



Soon to be



Seussical

2024
SEASON

MUSICAL

PRODUCTION NUMBER 254

Jun. 14 — THROUGH — Aug. 03

Oh, the Places He Went!

Written by Mark Fossen

In nineteen oh four,
a bright mind did appear,

Theodore Seuss Geisel,
to his parents so dear.

To Dartmouth and Oxford
with pen firm in hand,

A future so bright,
'til one day he was banned.

Theodore Seuss Geisel was born in 1904 in Springfield, Massachusetts. He attended Dartmouth College as an undergraduate and became editor-in-chief of *The Dartmouth Jack-O-Lantern*, a college humor magazine. He then attended Lincoln College, Oxford, in pursuit of a doctorate in English literature. (Although he adopted "Dr." as part of his pen name, Geisel never completed that degree.)

Prohibition said "No",
but he was caught with some gin.

"So, time for a pen name,"
he said with a grin.

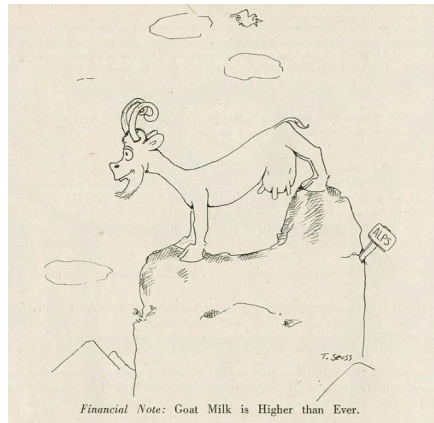
"Dr. Seuss" took the stage,
with a gleam in his eyes,

And that name would be his,
as his fame would rise.

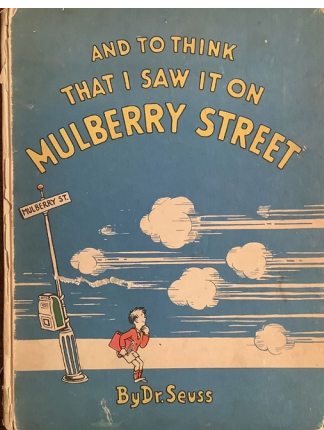
His time at Dartmouth came during Prohibition, and he was caught drinking illegal gin in his room. As punishment, he was removed from all his extracurricular activities, including those at *The Dartmouth Jack-O-Lantern*. To get around this ban, he adopted the pen name "Seuss" so he could continue to contribute without the administration knowing. Of course, it's by that name we know him best: "Dr. Seuss." (Although



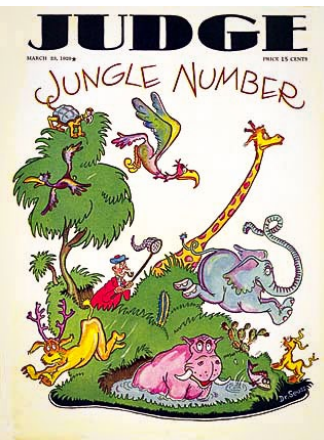
Dr. Theodore Seuss Geisel with models of characters he created, 1959



The first known appearance of the pen name "Seuss", in *The Dartmouth Jack-o-Lantern*, 1925



The first edition of Dr. Seuss's first book, *And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, 1937



A cover from the March 23, 1929 issue of *Judge*, showing Dr. Seuss' distinctive style.

“Seuss” is correctly pronounced more like “Soice” in German, he eventually embraced the Americanized pronunciation because it rhymed with “Mother Goose.”)

In *Judge* mag, his cartoons
they first came to light,

To many they brought a great deal of delight.

Came '36, with a tale to be told,

Mulberry Street he penned,
but it couldn't be sold.

His earliest steady work was at *Judge* magazine beginning in 1927. In 1936, he wrote his first children's book: *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. The book was inspired by the rhythms of ship engines he had heard on a European voyage with his wife, as well as Mulberry Street, which was a few blocks away from his childhood home in Springfield. The book faced numerous rejections, reportedly between 20 and 43 times, before his old Dartmouth College friend, Vanguard Press publisher James Lloyd, helped get it published.

