

The Global Neighborhood

A Guided Tour of the Early 20th Century Worldview
Through the “Little Cousin” Literary Series



ANNUAL COLLECTION
Exhibit: 1900-1920
EST. 1800

Humanizing the Map



Published in the early 1900s by authors like Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade and Blanche McManus, the "Little Cousin" series had a singular, ambitious goal: to transform "foreigners" into "family".



In a pre-digital era, these books were the primary window to the outside world. The title "Cousin" was a deliberate psychological framing device designed to bridge cultural distances and foster empathy rather than fear.

The Literary Formula

Almost every book in the series follows a consistent narrative structure designed to educate and entertain.

The Protagonist:
A named child representing the “national character” (e.g., Alila, Sigrid, Hamid).

The Setting:
Vivid landscapes framed as playgrounds or survival challenges.



The Culture:
Integration of local customs, clothing, and food (e.g., Tuba sap, Oplatki wafers).

The Connection:
A plot device connecting the protagonist to the West, often a visiting American relative.

The Old World: Village & Pastoral Life

Western Europe depicted through a lens of leisure, history, and tranquility.



- ✿ England: Edith lives an idyllic life on the Thames, characterized by tea times and river picnics. ✿
- ✿ Scotland: Donald Gordon explores Edinburgh and the Highlands, focusing on clan history. ✿
- ✿ France: Germaine lives in a farmhouse in Normandy, surrounded by agricultural abundance. ✿
- Holland: Pieter and Wilhelmina live a life of canals, weddings, and catching candies from bridal carriages.

The Alpine & Northern Spirit

Adaptation to the environment and the celebration of seasonal traditions.



Sweden: Sigrid prepares for a skating carnival in Stockholm; industrious and cheerful.

Switzerland: Carl participates in flag-waving festivals and moves cows to high summer pastures.

Denmark: Karen awaits her famous sculptor Uncle Thor, blending domestic warmth with high art.

Germany: Bertha's life revolves around the privacy and magic of the Christmas tree.

Finland: Juhani and Maja row across lakes and gather berries in the autumn forest.

Shadows & Resilience: Central & Eastern Europe

Cultures defined by struggle, deep-rooted tradition, and survival.



- ❖ Czecho-Slovakia: Jozef's village is marked by the struggle against oppression, balanced by simple joys like mushroom hunting. ❖
- ❖ Poland: Jan Teczynski's story centers on the country manor and the sharing of the oplatki Christmas wafer.
 - ❖ Hungary: Banda Bela, a Gypsy boy, finds community and music after wandering the hills. ❖
- ❖ The Jewish Cousin: Esther and Solomon in Jerusalem mourn the loss of their homeland at the "Place of Wailing".

The Frozen Frontiers

Survival and warmth in the extreme North and Siberia.

The Arctic (Eskimo): Etu spends infancy nestled on his mother's back; life revolves around the igloo and dog teams.
Alaska: Kalitan bridges the gap with white settlers, teaching the wisdom of the land and fishing rights.
Siberia (Cossack): Vanka grows up on the rugged Ussuri River, facing dangerous ice crossings.
Russia: Petrovna in St. Petersburg enjoys skating and coasting, and visits the Great Fair.



Tales from the Desert & The Orient

Hospitality, ancient codes, and the allure of the East.

Arabia: Hamid welcomes his city cousin to the tents. The focus is on the 'Code of the Desert'—generosity, horsemanship, and falconry.

Persia: Karim's birth is marked by rituals to ward off the "Evil Eye," introducing mysticism.



Turkey: Osman lives in Constantinople, a city of contrasts, luxury, and ancient school customs.

Greece: Zoe connects modern life in Thessaly with the myths of the past.

Life in the East: Ceremony & Nature

Politeness, social hierarchy, and life on the water.



Japan: Lotus Blossom is the archetype of politeness. Her life is a series of beautiful rituals, from tea to festivals.

Siam (Thailand): Chin grows up on a houseboat on the river Meinam; the water is his playground.

India: Chola and Mahala's daily life involves bathing rituals and playing with a pet monkey named Jam.

The Tropical Playground: Islands & Jungles

Where the barrier between 'indoors' and 'outdoors' dissolves.



Philippines: Alila hunts buffalo and taps trees for tuba (coconut sap).



Hawaii: Auwae practices "surf-riding" and visits the Kilauea volcano.



Brazil: Affonzo's adventure begins with climbing a banana tree—a playful introduction to the tropical paradise.

The Spanish Main & The Canal

Regions in the midst of political change and modernization.



Panama: Vasco witnesses the massive undertaking of the Canal construction, contrasting old heritage with modern industry.

Cuba: Maria's life is shadowed by the struggle for independence and war in Havana.

Porto Rico: Manuel captures fireflies and learns local songs amidst a new political reality.

Spain: Fernando in Granada represents the ancestral traditions of hospitality.

