



The World of Archie Comics Archive

Access to 100+ titles from Archie Comics, spanning the early 1940s to 2020

An unprecedented digital collection offering access to the runs of more than 100 publications from Archie Comics. This is one of the longest running, best-known comic stables, spanning the early 1940s to 2020. Alongside the flagship title, *Archie*, other prominent titles, which have pervaded wider popular culture, include *Sabrina: The Teenage Witch*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, *Betty & Veronica*, and *Jughead*.

The evolution of these publications, across more than eight decades, offers insight into changes in society and attitudes pertaining to, for example, issues of race, class, sexuality/gender, and politics. The archives are also key sources for research in many aspects of comics studies and popular culture history, including the development of the genre, comic art/narrative techniques, and the marketing of comics to particular demographic groups.



Archie Andrews will soon turn 100. So what is the continuing fascination readers have with he and his pals in Riverdale? Archie represents the quintessential American teenage life since its inception in the 1940s. The gang experience lives that are recognizable to many but which have changed over the decades, just as the nation has. Beyond the eternal triangle of Archie, Betty and Veronica, an African American girlfriend was introduced along with other characters of color. Then gay characters appeared. All of this demonstrates how closely the writers and artists listen to the world around them which makes digital Archie a critical source for scholarship in the humanities whether in literature, history or American Studies.

— James P. Danky, co-author
 "Wisconsin Funnies: 50 Years of Comics"
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FEATURES

- Coverage spanning 1939 to 2020 – 8 decades of content*
- Variety of publication types, from comic book series to graphic novels, annuals, and one-shot comics.
- Digital backfiles of more than 100 titles, including several major, long-running series, as well as rare, influential early superhero comics from the 1940s.
- At completion, this collection will contain approximately 300,000 pages.
- Page-image, color digitization maximizes the rich visual content of this material, while detailed article-level indexing enhances the searchability and navigability of this resource.
- Cross-searchable with ProQuest's Underground and Independent Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels, where institutions have access to both resources.

* Policy is to include each issue from the first and to scan from cover to cover. Due to the rarity of this material, however, there will be some gaps (issues or pages).



COMICS: A GROWING RESEARCH FIELD

Comics are an increasingly popular source type in research and teaching, not only within dedicated Comics Studies departments but in many other disciplines, including American Studies, Media/Communications, Women's and Gender Studies, History, Literature, Cultural Studies, and Sociology. Libraries rarely have good print backfile holdings of comics, however; the availability of primary sources for comics studies has not kept pace with the growth of this field. *The World of Archie Comics Archive* provides a large volume of this increasingly studied content type, for which there are few existing digital sources.

Example Research Applications

Archie Comics titles have previously been used in a wide variety of research and teaching topics, including sex/gender roles, sexuality, youth culture, textual analysis, cold war culture, depictions of witchcraft/Wicca, and comics in literacy development.

The following are example titles of published research and dissertations examining Archie Comics publications:

- "Casting a Spell on Feminism: A Rhetorical Analysis of Sabrina Spellman and the Dialectic of Feminist Liberation and Patriarchal Control"
- "Rebellion in Riverdale," in *Comic Books and the Cold War: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code and Social Concerns*
- "Comic book culture and second language learners"
- "'Veronica and Betty are Going Steady!': Queer Spaces in Archie Comics"
- "'Now that it's just us girls': transmedial feminisms from Archie to Riverdale"
- "The Archie Code: A study in sexual stereotyping as reflective of a basic dilemma in American society"
- "The Acast of Aces: Representations of Asexuality in Fiction"
- "'Archie's girls?' Betty, Veronica, and the rise of American youth culture, 1941-1950"
- "Beyond Betty, Veronica, Thelma, and Louise: An exploration of best friendship among heterosexual women"
- "The Motivating Power of Comic Books: Insights from Archie Comic Readers"
- "Modernism in Riverdale: Reading the Self-Evident Text Ambiguously"
- "'Leaving my girlhood behind': woke witches and feminist liminality in Chilling Adventures of Sabrina"

ARCHIE COMICS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

In 1938, following hard economic times due to the Great Depression and on the verge of a second world war, Americans needed an escape from their everyday lives. With the surge in popularity of comic strips that were featured in newspapers, a new format emerged to meet the demand of consumers: comic books. The Golden Age of comic books is an era of American comic books from 1938 to 1956. During this time, modern comic books rapidly increased in popularity with a variety of genres published. M.L.J. Magazines, Inc (later Archie comics) was one of the more popular comics publishers during the Golden Age. Their early publications, *Blue Ribbon Comics* (1939-1942), *Top-Notch Comics* (1939-1942), and *Zip Comics* (1940-1944), featured various superhero characters, including the Shield, the first patriotic hero in the United States wearing a costume of red, white, and blue; Black Hood, and ex-cop framed for larceny and trained to fight crime, and the Comet, a scientist who injected his bloodstream with a special gas allowing him to make superhuman leaps and eventually fly.

