



# COMICS!

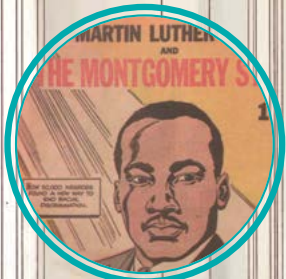
AN AMERICAN HISTORY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE  
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

## INSIDE



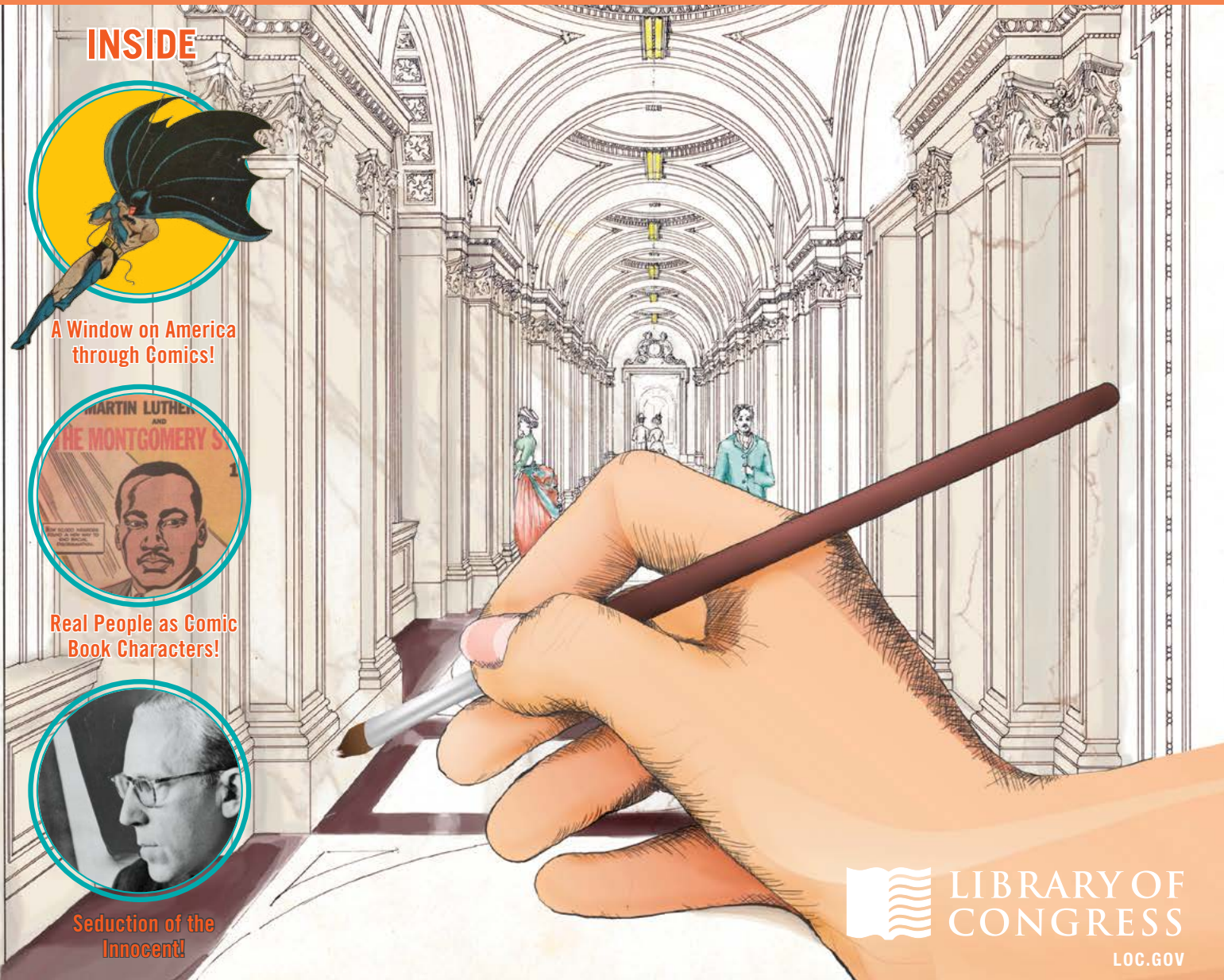
A Window on America  
through Comics!



Real People as Comic  
Book Characters!



Seduction of the  
Innocent!



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PLUS

Birth of Spider-Man

| Lynda Carter & Wondrous Women

| Webcomics & Webculture





Desiree Woodard, winner of the costume contest held as part of "Library of Awesome" events at the Library in June, poses in front of her muse, Minerva, in the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building. *Shawn Miller*



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

Library of Congress Magazine  
Vol. 6 No. 5: September/October 2017

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[news@loc.gov](mailto:news@loc.gov)  
[loc.gov/lcm](http://loc.gov/lcm)  
ISSN 2169-0855 (print)  
ISSN 2169-0863 (online)

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**ON THE COVER:** An original architectural drawing by Smithmeyer & Pelz (from between 1889 and 1896) of the first floor corridor in the Thomas Jefferson Building is the basis for our comic-book cover tribute. *Photo illustration by Ashley Jones*

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**LCM online:** loc.gov/lcm



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Poet Laureate  
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## FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN

In an act of superheroic proportions, an anonymous donor in 2008 presented to the Library the original artwork by Steve Ditko for Marvel Comics' "Amazing Fantasy #15"—the comic book that introduced Spider-Man in August 1962.

This unique set of drawings for 24 pages features the story of the origin of the costumed hero along with three other short stories—all written by Stan Lee and illustrated by Ditko—for the same issue: "The Bell-Ringer," "Man in the Mummy Case" and "There Are Martians Among Us."

The black-and-white, large-format drawings (21 x 15 inches) detail the transformation of high school bookworm Peter Parker into Spider-Man. He is bitten by a radioactive spider, discovers his new powers and develops his now well-known disguise.

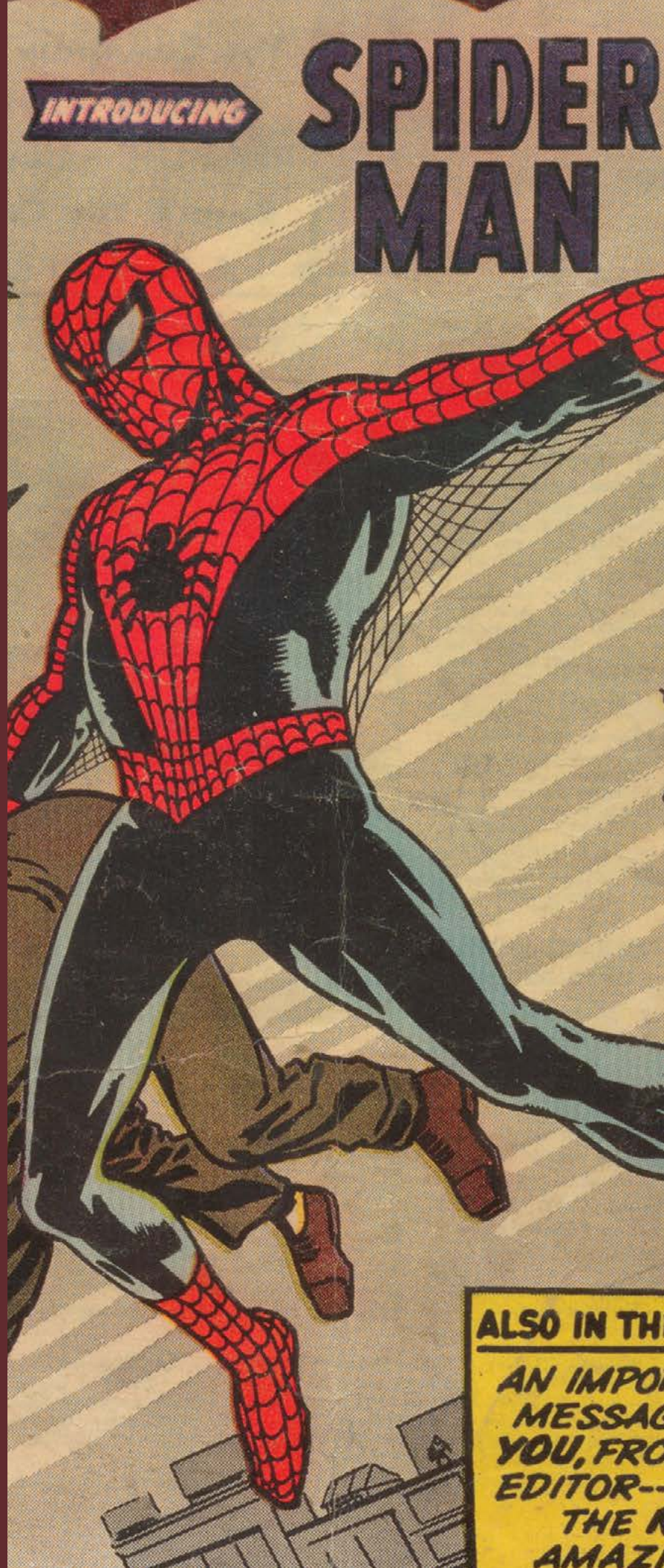
The story, published at the dawn of what would be known as the Silver Age of comics, showed no real inkling of the worldwide phenomenon that Spider-Man would become. Almost apologetically, the opening paragraph reads "Like costume heroes? Confidentially, we in the comic mag business refer to them as 'long underwear characters'! And, as you know, they're a dime a dozen! But, we think you may find our SPIDERMAN just a bit ... different!"

The first episode concludes with several of the most famous lines attached to the story of Spider-Man: "With great power there must also come great responsibility ... and so a legend is born and a new name is added to the roster of those who make the world of fantasy the most exciting realm of all."

