Classics Illustrated collection
1942-1998
(bulk dates 1942-1969)

Abstract: The Classics Illustrated collection is a collection of comic books from four versions of the Classics Illustrated series. Classics Illustrated published adaptations of the classics of literature in comic book format, with the intention of introducing literature to younger readers. The bulk of the collection comprises 79 issues from the original Classics Illustrated series, which was created by Albert Lewis Kanter and published by Gilberton Company from 1941 to 1971. There are also: 22 issues from the Classics Illustrated Junior Series, which adapted fairy tales and fables for a younger audience from 1953 to 1969; three issues of First Comics’s version of Classics Illustrated, which published entirely new adaptations of classic literature from 1990 to 1991; and 48 issues of Acclaim Books’ Classics Illustrated Study Guides, which reprinted issues from the original Classics Illustrated series in a study guide format similar to CliffsNotes from 1996-1998.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 647
Title: Classics Illustrated collection
Inclusive Dates: 1942-1998
Bulk Dates: 1942-1969
Extent: 1.6 linear feet (3 boxes)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 647, Classics Illustrated collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS record center cartons; Boxes 2-3: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Source: Purchase.

Processing: Processed and encoded by Alexander Clark Johnston, January 2012.

Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

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Historical Note

Classics Illustrated was created by Albert Lewis Kanter (1897-1973) and first published by Gilberton Company in 1941 under the name Classic Comics. The series was renamed as Classic Illustrated in 1947 in order to distance the series from other comic books, which were under increasing attack from educators and the general public. Kanter intended to use the relatively new comic book format to introduce younger readers to the classics of literature. Each issue presented an illustrated adaptation of a novel, play, or other literary work, which was supplemented by a brief biography of the featured author and shorter comic book adaptations of other historical events. Some newspaper comic strips had presented similar adaptations, but Classics Illustrated was the first full-length comic book to do so. The series proved to be immensely popular, with many issues running through as many as twenty printings. It flourished throughout the 1940s, survived the anti-comics campaigns of the 1950s and extended into the 1960s, with a total run of 169 issues. Sales of Classics Illustrated waned in the 1960s. The last new material in the original Classics Illustrated series was published in 1969. The series continued publishing reprints until 1971, when poor sales and a shrinking market prompted Gilberton to cancel the series. The series has occasionally been revived in the following years; some of these revivals are also represented in the collection.

Sources:


The Classics Illustrated collection is a collection of comic books from four versions of the *Classics Illustrated* series. *Classics Illustrated* published adaptations of the classics of literature in comic book format, with the intention of introducing these works to younger readers. The bulk of the collection comprises 79 issues from the original *Classics Illustrated* series, which was created by Albert Lewis Kanter and published by Gilberton Company from 1941 to 1971. There are also: 22 issues from the *Classics Illustrated Junior* Series, which adapted fairy tales and fables for a younger audience from 1953 to 1969; three issues of First Comics’s version of *Classics Illustrated*, which published entirely new adaptations of classic literature from 1990 to 1991; and 48 issues of Acclaim Books’s *Classics Illustrated Study Guides*, which reprinted issues from the original *Classics Illustrated* series in a study guide format similar to CliffsNotes from 1996-1998.

The collection is arranged into four series, each of which represents a different imprint of the *Classics Illustrated* series: I. *Classics Illustrated*; II. *Classics Illustrated Junior*; III. *Classics Illustrated* (Berkley/First Publishing); and IV. *Classics Illustrated* (Acclaim Books Study Guide). Within each series, the comic books are arranged, alphabetically, by author and title.

Series I, *Classics Illustrated*, contains 79 issues of the original *Classics Illustrated* series, which ran from 1941 to 1971, with a total of 169 issues published. Nearly all of the issues in the collection are later reprints. Most issues of *Classics Illustrated* were reprinted several times, which was uncommon for comic books at the time, which usually went through only one printing. The reprints were almost never explicitly identified as reprints, despite the fact that some reprints had been substantially rewritten or featured entirely new artwork. The reprints are most readily identified by the fact that they contain advertisements for subsequent issues of *Classics Illustrated* which had been published years after the issue in question.

The illustrators and writers employed by *Classics Illustrated* generally went uncredited, although their roster included notable comic book artists such as Joe Orlando and Jack Kirby. William B. Jones, Jr. has identified many of the artists and writers involved in his *Classics illustrated: a cultural history, with illustrations* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2002).