Yet success he did find in the books that
came next,

With Hortons and Grinches,
his work was the best.

Sixty books he created,
with artwork so bright,

Wild worlds and wild creatures, to chil-
dren's delight.

After this initial struggle for publication, later books followed quickly, including *Horton Hatches the Egg* in 1940. In total, he wrote and illustrated 60 children's books under the pen name “Dr. Seuss.”

But in May fifty-four,
a challenge was made,

To write using words
that would suit the first grade.

The Cat in the Hat
used just two thirty-six,

It took nine months to write,
full of Seussian tricks.



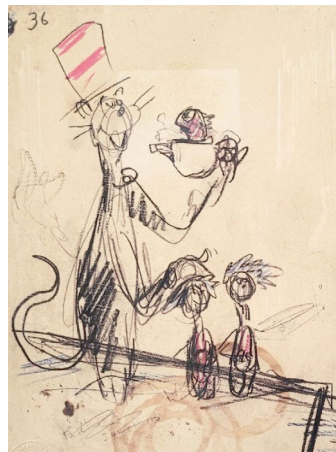
A 1954 *Life* magazine article concerning illiteracy concluded that many school children were not reading because the books were simply not engaging enough. In order to combat this, William Ellsworth Spaulding, an editor at Houghton Mifflin, compiled a list of 348 words that he felt first-graders should recognize. He asked Geisel to write a book containing no more than 250 of those words and to "bring back a book children can't put down". After nine months of writing, Geisel created *The Cat in the Hat* which used 238 of the words and launched his *Beginner Books* line and led to books like *Green Eggs and Ham* and *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.

Don't start with morals,
Seuss would say with a grin,
"Kids can spot them a mile off."
Story's where to begin!

Among top one hundred,
for children's delight,
Sixteen were by Seuss!
What an incredible sight!

Geisel always insisted that while every story inherently carries a moral, he never began with the moral in mind, stating that "kids can see a moral coming a mile off." That intuition proved correct as his books ended up

Dr. Seuss at his drafting table in his home office with a copy of his book, *The Cat in the Hat*, in La Jolla, California, April 25, 1957



An early sketch from *The Cat in the Hat*

selling over 600 million copies in 20 languages. In 2000, *Publisher's Weekly* created a listing of the top 100 best-selling children's books of all time, and 16 of them were Dr. Seuss books.

In November two thousand,
a show took the stage,

Seussical had its debut ...
but was not quite the rage.

On Broadway it flopped,
but it quickly did tour,

It's now loved and adored,
a favorite for sure.

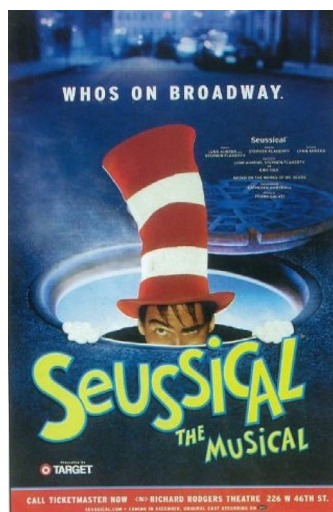
Seussical: The Musical by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty premiered on Broadway on November 30, 2000. It was not a critical hit and didn't have a very long run. In fact, its \$11 million loss marks it as one of the biggest "flops" in Broadway history. However, the production underwent significant changes during its National Tours. The revised version gained popularity and is now beloved by many, frequently produced in theaters ranging from professional to grade-school.

Enjoy this creation,
its cats and its hats,

Its Hortons and Grinches,
and no room for bats.

Its foxes in soxes,
and hops on the pops,

With the talent on stage,
we sure think it's the tops!



Original *Seussical: The Musical*
Broadway poster, 2000

Kevin Chamberlain as Horton
the Elephant, and the cast
of the original Broadway
production of *Seussical: The
Musical*, 2000