### ► MORE INFORMATION

"Spider-Man!" from *Amazing Fantasy No. 15*  
[loc.gov/item/2016687393/](http://loc.gov/item/2016687393/)

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# SPIDER-MAN!



LIKE COSTUME HEROES? CONFIDENTIALLY, WE IN THE COMIC MAG BUSINESS REFER TO THEM AS "LONG UNDERWEAR CHARACTERS"! AND, AS YOU KNOW, THEY'RE A DIME A DOZEN! BUT, WE THINK YOU MAY FIND OUR **SPIDERMAN** JUST A BIT... DIFFERENT!

SAY, GANG, WE NEED ONE MORE GUY FOR THE DANCE! HOW ABOUT **PETER PARKER** OVER THERE?

ARE YOU **KIDDIN'?** THAT BOOKWORM WOULDN'T KNOW A CHA-CHA FROM A WALTZ!

**PETER PARKER?** HE'S MIDTOWN HIGH'S ONLY PROFESSIONAL WALL FLOWER!



Stan Lee + S. DITKO

V-789 1



# WONDROUS WOMEN OF COMICS

SERIALS REFERENCE SPECIALIST MEGAN HALSBAND SHARES A FEW OF HER FAVORITES FROM THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION OF SOME 140,000 COMIC BOOKS.



## ALL STAR NO. 8 (DECEMBER 1941/ JANUARY 1942)

Though this issue features the Justice Society of America, it is best known for the first appearance of Wonder Woman, created by William Moulton Marston. Wonder Woman has undergone many changes to her powers and her costume during the last 75 years, yet has remained a feminist icon for readers around the world. (see page 20)



## MARGE'S LITTLE LULU NO. 25 (JULY 1950)

First appearing in 1935, Little Lulu, created by pioneering cartoonist Marjorie Henderson Buell, was an independent girl who broke gender stereotypes in the male-dominated comics stories of the day.



## WIMMEN'S COMIX NO. 1 (1972)

This early all-female underground comix anthology featured artists such as Trina Robbins, Diane Nootin and Aline Kominsky-Crumb, who were often not included in the other underground comix titles and series published at the time.



## CAPTAIN MARVEL NO. 1 (1989)

Monica Rambeau was the first woman to be known as Captain Marvel. Along with Butterfly, Storm and Vixen, Monica Rambeau was an early black female superhero, and one of the first to have her own title.



**BATGIRL NO. 1  
(APRIL 2000)**

Cassandra Cain, daughter of assassins David Cain and Lady Shiva (Sandra Wu-San), takes up the role of Batgirl in this series. Initially mute and illiterate, Cassandra is later trained by both Barbara Gordon (Batgirl/Oracle) and Batman.

**PRINCESS (2013)**

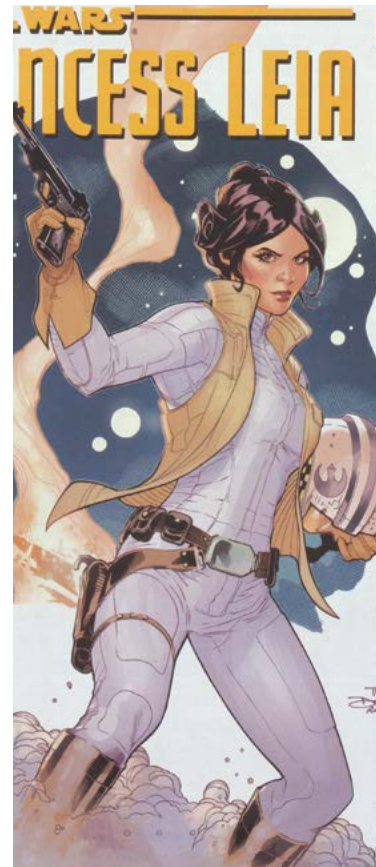
Princessless tells the story of Princess Adrienne, a strong brave black girl who questions traditional princess stereotypes by not only rescuing herself, but by setting out to rescue her sisters.

**MS. MARVEL NO. 1  
(APRIL 2014)**

Kamala Khan, a Muslim-American teenager, becomes Ms. Marvel after Carol Danvers assumes the role of Captain Marvel. Co-created by Sana Amanat, who is Pakistani-American, this new series is redefining what it means to be a superhero.

**PRINCESS LEIA  
NO. 1 (MAY 2015)**

Despite being one of the most famous female characters in science fiction, this is the first eponymous series for Princess Leia, who has been a featured character in Star Wars comics since 1977.



Wonder Woman, Batgirl © DC Comics; Little Lulu, 1950 © Dell Comics; Wimmen's Comix #1, 1972 © Last Gasp; Captain Marvel, Ms. Marvel, Princess Leia © Marvel Entertainment LLC; Princessless © Action Labs Comics

## STROKE OF PEN, BRUSH OF INK

**CURATOR OF POPULAR AND APPLIED GRAPHIC ART SARA DUKE EXPLAINS HOW ORIGINAL ART IN COMICS OFFERS BEHIND-THE-SCENES INSIGHT INTO THE THINKING AND COLLABORATION THAT GO INTO CREATING COMICS FOR PUBLICATION.**

We encourage researchers who come to the Library to examine the more than 128,000 original cartoon drawings and prints in our holdings. Often, they find dialogue—between artist and writer, between artist and colorist or between editor and artist—not conveyed in a published comic. The creative spark may be beautifully rendered in the print version. But if you want to fully understand the art and collaboration that went into its creation, you need to look at the original.

Since acquiring a trove of copyright deposit satirical prints in the 19th century and 10,000 British cartoon prints in the 1920s, the Library of Congress has celebrated and collected the Ninth Art—a term for graphic narrative coined in France in the 1960s and used by people who study comics as works of art. Original drawings by individual cartoonists have expanded the collections, as have major donations by Caroline and Erwin Swann, Art Wood, Ben and Beatrice Goldstein and Herblock. For decades now, the Library has dedicated physical exhibition space to original caricature and cartoon.

Here is an example of the value of original comic art. Both Stan Lee and Steve Ditko claim credit for creating the massively popular character Spider-Man (see page 2). In the marginalia of the original pages of *Amazing Fantasy* No. 15, in which Spider-Man debuts, Lee wrote Ditko a short note about art that had been inked: “Steve, make this a sedan—no arms hanging—don’t imply wild reckless driving.” Other comments and alterations, either approved or ignored by Ditko, appear throughout the story.

Cartoonist Milton Caniff, famous for the comic strips “Terry and the Pirates” and “Steve Canyon,” provides another example. Many scholars have looked at his art solely in reproduction, which highlights his ability to



Shawn Miller

spin a great yarn. But Caniff was more than a raconteur: He was a brilliant artist. To fully appreciate Caniff’s mastery of the ink brush, you have to see his work in person. In addition, he scraped out ink with a pin to redirect and control his line and create texture.

The role of the colorist in creating beautiful Sunday newspaper comics has been forgotten. But in the early days, artists often used watercolor to show how the page should appear. Rose O’Neill, for her comic strip “Kewpies,” used her colorist to full advantage. On one drawing in the Art Wood Collection, she wrote a long letter to a Miss Hess in the margins, implying that Miss Hess had contributed significantly to its appearance.

Not everyone can visit the Library in person, of course. For those of you who can’t, our Prints and Photographs Division has placed selected works online; online versions of Library exhibitions of original caricature and cartoon art are also available.

### ► MORE INFORMATION

**Prints and Photographs Division**  
[loc.gov/rr/print/](http://loc.gov/rr/print/)

**Online Comics at the Library**  
[loc.gov/photos/?q=comics](http://loc.gov/photos/?q=comics)





Shawn Miller

**▶ MORE INFORMATION:**

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loc.gov/exhibits/

**IN JANUARY 2017, THE LIBRARY INTRODUCED** a new space in the Thomas Jefferson Building for short-term “pop-up” displays to further showcase a wide variety of its vast collections. “We have so many treasures here and love sharing them,” said Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden. “Our major exhibitions are wonderful, but these pop-ups will allow us to have a wider variety

of items for visitors to see.” The pop-ups are the latest in a series of steps by Hayden to make America’s library and its treasures more accessible on-site. The first of these, curated by the Library’s expert staff, featured items related to presidential inaugurations, LGBTQ+ collections and comic books (pictured above).





# THE GREATEST COMIC BOOK VILLAIN?

How a mild-mannered psychiatrist concerned with the welfare of children nearly destroyed the American comic book industry in the 1950s.

BY JOHN SAYERS

He has caused more carnage in comics than Lex Luthor, Magneto, the Red Skull and the Joker combined.

Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham (1895–1981) is considered by many fans to be the most notorious villain in the history of comics. His landmark volume “Seduction of the Innocent” capped a decades-long anti-comics crusade, led to congressional hearings and resulted in the end of entire genres of comic books on America’s newsstands.

The Library acquired Wertham’s papers in 1987, through the estate of his wife, Florence Hesketh Wertham. In May 2010, some 82,000 items were opened to public research access in the Manuscript Division. The papers of this key figure in the history of comics—comprising letters, research notes, photos and annotated copies of actual comic books—have captured the interest of researchers ever since.

Prints and Photographs Division

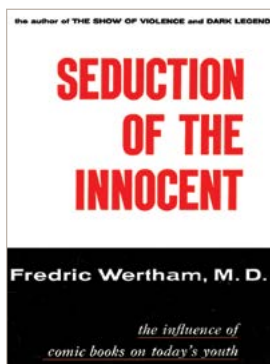




Wertham was born in Munich, Germany, on March 20, 1895. He received his degree in 1921, then moved to the U.S. to teach at Johns Hopkins University and practice at the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic. In 1932, he moved to New York City to run the Court of General Sessions psychiatric clinic, which examined every convicted felon in the city. In 1936, he became director of Bellevue's Mental Hygiene Clinic and later director of psychiatric services at Queens Hospital Center.

