to conduct this research on *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*.

The work previous scholars have done on Turner's early career—particularly that of art historian and Turner expert A. J. Finberg—has been invaluable to my research, allowing me to build upon and contribute to this ongoing conversation. Trying to navigate through the archival record when researching a person's juvenilia is always a challenge. More challenges arise when trying to work with a specific library. For example, as a student at UNC, my sources are largely limited to what they have purchased. To help mitigate this limitation, there is Interlibrary loan. I had worked with this before, but sparingly. This semester, however, I used the Interlibrary loan program more than I ever have. Many of the sources I consulted—particularly the older sources that were created about the Turner Bequest—were not held at UNC, so I was not able to immediately access them. Instead, I had to request them. The most important of these requests, at least in terms of my own research, was A. J. Finberg's 1922 book *Notes on Four Pencil Drawings Made by J. M. W. Turner in May or June, 1793*.[5] Finberg writes that several of the pencil drawings Turner made during this sketching tour were exhibited at "Mr. Walker's gallery in Bond Street" (4). Perhaps the sketch of *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham* was displayed here and was eventually sold, which would explain why it was not part of Turner's Bequest to the Nation upon his death. At eighteen, Turner, a "precocious boy," had "already

succeeded in doing such work [landscape watercolours] nearly as well as it can be done" (Finberg 4).

Finberg's work allowed me to connect the sketch of *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham* in Ackland to the other ones he made on his Marches tour, such as *Tewkesbury Abbey* (1793), *All Saints Church* (1793), *Old Ruin*s (1793), and *Hereford* (1793)—sketches once held by art collector Herbert William Underdown, but which now appear to be held by the British Museum. Without Finberg's work, which was largely dedicated to cataloguing the Bequest, I would not have been able to make the connections that I did this semester. It allowed me to pursue a path I would not have otherwise gone down. Furthermore, the previous scholarship that I looked at showed me that there will always be more questions to answer and more pathways to follow when doing juvenilia studies research. It shows that youthful creation, and research about it, is complex and worthy of study. The process of researching may be difficult and daunting at times, but the end result is always worth it.

NATHALIA CRANE'S *THE JANITOR'S BOY AND OTHER POEMS*

Madison Gagnon
English major, UNC class of 2025

THE 1920S, otherwise known as the "Roaring Twenties," marked a period of change in the lives of women and girls alike. At the time, scholars suggest, "a new type of adolescent femininity emerged in the US" through the image of the flapper (Burr 420). The flapper was a "sexualized, commercialized version of middle-class girls" (McCarron 418). Young women were often portrayed with "short hair and shorter skirts and sometimes their new right to vote" (Hirshbein 114). Work and educational opportunities started to arise outside the home, which granted younger women "freedoms hardly imaginable by their mothers and grandmothers" (Hirshbein 121). At the same time, poetry and prose written by young girls, such as Hilda Conkling and Opal Whiteley, emerged as "popular reading in the 1920s in Britain and America" because their texts "appeared to both crystallize and support readers' conceptions of what children were like," leading to the larger cultural phenomenon of publishing children's work (Halverson 235, 236).

One of these young girl poets was Nathalia Crane (11 August 1913–22 October 1998), who published her first poetry collection in 1924, *The Janitor's Boy and Other Poems*, at eleven years old. Crane presents an entirely new conception of girlhood, related to the representation of the flapper, by asserting that girls are individuals with their own feelings and thoughts in a time of changing preconceptions around gender.

In such poems as "The Janitor's Boy," "Oh Roger Jones," "The Flathouse Roof," and "The Vacant Lot," the speaker uses her childhood imagination to create a romance narrative that explores her love for the Janitor's Boy Roger and grapple with her own feelings. Lines such as "It was really romantic, or / As good, at any rate" (Crane 24.11–12) indicate a level of ambivalence, though, as the speaker has not decided yet whether she found the experience of imagining romance enjoyable or was pretending to fit in with the preconceived notions of gendered ideals of romance.

