

Steven Kellogg was born in Norwalk, Conn., on Oct. 26, 1941, to Robert E. and Hilma Marie (Johnson) Kellogg. He has two younger sisters, Patti and Martha.

Some of Kellogg's popular work includes "Island of the Skog," "Johnny Appleseed," "A Rose for Pinkerton," "How Much is a Million" and "The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash." Readers may recognize characters such as The Christmas Witch, Pinkerton and Rose, Jimmy and Jimmy's Boa and Clorinda from Kellogg's work.

Kellogg fell into a love of writing and drawing at an early age. He had a great appreciation for picture books as a child, and he was particularly fond of the illustrations and stories of Beatrix Potter and N.C. Wyeth.

Animal stories were irresistible, an interest that may have started with the time that he spent with his grandmother. The two of them spent many hours together, during which she taught him about the plants and animals that lived in the area. She helped him appreciate the magic and wonder of little things that other people might consider unimportant. He says that many of the things she taught him still show up in his books.

In fact, many years ago, Kellogg and his wife, Helen, purchased a Great Dane puppy, whom they called Pinkerton. Pinkerton became a very popular character, starring in a series of books.

As a child, Kellogg often used his interest in animal stories to create his own. Kellogg and his sisters played a game called Telling Stories on Paper. "When it took place, I would sit between them [his sisters] with a stack of paper on my lap and a pencil in my hand, rattling off tales and scribbling illustrations to accompany them, and passing the pictures first to one of the girls and then the other. I enjoyed these storytelling sessions enormously and I usually persevered until my sisters were too restless to sit there any longer, or until they were buried under pieces of paper," he said.

It was of no surprise to his family that Kellogg had decided during his pre-school years to make drawing the center of his future career. Steven noticed early in life that not all grownups enjoyed their jobs, and he was determined to choose a job that he really loved.

Kellogg continued drawing throughout his school career and went on to get a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1963. He majored in illustration and was particularly interested in the few projects he did related to the creation of picture books. During his senior year, Kellogg won an honors fellowship allowing him to study abroad in Florence, Italy. Upon returning to the United States in 1965, Kellogg started his graduate work at American University in Washington, D.C. The following year, he took a position as an instructor in etching with the school.

In the mid-1960s, Kellogg married his wife Helen, who brought with her an instant family of six children (four girls and two boys) that Kellogg helped her raise.

Around that same time, Kellogg started submitting picture book ideas to various publishers. He began illustrating books for other children's book authors in 1969, but things really became exciting when his own books were accepted by publishers. It was not long before he realized that he would be able to create picture books full time and make a living at it. Steven recalls, "I looked at some grownups and noticed that some loved their work and other grownups did not, and the effect that it had on their moods made a big impression on me."

Since the beginning of his writing career, Kellogg has authored or collaborated on approximately 110 books. Looking back on his career and his life-long interest in it, Kellogg once said, "I have always wanted to write and illustrate picture books, and, the more deeply involved in it I become, the more I find it to be an endlessly broad and fascinating art form. I enjoy illustrating my own books, and I love the challenge of devising the right visual accompaniment for the manuscripts of other authors."

The Kelloggs lived in Stony Brook, Conn., for many years, but Steven and his wife moved to a beautiful farm in rural Essex, N.Y., about 10 years ago. He just recently received news that they are shortly to become great-grandparents!

Over the years, Steven has visited thousands of schools and has presented to countless audiences — young and old. He remains a popular speaker and visitor.

Kellogg is a vice-president of the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, a national not-for-profit organization that advocates for literacy.