A respected witness in criminal cases, his research on the detrimental effects of segregation was used in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* court case. Wertham also founded an outpatient facility providing care to poor children.

When comic books became widely popular in the 1940s, they consisted of dozens of genres and hundreds of titles enjoyed by millions of Americans of all ages. Wertham became concerned the violence depicted in certain comics—both realistic and fantastical—was having a dangerous effect on young children. He shared these views in lectures and articles through the late 1940s and early 1950s.



In his 1954 opus, “Seduction of the Innocent,” Wertham detailed blatant or subliminal depictions of violence, sex, drug use and other adult content in “crime comics”—a term he used to describe not only the adult gangster-

oriented titles of the time but also superhero and horror comics—and asserted that this material encouraged similar behavior in children. He made his points using lurid illustrations from some of the most horrific comics of the day. Even the most beloved superheroes—Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman—did not escape his critical assessment.

In the 2014 anthology “Comics Through Time,” Diana Green observed, “While there was ample anecdotal evidence to support Wertham’s view of comics as a cause for adolescent violence, his methodology was flawed. However, in the 1950s Cold War climate, this did not prevent his ideas from taking hold.”

“Seduction” created a nationwide sensation, with excerpts appearing in *Reader’s Digest* and *Ladies Home Journal*.

Marvel Comics creator Stan Lee later observed that Wertham “said things that impressed the public, and it was like shouting fire in a theater. It started a whole crusade against comics.”

The public outcry led to hearings on comic books convened by Sen. Estes Kefauver. Wertham testified several times before the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency on the harmfulness of comics, using gruesome illustrations from his book to make his points. Attempts by publishers to refute Wertham’s vivid testimony were largely ignored.

The subcommittee’s findings forced comic publishers to self-police, creating the Comics Code Authority (CCA) and developing a series of guidelines and content prohibitions for comics. Vendors and distributors would not display comic books without the CCA seal of approval, leading to newsstands filled only with sanitized comics suitable for the youngest readers.

Wertham’s legacy reverberates among comic-book fandom. His work effectively changed comic books in the U.S. from an all-ages medium to one designed just for children until the underground comix explosion of the 1960s and relaxation of CCA standards in the 1970s. In other parts of the world, comics for different ages and audiences flourished. Since Wertham’s papers were opened at the Library of Congress in 2010, scholars have pored over his patient studies, draft writings and annotated comics to reassess his findings.

“I think he was part of a movement that is uniquely American—this need to protect children from adult life—that started in the 1950s,” said Sara Duke, curator of the Library’s comic arts collections. “It was the same movement that said every child ought to graduate from high school and have the opportunity to go to college. Until we can synthesize Wertham in his time, he will be demonized by historians for changing the comic-book industry and affecting the way generations of adults see comic books.”

—Erin Allen, a writer-editor in the Office of Communications from 2006 to 2017, contributed to this article.

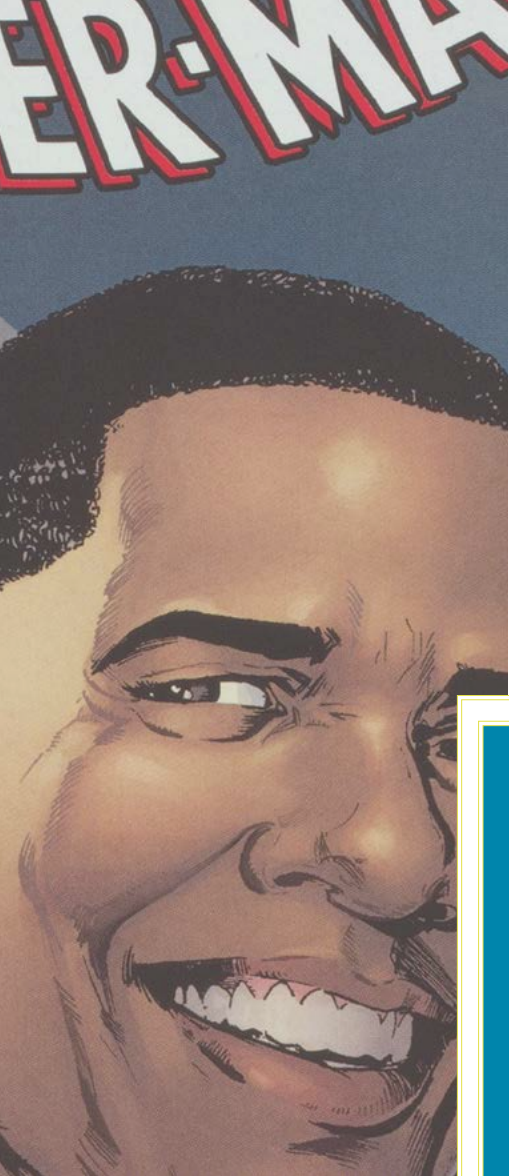
#### ▶ MORE INFORMATION

**Frederic Wertham Papers at the Library**  
[lccn.loc.gov/mm87062110](http://lccn.loc.gov/mm87062110)

**Video: “Frederic Wertham and the Anti-Comics Crusade”**  
[go.usa.gov/xNGjQ](http://go.usa.gov/xNGjQ)

**“Papers of Comic-Book ‘Villain’ Open at Library,” Aug. 27, 2010**  
[go.usa.gov/xRZ5g](http://go.usa.gov/xRZ5g)





# Presidents, Rock Stars & Other Heroes

■ REAL PEOPLE IN COMICS



AMELIA EARHART  
(1891 - 1937)

OF ALL WOMEN AVIATORS WHO EVER LIVED, AMELIA EARHART HAS BEEN THE MOST FAMOUS AND MOST PUBLICIZED. NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES GAVE EXTRAVAGANT SPACE TO EVERYTHING SHE DID. BUT IT WAS NOT THE THOUGHT OF FAME THAT INSPIRED THE DARING EXPLOITS OF THIS HEROINE OF THE AIR... IT WAS THE INSATIABLE DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

AS A YOUNG GIRL IN ATCHINSON, KANSAS, A HOME-MADE ROLLER COASTER MARKED AMELIA EARHART'S "FIRST FLIGHT"...



- U.S. comic books have not been solely the realm of fantastic characters with supernatural powers. The lives and work of actual people have also been rendered in graphic form.

BY WENDI A. MALONEY

When civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis was a young boy growing up on his family’s farm outside of Troy, Alabama, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. moved him deeply. He recalls listening to King on the radio. But he also learned about King’s work from a more surprising source: a comic book. People often think of comics as the realm of superheroes and villains, but comics—both nonfiction and fiction—have incorporated real people from the start.

“Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story” recounts the Montgomery Bus Boycott in which King, Rosa Parks and tens of thousands of others protested segregation on city buses in Montgomery, Alabama. The 16-page comic was published in December 1957.

“This book became like a road map for those of us that got involved in the American civil rights movement,” Lewis told an audience of students at the Library of Congress earlier this year. The comic also inspired Lewis many years later to tell his own story using graphic narrative in the trilogy “March.” Its third volume was the first graphic novel to win the National Book Award, in 2016.

Illustrated by Nate Powell and co-authored by Lewis’ congressional aide Andrew Aydin—a comic book fan like Lewis—the civil rights memoir takes its title from the 1965 protest marches in Selma, Alabama.

Nonfiction graphic narratives featuring real people have a long history, notes Sara Duke, curator of popular and applied graphic art at the Library of Congress. But the genre expanded exponentially after “Maus” by cartoonist Art Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992, the first graphic novel to do so. It tells the story of Spiegelman’s father, a Holocaust survivor, and depicts Nazis as cats and Jews as mice.

Real people have made cameos in popular fictional comics ever since mass-market comic books first appeared in the late 1930s. Since then, celebrities, musicians, political figures, villains—



the list goes on—have shown up in comics. Some have even had starring roles.

Adolf Hitler was among the first to make a cameo in mainstream superhero comics. In Captain America Comics No. 1, published in March 1941, a red-white-and-blue-bedecked Captain America punches Hitler, knocking him off his feet.

“Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, the creators of Captain America, intend readers to understand how the costume’s visual appearance speaks to the core American values of liberty and equality that the hero embodies,” explains comics scholar

**Above:** Rep. John Lewis signs copies of his Walter Award-winning graphic novel, “March: Book 3,” at a reception in the Library’s Members Room. *Shawn Miller*

**Opposite, top from left:** Details from Amazing Spider-Man No. 583, featuring President Barack Obama, 2009; Howard the Duck No. 13 featuring Kiss, 1977; Captain America No. 1, 1941 | © *Marvel Entertainment LLC* and a detail from “Wonder Women of History: Amelia Earhart,” Wonder Woman No. 23, 1947 | © *DC Comics*





Detail from "Wonder Women of History: Sojourner Truth," Wonder Woman No. 23, 1947 | © DC Comics

Nick Katsiadis of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. "Hitler, on the other hand, embodies ideas against which our hero must fight."

Wonder Woman is the most popular female superhero ever and the first to have her own comic book: Wonder Woman No. 1 appeared in summer 1942. Psychologist William Moulton Marston—the inventor of the lie-detector test—created Wonder Woman as a strong, courageous woman meant to inspire self-confidence and achievement in young girls.

Wonder Woman debuted another novel feature as well: backup stories about real women trailblazers. "What better way to promote strong women than to show that there are also superwomen in everyday life?" asks Georgia Higley, head of the Library's Newspaper Section.

