

## Early American Children's Periodicals Written and Edited by Children

It has long been known that late nineteenth and early twentieth century children's magazines *St. Nicholas* and *The Children's Magazine* had a profound impact on American Children's literature. However, the role which children themselves played in creating and promoting the genre earlier in the nineteenth century has been entirely neglected. Fueled by benevolent postal regulations and cheap paper, post-revolutionary war America saw a rapid expansion in the number of newspapers and periodicals offered for sale and subscription. This boom provided opportunities for many new formats, and also made space for publications by authors and editors who would normally have been excluded from professional publishing ventures. The years 1790-1835 saw a rapid expansion in the numbers of children's magazines published. Many of these periodicals closely resembled British publications like the *Juvenile Repository* and the *Lilliputian Magazine*, but there were also significant deviations from the established models that reflected the new nation's religious and political preoccupations. One of the most interesting aspects of these very early periodicals was that they were not only written for children, but at times they were written and edited by children. Five of the first twelve children's magazines published in the United States: *The Fly*, *The Juvenile Port-folio*, *The Parlour Companion*, *The Dawn* and *The Juvenile Museum*, were published by editors in their teens. In addition to these "professional" publications, the period also saw a wide range of amateur child-authored magazines such as *The Thespian Mirror* (1805), *The Bung-Town Patriot* (1825), and *The Juvenile Gazette* (1827)—all professionally printed and offered for subscription. A smaller number of hand-drawn periodicals are also archived at the American Antiquarian Society. These works were created by small collections of young friends or relatives and their titles include *The Juvenile Muse* (1795), *The Flower* (1827), and *The Juvenile Rambler* (1833). Taken together, these creations provide fascinating insights into contemporary education and child-life, as well as shedding light on the evolution of a form of media that would come to dominate American children's literature in the following decades.