Series II, *Classics Illustrated Junior*, contains 22 issues of the *Classics Illustrated Junior* series, which was introduced in 1953 in order to expand the *Classics Illustrated* format to a younger audience. The series printed adaptations of fairy tales, fables and other stories aimed at a younger audience. The stories were usually sanitized so as to eliminate the violent elements often present in the originals. The series began publication with issue number 501 and ceased publication with issue number 577 in 1969. As with the original *Classics Illustrated* series, most issues went through several printings, usually without any explicit identification that the issue was a reprint. Contributing writers and artists generally went uncredited.

Series III, *Classics Illustrated* (Berkley/First Publishing), contains three issues of First Comics’s version of *Classics Illustrated*, which was published from 1990 to 1991. This series was an entirely new version of *Classics Illustrated*, which was intended to tap into the popularity of the graphic novel format. Unlike the original *Classics Illustrated*, the contributors to these issues received prominent credit for their work. The entire comic book industry was experiencing an economic slump at the time, and the series failed to establish a foothold in the market, leading to its cancellation after only twenty-seven issues.
Series IV, *Classics Illustrated* (Acclaim Books Study Guide), contains 48 issues of Acclaim Books’ series of *Classics Illustrated Study Guides*. The series, which went through 62 unnumbered issues from 1996-1998, presented recolored reprints of the original *Classics Illustrated* series. These reprints were presented as study guides, akin to CliffsNotes, and included supplemental materials such as author biographies, critical analyses, discussion questions and other background materials about the work in question. The series’s editors also commissioned scripts and illustrations for several new adaptations in 1998, near the end of its run. The series proved to be commercially unsuccessful and it was canceled in 1998 after failing to establish an audience.
Selected Search Terms

Alternate Title

Classics illustrated (New York, N.Y.)
Classics illustrated junior.
Acclaim Books study guide.

Personal Names


Corporate Names

Gilberton Company.

Topical Terms

Comic books, strips, etc.
Literature--Adaptations.

Form/Genre Terms

Comic books.
Graphic novels.

Alternate Title

Classics illustrated (New York, N.Y.)
Classics illustrated junior
Acclaim Books study guide
Arrangement

I. Classics Illustrated
II. Classics Illustrated Junior
III. Classics Illustrated (Berkley/First Publishing)
IV. Classics Illustrated (Acclaim Books Study Guide)
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. *Classics Illustrated*, 1944-1969

About, Edmond. *The king of the mountains*, 1955 [Box 1 F1]
Issue 127

*The atomic age*, 1960 [Box 1 F1]
Issue 156A (Special Issue)

Bakeless, John. *Daniel Boone*, 1952 [Box 1 F2]
Issue 96

Bakeless, John. *Daniel Boone*, 1952 [Box 1 F2]
Issue 96 (1969 reissue, with variant cover)

Buck, Frank. *Bring 'em back alive*, 1953 [Box 1 F2]
Issue 104

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. *The last days of Pompeii*, 1947 [Box 1 F3]
Issue 35

Issue 145

Clark, Walter van Tilburg. *The Ox-Bow incident*, 1955 [Box 1 F3]
Issue 125

Issue 30 (1968 reissue)

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The last of the Mohicans*, [1942] [Box 1 F4]
Issue 4

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The prairie*, 1949 [Box 1 F4]
Issue 58 (1969 reissue)

Crane, Stephen. *The red badge of courage*, 1952 [Box 1 F5]
Di az del Castillo, Bernal. *The conquest of Mexico*, 1960 [Box 1 F5]

Issue 156

Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*, 1967 [Box 1 F5]

Issue 48

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*, 1945 [Box 1 F6]

Issue 23

Dickens, Charles. *A tale of two cities*, [1942] [Box 1 F6]

Issue 6

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and punishment*, 1951 [Box 1 F6]

Issue 89

Dumas, Alexandre. *The conspirators*, 1960 [Box 1 F7]

Issue 158

Dumas, Alexandre. *The Corsican brothers*, 1945 [Box 1 F7]

Issue 20

Dumas, Alexandre. *The count of Monte Cristo*, [1942] [Box 1 F7]

Issue 3

Dumas, Alexandre. *The three musketeers*, [1942] [Box 1 F7]

Issue 1


Issue 55

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust*, 1962 [Box 1 F8]

Issue 167

Haggard, H. Rider. *Cleopatra*, 1961 [Box 1 F8]

Issue 161
Haggard, H. Rider. *King Solomon’s mines*, 1965 [Box 1 F9]

Issue 97

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The house of the seven gables*, 1948 [Box 1 F9]

Issue 52 (1968 reissue)

Henty, G. A. (George Alfred). *In the reign of terror*, 1957 [Box 1 F9]

Issue 139

Henty, G. A. (George Alfred). *Won by the sword*, 1959 [Box 1 F10]

