

The Evolution of Series Books for Children

The "Rollo" and "Lucy" books were the first fictional children's literature series. Other authors of the 19th century emulated this style, but never with the success of Jacob Abbott. The series style was revived in the late 1800s and received its most unusual permutation in the early 20th century. Edward Stratemeyer began writing the "Rover Boys" series in the 1890s and, although not an especially original writer, he did know how to use trends in popular culture. His real genius came in his use of ghostwriters. In 1905, he formed Stratemeyer Syndicate, whose "Series Books" were written by a stable of authors who were given established plot outlines. These books are very seldom in a family setting, instead they emphasize peer groups, travel and mystery. Stratemeyer creations include the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and the Bobbsey twins.



The Bobbsey Twins At Pilgrim Rock.
by Laura Lee Hope.
New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1956.