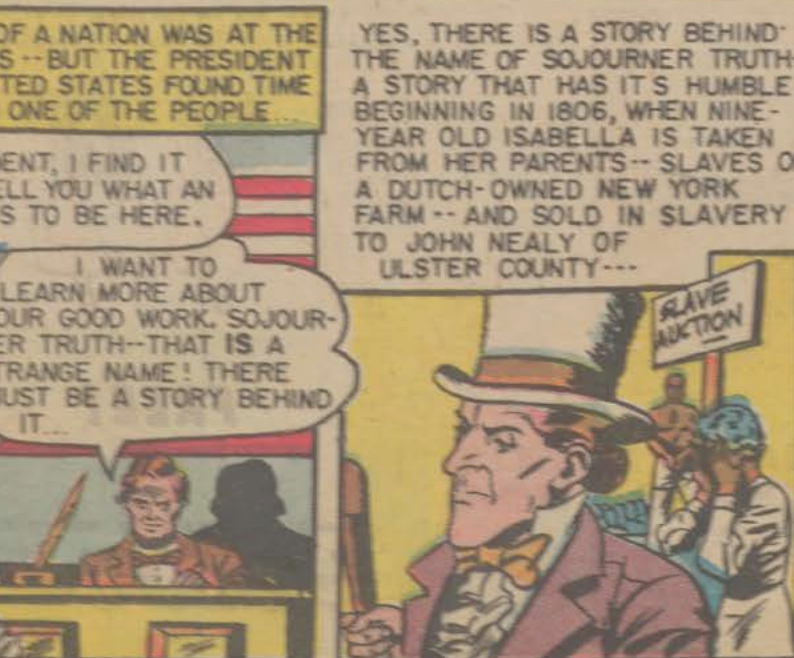
Alice Marble, a top-rated tennis star, proposed the series to Wonder Woman's publisher and served as its associate editor. Florence Nightingale occupied a four-page spread in the first issue, followed by Abigail Adams, Carrie Chapman Catt, Madame Curie, Helen Keller, Sojourner Truth and dozens of others.

U.S. presidents have appeared in countless comic book issues—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton among them. When 2008 presidential candidate Barack Obama let it be known that he once collected Spider-Man and Conan the Barbarian comics, he quickly became an industry and fan favorite and was depicted variously as Batman, Superman, the Green Hornet and others.

A week before Obama's inauguration, The Amazing Spider-Man No. 583 carried a bonus story titled "Spidey Meets the President!" The issue reportedly sold out within minutes of publication.

"Presidents often take on the attributes of superheroes. But they are not always favorably represented in mainstream comics—some are in league with supervillains," says Katsiadis. "The president's function as a figurehead makes the position ripe with imaginary potential for storytelling."

Icons of popular culture have long been folded into comic plots. Director Orson Welles helps Superman prevent an invasion from Mars in Superman No. 62 (1950); the rock band Kiss makes the first of many







comic book appearances in *Howard the Duck* No. 12 (1977); Bruce Springsteen performs as “Brick Springstern” in *Transformers* No. 14 (1986); and basketball superstar Charles Barkley bests Godzilla in *Godzilla v. Barkley* (1993).

More recently, characters from the television series “Glee” mix with the kids from *Riverdale High*

School in four issues of *Archie* Nos. 641–644 (2013). Even newscaster Anderson Cooper has appeared in a comic: In *Black Widow* No. 12 (2014), he reports on an espionage case.

“The use of real people in comics is probably a lot broader than many people suspect,” sums up Higley of the *Newspaper Section*. “It’s not an outlier.”

Rock star “Brick Stringstern” in a detail from the cover of *Transformers* No. 14, 1986 | © Marvel Entertainment LLC

*Wendi A. Maloney is a writer-editor in the U.S. Copyright Office.*

## RUNNING FOR OFFICE: POLITICAL COMICS

The incredible popularity of comic books in the mid-1940s and 1950s made them an attractive choice for politicians courting voters—as did the use of graphic narrative.

“Campaigns didn’t take it for granted that the population was entirely literate,” points out Sara Duke, curator of popular and applied graphic art at the Library of Congress. “Comic books were an effective way to disseminate information to a semiliterate audience.”

For Harry Truman’s 1948 presidential campaign, the Democratic National Committee produced a 16-page four-color comic book. It told the story of Truman’s childhood in Missouri on his family farm—where he was known for plowing the straightest furrow in the county—and his history as a churchgoer, World War I fighter, struggling businessman, county judge, U.S. senator, vice president and finally president—the one who, in the words of the comic book, “made the awesome decision to use the atom bomb” against Japan in World War II “and thus saved untold thousands of American lives.” In the postwar years, Truman had proved himself a “world leader for lasting peace,” the comic book proclaims.

Three million copies of it “quickly disappeared,” writes David McCullough in his biography of Truman, and *Time* magazine hailed the comic as “something new in ‘campaign literature.’”

Yet Truman’s campaign was not the first to create a comic book—nor the first to draw attention via graphic format to the power of the atom bomb, a major concern of the period.

In 1946, the Citizens Committee for the Re-Election of Senator Brien McMahon produced an eight-page full-color comic book supporting the candidacy of the U.S. senator from Connecticut.

Its cover featured missiles and a mushroom cloud from a detonated bomb.

The comic follows the same story arc as Truman’s: it dramatizes McMahon’s early life, his career before politics—including his prosecution of famous 1930s gangsters as a Justice Department lawyer and his defense of workers’ rights as assistant attorney general—and his political rise.

As a senator, McMahon became known for advocating control of atomic energy. He chaired the Senate Special Committee on Atomic Energy, whose McMahon Bill became the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. A full two-and-a-half pages of the comic book—in addition to its cover—are devoted to the power and destructive potential of atomic energy.

In the 1950s, campaign comic books became a bit of a fad, according to Randy Duncan, Michael Ray Taylor and David Stoddard, authors of the 2016 book “Creating Comics as Journalism, Memoir and Nonfiction.” Other politicians whose campaigns created them include Jacob Javitz, Louis Lefkowitz, John Patterson, Nelson Rockefeller and Adlai Stevenson.

After the 1950s, enthusiasm faded for comic books as tools in political campaigns as other vehicles ascended.



—Wendi A. Maloney





# THE AMERICAN

## HOW COMIC BOOKS REFLECT

BY MARK HARTSELL

From left, detail from Archie No. 1, 1942 | © Archie Comics; Mickey Mouse Magazine Vol. 4 No. 1, 1939 | © Disney; Mickey Rat No. 1, 1972 | © Robert Armstrong; Wimmen's Comix No. 1, 1972 | © Last Gasp

THE LIBRARY'S VAST TROVE OF COMIC BOOKS EXPOSES A UNIQUE AND REVEALING HISTORY OF AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE.

Open a comic book, and you can see America in the pages—its people, its values, its culture, how it's changed.

As evidence, consider two comic-book rodents. During the Depression, Mickey Mouse Magazine told the sweet, simple story of Disney's iconic, wholesome character conquering a giant, saving a village and winning the hand of a princess, Minnie.

Three-plus decades later, the cultural revolution of the '60s gave America a new, subversive kind of hero: Mickey Rat, a vulgar, hungover, womanizing reprobate who debuted in a story titled "The King of Rotten Stuff"—a sure sign of how much society's sensibilities had changed.

American culture had evolved, and the pages of the era's comic books showed it. Today, they still do.



# CAN WAY

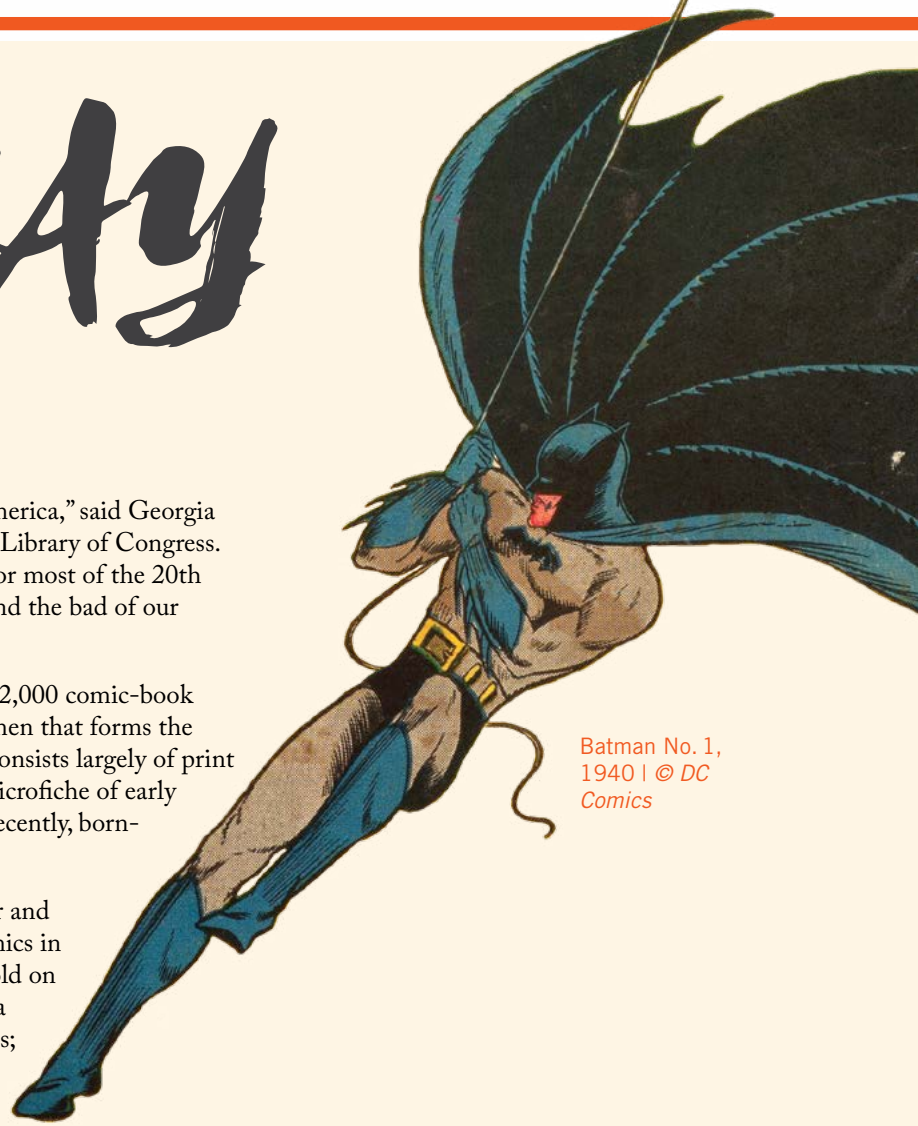
## ECT OUR CULTURE

“They reflect us. It’s the ultimate popular culture of America,” said Georgia Higley, who oversees the comic-book collection at the Library of Congress. “They really document what we’ve been interested in for most of the 20th century and beyond. It’s also a reflection of the good and the bad of our society.”

