

The smallest children's book in the world contains:

The Story of Old King Cole

Who was Old King Cole? Why was he so merry?

According to L. Frank Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, in his book *Mother Goose in Prose* (Chicago: Way and Williams, 1897)

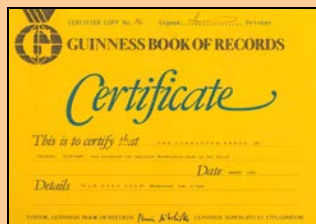
Cole was a poor man who made his way in the world by riding his donkey about and playing on his fiddle.

He was chosen to be king as dictated by the kingdom's quaint laws in what amounted to a game of blind man's bluff—but he didn't let his elevation ruin his spirit of fun!

Settling all his subjects' quarrels by handing over the disputed items to the poor, he spent the rest of his time leading the court in dances and merriment, and died a much-beloved ruler.

He is remembered in the nursery rhyme:

Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl
And he called for his fiddlers three.



Acknowledgements: Image from *The History and Adventures of Little Eliza*. Philadelphia: William Charles, 1812. Rare Book and Special Collections Division. Annotations by Anita Burkam.



*The Smallest Children's Book in the World
and
Other Curious Bibliothings*

Children's Literature Center
Rare Books and Special Collections
Division

Library of Congress
Thomas Jefferson Building
North East Pavilion, LJ-129

Telephone: (202) 707-5535
Monday through Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm