

Then use a kerchief,
To avoid any hint of seeming uncouth!

EPILOGUE

Thus ends my sequel to Ars Longa.

Physicians, as a group, have many accomplishments for which they can be justly proud. Reminding ourselves that we can also be quite loony and off the wall has its upside. Such reminders may keep us humble; and there is much to be said for humility.

Sir William Osler, that very wise physician, wrote to his fellow physicians in his Aeguanimitas, "The Art of Detachment, the Virtue of Method, and the Quality of Thoroughness may make you students, in the true sense of the word, successful practitioners, or even great investigators; but your characters may still lack that which can alone give permanence to power - the Grace of Humility."

OZ@C

Oz at One Hundred

June 12, 2000

Robert C. Vitz

When informed that I would be presenting the paper at the annual picnic, I had every intention of presenting another Otto Steinbrecher case, primarily because Ed Burdell keeps nagging me about my alter ego masquerading as a private detective. Rest assured, Otto is working on a case, but at the moment he is having difficulty solving it - a serious embarrassment for any fictional detective. Thus, I turned to a very different subject, part biography and part literary criticism, with a smidgen of autobiography.

Every year at Christmas my two older brothers and I often received books, usually one for each of us. What could you expect when both parents were librarians? The books were always wonderful and the ones to my brothers quickly worked their way down to me. I recall reading The Black Stallion Returns and Big Red, Hugh Lofting's The Adventures of Doctor Dolittle and John R. Tunis's The Kid from Tompkinsville. Tom Sawyer fell in there somewhere, along with Booth Tarkington's Penrod books, and, of course, Treasure Island with its glorious N.C. Wyeth illustrations. If the book was part of a series we never received any sequels-for those we were expected to use the public library, an institution we knew quite well.

However, from my ninth year to about the age of eleven, the books we most anticipated never arrived in gift wrap, never made an appearance under the Christmas tree. These were the stories that centered on that fantastic land called Oz. Shortly after we had moved from Minneapolis to Cincinnati in 1945, one of my older brothers, Martin, became good friends with a Clifton School classmate, Matthew MacLeid. One day he came home with an Oz book borrowed from MacLeid, one of the colorful Reilly and Lee volumes with a John R. Neill illustration on the front cover. We were hooked. Over the course of the next year or two, we read-I, in hand-me-down style-virtually the entire series, or at least those written by L. Frank Baum, and all of those strange and appealing characters entered into my childhood, just as I easily entered into the land of Oz. But older brothers develop other interests and Martin, no doubt, was already at the upper end of the Oz reading range, so that my doorway to Oz closed rather quickly. I turned to the public library. .only to discover that this remarkable series was not in the collection. Librarians had determined that the Oz books lacked plot, style, and theme; that they failed to provide sufficient moral instruction; that they were "foolishly sentimental;" and that they did not meet the accepted standards of meritorious literature. In other words they were inappropriate for children. To borrow a movie phrase from Dorothy - "Oh, my!"

Now, the Oz books are not traditional literary masterpieces, and libraries had accurately assessed their weaknesses. Even The Wizard of Oz, usually cited as the best in the series, suffers from occasional wooden language, problems of plot cohesion, and spends the last seven chapters on an anticlimactic journey to Quadling Country - a trip rightfully left out of the popular movie version. Several of Baum's later Oz books approached mediocrity, and certainly many of those contributed by other writers damaged the reputation of all - a sort of Gresham's law of literature. In the early 1930s, led by Ann Carroll Moore, head of the Children's Department of the New York City library system, librarians across the country began to remove the Oz books from shelves. "Out with Oz," they thundered - or, probably whispered. But reviewers liked them better, and children liked them best of all. The books sold, especially The Wizard of Oz. Total sales now exceed fifteen million, and it has been translated into every major language. The Russian translator, Alexander Volkov, so admired the book that he altered the title, replaced Baum's name with his own, and claimed credit as the author - thereby establishing another Soviet first!

