

Re-animating an Out-of-Print Picture Book: The Case of Mary Liddell's *Little Machinery*

In my presentation, I will talk about how I transformed a portion of a dissertation chapter about Mary Liddell Wehle's picture book, *Little Machinery* (1926), into an article (*Children's Literature* 34) and ultimately into a book project: *Little Machinery: A Critical Facsimile Edition*, published by Wayne State University Press with a foreword by John R. Stilgoe (2009). I will discuss how my dissertation research and my ChLA Award-winning article—in which I took a critical approach to an out-of-print picture book and sought publisher permission to reproduce images from that text—turned into an investigative and editorial project. Because of my enthusiasm for the Constructivist-inspired imagery and the post-industrial implications of the original text, I pitched a new edition to publishers who might republish a four-color text with a small print run. I met and worked with the Wehle family to both honor Mary Liddell Wehle and represent the book accurately, secured generous subvention funding from my university, and collaborated with Professor of Landscape History John Stilgoe, who served as a reader on the prospectus and ultimately contributed an introductory essay to the project. I learned a different kind of scholarship while completing this project, which required me to take an editorial role as well as champion a long-lost yet significant text. I intended *Little Machinery* as a teaching volume, and I am grateful that this rare picture book has enjoyed a small but enthusiastic new readership among graduate students and longtime colleagues in studies of visual/verbal texts.