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## USM Gets Collection of Children's Books

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# USM gets collection of children's books

● The donated 2,100 volumes include one that dates back to 1815.

By **AMY SUTHERLAND**

*Staff Writer*

As a child growing up in Arlington, Mass., Barbara Winn Adams was inspired to read by the local librarian, a woman named Edith Rice. Reading led to collecting, and getting her hands on children's books became a passion for Adams. She started in her 20s, and by the time she died last fall at age 86 she had amassed 2,100 volumes, which filled shelf after shelf in the basement of her Maryland home.

The University of Southern Maine announced this week that the collection, named for Rice and valued at \$23,000, had been donated to the school's Glickman Family Library. It is an usually large donation of books for the library and will take months for the staff to catalogue.

Most of the books sit in dozens of boxes at USM, but the library's director, Steve Bloom, had a dozen or so of the books in his office Friday to show off.



*Staff photo by John Ewing*

**A cache of children's books has been donated to the USM library, many from the 19th century.**

There was an 1815 edition of "Display: A Tale for Young People" by Jane Reynolds. Tucked in it is a price tag that lists 10 English pounds. Bloom also had out a bulky edition of "The Scottish Chiefs" by Jane Porter, a 1921 book with the

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# BOOKS

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richly colored, dramatic illustrations of N.C. Wyeth. There was a 1919 edition of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," a copy of Ogden Nash's first book, "The Cricket of Carador," and a 1938 oversized picture book featuring Babar the elephant.

Some of the books are well-worn, their pages yellowing with age and their jackets tattered. The wear evidences the many hours they were read. "Regular, everyday people would have bought these books for their children," Bloom said.

Adams' daughter, Susana Adams, arranged the donation. Susana, 56, earned a degree in music education from USM in 1997; she still lives in Portland and teaches music in the area.

Her mother had been looking for a home for her collection before she died but couldn't find a library that had room for it in its entirety. Susana chose USM because it has courses on children's literature in the education department and because there is an annual summer institute on children's literature there.

Susana's father was a medical

librarian who headed the National Institute of Health's library. Her mother was a homemaker who spent her spare time tracking down books for her collection. She ordered many of her books from England and regularly patronized a bookstore in Philadelphia.

Typically, collectors focus on one aspect, but Barbara Winn Adams acquired an eclectic collection. It included folk tales from other countries, children's books, about 40 first editions and books on children's literature.

Her mother read to her all the time when Susana was a child, even recording readings of children's books to her. She also gave her books to read on her own. Susana was then expected to write a book report.

"I'd start each one by saying, 'This is my most favorite book,'" she said.

The collection will not circulate. It will be available for use in the library. Eventually, it will be housed in a special collections room to be constructed on the sixth floor.

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