The Library holds more than 140,000 issues of some 12,000 comic-book titles—an assemblage of Archies, Avengers and Aquamen that forms the largest collection in the United States. The collection consists largely of print comic books but also includes special editions, color microfiche of early comics, self-published experimental books and, most recently, born-digital webcomics.

Among the issues of Black Panther, Crimson Crusader and Green Lantern reside some of the most important comics in history: Famous Funnies No. 1, the first comic book sold on newsstands; Detective Comics No. 1, the first issue in a series that spawned Batman and other iconic characters; Amazing Fantasy No. 15, the issue that introduced Spider-Man; and All Star Comics No. 8, which gave the world Wonder Woman.

Comics, and popular culture in general, have been a growing area of academic study for what they reveal about our society. Researchers have used



Batman No. 1, 1940 | © DC Comics



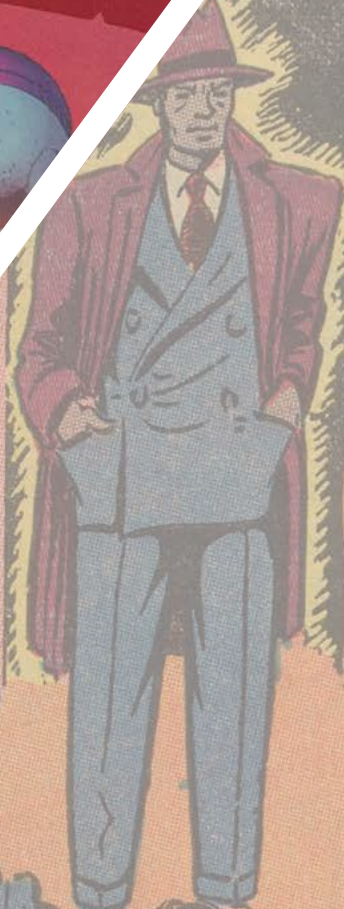


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the Library's comics collection to explore such topics as the changing roles of women and evolving perspectives on race and ethnicity.

Detective Comics, for example, debuted in 1937 with a caricatured “yellow peril” Chinese villain on the cover—drooping Fu Manchu moustache, sawtooth teeth, wildly exaggerated facial features. Inside, hero Slam Bradley fights a cast of crudely imagined Chinese foes—characters with bright yellow skin, bearing caricatured names (Fui Onyui) and speaking stereotyped lines: “Velly solly. No see missy. You slam!”

But, over 70 years, attitudes about race and gender in America changed, along with the demographics of comic book writers and readers.

In 2016, the same publisher that produced those caricatured Chinese villains reintroduced one of comics' most iconic heroes, Superman, as a modern, cola-swigging Chinese teenager from Shanghai—“broad-shouldered, handsome like a movie star, tall but not in a freaky way like Yao Ming.” The new Superman was written by Gene Luen Yang, a Chinese-American from California (who also serves as the Library's national ambassador for young people's literature).

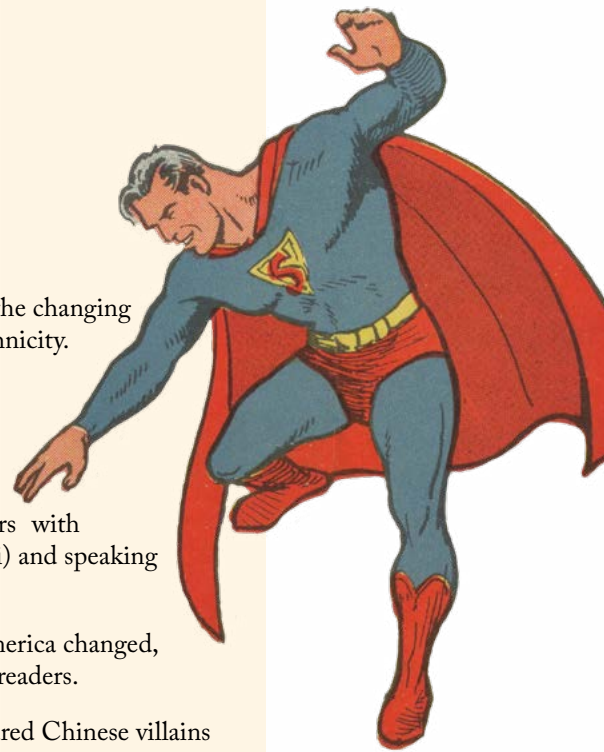
Early comic books produced a few female heroines—in 1937, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle became the first woman character with her own series.

But women often took secondary roles or were portrayed as career girls—Nellie the Nurse, Millie the Model, Tessie the Typist—searching for romance while holding jobs that, at the time, were traditionally reserved for women. Or, they just served as voluptuous objects of attention for men: “Funny, we never had ‘standing room only’ at an operation before,” a doctor in surgery observes as a gallery full of men ogle Nellie.

The cultural upheaval of the '60s opened the door to new topics for women, in life and in comics: sex, drugs, feminism, politics, anything. “Nothing is off limits,” Higley said.

Wimmen's Comix, an “underground” comic that was the first comic produced entirely by women, debuted in 1972, replacing Nellie the Nurse with Goldie, A Neurotic Woman—insecure, self-loathing, obsessive, promiscuous, confessional. “In the beginning, I felt loved,” Goldie says. “I was teacher's pet and the most popular. Life was good. With puberty came ugliness and guilt.”

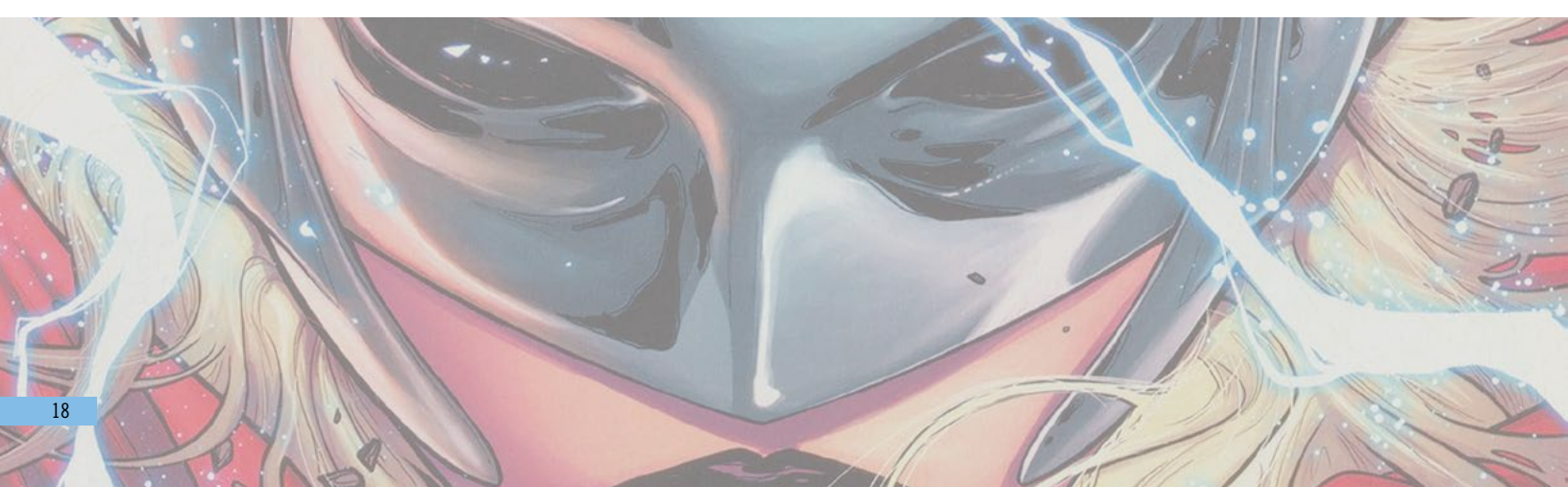
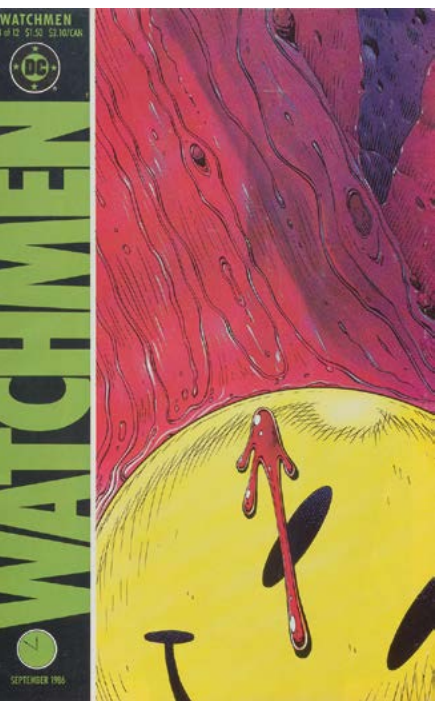
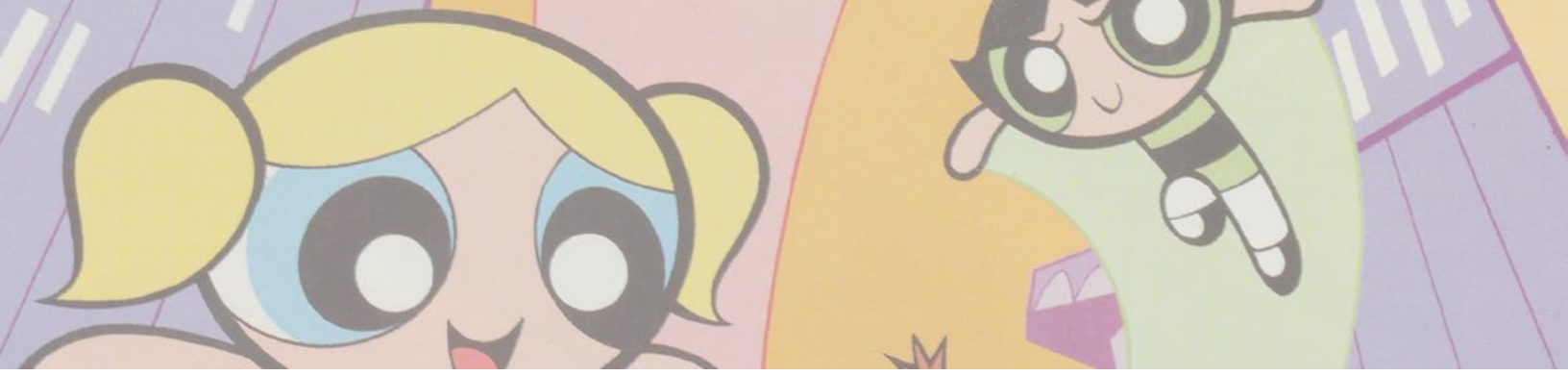
Wimmen's Comix also addressed LGBTQ issues early on: The debut issue featured “Sandy Comes Out,” the first strip starring an “out” lesbian. As those issues became more prominent in society, they increasingly were