In more recent years The Wizard of Oz book has been politicized, dissected, psycho-analyzed, even deconstructed by a generation of critics, although in some cases they have been more interested in the 1939 movie than in the book. An army of scholars have discovered economic, historical, political, feminist, mythical and spiritual themes, and the book has worked its way into scores of dissertations, perhaps the final step toward literary degradation. Today, The Wizard of Oz can be found as a children's classic, as part of the Critical Heritage Series, as a pop-up book, as a coloring book, as a book with sound, or simply listened to on cassette tape. It has been referred to in poetry and song, been compared to John Bunyan's A Pilgrim's Progress, called America's best fairy tale, and authors Gore Vidal, Allison Lurie, James Thurber, Paul Gallico, and Ray Bradbury have all confessed their love for the book. And John Steinbeck once tweaked the State Department by applying to be the U.S. ambassador to Oz. An International Wizard of Oz Club exists, and one can spend hours on the Internet exploring hundreds of web

sites, many of which are beautifully illustrated, play music from the movie, and discuss the book, the characters, and the imaginary land, while a cottage industry has sprung up selling Oz items. The Library of Congress just opened an exhibit in recognition of the book's lasting appeal. . .Ozmania lives!

So, how did this delightful tale of a little girl's odyssey come to be? Lyman Frank Baum, of Dutch descent, was born in 1856 in Chittenango, a village just northeast of Syracuse, New York. His father, Benjamin Baum, trained as a cooper, had used barrel making to hitch his fortune to the nascent oil industry. After buying land in the western Pennsylvania oil fields, the senior Baum expanded his business interests to include banking, stock speculation, retail properties and extensive farm land. On the eve of the Civil War he acquired a fifteen acre rural estate near Syracuse, which he named Rose Lawn. Prosperity and children arrived in equal installments. Frank Baum - he preferred not to be called Lyman - was the seventh of nine children, four of whom died in infancy. Because of this, and because he was born with an impaired heart, Frank grew up in a sheltered world of security and comfort, a world of supportive siblings, imaginary playmates, well kept gardens, domestic animals, private tutors, and books.

His interests were eclectic. As a teenager he bred Hamburg chickens, winning numerous awards at local fairs and years later wrote a 70 page pamphlet titled The Book of the Hamburgs. He also collected stamps, which remained a lifelong hobby, and at age seventeen published a directory of stamp dealers in the country, rating them on their fairness and honesty. These two pamphlets reflect an early and lifelong interest in printing and publishing that served him well in the future. Another lifelong interest developed after his father purchased a chain of small town theaters. Young Frank discovered grease paint and footlights, and he spent much of his early adulthood in pursuit of a stage career, mixing marginal success as an actor and playwright with occasional stints as a journalist. After his father deeded the theaters to him in 1882, he organized his own acting troupe, taking advantage of

the newly emerging theater circuit linked by the expanding railroads.

The stage introduced Baum to a world of glamour and illusion, and it certainly helped shape his later stories. At about the same time, he met and married Maud Gage, the strong-willed youngest daughter of a staunch woman's suffrage advocate. The couple soon purchased a home in Syracuse, and Baum, now tired of traveling, managed a family owned store selling oil products. He continued to write plays, but he left the acting troupe in the managerial hands of his Uncle John.

At this point a series of tragic events entered Frank Baum's blissful life. It would be interesting to speculate about Baum's life if his comfortable world had not been so severely disrupted. Certainly, if he had eventually written children's stories, they would have been quite different, for he needed the next decade of adversity to release the magic of his imagination. His world changed in 1884. While his uncle recovered from an illness, a dishonest bookkeeper mismanaged the theater company's finances, and then fire destroyed most of the stored costumes and scenery. By the time all accounts were settled, Baum was completely out of the theater world and working for his eldest brother as the head salesman promoting Casorine, an axle lubricant. This was the first of several jobs that took him away from his family for long stretches, and the theme of an exile longing for home, so strong in The Wizard, surely stems from these absences.

