



Considered a “holy grail” for Nancy Drew collectors, the first printing and first edition of *The Secret of the Old Clock*—the first Nancy Drew story—is a rarity indeed with a dust jacket. Seldom coming up for auction there are only about 5 known first printings in dust jacket that have surfaced among the collecting community. No doubt there are probably a few more that remain hidden from the public eye whether by a careful and secretive type or perhaps by an unsuspecting spinster who treasures an old childhood friend.

Why is this volume so rare you might ponder? In a nutshell, there are few printings that come to light with a

dust jacket. The dust jacket holds most of the value as compared to the book. Quite a few collectors have a first printing without the dust jacket—still a scarce find. From 1930 to early 1932, Grosset & Dunlap printed the Nancy Drew series in a blank endpaper fashion which lacked the familiar orange silhouette of later volumes. Only the first seven volumes exist in this format—and only the first printing of volume seven, *The Clue in the Diary*, came in this format. Therefore, for a very short time period, these blank endpaper and silhouetteless editions existed.

At this time, the dust jackets were not so highly valued as they are today by collectors. Often they were removed, stored elsewhere, tore and were trashed, or were used to keep track of books in one's collection. The back of these early dust jackets had lists of other titles in various other series that kids could purchase and I theorize that kids used these to keep track of their purchases and turned them into checklists which were discarded at later dates. For whatever condition that befell the dust jackets, many books turn up missing the dust jacket and are worth less than if found with the dust jacket.

Up now on eBay is the fifth known first printing with the dust jacket—the auction ends on August 16, 2005. While the dust jacket is not in excellent condition and is rather worn and fair, this is a prized find for whoever becomes the highest bidder. Previously in auctions and private sales, this book has brought upwards of 8500.00—the higher figure included some other books as well. While I cannot predict the cyclic nature of auctions at eBay, this auction is highly watched with zeal by series book collectors all over the world. Will it surpass the \$10,000.00 figure (for a book in good condition) in the latest Nancy Drew “bible” guide, the 12<sup>th</sup> printing of *Farah's Guide*? Tune in to find out! Go to this link to view the auction:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=7991861723>