Figure 13. Nathalia Crane, frontispiece to The Janitor's Boy, and Other Poems*, by Nathalia Crane, limited edition, Thomas Seltzer, 1924. Signed by the author.*

For exploring such questions, Crane became known as one of the "most controversial of all child authors of the 1920s" (Sadler 24). As Catherine Halverson observes, when readers are presented with a child's writing, such as Nathalia Crane's poetry, they try to draw "their own conclusions regarding authenticity" and the degree to which the text matches their "already formed notions of 'the child'" (243); for many readers, these notions emphasise such characteristics as "innocence, kinship to nature, incipient but not full-blown sexuality" (244). Crane, on the other hand, as David Sadler notes, wrote about "sophisticated subjects using an adult vocabulary";

because she "turned a critical eye on adult themes," she has often been criticised for not being "childlike enough" (27). Paul B. Bellew similarly observes that Crane faced "mistrust on account of knowing too much, specifically about romance and sexuality" (55). Yet Crane "express[es] agency" in the "context" of the 1920s, a period of changing conceptions around women's agency and sexuality, by directly dispelling traditional notions of childhood in poems that openly explore topics, such as love, that have been deemed "adult" content by others (Conrad 45). Writing gives young people the ability to explore their identities, which adults may not agree with or find appropriate, such as in the case of Nathalia Crane.

Searching archives and databases was the first step in finding information about Crane and her first poetry collection. At first the process seemed daunting, as searching in academic databases, such as Jstor and ProQuest, revealed little literary scholarship. I also used the ArchiveGrid database to find collections and archives where Crane's papers and manuscripts of her work are currently held. But when I entered the keyword of "Nathalia Crane" into the search bar and hit enter, only about fourteen results popped up. In this way I realised that people and institutions, during her time, did not find Crane's work important enough to save for future generations to read and research. Therefore, I had an intimidating task ahead of me.

As I combed through the results, I found photos of Crane. The frontispiece of *The Janitor's Boy, and Other Poems* shows a young Nathalia Crane sitting in a large chair with a picture book open on her lap (Fig. 13). I also found a group of photos showing Crane in her twenties from *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* that are currently stored in the Brooklyn Public Library (Photographs). From this collection, we can assume Crane was still in the public eye as an adult in her twenties, as she was still publishing poetry and prose then, if not as frequently as when she was a child. The pictures help to situate Crane as a young woman growing up in the 1920s and 1930s, a time of changing perceptions around womanhood and girlhood. The frontispiece in *The Janitor's Boy, and Other Poems* and the later photos in *The Brooklyn Eagle* serve as a reminder of Crane's ability to establish and maintain a place for herself in the public eye.

After stumbling upon this trove of newspaper photos, I directed my attention towards archives of historic newspapers. Here I encountered a multiplicity of sources, which showed that Crane was in the public eye from a young age. Historical newspapers provided a clear sense of the general public's primarily skeptical perception of Nathalia Crane and her poetry. Newspapers published in the 1920s contain many discussions of Crane's authorship; at first many reviews were positive, with such authorities as Louis Untermeyer and William Rose Benét praising her work; however, with the publication in 1925 of Crane's second volume of poetry, *Lava Lane*, an increasing number of reviews argued that neither collection could have been written by a child. Through a keyword search of the ProQuest database, results from the press quickly filled the screen, numbering over one hundred. In one instance, the *New York Herald Tribune* published a short article with four headlines: "Poems Too

Wise for Nathalia, Says Markham; Poetry Society's President Doubts Little Miss Crane Wrote the Volume, and Suggests 'a Genial Hoax'; Gives Opinion as 'Expert'; Says Verses Evince Maturity and Sophistication Beyond Grasp of a Child" ("Poems Too Wise").[6] It became clear that Crane was seen as a fraud by many who believed her poetry was too advanced for a child to have written because of its complexity in vocabulary and subject matter.

The responses to Crane's work recorded within these historical newspapers revealed adults' unrealistic expectations for what a child could understand and write about. Adults viewed such topics as love as "adult" because of their complex and intimate nature. However, through her poetry, Crane exposes adults' assumptions about children and young adults by showcasing how youth themselves are individuals with their own thought processes. She subverts her readers' romanticised childhood and girlhood ideals by directly exploring the "shiver[ing] in bed" that to her seems a natural part of growing into a young woman (Crane 3.16).

My process of in-depth, close reading and analyzing of Crane's poetry entailed meticulously poring over each line and phrase to understand Crane's perspective. I first read all the poems within *The Janitor's Boy, and Other Poems.* I tossed and turned on various ideas, but finally because of the context found within the historical newspapers, I concluded that Crane, unlike other young girl poets of the time, presents a new conception of girlhood that critiques gendered expectations for girls through lines such as "And the only thing that occurs to me / Is to dutifully shiver in bed" (Crane 3.16). While Crane partakes in a childhood fantasy of creating a family, she knows about the traditional underlying gender roles within a family system. Yet that Crane calls her imagined feminine passivity "dutiful" raises questions about the traditional expectations for girls and young women to stay at home, within the domestic sphere, so that they can raise a family and follow their husbands' bidding without any protest or complaint.