Ill fortune continued to haunt the family. His father suffered a serious head injury in a carriage accident, and as his health deteriorated so did his financial affairs. Maud almost died from peritonitis following the birth of the couple's second child, and two years later Frank Baum walked into his brother's office to find the bookkeeper dead from a self-inflicted gunshot. When massive embezzlement by the man was discovered, the business collapsed.

For thirty years Frank Baum had lived the American Dream. Now an uncertain future faced the Baums, but in true Horatio Alger fashion it did not deter them. In

1888 Frank and Maud decided to seek their future in the Dakota Territory, where Maud's brother and two sisters reported great opportunities in cattle and wheat. Frontier optimism was everywhere. Frank opened a general notions store, called Baum's Bazaar and patterned after the recently established F.W. Woolworth store in Utica, New York. Items ranged from candy and cigars to tinware and Japanese goods. However, Aberdeen was not Utica. Baum's Bazaar closed on New Year's Day, 1890, less than eighteen months after it opened. Never losing faith in the American Dream, Baum next scraped together enough capital to acquire the Dakota Pioneer, a weekly newspaper which he renamed the Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer. Hard times persisted, not just for the Baums, however, for the agricultural economy of the upper great plains had entered a long bust cycle. Fourteen months after taking over the newspaper it folded, and the Baums, now with three children, were on the train to Chicago.

In Chicago Baum became that icon of turn-of-the-century America, the traveling salesman. Despite the rapid onset of the depression of the 1890s, at the time the worst the country had faced, Baum's confidence and sunny disposition led to success, and by mid-decade family fortunes were on the rise. During all of this turmoil Baum remained an extraordinarily kind and attentive father. Summers meant home made ice cream, picnics and band concerts, neighborhood walks, and even trips to Cubs games; winters involved sledding, ice skating, and long evenings of reading stories; and holidays were always special events in the Baum house. Most of all his children remembered the fanciful stories he concocted. Indeed, wherever the Baums lived neighborhood children soon became a part of any evening storytelling hour. Frequently Baum embroidered details on the Mother Goose verses, creating lengthy adventures based on the famous characters. Pushed by his mother-in-law, he began writing out his stories. The resulting Mother Goose in Prose, with fourteen black and white illustrations by a young Maxfield Parrish, appeared in 1897. A folio edition with large type, heavy paper, and handsome binding, the book was too large and expensive for a traditional children's book, but its striking graphic design took it through several printings. These stories ventured far from the

original rhymes to reveal an enchanted world of talking animals, strange people, gentle children, and broad humor - all the ingredients of the future Oz books. At age 41 Frank Baum had found his calling.

Run-down from the incessant travel and suffering from renewed heart problems, Baum now turned increasingly to writing. With his usual energy he handprinted a book of his own poetry, called By the Candelabra's Glare. He also made the acquaintance of William Wallace Denslow, a well-known illustrator in the Chicago publishing world, and soon the two began collaborating on how to illustrate some of the accumulated jingles and verses Baum had jotted down during his idle hours as a salesman. The two men took their results to George M. Hill, president of a recently established printing and binding company. Wary of the publishing trade, Hill supported the project only if Baum and Denslow would pay for the plates and manufacturing costs. Convinced they had a good idea, Baum and Denslow agreed to the risk and then paid a young artist to hand letter the verses. Father Goose, His Book was the result. What Father Goose lacked in poetic skill, it made up for in cheerful humor, homespun nonsense, clever yarns, and beautiful design. Success surprised everyone. In three months 75,000 copies were printed, making the book one of the hits of the 1899 Christmas season, and within a year it was the best selling children's book in the nation.

Father Goose opened the way for the Wizard of Oz. Over the years Baum had fashioned for neighborhood children a series of tales about a girl in an imaginary land inhabited by very unusual people, and in the course of spinning this web of fantasy one of his listeners asked where the scarecrow and tin Woodman lived. Searching for a name, Baum's eyes lighted on an older two drawer filing case, the lower drawer of which had a label marked O - Z. In that moment the land of Oz was born. At least this is the "official" version Baum gave to reporters some years after he wrote the book. Indeed, he told several different versions of this story, but, according to his widow, "The word Oz came out of Mr. Baum's mind, just as did his queer characters. No one or anything suggested the word. . .This is a fact."