Frontiers of Settlement

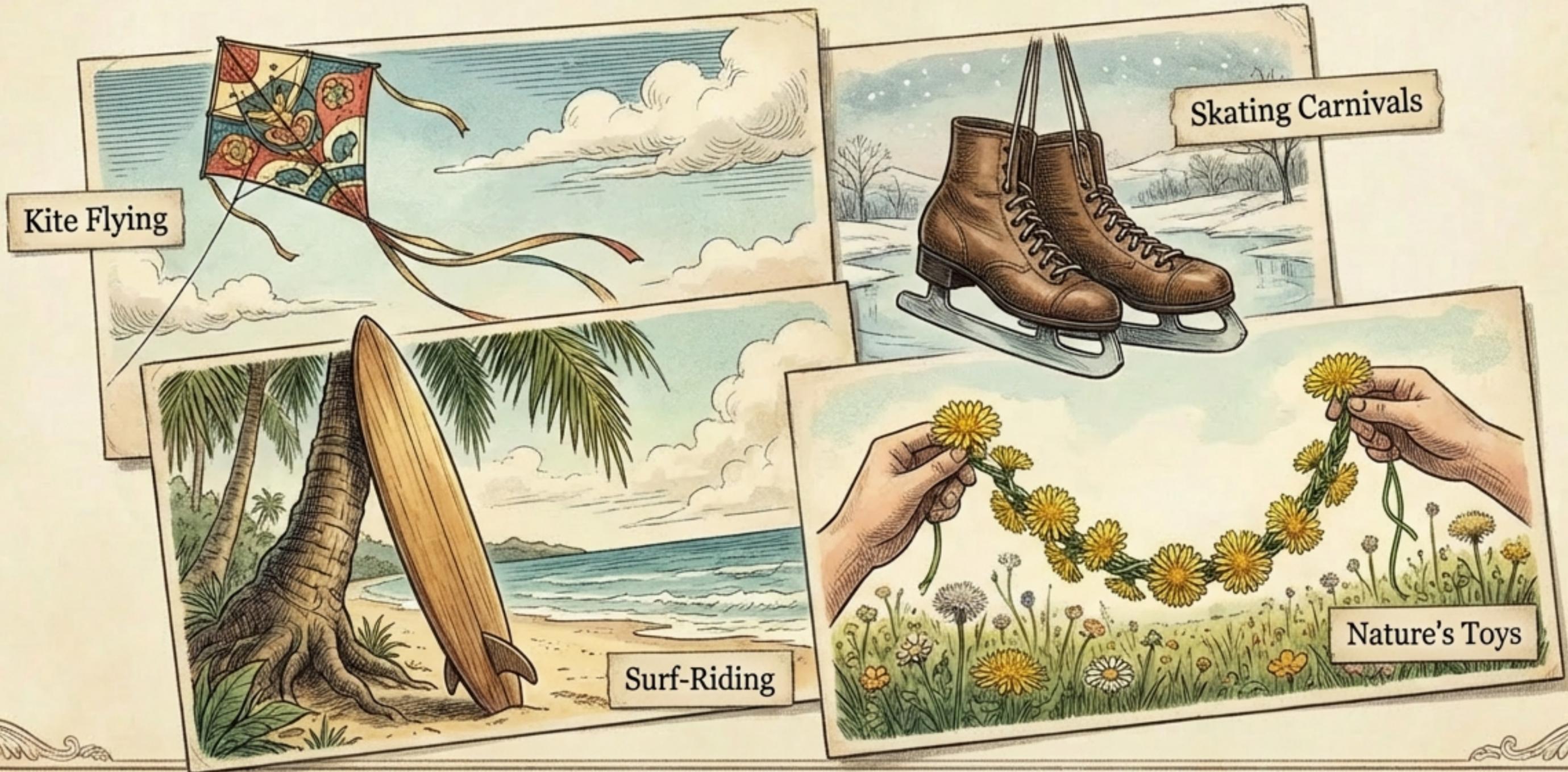
The vast, wild landscapes and the people who call them home.



Canada: Marjorie and Jack make dandelion chains in New Brunswick—an idyllic, fairy-tale view of the woods.
Quebec: Oisette Mary Tremblent tends to her father's melon patch, maintaining French-Canadian traditions.
Native American Cousin: Yellow Thunder's story focuses on tribal wisdom and the encroachment of settlers.
South Africa (The Boer): Petrus Joubert fights locusts and attends farm-school in the Transvaal.

Universal Threads: The Language of Play

Despite vast differences in climate and culture, the 'Little Cousin' series argues that the impulse to play is the primary unifying human trait.



Universal Threads: Festivals & Faith

Every culture marks the passage of time with sacred rituals,
often centered around the family and the home.



The Christmas Tree & Oplatki: German and Polish traditions of sacred sharing.
The Christening: Celebrations of new life in Spain and the Philippines.
Ancient Rites: The Jewish 'Place of Wailing' and Persian protective rituals.

The Legacy of the 'Little Cousin'

In an era before airplanes and the internet, these 30+ volumes built a “Global Neighborhood” in the minds of young readers. By framing strangers as “Cousins,” the series replaced the fear of the unknown with the curiosity of kinship.