Detail from Superman No. 1 cover, 1939 | © DC Comics

**Opposite, changing perceptions of race and ethnicity through the years:** Clockwise from left, covers from Detective Comics No. 1, 1937 and New Super-Man No. 1, 2017 | © DC Comics; All-Negro Comics No. 1 (interior), 1947 | © All-Negro Comics Inc. and Luke Cage No. 1 2009 | © Marvel Entertainment LLC







**Opposite from left:** Comics reflecting contemporary values and audience tastes include *The Powerpuff Girls* No. 1, 2000 | © DC Comics; *Watchmen* No. 1, 1986 | © DC Comics; *Astonishing X-Men* No. 51, 2012 | © Marvel Entertainment LLC; *Miles Morales: The Ultimate Spider-Man* No. 1, 2011 | © Marvel Entertainment LLC; *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* No. 1, 1984 | © Kevin Eastman & Peter Laird; *Ghost in the Shell* No. 1, 1995 | © Dark Horse Comics and *Thor* No. 1, 2014 (featuring a female God of Thunder) | © Marvel Entertainment LLC

reflected in storylines and characters in mainstream comics—especially in recent years.

In the 2010 story “Isn’t It Bromantic,” new Archie Comics character Kevin Keller explains to a friend the real reason he isn’t interested in vixenish Veronica Lodge: He’s gay—the first openly gay character in a series that began in 1941.

Kevin wasn’t alone. In a 2012 issue of *Astonishing X-Men*, Marvel staged the first gay wedding in comic book history, between superhero Northstar and his longtime partner, Kyle Jinadu. Three years later, DC Comics revealed a not-so-surprising, to her fans, secret: Catwoman is bisexual.

The portrayal of race in comics followed a similar path.

In 1947, *All-Negro Comics* became the first comic book written and drawn solely by African-Americans—a comic that lasted one issue. But as civil rights advanced and America became more diverse, comics’ characters did too: In 1965, Lobo became the first black character to headline his own series, followed by Black Panther, Luke Cage, Falcon and others.

Today, many iconic characters are rebooted, to better reflect today’s sensibilities and America’s more diverse population.

In 2014, Marvel reintroduced Thor, with a twist: The god of thunder now is a woman. Likewise, other characters: Spider-Man now is Miles Morales, a black Hispanic teenager. Blue Beetle, created in 1939, now is Jaime Reyes, the son of an El Paso garage owner. Tony Stark’s successor as Iron Man will be an African-American woman who goes by Ironheart. Ms. Marvel is Kamala Khan, a Muslim-American student from New Jersey.

“That speaks to publishers realizing that people who are reading comics want to see characters and a story that reflect their experience,” said Megan Halsband, a librarian who also curates the Library’s comic book collection. “There are more Hispanic characters, other characters of color, Muslim characters, black characters.”

Says Higley: “They’re a great reflection of what’s going on. And there are also comics that represent the hopes we have too.”

*Mark Hartsell is editor of The Gazette, the Library’s staff newspaper.*

## ▶ MORE INFORMATION

**Information on the Library’s Comic Book Collection**  
[loc.gov/rr/news/comics.html](http://loc.gov/rr/news/comics.html)

**Serial and Government Publications Division**  
[loc.gov/rr/news/](http://loc.gov/rr/news/)

Detail from *The Black Panther* No. 1, 2016 | © Marvel Entertainment LLC







## THE WONDER WOMAN EFFECT

**LYNDA CARTER SPOKE WITH LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS CARLA HAYDEN ABOUT THE ABILITY OF STRONG CULTURAL ICONS TO PROVIDE ROLE MODELS AND EMPOWERMENT.**

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden recently interviewed Lynda Carter, the actress best known for her role as Wonder Woman in the 1970s television series, to a packed house in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium. The interview was scheduled during "Library of Awesome," a pop-up exhibition featuring items from the Library's comic book collections presented in conjunction with the Awesome-Con comics convention in Washington, D.C.

As part of the event, Carter presented to the Library an inscribed film script from the blockbuster 2017 film "Wonder Woman," starring Gal Gadot, which introduced the DC Comics character to a new generation of fans.

The conversation touched on her career as an actress and singer, her family, her Latina heritage, rowing, establishing a television Stunt Woman's Association (her first stunt double was a man), and the new Wonder Woman movie, directed by Patty Jenkins. "We've become great, great friends," said Carter of Jenkins. "She's brilliant."

**From top:** Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden interviews actress Lynda Carter as part of the "Library of Awesome" events at the Library in June. *Shawn Miller*; Carter appears in costume as the Amazonian superhero in the 1970s television series "Wonder Woman." *ABC Television, Getty Images*





Today's Wonder Woman as seen in DC Universe Rebirth: Wonder Woman No.1, 2016 | © DC Comics

**▶ MORE INFORMATION**

**Video: Carla Hayden Interviews Lynda Carter**  
[go.usa.gov/xRVNU](http://go.usa.gov/xRVNU)

Carter, Gadot, Jenkins and United Nations Under-Secretary General Cristina Gallach appeared at the U.N. on Oct. 21, 2016, the 75th anniversary of the first appearance of Wonder Woman, to mark the character's designation by the United Nations as its Honorary Ambassador for the Empowerment of Women and Girls.

At that event, Carter said, "More than 40 years ago, I had the honor of being cast as Wonder Woman by Warner Bros. This was a momentous thing for, at the time, they didn't think a woman could hold her own television show.

"But the response was tremendous. This idea of a female superhero who could inspire and have an influence in girls' and women's lives was when Wonder Woman became flesh. In some magical and mystical way, there lies within each of us Wonder Woman. She is real, she lives and she breathes.

"I know this because she lives in me and she lives in the women I've heard from. I see it in their letters and in their stories. I see it in the tears that fall from their eyes, who say she's saved them, she inspired them to endure some awful thing, they could do something great.

"Women can be smart and beautiful and strong and wise and kind and brave. We believe in fair play and fair pay and playing by the rules. We build families and communities. And, yes, we stand by our men, as they stand beside us. Wonder Woman helps bring out the inner strength every woman has. We are all-inclusive. We are stronger together. We are half the world. We have a voice. We are the mothers of all mankind—your mothers and sisters and daughters and grandmothers and great-grandmothers. We are black and brown and white and red and yellow. We are tall and short and thick and thin. We are blondes and brunettes and gingers and salt-and-peppers. All you women of all colors, all you children out there, never forget Wonder Woman lives inside you."

## for you AT THE LIBRARY

### CONCERTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



**FOUNDED IN 1925, THE "CONCERTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS"**

series offers a range of genres from classical to pop, jazz to Broadway and American to world music. The series is held in the 500-seat Coolidge Auditorium, considered to be one of the finest acoustic environments in the world.

**WHAT:** Library of Congress concert series and pre-concert presentations

**WHERE:** Unless otherwise noted, the Coolidge Auditorium located on the ground floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building

**WHEN:** October – May 2018

**COST:** FREE

The 2017-2018 concert season (October through May) will offer a celebration of the centenary of composer Leonard Bernstein, premieres of new commissions, an appearance by composer, bassist and vocalist Esperanza Spalding, plus lectures, films, master classes and conversations with artists.

**▶ Concert Schedule** [loc.gov/rr/perform/concert/](http://loc.gov/rr/perform/concert/)  
**Tickets** [loc.gov/concerts/tickets.html](http://loc.gov/concerts/tickets.html)



# COLLECTING WEB COMICS AND CULTURE

**TWO NEW ONLINE COLLECTIONS CAPTURE CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AS IT IS CURRENTLY CONSUMED, VIA THE WEB.**

The millions of items in Library of Congress collections chronicle human creativity in all its forms, from Bach scores to baseball sheet music, Shakespeare’s First Folio to dime novels and comic books.