Ultimately, my project revealed what was involved in researching young writers who remain unknown in today's world. Crane was well-known during the 1920s because she represented ongoing discourses around girlhood during a time when idealised notions of innocence were changing to become less restrictive of what girls could do. The historical newspapers and firsthand accounts of Crane's work were useful in uncovering and understanding how she represented the changing attitudes towards gender at the time. Using a historical approach in juvenilia studies can be vital in recovering young writers, waiting to be discovered, who both challenge the dominant narratives of their time and offer insights into the contexts in which they lived and wrote—young writers like Nathalia Crane. Through her poetry, Crane challenges traditional notions of childhood by showcasing young people's thought processes while critiquing the highly gendered structures present within society during the early twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

Laurie Langbauer
Professor, *UNC Chapel Hill*

FOR ME, the voices in this essay confirm that collaboration sparks original research. I hope this joint essay also shows that the secret is the people you work with, not the specific resources you might have. I found for this class just as many freely available primary sources online as we pulled from UNC's special collections. Don't get me wrong—we at Carolina are lucky to have exceptional special collections and museum galleries. The class did love visiting objects they could look at and handle—for some, that direct contact provided their eureka moment. But you don't need those. What Matt Turi calls "the fun and adventure of working in an archive" can happen otherwise too. We read the Campbell and Love diaries he pulled, but we also had great discussions about Marjory Fleming's journal digitised by the National Library of Scotland and Elizabeth Jernigan's diary written aboard a whaling ship, curated by the Martha's Vineyard Museum.[7] The projects the class chose to do ultimately divided equally between texts we saw on campus and texts we consulted online. For many students, that access to what they could not otherwise see opened up a whole new understanding of the range of works produced by young people, a bigger picture they found remarkable.

I hope our combined endeavour leaves you with the sense that anyone can offer this kind of course, if they've a mind to it. As Mohala Kaliebe and Caroline Parker suggest in their entries, such repositories were never collected with the youth of the producers in mind, anyway. We all had to find the young creators in those collections—and locating juvenilia in the libraries, historical societies, and museums near you or using digital tools to find them in myriad websites across the globe expands everyone's horizons. Every section in this essay strives to contribute to that widening of our knowledge. We offer our accounts to show the ways that finding great partners, who can share, listen, and work together, lifts everyone higher.

NOTES

[1] "The Nelson Brothers Library of home-made books is kept in Archives and Special Collections at the Frost Library in Amherst College." For a description of the semester's coursework on these archival materials taught by Karen Sánchez-Eppler in Spring 2014 go to <www.ats.amherst.edu/childhood/exhibits/show/nelson/home/about/about-us>. For the Darwin children's marginalia, see "Children's Drawings & Stories" on the

American Museum of Natural History website at <www.amnh.org/research/darwin-manuscripts/surviving-pages-from-the-first-draft-of-the-origin/children-drawings>.

[2] "Letters of Lord Byron to His Mother, Catherine Gordon Byron., 1799–1809." National Library of Scotland MS.43409. Available on Adam Matthew's website *Nineteenth Century Literary Society* at <www.nineteenthcenturyliterarysociety.amdigital.co.uk>.

[3] ArchiveGrid "is a collection of millions of archival material descriptions, including MARC records from WorldCat and finding aids harvested from the web." This open-access resource is published by OCLC at <www.oclc.org/research/areas/research-collections/archivegrid.html>.

[4] T*he Carolina Chemist* is available on *Internet Archive* and *HathiTrust*. For vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1915), go to <ia800606.us.archive.org/23/items/carolinachemists1922may/Carolina chemists1922may.pdf.>; for vol. 8, no. 1 (May 19222), go to <ia800606.us.archive.org/23/items/carolinachemists1922may/carolinachemists1922may.pdf>.

[5] Two other books by Finberg that I consulted are *Early English Water-Colour Drawings of the Great Masters*, edited by Geoffrey Holme (The Studio, 1919), at <www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/65259/pg65259-images.html>; and *Turner's Sketches and Drawings*, 2nd ed. (Methuen, 1911). Other helpful sources were Ian *Turner's Sketchbooks* (Tate, 2014), Gerald Wilkinson and J. M. W. Turner, *Turner's Early Sketchbooks; Drawings in England, Wales and Scotland from 1789 to 1802* (Watson-Guptill, 1972), and Andrew Wilton, "Watercolors and Studies Relating to the Welsh and Marches Tours 1793–4," in *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolors*, edited by David Blayney Brown (Tate Research Publication, December 2012), at <www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/watercolours-and-studies-relating-to-the-welsh-and-marches-tours-r1141164>.