Issue 151

[Hickok, Wild Bill]. *Wild Bill Hickok*, 1954 [Box 1 F10]

Issue 121

Homer. *The Iliad*, 1950 [Box 1 F10]

Issue 77

Hope, Anthony. *The prisoner of Zenda*, 1950 [Box 1 F11]

Issue 76


Issue 131

Hugo, Victor. *The hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1944 [Box 1 F11]

Issue 18

*Joan of Arc*, 1950 [Box 1 F12]

Issue 78 (1969 reissue)

Kipling, Rudyard M. *The jungle book*, 1951 [Box 1 F12]

Issue 83

*Knights of the round table*, 1953 [Box 1 F12]

Issue 108 (1969 reissue)

[Lincoln, Abraham]. *Abraham Lincoln*, 1958 [Box 1 F13]

Issue 142

Issue 91


Issue 80

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *The courtship of Miles Standish and Evangeline*, 1964 [Box 1 F14]

Issue 92

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*, [1942] [Box 1 F14]

Issue 5

Mundy, Talbot. *King – of the Kyber Rifles*, 1953 [Box 1 F14]

Issue 107

Nordhoff, Charles and James Norman Hall. *Men against the sea*, 1953 [Box 1 F15]

Issue 103

Nordhoff, Charles and James Norman Hall. *Mutiny on the Bounty*, 1952 [Box 1 F15]

Issue 100

Nordhoff, Charles and James Norman Hall. *Pitcairn’s island*, 1953 [Box 1 F15]

Issue 109

Ouida. *Under two flags*, 1951 [Box 1 F16]

Issue 86

Parkman, Francis. *The conspiracy of Pontiac*, 1960 [Box 1 F16]

Issue 154

Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon trail*, 1959 [Box 1 F16]

Issue 72

[Polo, Marco]. *The adventures of Marco Polo*, 1946 [Box 1 F17]

Issue 27


Issue 67
Robin Hood, 1964 [Box 1 F17]
Issue 7

Rostand, Edmond. Cyrano de Bergerac, 1951 [Box 1 F18]
Issue 79

Schiller, Friedrich. William Tell, 1952 [Box 1 F18]
Issue 101

Scott, Walter, Sir. Ivanhoe, 1946 [Box 1 F18]
Issue 2 (1968 reissue)

Scott, Walter, Sir. The lady of the lake, 1950 [Box 1 F19]
Issue 75

Scott, Walter, Sir. The lady of the lake, 1950 [Box 1 F19]
Issue 75 (Undated reissue, with a variant cover)

Scott, Walter, Sir. The talisman, 1953 [Box 1 F19]
Issue 111

Seton, Ernest Thompson. Lives of the hunted, 1960 [Box 1 F20]
Issue 157

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet, 1952 [Box 1 F20]
Issue 99

Shakespeare, William. Julius Caesar, 1950 [Box 1 F20]
Issue 68 (1967 reissue)

Shakespeare, William. Macbeth, 1955 [Box 1 F20]
Issue 128

Sienkiewicz, Henryk. With fire and sword, 1958 [Box 1 F21]
Issue 146

Stevenson, Robert Louis. The black arrow, 1946 [Box 1 F21]
Issue 31 (1968 reissue)
Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The bottle imp*, 1954 [Box 1 F21]
Issue 116

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure island*, 1949 [Box 1 F21]
Issue 64

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver’s travels*, 1944 [Box 1 F22]
Issue 16

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s court*, 1945 [Box 1 F22]
Issue 24

Twain, Mark. *Huckleberry Finn*, 1945 [Box 1 F22]
Issue 19

Twain, Mark. *The prince and the pauper*, 1946 [Box 1 F23]
Issue 29 (1966 reissue)

Twain, Mark. *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, 1952 [Box 1 F23]
Issue 93

Verne, Jules. *Around the world in 80 days*, 1950 [Box 1 F23]
Issue 69

Verne, Jules. *From the earth to the moon*, 1953 [Box 1 F24]
Issue 105

Issue 28

Verne, Jules. *Robur the conqueror*, 1961 [Box 1 F24]
Issue 162

Verne, Jules. *20,000 leagues under the sea*, 1948 [Box 1 F25]
Issue 47

Issue 147
Issue 160

Wells, H. G. (Herbert George). *The war of the worlds*, 1954 [Box 1 F26]
Issue 124

Wyss, Johann. *Swiss family Robinson*, 1947 [Box 1 F26]
Issue 42 (1969 reissue)

**Series II. Classics Illustrated Junior, 1954-1960**

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The chimney sweep*, 1957 [Box 1 F27]
Issue 536