To those, add born-digital comics, emoji, memes and GIFs. In June, the Library launched two new collections—the Webcomics Web Archive and the Web Cultures Web Archive—designed to document contemporary online culture.

The webcomics archive preserves a sampling of comics created specifically for the web, supplementing the Library’s holdings in comic books, graphic novels and original comic art. The collection focuses on long-running and award-winning comics as well as creators and subjects—

such as women, minority or LGBTQ artists and characters—not traditionally represented in mainstream comics.

Sticky Comics, for example, explores women’s experiences, in life (“low points in dieting”), the workplace (eight types of people in the office kitchen) and the digital age: Her character, distracted by Facebook and Instagram, forgets to call 911 and lets a house burn down. Dinosaur Comics, meanwhile, examines issues through conversation between two talking dinosaurs who ponder, say, Bitcoin or the arguments for the existence of Batman.

“The Web Archiving team is thrilled to finally get this collection online and available for research use. While we’ve been archiving a variety of types

**From left:** The Library’s newest entries in its growing web archives feature webcomics—such as Sticky Comics by Christiann Macauley—and web cultures, collecting the memes, terms, visual commentary and emojis reflecting current digital communication.



## Emoji List by Platform

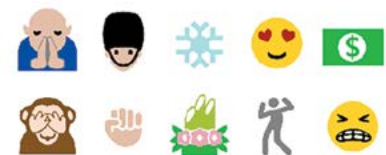
### Apple iOS, OS X, and Whatsapp Emoji



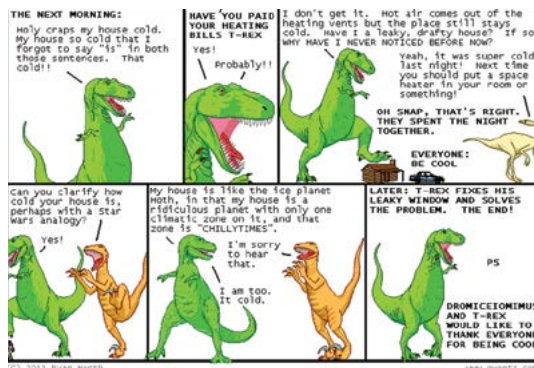
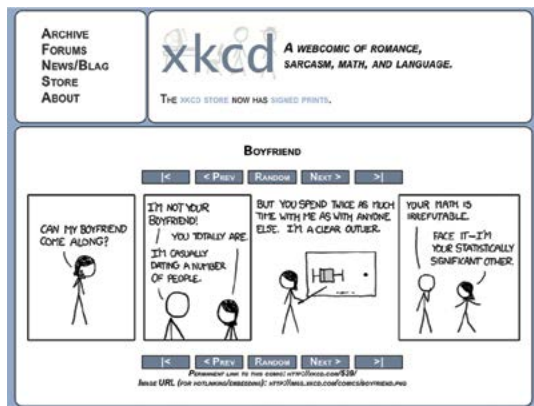
### Google Android and Google Hangouts Emoji



### Microsoft Windows 8 and Windows Phone Emoji







of websites since 2000, comics were added to the Library's web-archiving program in 2014," information-technology specialist Abigail Grotke said. "This presented new challenges as these were more visually focused than sites included in prior collections."

The other new online collection seeks to document and preserve a new kind of folklore: the GIFs, memes, emoji and other expressions created and shared online each day among millions of people around the world.

The Web Cultures Web Archive collects a representative sample of websites—Urban Dictionary, Internet Meme Database and Emojipedia, among others—that might help people in the future better understand today's digital world.

Emojipedia decodes the meanings of the pictorial characters used to punctuate digital text. Replygif.net archives the animated images employed in digital culture by users who might prefer to express exasperation via a GIF of Bill Murray rolling his eyes.

"The proliferation of smart phones, tablets and wireless internet connection has positioned networked communication as a space where people increasingly develop and share folklore," said Elizabeth Peterson, director of the American

Folklife Center, which maintains the archive. "This effort will help scholars 25 and 100 years from now have a fuller picture of the culture and life of people today."

Urban Dictionary, a crowd-sourced dictionary of slang, might help folks decades down the road puzzling over contemporary terms such as "icicle fingers" (when your fingers are too cold to text) or "desk rage" (peak employee stress level that leads to outbursts of foul language).

Some things, of course, are timeless, digital or not.

Cute Overload, a widely read blog preserved in the archive, once carried out a mission of searching the internet for "only the finest in cute imagery"—such as a polar bear cub playing with toys or a puppy swinging in a hammock.

Even a century from now, who wouldn't want to see that?

—Mark Hartsell

#### ► MORE INFORMATION

**Webcomics Web Archives**  
[go.usa.gov/xR6mb](http://go.usa.gov/xR6mb)

**Web Cultures Web Archives**  
[go.usa.gov/xR6mK](http://go.usa.gov/xR6mK)

Clockwise from left: the work of creators Randall Munroe (xkcd), Jeph Jacques (Questionable Content) and Ryan North (Dinosaur Comics) turn traditional comic storytelling forms on their heads to reach readers who get more and more of their content online.





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1. A “Summer Movies on the Lawn” series kicks off with a screening of “The Princess Bride,” July 13.

2. The Library hosts a pop-up exhibit of LGBTQ+ related and similar collection items in honor of Pride Month in June.

3. Eugene Gulland acts as counsel for Antonio before a panel of judges chaired by Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in “Justice for Shylock: A Mock Appeal Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Venice Ghetto,” a presentation sponsored by the Law Library.

4. Members of the national tour cast of “Rent” look over original items from the papers of the musical’s creator, Jonathan Larson, including production notes and biographies for their characters, during a display in the Whittall Pavilion.

5. Library Junior Fellows hold their annual display day, highlighting the projects and collections they worked on during the summer of 2017.



6

6. Singer-songwriter Billy Bragg (center) is interviewed by Library staff prior to a discussion on his book “Roots, Radicals and Rockers,” a history of the British Skiffle movement.

All photos | Shawn Miller



**TRACY K. SMITH NAMED NEW POET LAUREATE**

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden has appointed Tracy K. Smith as the Library’s 22nd Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for 2017–2018. Smith will open the Library’s annual literary season in September with a reading of her work.



Shawn Miller

“It gives me great pleasure to appoint Tracy K. Smith,” Hayden said. “Her work travels the world and takes on its voices; brings history and memory to life; calls on the power of literature as well as science, religion and pop culture.

Smith, a professor at Princeton University, is the author of three books of poetry, including “Life on Mars” (2011), winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; “Duende” (2007), winner of the 2006 James Laughlin Award and the 2008 Essence Literary Award; and “The Body’s Question” (2003), winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. Smith is also the author of a memoir, “Ordinary Light” (2015).

“I am profoundly honored,” Smith said. “As someone who has been sustained by poems and poets, I understand the powerful and necessary role poetry can play in fostering a mindful, empathic and resourceful culture.”

► **MORE:** [loc.gov/item/prn-17-083/](http://loc.gov/item/prn-17-083/)

**LIBRARY OFFERS LARGEST RELEASE OF DIGITAL CATALOG RECORDS IN HISTORY**

The Library is making 25 million records in its online catalog available for free bulk download from its website in the largest release of digital records in the Library’s history.

The records also will be easily accessible at data.gov, the open-government website hosted by the General Services Administration. Until now, these bibliographic records have only been available individually or through a paid subscription. The new, free service will operate in parallel with the Library’s fee-based MARC Distribution Service, which is used extensively by large commercial customers and libraries.

► **MORE:** [loc.gov/item/prn-17-068/](http://loc.gov/item/prn-17-068/)

**SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS NOW ONLINE**

The Library has placed online nearly 25,000 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, which depict the structure and use of buildings in U.S. cities and towns. Maps will be added monthly until 2020, for a total of approximately 500,000.

The online collection now features maps published prior to 1900. The states available include Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Alaska is also online, with maps published through the early 1960s. By 2020, all the states will be online, showing maps from the 1880s through the 1960s.

In collaboration with the Library’s Geography and Map Division, Historical Information Gatherers digitized the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps during a 16-month period. The Library is in the process of adding metadata and placing the digitized, public-domain maps on its website.

► **MORE:** [loc.gov/item/prn-17-074/](http://loc.gov/item/prn-17-074/)

**TONY BENNETT NAMED RECIPIENT OF GERSHWIN PRIZE**

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden has announced that Tony Bennett is the next recipient of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.



“Tony Bennett is one of the most accomplished and beloved artists of our time,” Hayden said. “His staying power is a testament to the enduring appeal of the Great American Songbook the Gershwins helped write, and his ability to collaborate with new generations of music icons has been a gift to music lovers of all ages.”

Bennett will receive the prize in Washington, D.C., in November. The Gershwin Prize honors a living musical artist’s lifetime achievement in promoting the genre of song as a vehicle of cultural understanding; entertaining and informing audiences; and inspiring new generations. Previous recipients are Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder, Sir Paul McCartney, songwriting duo Burt Bacharach and the late Hal David, Carole King, Billy Joel, Willie Nelson and Smokey Robinson.

► **MORE:** [loc.gov/item/prn-17-089/](http://loc.gov/item/prn-17-089/)



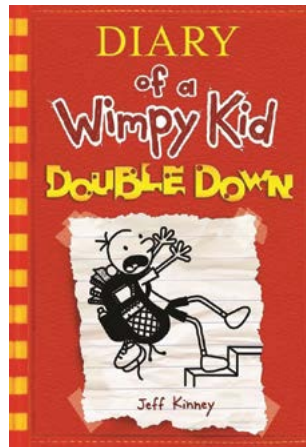
The **Library of Congress Shop** contains a rich selection of gifts from the graphic to the whimsical to the library-specific, fun for all ages.