Sometime in late 1899 or early 1900 Baum began work on the Oz story in earnest. Long evening hours were spent using white paper and a soft lead pencil; final versions flowed from an L.C. Smith typewriter. As the story took shape, he called in Denslow who sketched out illustrations. In Baum's study the smoke from his ever present cigar mingled with that of Denslow's corn cob pipe. Finally, armed with a draft titled "The Emerald City," the buoyant Baum made the rounds of the city's publishing houses. A wall of pessimism met him. American children are quite content with Hans Christian Andersen's stories and fairy tales by the brothers Grimm, publishers stated, and besides, with the proposed color plates the cost would be prohibitive. Discouraged, Baum and Denslow returned to the publisher of Father Goose. George Hill, still reluctant to enter the competitive world of children's books, made the same offer as he had earlier: you two pay publication costs while I provide promotion and advertising. Thus, both the risk and the profit again belonged to Baum and Denslow. There was one additional hitch. A long standing publishing superstition about titles with jewels in them required that the title be changed. For a while Baum used "From Kansas to Fairyland;" then it was "The Fairyland of Oz," and early promotion presented it that way, but Hill and Company rejected this title as too prosaic. In desperation Baum finally suggested The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. It stuck. . .at least until the Bobbs-Merrill Co. dropped the "Wonderful" in its 1903 edition.

Advance copies appeared in June, 1900 - one hundred years ago this week. The book, 6 x 8 1/4 inches, bound in green cloth with the Cowardly Lion on the front and the Tin Woodman on the back, with 24 full page color plates and over a hundred two-tone text illustrations, all by Denslow, sold for a commanding buck fifty. Although the book did not arrive in stores until September, by Christmas 65,000 copies had been distributed and sales remained brisk throughout the next year.

What made The Wizard of Oz an instant best seller and ultimately a children's classic? First of all, it appealed to the imagination of children. It invited them into a unique land of exotic, outrageous

characters who confront equally exotic and outrageous situations. By using an American child, Dorothy Gale, the American reader is allowed to travel to this fantasy land, a land that is both like nothing else and yet possesses a distinct American-ness. Oz has a sense of place that reflects the geographic range of the United States. There is a clear sense of the wonder and joy in an environment of forests, deserts, and mountains, all of which existed in the United States but in 1900 remained beyond the experience of most readers. While Baum never stated exactly where Oz was, it apparently lay somewhere in the lesser explored areas of the American West, surrounded by an impassable desert. After all, the time it took for the cyclone to carry Dorothy to Munchkin Land was measured in hours. Even the haphazard, un-planned nature of Oz - a situation more clearly noticed in later books - is suggestive of American expansion into the West.

The principal characters are also distinctly American. Dorothy's common sense is always firmly rooted in Kansas soil. The Scarecrow is the embodiment of an American farm image, while the Tin Woodman, once human, is an oversized version of a mechanical toy. Even the Cowardly Lion is less an African carnivore than he is an over-sized tabby cat. Finally, the Wizard turns out to be an American fraud, a Barnumesque humbug. Oz is also filled with common-place items. The Good Witch of the North uses a slate; the Wizard uses an ordinary clothes basket to depart by balloon. The Wicked Witch of the West carries not a broom but an umbrella (appropriate, of course, to her fear of water). Cornfields, peach trees, field mice, crows, storks, and beetles fill the Ozian landscape, and the exotic aspects of Oz stand out because so much of Oz was familiar to the American audience. Baum avoided both Medieval language and Victorian English. His characters speak in American idioms, the language of his readers. Thus, The Wizard of Oz was a distinct change from the more traditional European fairy tales that dominated the genre. It is this typical American sense of place that makes Oz believable and allows the reader to accept the incongruities of situations. In other words, what takes place in Oz can happen because it is Oz.