[6] Markham only expressed his skepticism in late 1925, after Crane had published her second collection, *Lava Lane*. *Time* magazine subsequently sent reporters to interview the Cranes; they witnessed Nathalia compose extempore and concluded that "Nathalia collects words the way a boy of her age collects postage stamps" ("Miscellany").

[7] See Marjory Fleming's journal at <digital.nls.uk/marjory-fleming/archive/100989212>; for Laura Jernigan's diary, go to *Laura Jernigan: Girl on a Whaleship* at <www.girlonawhaleship.org>.

WORKS CITED

Archer, Mark. "J. M. W. Turner Was a Hustler; How Did the Son of a Barber Become the First Popular Artist of the Modern Age?" Review of "The Extraordinary Life and Momentous Times of J. M. W. Turner" by Franny Moyle. *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, November 2016. *ProQuest*.

Bellew, Paul B. "Girl Wonder: Nathalia Crane, Poetic Prodigy of the 1920s." *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2022, pp. 38–64. doi:10.1017/S0021875821000505.

Burlock, Hillary. "Dancing into the Houses of Parliament: The Role of Balls in Georgian Electoral Campaigns." *Georgian Lords* (blog). *The History of Parliament*,

5 September 2019. historyofparliament.com/2019/09/05/dancing-into-the-houses-of-parliament-the-role-of-balls-to-georgian-electoral-campaigns/.

Burr, Christina. ""They Are Just Girls": Clara Bow's Star Persona, Female Adolescence, and the Flapper Youth Spectator." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 16, no. 3, Sept. 2023, pp.420–39. doi:10.1353/hcy.2023.a909988.

"*Carolina Scientific Magazine*." *Carolina Scientific*, www.carolinascientific.org/.

Clark, Lorna J. "Teaching 'the young idea how to shoot': The Juvenilia of the Burney Family." *Journey of Juvenilia Studies*, vol. 1, 2018, pp. 20–36.

Conrad, Rachel. *Time for Childhoods*. U of Massachusetts P, 2020.

Crane, Nathalia. *The Janitor's Boy, and Other Poems*. Thomas Seltzer, New York, 1924. archive.org/details/janitorsboyother00cran/mode/2up.

"David Herbert Killifer [D. H. Killeffer]." *Yackety Yack*, 2015, vol. 15. Publications Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *Internet Archive*, dn720404.ca.archive.org/0/items/yacketyyackseria1915univ/yacketyyackseria1915univ.pdf.

Elizabeth Rose Campbell Papers. Records #5294, Southern Historical Collection. Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/catalog/05294.

Exhibition of the Royal Academy. No. 28, Summer 1796. Royal Academy of Arts. www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/exhibition-catalogue/ra-sec-vol28-1796.

Finberg, A. J. *Notes on Four Pencil Drawings of J. M. W. Turner*. Chiswick Press, 1921.

Halverson, Cathryn. "Reading Little Girls' Texts in the 1920s: Searching for the 'Spirit of Childhood.'" *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1999, pp. 235–48. doi:10.1023/A%3A1022467821168.

Hirshbein, Laura Davidow. "The Flapper and the Fogy: Representations of Gender and Age in the 1920s." *Journal of Family History*, vol. 26, no.1, 2001, pp.112–37. doi:10.1177/036319900102600106.

Hunt, Tamara Lisa. *"To Take for Truth the Test of Ridicule": Public Perceptions, Political Controversy, and English Political Caricature, 1815–1821*. 1989. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, PhD Dissertation. ProQuest, www-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/dissertations-theses/take-truth-test-ridicule-public-perceptions/docview/303771778/se-2?accountid=14244.

Hutchinson, Sidney C. *The History of the Royal Academy 1768–1986*. Robert Royce, 1986.

Jeffries, W. L. [W. L. Jefferies], C. B. Carter, J. E. Hoover, D. H. Killeffer, and W. M. Boyst. "Editorials." *The Carolina Chemist*, January 1915, pp. 1–2. *HathiTrust*.

"Journal Club Notes." *The Carolina Chemist*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1915, pp. 2–3. *HathiTrust*.

Juvenile Journalists : Selected Amateur Newspapers. Nineteenth-Century Collections Online. Gale Cengage, www.gale.com/c/amateur-newspapers-from-the-american-antiquarian-society.

Killeffer, D. H. "The Chemist's Paymaster." *The Carolina Chemist*, vol. 8, no. 1, May 1922, pp. 11–13.