**Punk Rock Authors Tote**

Product #21301011  
Price: \$18

This edgy canvas tote reimagines some of your favorite authors as punk rockers, courtesy of illustrator Wendy MacNaughton.



**Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Double Down (signed)**

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The 11th book in Jeff Kinney's popular illustrated series. Greg and Rowley hatch a get-rich-quick movie scheme. 224 pages, signed by the author.



**The End Bookend**

Product #21501001  
Price: \$19.95

This single bookend appears to be overcome with the weight of a heavy tome. The silhouetted figure is crafted from powder-coated steel.



**Etch-a-Sketch Notebook**

Product #21408163  
Price: \$5.95

This hardbound notebook recalls the famous drawing toy. Pencils and erasers are stored within. Ages 6 and up. 200 pages.



**Ray Gun Ink Pen**

Product #21503048  
Price: \$130

This rollerball pen lends comic relief to the most mundane tasks. Silver-plated brass pen with aluminum and hand-lacquered acrylic stand.

► **MORE INFORMATION** | Order online: [loc.gov/shop](http://loc.gov/shop) | Order by phone: 888.682.3557



# CONTEMPORARY GRAPHIC GIFTS

**THROUGH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SMALL PRESS EXPO, THE LIBRARY COLLECTS AND PRESERVES INDEPENDENT COMICS AND CARTOON ART.**

Like Animals? Monsters? Robots? Superheroes? Autobiography? Noir? Science Fiction? History? The Small Press Expo Collection at the Library of Congress probably has a comic (or two) for you.

The nonprofit Small Press Expo was created in 1994 to promote artists and publishers who produce independent comics. The annual SPX festival in Bethesda, Maryland, hosts independent and small-press comic artists and publishers from around the world who come to the festival to present their wares, chat with fans and nerd out about comics (or comix, if you prefer).

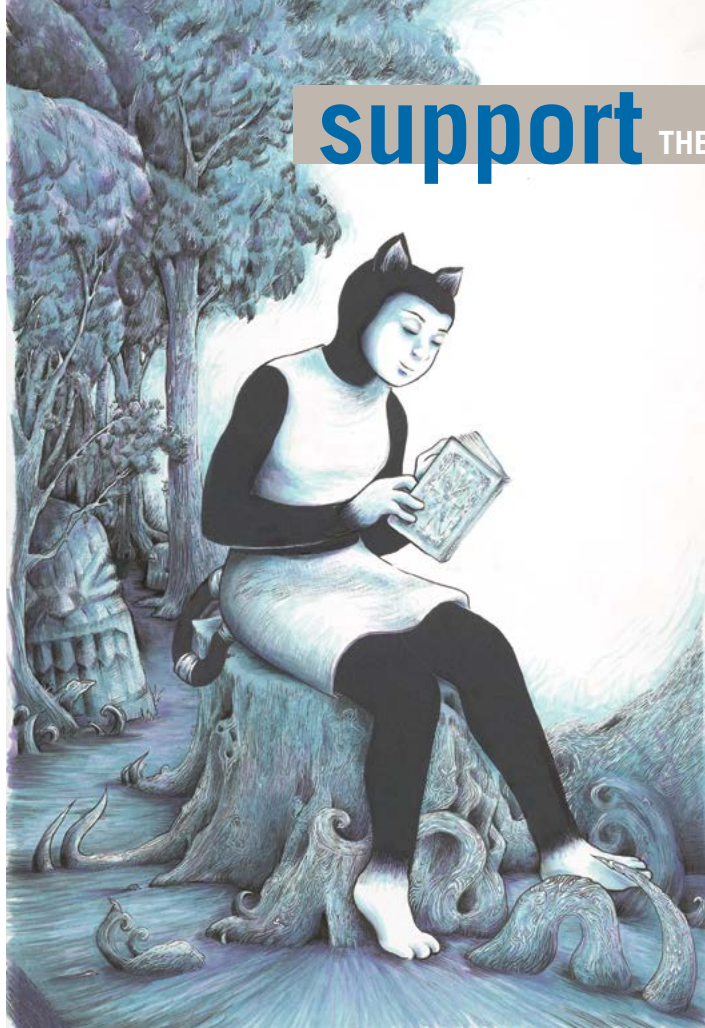
Small Press Expo Executive Director Warren Bernard approached the Library in 2010 about establishing a collection to preserve the artistic output of the creators who come to SPX, as well as the history of the yearly SPX festival. This agreement provided a unique opportunity for the Library to collect materials for both its comic book and original art collections.

With as many different subjects and genres as there are artists at the festival, the collection is a fantastic representation of the wide variety of comics and comic books currently being published outside the mainstream press.

Every September since 2011, a number of Library curators attend the festival and seek donations from artists and publishers. Through their generosity, the Library has been able to develop these contemporary and relevant enhancements to its graphic arts and serials collections.

From a few dozen items at the start of the agreement, the collection has grown to several thousand. Material in the SPX collection ranges from tiny accordion-fold pages of doodles and poignant memoirs to oversize newsprint issues and original artwork and posters.

Annually since 1997, the Small Press Expo has awarded the Ignatz Award for outstanding



achievement in comics and cartooning. The nominees and winners of the awards in nine categories form a key component of the overall collection. In addition, the collection includes online content—webcomics and the Small Press Expo website itself—which the Library harvested through its web archiving program. The new SPX web archive will go live in September.

The Library also hosts an annual lecture series that has featured artists such as Dean Haspiel and Box Brown, publishers Gary Groth and Locust Moon Press, and writer-editor Heidi MacDonald. The lectures, held the Friday before the SPX festival, are open to the public and are archived on the Library’s website.

—Megan Halsband is a reference librarian in the Serial and Government Publications Division.

“Henni” by Miss Lasko-Gross (2015), drawing for a poster designed for the American Library Association | *Small Press Expo Collection, Prints and Photographs Division*

## ► MORE INFORMATION

### Curators’ Picks: Exposing Cartoon Art

[blogs.loc.gov/loc/2012/12/curators-picks-exposing-cartoon-art/](https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2012/12/curators-picks-exposing-cartoon-art/)

### Make a Gift to the Library

202.707-2777

[loc.gov/donate/](https://loc.gov/donate/)





**SHE HAD COME BECAUSE OF A COMIC BOOK. SHE LEFT STIRRED BY THE WORDS OF AN AMERICAN HERO.**

A young woman attended a comics-convention panel I moderated several years ago to listen in person to Rep. John Lewis, the civil-rights hero turned first-time graphic-novel memoirist.

Lewis had just published “March: Book One,” the first in an illustrated trilogy about how nonviolent protest was used to combat segregation in America. One of the graphic novel’s central messages, as illustrated by the 1965 Selma march, was about having the courage to stand up for one’s deepest convictions.

On this day, the woman came to the microphone and asked: “As a person in a same-sex relationship, should I move to D.C. so I can get married legally, or stay in Virginia and challenge the law?”

“You must *fight!*” Lewis exclaimed from the stage without a second’s hesitation. “You must stay. Stand up! *Speak out!* Speak up for what’s right!”

The room went silent, in awe of his resonant moral clarity. Then came the cheering. All because a comic book that speaks directly to American democratic ideals had been the source of inspired social connection.

America has contributed at least three unique inventions to the world’s culture: baseball, jazz and the newspaper comic strip. All three foster both the teamwork of shared production and the spark of an individual’s original genius. Yet to the reader, a comic panel is not only a window into the imagination of the creator, it is also a mirror that reveals something about ourselves.

Consider Ben Franklin, that father of American cartoon satire who sponsored such images as the iconic 1754 “Join, or Die” cartoon used in the Revolutionary cause. Think of cartoonist Thomas Nast, whose work toppled political corruption at Boss Tweed’s Tammany Hall.

Consider the social commentary of Richard F. Outcault’s Yellow Kid, establishing the funny pages as a national pastime. And then, with World War II on the horizon, the superhero comic-book boom was launched largely by Jewish creators who could identify with a cultural “outsider” like Superman.

“Peanuts,” Charles Schulz’s profound window into the adult psyche told through young archetypes. Art Spiegelman’s towering “Maus.” Will Eisner’s “A Contract With God.” Walt Kelly’s “Pogo.” Stan Lee and Jack Kirby’s creation of the Marvel Universe. Garry Trudeau’s satirical “Doonesbury,” spanning Nixon to Trump. Each of those creations is an essential link in our nation’s long comics evolution.

Which brings me full circle to Rep. Lewis. At the 2016 Library of Congress National Book Festival, I introduced Lewis, who had helped open the National Museum of African American History and Culture that very morning. And on that magical evening, Rep. Lewis used the platform of comics to speak in soaring oratory to the resilient promise of American equality.

The Library of Congress must continue its efforts to make the preservation and curation of graphic art a central mission. Because panel by panel, comics tell a story as profoundly as any other art form. They are a national treasure.

*Michael Cavna is an Eisner-nominated columnist and cartoonist for the Washington Post who writes the column “Comic Riffs.”*

► MORE INFORMATION

Rep. John Lewis and Andrew Aydin at the 2016 National Book Festival  
[go.usa.gov/xRQgT](http://go.usa.gov/xRQgT)

Michael Cavna





The domed ceiling of the Northwest Pavilion of the Thomas Jefferson Building (also known as the Pavilion of Art and Science) shows William De Leftwich Dodge's stunning 1896 mural "Ambition." Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Prints & Photographs Division





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## exhibitions AT THE LIBRARY

**Echoes of the  
Great War:  
American  
Experiences of  
World War I**  
Through  
January 2019

**Baseball's  
Greatest Hits:  
The Music of Our  
National Game**  
Extended through  
December 30, 2017

**Drawing Justice:  
The Art of  
Courtroom  
Illustrations**  
Extended through  
December 30, 2017

**MORE INFORMATION:**  
[loc.gov/exhibits/](http://loc.gov/exhibits/)