Most importantly, the book provided a set of experiences to which children could relate. The central theme is Dorothy's search for a way to return to home and family. What child has not experienced the real or imagined sense of being lost? Of being cut off from those he or she loves? The Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion are incomplete "people" searching for ways to fulfill themselves. What child has not struggled with some personal inadequacy, whether it be the intellectual inferiority of the Scarecrow, an inability to express deep felt emotions like the Tin Woodman, or physical inadequacy as with the Cowardly Lion? What child has not worried about "who" he is, sometimes pretending to be someone else, just as the Wizard did? In the final analysis, the Wizard of Oz has several levels of understanding, and it can speak to the reader's own needs. Good fantasy is about reality; it enables us to understand something about ourselves and our world.

The Wizard of Oz has had remarkable staying power. The book not only achieved great success but the story found its way into other forms of expression. In 1902 Baum assisted in creating an elaborate stage musical which was a smash hit in New York and elsewhere and starred vaudevillians Fred Stone and Dave Montgomery. Fifteen years later Hollywood produced an unsuccessful feature length version, starring Oliver Hardy as the Tin Woodman, Larry Semon as the Scarecrow, and Dorothy Dwan as her namesake. During the 1920s two popular marionette versions toured the country and in 1933 Jell-O sponsored a radio dramatization. And then, of course, we are all familiar with the 1939 MGM film, featuring Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr, and which has appeared on TV almost annually since 1956. There were various television spin-offs in the 1960s and 1970s, and in 1975 "The Wiz," with a New York based plot and an all black cast, became a Broadway hit, earning seven Tony awards. Today, Dorothy and her friends are better known than Captain Ahab, Hester Prynne or Nick Adams, and over the years the Oz story has been exploited to sell jig saw puzzles, crossword puzzles, dolls, figurines, puppets, toys, playing cards, posters, comic books, wall paper, postcards, buttons, and even led to a Parker Brothers board game. One character, the Woggle-Bug, became so

popular that in the 1920s it was used to promote Hamm's Beer in an advertising predecessor to Budweiser's current frogs and lizards.

When Baum and Denslow completed their final Wizard of Oz manuscript, they had no plans for a sequel. Baum's fertile mind had too many other stories searching for paper. The next year he turned out Dot and Tot of Merryland, a sunny, quietly charming, but rather placid story, which turned out to be his last collaboration with Denslow. That same year Baum also published a collection of short stories for children as well as a science fiction fantasy based on the wonders of electricity. The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus, published in 1902, created a highly dramatic childhood for the future dispenser of gifts. Gone is the saintly Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, replaced by a magical Medieval European setting, populated by fairies, nymphs, ryls and knocks, complete with a laughing valley called "Hohaho."

Baum followed this story with a more traditional book, The Enchanted Island of Yew. Here he created another imaginary land, cut off from humans by a great sea, something similar to Oz but far less successful. While these books met with varying initial success, none provided much income. At this time he also wrote Queen Zixi of Ix, although it was not published until 1905. This book continued Baum's interest in traditional European fairy tales, but while considered by some to be his best writing, Queen Zixi failed to develop the reader interest of his Wonderful Wizard of Oz, a lesson not lost on the continually financially pinched author. During these first years of the twentieth century Baum's heart lay in theater extravaganzas. He helped produce the very colorful and very successful 1902 stage version of The Wizard of Oz, a loosely based version of the book. He invested heavily in The Oz Film Manufacturing Company which produced multi-media versions of his stories by combining narration, live acting, orchestral music, stereopticon slides, and hand-tinted color motion pictures. Audiences loved the dramatic results, but costs left Baum heavily in debt and eventually the company was sold to Universal Studios.

