

LEWIS CARROLL-AUTHOR-MATHEMICIAN-REVEREND-PHOTOGRAPHER



Child of the pure unclouded brow
And dreaming eyes of wonder!
Though time be fleet, and I and thou
Are half a life asunder,
They loving smile will surely hail
The love-gift of a fairy-tale

Lewis Carroll
from *Through the Looking-Glass*



A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF LEWIS CARROLL

Author of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Lewis Carroll, born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in 1832, entered Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1850. He died forty-eight years later, after having passed virtually the whole of his adult life within the university precincts. He taught mathematics at Oxford. He never married. He was fascinated by games and puzzles. He also took pictures, and became one of the foremost early portrait photographers. (If you owned and operated a camera in the 1840's you were very unusual.) From his childhood Dodgson wrote words that tumbled in rhyme. He had 10 brothers and sisters.

One day, there were three little girls in a boat listening to a tale, the adventurous chronicle of a little girl called Alice.



One of the little girls in the boat was called Alice - Alice Pleasance Liddell. On the river is where *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was born.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR, LEWIS CARROLL

This is from Lewis Carroll to you! It gives you a good sense of the kind man.

(Appended to the Nursery edition published at Easter in the year 1890.)

An Easter Greeting to Every Child Who Loves "Alice"

My, Dear Child,

Please to fancy, if you can, that you are reading a real letter, from a real friend whom you have seen, and whose voice you can seem to yourself to hear, wishing you, as I do now with all my heart, a happy Easter.

Do you know that delicious dreamy feeling, when one first wakes on a summer morning, with the twitter of birds in the air, and the fresh breeze coming in at the open window--when, lying lazily with eyes half shut, one sees as in a dream green boughs waving, or waters rippling in a golden light? It is a pleasure very near to sadness, bringing tears to one's eyes like a beautiful picture or poem. And is not that a Mother's gentle hand that undraws your curtains, and a Mother's sweet voice that summons you to rise? To rise and forget, in the bright sunlight, the ugly dreams that frightened you so when all was dark--to rise and enjoy another happy day, first kneeling to thank that unseen Friend who sends you the beautiful sun?

Are these strange words from a writer of such tales as "Alice"? And is this a strange letter to find in a book of nonsense? It may be so. Some perhaps may blame me for thus mixing together things grave and gay; others may smile and think it odd that any one should speak of solemn things at all, except in Church and on a Sunday: but I think--nay, I am sure--that some children will read this gently and lovingly, and in the spirit in which I have written it.

For I do not believe God means us thus to divide life into two halves--to wear a grave face on Sunday, and to think it out-of-place to even so much as to mention Him on a week-day. Do you think He cares to see only kneeling figures and to hear only tones of prayer--and that He does not also love to see the lambs leaping in the sunlight, and to hear the merry voices of the children, as they roll among the hay? Surely their innocent laughter is as sweet in his ears as the grandest anthem that ever rolled up from the "dim religious light" of some solemn cathedral?

And if I have written anything to add to those stores of innocent and healthy amusement that are laid up in books for the children I love so well, it is surely something I may hope to look back upon without shame and sorrow (as how much of life must then be recalled!) when my turn comes to walk through the valley of shadows.

This Easter sun will rise on you, dear child, "feeling your life in every limb," and eager to rush out into the fresh morning air--and many an Easter-day will come and go, before it finds you feeble and grey-headed, creeping wearily out to bask once more in the sunlight--but it is good, even now, to think sometimes of that great morning when "the Sun of righteousness" shall "arise with healing in his wings."