ARCHIE, TEEN HUMOR AND CULTURE

In the early 1940's, teens became a target group for comics consumerism as teen culture and buying power began to emerge in the U.S. When World War II ended, there began a shift in public interest to humor comics. Archie Andrews was first introduced in the superhero comic book, *Pep Comics* (1940-1946), and he would later become the principal character as M.L.J. Magazines, Inc focused on teen humor comics targeting middle class pre-teen females and youths who were about to experience high school life. Most stories featured in *Pep Comics*, and later *Archie Comics* (1946-present), focused on benign aspects of teen life, such as cars, dating, school, parents, and friends. The comic series idealized sub-urban life with Archie optimizing conformity and respect of authority. It also featured iconic characters such as Jughead, Betty, and Veronica.

ARCHIE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Archie Comics have also been an important site of research for gender and LGBT studies. In particular, the character Jughead is one of the few asexual, or ace, characters in mainstream media. *Archie Comics'* confirmation of Jughead as ace in 2016 is a progressive move and an important step for media representation of ace characters. In addition, the character Kevin Keller, who first appeared in *Veronica* in 2010, was the first openly gay character in the Archie world. The importance of this character was to help destigmatize homosexuality and show that Riverdale had evolved and was part of the 21st century.

ARCHIE COMICS AND LITERACY

Many scholars have done research on the use of comics— and Archie comics in particular— as an instructional tool for literacy development for teens and young adults and use of comic book culture for second language learners. The accessibility of comic books, with the aid of additional visual cues such as page layout and images, functions to help reader comprehension and engagement.



TITLE HIGHLIGHTS:

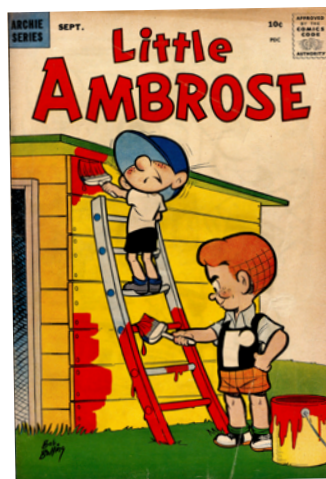
- **Blue Ribbon Comics** (1939-1942 and 1983-1984) was the first comic published by M.L.J. Magazines, Inc. This anthology series covered various genres from science fiction, crime, humor, and adventures tales. It also debuts the first superhero, Bob Phantom who was a Broadway theater columnist with strength and the ability to teleport.
- **Pep Comics** (1940-1946 and 1946-1987) was the comic that first introduced Archie Andrews, who eventually became the main focus of Archie Comics extensive range of publications.
- **Katy Keene Comics** (1949-1961) features the character Katy Keene, known as "America's Pin-Up Queen." Most issues focused on Katy's life as a model and actress. Readers were encouraged to submit drawings of outfits and accessories for Katy and her friends to wear.
- **Shield Wizard Comics** (1940-1944) was a short-lived superhero comic featuring the Wizard, one of the earliest superhero characters ever created, and the Shield, first superhero who donned U.S. colors in support of patriotism.
- **Super Duck** (1944-1960) features an anthropomorphic character, originally intended to be a parody of Superman.
- **Zip Comics** (1940-1944) was an anthology series that covered various genres from war, mystery, crime, and adventure. The key character featured was Steel Sterling, a chemist who became the "Man of Steel" after dunking himself in chemically treated cauldron of molten steel.
- **Sabrina the Teenage Witch** (1971-1983 and 1997-2009) featuring half-witch Sabrina Spellman as she navigates being a teenager and mastering her powers.
- **Little Ambrose** (1958) Archie spin-off comic starring little Archie characters and their picked-on pal "Little Ambrose".
- **Kevin Keller** (2011-2014) features the first openly gay character, Keven Keller, in the Archie universe.
- **Archie and Me** (1964-1987) focuses on the interaction of Archie Andrews and the school principal, Mr. Weatherbee.
- **Archie's Mad House** (1959-1982) featuring the "Archie Gang", this comic series produced stories that made no sense, with monsters, space, and parodies of popular culture fads. In the late 1960s, Archie's Mad House went through a major overhaul due to the impact of hippies, mods and rock and roll on popular culture.



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- Youth and Popular Culture Magazine Archive



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