In 1904 pressure pushed him back to Oz. Children's letters continually arrived asking questions about his most popular story and demanding another adventure. This resulted in The Marvelous Land of Oz, the only Oz story in which Dorothy does not appear. The Land of Oz - the "marvelous" was dropped in later editions - introduced several important and memorable new characters: Jack Pumpkinhead, Tippetarius, and the Woggle-Bug, all delightfully captured by new illustrator John R. Neill. Jack Pumpkinhead is another rustic character, similar to the Scarecrow, who was brought to life by a witch, but his homely honesty and virtue represent Baum's essential nineteenth century Jeffersonian view of America. Tippetarius, or Tip, first appears as an adventuresome boy but eventually proves to be the missing Princess Ozma who, as it is finally revealed, had been turned into a boy by an evil witch. Following this revelation, the androgynous Ozma becomes a more traditional princess, complete with tiara and frilly white dress. The Woggle-Bug remains one of Baum's most brilliant creations. Known formally as H.M. Woggle-Bug, T.E., he began as a lowly field bug with no name at all. He hid in the floor of a schoolhouse and by eavesdropping on the classes of Professor Nowitall - not to be confused with anyone in attendance this evening - he absorbed great chunks of knowledge; thus he bestowed upon himself the honorary degree of T.E., standing for "thoroughly educated." Eventually he was caught on a magic lantern lens and projected on a classroom screen; he stepped off highly magnified (the letters H.M.), fully qualified to be Dean of the Royal College, "the most learned and important educator" in Oz. In The Land of Oz and various later books, the Woggle-Bug tells stale jokes, makes bad puns, and struts his self-importance, a symbol of ostentatious erudition that rivals anything written by Thorstein Veblen or H.L. Mencken.

The second Oz book, while intended as a sequel was not meant to begin a series. In fact, the great motivation behind the book was undoubtedly to repeat the success of the stage version of "The Wizard." This second book featured the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman, the two most popular characters in the play, and Baum originally titled this volume, "The Further Adventures of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman." While the book

sold quite well, the plot discrepancies between it and The Wizard of Oz, particularly unexplained changes in the physical description of Oz and in the Wizard's character, and a new origin for the Emerald City, have challenged Oz-philes for decades.

With the Oz fantasy seemingly behind him, Baum again turned to other ideas. He and his family had started spending winters in southern California; several years later they would move permanently to a quiet, sparsely settled Los Angeles suburb named Hollywood where Maud's inheritance purchased a new two-story frame house they called "Ozcot." Sunny California inspired several new short stories and a book length manuscript titled "King Rinkitink," which years later became Rinkitink of Oz. Seeking financial security, in 1906 Baum contracted with a new publisher, the Reilly and Brittan Co., to write five juvenile and one adult books - none on Oz, and all but one of these, as well as numerous later books, were published under such pseudonyms as Captain Hugh Fitzgerald, Laura Bancroft, and Edith Van Dyne. In addition, he continued to write fanciful plays. None of this work met the success of his two Oz books, and eventually financial difficulties led to bankruptcy in 1911.

Baum had attributed the continued success of The Wizard of Oz to the popularity of the stage version, and, as we have seen, he wrote the second book in hopes of repeating that success. When stage productions of "The Land of Oz" and "The Woggle-Bug" failed but the books continued to sell, Baum finally came to realize the power of his literary creation. In 1907 he returned to proven ground. Ozma of Oz debuted that year, followed by new stories in each of the next three years. Still interested in pursuing other ideas, however, he used The Emerald City of Oz to "end" the series. The Emerald City reveals his most complex plot because it tied up as many loose ends as possible, but it is also a great battle of good and evil in which, because Princess Ozma does not believe in hurting anyone, the Scarecrow's cleverness - remember, the Wizard had given him a brain - provides a solution which allows good to triumph. At its conclusion all the main characters, including Dorothy, Uncle Henry and Aunt Em, happily reside in Oz. To warn children that

the series was ending, and to protect Oz from outside encroachment, particularly from humans who had now developed airships, Baum ended the book with Oz forever cutoff from the outside world by a shield of invisibility. American children would have none of that. In 1913 Baum started another run of annual Oz titles which ended with the fourteenth in the series, Glinda of Oz, published posthumously in 1920.