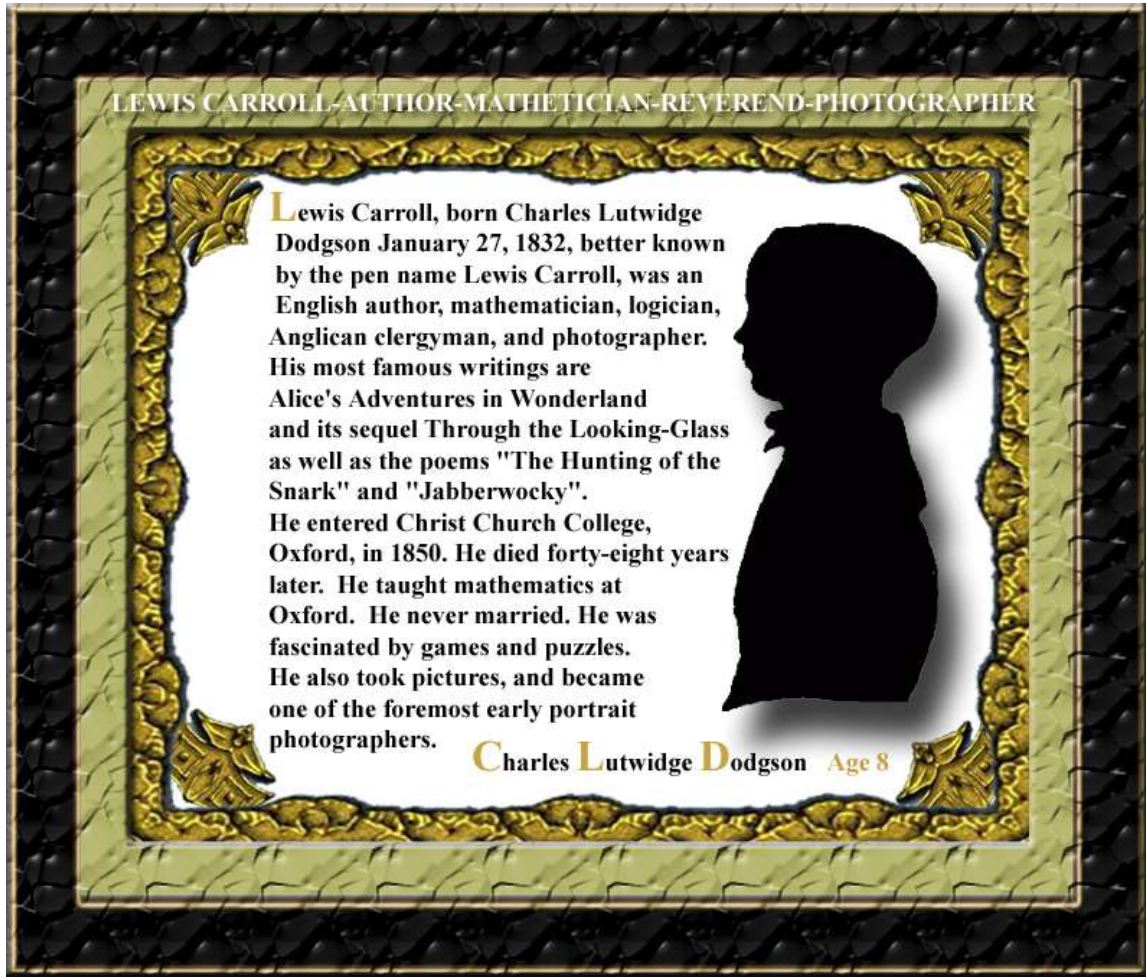
Surely your gladness need not be the less for the thought that you will one day see a brighter dawn than this--when lovelier sights will meet your eyes than any waving trees or rippling waters--when angel-hands shall undraw your curtains, and sweeter tones than

ever loving Mother breathed shall wake you to a new a glorious day--and when all the sadness, and the sin, that darkened life on this little earth, shall be forgotten like the dreams

of a night that is past!

Your affectionate Friend,

Lewis Carroll
Eastertide 1890



FAMILY ACTIVITY PROJECT

Silhouettes and biographies of your family. In the middle of the 1800's, cameras were just coming out, and a popular way of preserving a likeness of someone you loved or famous people was to cut out a "silhouette" of them. Paper cutting on which silhouettes were based is actually an ancient art, cultivated during the eleventh century by the shadow theaters of the Orient.

A **silhouette** is made by casting a shadow on paper, drawing the outline, cutting it out with scissors and pasting it on a light colored background. Smooth thin paper works best, tape down the corners with tape to draw with a strong light profiling your subject. A sketch is drawn on the paper and then slowly cut-out with scissors. It's easy to do and makes an interesting wall hanging, add a family biography and it becomes a family treasure. You may also learn a lot about your family this way.

A **biography** is a written history of someone's life, when and where a person was born, what the important elements that construct one's life, such as, what is meaningful to them, what they have done that they feel proud of? This makes a fun and interesting family project. Writing about the particulars of your families lives, as we have done with Lewis Carroll's life. Putting personal signatures under the silhouettes is a nice finishing touch.

Here are some questions you may want to ask for their biographies:

What year and where were you born?

Where did/do you go to school?

How many people are in your family?

What did your parents do and where did you grow up?

What do you do for a living?

What do you love doing?

What is your favorite thing to eat, read, do?

What is your philosophy of life?

What is the most important thing that ever happened to you?

What is a tragic thing that happened to you?

What do you aspire to, what is your dream?