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The elf mound*, 1958 [Box 1 F27]
Issue 556

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The nightingale*, 1956 [Box 1 F27]
Issue 522

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Thumbelina*, 1955 [Box 1 F27]
Issue 520

*The elves and the shoemaker*, 1958 [Box 1 F28]
Issue 546

*The frog prince*, 1956 [Box 1 F28]
Issue 526

*The golden fleece*, 1957 [Box 1 F28]
Issue 544

*The golden touch*, 1957 [Box 1 F28]
Issue 534

*The happy hedgehog*, 1960 [Box 1 F29]
Issue 568
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The 3 golden apples*, 1958 [Box 1 F29]
Issue 555

*Johnny Appleseed*, 1955 [Box 1 F29]
Issue 515

*King Thurshbeard*, 1958 [Box 1 F29]
Issue 553

*Paul Bunyan*, 1955 [Box 1 F30]
Issue 519

*The pied piper*, 1954 [Box 1 F30]
Issue 504

*Pinocchio*, 1954 [Box 1 F30]
Issue 513

*Puss-in-boots*, 1954 [Box 1 F30]
Issue 511

*Rapunzel*, 1956 [Box 2 F31]
Issue 531

Ruskin, John. *The king of the golden river*, 1955 [Box 2 F31]
Issue 521

*The sleeping beauty*, 1954 [Box 2 F31]
Issue 505

*The three giants*, 1960 [Box 2 F31]
Issue 561

*The 3 little pigs*, 1954 [Box 2 F32]
Issue 506

*The ugly duckling*, 1953 [Box 2 F32]
Issue 502
Series III. *Classics Illustrated* (Berkley/First Publishing)

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*, 1990 [Box 2 F33]

Issue 4

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, 1990 [Box 2 F33]

Issue 5

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, 1990 [Box 2 F33]

Issue 8


Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*, 1996 [Box 2 F34]

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering heights*, 1997 [Box 2 F34]

Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim*, 1997 [Box 2 F34]

Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*, 1997 [Box 2 F34]

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*, 1997 [Box 2 F35]

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*, 1997 [Box 2 F35]


Dumas, Alexandre. *The count of Monte Cristo*, 1997 [Box 2 F36]

Dumas, Alexandre. *The man in the iron mask*, 1997 [Box 2 F36]

Dumas, Alexandre. *The three musketeers*, 1997 [Box 2 F36]

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust*, 1997 [Box 2 F36]

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The house of the seven gables*, 1997 [Box 2 F37]

Homer. *The Odyssey*, 1997 [Box 2 F37]

Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains courageous*, 1997 [Box 2 F37]


Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*, 1997 [Box 3 F38]

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*, 1997 [Box 3 F38]

Melville, Herman. *Typee*, 1997 [Box 3 F38]


Poe, Edgar Allan. *Stories by Poe*, 1997 [Box 3 F39]

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All quiet on the Western front*, 1997 [Box 3 F39]

Rostand, Edmond. *Cyrano de Bergerac*, 1997 [Box 3 F39]

Scott, Walter, Sir. *Ivanhoe*, 1997 [Box 3 F40]

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, 1997 [Box 3 F40]


Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*, 1997 [Box 3 F40]

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, 1997 [Box 3 F41]

Shakespeare, William. *A midsummer night’s dream*, 1997 [Box 3 F41]


Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Kidnapped*, 1997 [Box 3 F41]

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The master of Ballantrae*, 1997 [Box 3 F42]

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure island*, 1997 [Box 3 F42]

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom’s cabin*, 1997 [Box 3 F42]

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver’s travels*, 1997 [Box 3 F42]

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s court*, 1997 [Box 3 F43]

Twain, Mark. *Huckleberry Finn*, 1997 [Box 3 F43]
Twain, Mark. *The prince and the pauper*, 1997 [Box 3 F43]

Twain, Mark. *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, 1997 [Box 3 F43]

Twain, Mark. *Tom Sawyer*, 1996 [Box 3 F44]

Verne, Jules. *Around the world in 80 days*, 1997 [Box 3 F44]

Verne, Jules. *From the earth to the moon*, 1997 [Box 3 F44]

Verne, Jules. *A journey to the center of the earth*, 1997 [Box 3 F44]

Verne, Jules. *The mysterious island*, 1997 [Box 3 F45]

Verne, Jules. *20,000 leagues under the sea*, 1997 [Box 3 F45]

Wells, H. G. *The invisible man*, 1997 [Box 3 F45]

Wells, H.G. *The war of the worlds*, 1997 [Box 3 F45]