

William Wallace Denslow

William Wallace Denslow (/ˈdɛnsloʊs/; May 5, 1856 – March 29, 1915), professionally **W. W. Denslow**, was an American illustrator and caricaturist remembered for his work in collaboration with author L. Frank Baum, especially his illustrations of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.^[1] Denslow was an editorial cartoonist with a strong interest in politics, which has fueled political interpretations of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

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Biography

Born in Philadelphia, Denslow spent brief periods at the National Academy of Design and the Cooper Union in New York, but was largely self-educated and self-trained. In the 1880s, he traveled about the United States as an artist and newspaper reporter; he came to Chicago for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, and chose to stay. Denslow acquired his earliest reputation as a poster artist; he also designed books and bookplates, and was the first artist invited to work at the Roycroft Press.^[2]

Denslow may have met Baum at the Chicago Press Club, where both men were members. Besides *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Denslow also illustrated Baum's books *By the Candelabra's Glare*, *Father Goose: His Book*, and *Dot and Tot of Merryland*. Baum and Denslow held the copyrights to most of these works jointly.

After Denslow quarreled with Baum over royalty shares from the 1902 stage adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz*, for which Baum wrote the script and Denslow designed the sets and costumes, Baum determined not to work with him again. (As co-copyright-holder, Denslow demanded an equal share in royalties with Baum and composer Paul Tietjens.) Denslow illustrated an edition of traditional nursery rhymes titled *Denslow's Mother Goose* (1901), along with *Denslow's Night Before Christmas* (1902) and the 18-volume *Denslow's Picture Books* series (1903–04).^[3] He also used his copyright to the art of the Baum books to

W. W. Denslow



William Wallace Denslow, photographed in 1900

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| Born | May 5, 1856 <div>Philadelphia,<div>Pennsylvania, U.S.</div></div> |
| Died | March 29, 1915 (aged 58) <div>New York City, New York, U.S.</div> |
| Nationality | American |
| Education | National Academy of Design <div>Cooper Union</div> |
| Known for | Illustration |
| Notable work | <i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i> <div>collaborations with L. Frank Baum</div> |

create newspaper comic strips featuring Father Goose and the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman during the first decade of the twentieth century. He also created the comic strip Billy Bounce, notable as one of the earliest comic strips in which the protagonist has some manner of super powers.^[4]

The royalties from the print and stage versions of The Wizard of Oz were sufficient to allow Denslow to purchase Bluck's Island, Bermuda,^{[5][6]} and crown himself **King Denslow I**.

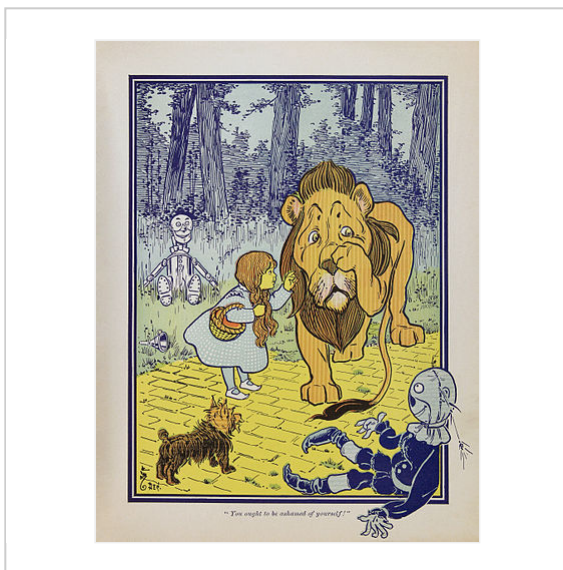
Denslow wrote and illustrated a children's book called The Pearl and the Pumpkin.



The Black Sheep, from a 1901 edition of Mother Goose



Denslow's illustration for "There was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe", from a 1901 edition of Mother Goose



Dorothy meets the Cowardly Lion, from the first edition of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Personal life

Denslow had three wives and three divorces in his lifetime. His first wife, Annie McCartney (née, Anna M. Lowe, 1856-1908) married him in 1882 and gave birth to his only child, a son, the following year. The couple were already separated, however, and Denslow never saw his son. They finally divorced in 1896, freeing her to marry the man she lived with for five months. That same day, February 20, 1896, Denslow married Anne Holden Denslow, the daughter of Martha Holden, writer.^[7] The marriage did not last long either. Anne filed for divorce in September 1903, alleging that he told her in June 1901 that he did not love her and henceforth declined to live with her. In less than a month she married a young artist, their friend, Lawrence Mazzanovich, and left with him for Paris. Denslow then married his third wife, Mrs. Frances G. Doolittle December 24. Frances left him in 1906 and they finally divorced in 1911. He changed his will in 1914, leaving his estate to a fourth woman.^[8]



The footstone of William Wallace Denslow in Kensico Cemetery, featuring his seahorse insignia and images of the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman

References

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3. *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, pp. lii-lvi.
4. "Don Markstein's Toonopedia: Billy Bounce" (<http://www.toonopedia.com/b-bounce.htm>). Toonopedia.com. Retrieved 2012-04-16.
5. *GeoNames* (<http://www.geonames.org/search.html?country=BM&q=>), retrieved August 6, 2009
6. "In the Real Estate Field" (<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1908/06/05/104729120.pdf>) (PDF), *The New York Times*, June 5, 1908, retrieved August 6, 2009
7. Frank Joslyn Baum, Russell P. MacFall. *To please a child: a biography of L. Frank Baum, royal historian of Oz.* p. 97.
8. "Decree to Mrs. Denslow" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20121104144947/http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/chicagotribune/access/407329571.html?dids=407329571%3A407329571&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS%3AAI>). *Chicago Daily Tribune*. 1903-09-17. p. 7. Archived from the original (<https://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/chicagotribune/access/407329571.html?dids=407329571:407329571&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:AI>) on 2012-11-04. Retrieved 2010-12-03. (subscription required)

External links

- Works by William Wallace Denslow ([https://www.gutenberg.org/author/Denslow,+W.+W.+\(William+Wallace\)](https://www.gutenberg.org/author/Denslow,+W.+W.+(William+Wallace))) at Project Gutenberg
- Works by or about William Wallace Denslow (<https://archive.org/search.php?query=%28%28subject%3A%22Denslow%2C%20William%20Wallace%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22Denslow%2C%20William%20W%2E%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22Denslow%2C%20W%2E%20W%2E%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22William%20Wallace%20Denslow%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22William%20W%2E%20Denslow%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22W%2E%20W%2E%20Denslow%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22Denslow%2C%20William%22%20OR%20subject%3A%22Willia>)

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- Works by William Wallace Denslow (<https://librivox.org/author/2451>) at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks) ◀▶
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- DHS Denslow Seahorse (<http://www.dardhunter.com/wwdens.html>) at www.dardhunter.com
- *Denslow's Humpty Dumpty* (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/juv.96775>) From the Collections at the Library of Congress
- *Denslow's Mother Goose* (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/goudy.25765>) From the Collections at the Library of Congress
- *Denslow's Three Bears* (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/juv.96794>) From the Collections at the Library of Congress

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