Aficionados of Oz know that Ruth Plumly Thompson added nineteen adventures to the series before her retirement in 1939, and that three other authors contributed seven more, leaving the final official tally at an even forty, although great-grandson Roger Baum currently is extending the series. Some of these books, especially by Thompson, are rather good and capture the magical spirit of Baum, but their overall reputation leaves much to be desired. As a group, Baum's contributions to the series are the best, and while several reveal haste and, perhaps, fatigue, resulting in overly contrived situations, they all became instant best sellers. And they all reflect several important traits. The stories mix together ordinary domestic animals, mechanical inventions linked to early twentieth century technology, and totally bizarre characters to create a fascinating blend of the real and the fanciful. Readers came to expect this and in every book Baum introduced one or two new characters.

The successful introduction of so many exotic animals and people must have stretched Baum's imagination to the fullest. In Ozma of Oz, Tik-Tok, a rotund copper clock-work man, and the Hunger Tiger, another friendly feline, become permanent additions to the Oz population. In The Road to Oz an American boy named Button Bright, who has a propensity for getting lost, the Shaggy Man, a former tramp in the United States who continues his wandering in Oz, and Polychrome, who accidentally slid off the end of the rainbow, appear for the first time. Later books introduced the Patchwork Girl, a high spirited and good-natured rag doll, brought to life by the same special potion that humanized Jack Pumpkinhead; the Nome King, a perennial mischief maker from a land adjacent to Oz; Rinkitink, a roly-poly monarch from an

island kingdom; the Sawhorse, a common carpenter's sawhorse which became the most dependable steed in Ozdom because it never tired of running; and Betsy Bobbin, an Oklahoma girl who ends up in Oz with her mule Hank.

A second thread shared by the books is that the land of Oz keeps evolving. Each book provides more information about Oz, its peculiar geography and adjacent lands, its strange history and unusual people. Every story provides more details, and as Baum came to understand the series aspect of his work, a logic and order descend on Oz. Eventually a map appeared, drawn of course by none other than Professor H. M. Woggle-Bug, which remains the official version of Oz. The location of Oz became increasingly mysterious. Not only did it become invisible to humans, it became more remote from the United States, possibly a separate continent or even detached from Earth. By the time of Baum's death, Oz's location resided only in the reader's imagination. . .perhaps somewhere over the rainbow. And then there is Baum's humor, now somewhat dated but at the time it appealed to children of all ages. This is most clearly seen in his personal names and descriptions. General Jinjur, the head of a feminist army with hat pins, who eventually marries and happily keeps house; Allegro de Capo, who has reeds in his lungs which cause him to exude music as he breathes; and we learn that the Tin Woodman's real name turns out to be Nick Chopper. In Queen Ann Soforth's army the only non-officer is a man named Files, because every organization needs private files, and tucked into one corner of Oz is the city of Rigmarole, a penal colony for bores, inhabited by "a long-winded, tedious people."

Finally, Oz is a land of love, honesty, toleration and innocence. Although evil, in the form of the wicked witch of the east, certainly existed in the first book, eventually rudeness and ill-manners became the most prominent sins. Instead of strong moral conflicts, optimism, self-affirmation, and positive thinking triumph - a debt to Baum's attachment to Helene Blavatsky's Theosophy, a nineteenth century predecessor to the views of Norman Vincent Peale and Werner Erhardt.

Baum's health declined in his last years. On top of his angina pectoris, he suffered excruciating pain from a tic douloureux which wrenched his face with pain. By 1915 gall bladder attacks brought on semi-invalidism. After two years of ignoring his doctor's recommendation to have surgery, he finally had his gall bladder removed. A badly inflamed appendix came out at the same time. Weakened by the extensive surgery, he remained bedridden. Writing for short stretches each day, he completed The Tin Woodman of Oz in 1918, and early the next year finished The Magic of Oz. By this time Baum knew the end was near, that he would never again dig in his beloved garden or even sit in the warm sunshine of his porch. During the winter and early spring of 1919 he put his remaining energy into Glinda of Oz, but at the beginning of May, with the story almost complete, his heartbeat became erratic. On May 5th he lapsed into unconsciousness and the following day, nine days short of his 63rd birthday, Frank Baum died, whispering, "Now we can cross the Shifting Sands," a reference to the desert that borders Munchkin Land.