———. *The Genius of Industrial Research*. New York, Reinhold, 1948.

———. *Eminent American Chemists, a Collection of Portraits of Eminent Americans in the Field of Chemistry from the Earliest Days of the Republic to the Present, Together with Short Sketches of the Work of Each.* D. H. Killeffer, 1924.

———. *Six Decades of the Chemists' Club*. New York, The Chemists' Club, 1957.

Killifer, D. H. [D. H. Killeffer]. "Senior Class Poem." *Yackety Yack*, 1915, vol. 15. Publications Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *Internet Archive*, dn720404.ca.archive.org/0/items/yacketyyackseria1915univ/yacketyyackseria1915univ.pdf.

Kosik, Corryn. "George Cruikshank Biography." *Illustration History*. www.illustrationhistory.org/artists/george-cruikshank.

Langbauer, Laurie. "The Juvenile Tradition and the Fiction Factory, Part I: Wide-Awake Young Writers." *Journal of Juvenilia Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, December 2023, pp. 38–72. doi:10.29173/jjs93.

Lollipop Power, Inc. Record #4453, Southern Historical Collection. Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/catalog/04453.

Mary Tunstall Letter on Enslaved Child Betsy. Record #5249-z, Southern Historical Collection. Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/catalog/05249.

McCarron, Rebecca. "The Politicization of Girlhood: From the Gibson Girl to the National Woman's Party, 1895–1920." *Women's History Review*, 14 April 2020, pp. 1–25. doi:10.1080/09612025.2020.1744844.

"Miscellany: Markham v. Prodigy." *Time*, 23 November, 1925. time.com/archive/6862068/miscellany-markham-v-prodigy/

Moyle, Franny. *The Extraordinary and Momentous Life of J. M. W. Turner*. Penguin, 2016.

Odumosu, Temi, with David Schwittek, "Annotating *The New Union Club*: A Case Study on Critical Praxis for Digital Art Histories," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2025), doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2025.24.2.2.

Photographs of Nathalia Crane. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* Photographs. Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History, www.bklynlibrary.org/digitalcollections/items?search=nathalia%20crane.

"Poems Too Wise for Nathalia, Says Markham." *New York Herald Tribune* (1924–26), 14 November 1925, p. 11. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, ProQuest.

Records of the Alembic Club, 1901–1928. University Archives and Records Service, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Early records are under the name "the Journal Club."

Sadler, David. "Innocent Hearts: The Child Authors of the 1920s." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1992, pp. 24–30. doi:10.1353/chq.0.0883.

Schild, Joan Lynn. "George Cruikshank, Caricaturist." *University of Rochester Library Bulletin*, vol. 14, no. 1, Autumn 1958. rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/2486.

Simpson, Nicole. *Prints on Display: Exhibitions of Etching and Engraving in England 1770–1858*. 2018. The City University New York, PhD Dissertation. ProQuest, www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/prints-on-display-exhibitions-etching-engraving/docview/2018856276/se-2?accountid=14244.

Sloan, Catherine. "School Magazines, Collective Cultures, and the Making of Late Victorian Periodical Culture." *The Edinburgh History of Children's Periodicals*, Edinburgh UP, pp. 172–93.

Thorne, R. G. "Age, Family and Parliamentary Experience." *The History of Parliament*. www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/survey/iii-members.

Todd, John. Introduction. *Memoir and Poetical Remains of Henry Kirke White; Also Melancholy Hours*. Boston, Phillips, Sampson, 1850, pp. 11–55. Google Books.

"The Turner Bequest." The National Gallery. www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/history/the-turner-bequest.

Turner, J. M. W. *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*. 1793, graphite, Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC. www.ackland.emuseum.com/objects/18919/arch-of-the-old-abbey-evesham?ctx=8f77b6e33526f10251280c4887160aff93d446ee&idx=0.

———. *Arch of the Old Abbey, Evesham*. 1793, watercolor, RISD Museum, Providence, RD; risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/arch-old-abbey-evesham-6915460.

———. *All Saints Church*. 1793, graphite, British Museum. www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1958-0712-398.

———. *Hereford*. 1793, graphite, British Museum, www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1958-0712-396.

———. *Old Ruins*. 1793, graphite, British Museum. www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1958-0712-397.

———. *Self-Portrait*. 1791–1793, oil on canvas, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Indianapolis, IN. collections.discovernewfields.org/art/artwork/35136.

———. *Tewkesbury Abbey*. 1793, graphite, British Museum, www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1958-0712-389.

Yackety Yack. 2015, vol. 15. University of North Carolina. *HathiTrust*.