

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ACQUISITION OF A FIRST EDITION
*THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ***

We are excited to announce a special addition to our growing collection. A first edition of L. Frank Baum's classic children's story *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is now on display in the exhibit *Witches: Evolving Perceptions*. Originally published in 1900, today this book is widely considered America's first fairytale.

Now far removed from the era of legal witch-hunts, Baum's Land of Oz ruled by witches introduced several new interpretations of this age-old figure. While previous literature and folklore included powerful female characters such as good fairies, goddesses, and female spirits, it was not until the 1900 publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that America was introduced to its first notable good witches, Glinda and the Good Witch of the North. Benevolent, lovely, and supremely good, these characters were the forerunners of the many good witches that have appeared in American popular culture in the last century.

L. Frank Baum's Wicked Witch of the West also left a lasting mark on the image of the witch. When MGM began experimenting with the new Technicolor technology for the 1939 film adaptation of this classic children's story, the Wicked Witch was given bright green skin. This was a notable departure from the book's original W. W. Denslow illustrations. While there are other examples of green skinned women in mythology, this was the first time a witch was depicted as green, solidifying an archetype that remains popular to this day.

This first edition includes several original spelling mistakes, misprints, and imperfect image plates. Displayed alongside an autographed photo of Margaret Hamilton in her iconic role as the Wicked Witch of the West, these items bring a new depth to this exhibit's discussion of the evolution of the witch.

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