



Color within the Lines **Dick** and **Jane**



For millions of children growing up in the mid-20th century, learning to read started with just a few simple words: “See Dick. See Jane.” First introduced in 1930, these iconic storybooks became the gold standard for teaching American children how to read.



With their bright watercolor illustrations and repetitive stories, Dick and Jane became household names. Beyond teaching reading, these books modeled the “ideal” everyday life, family values, and social norms of the post-World War II era.

About the Exhibit

The framed reproductions of lithographs and pages from oversized instructional flipbooks, in addition to all but two of the published materials on display here, are part of the *Barbara Pfeifer McVey Collection of Children's Literature*.

A Publishing Phenomenon

At the peak of their popularity in the 1950s, nearly 80% of primary school classrooms in the United States used these readers. Success was so overwhelming that competing publishers rushed to create their own versions, resulting in copycat titles like *Alice and Jerry* and *Bob and Judy*.

About Barbara McVey

An alumna of Fort Hays State who graduated with a degree in Elementary Education in 1964, Barbara McVey is a retired reading specialist. She began collecting early childhood readers during her teaching career before donating her collection to Tebo Library's Special Collections & University Archives in 2021.