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Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the *Critical Insights* Series ***Critical Insights: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer***

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* holds a special place in American literature. Never out of print since its original publication in 1876 and equally beloved by both children and adults, it is one of the most widely read American novels ever published. Despite the book's enduring popularity and its author's fame as one of the greatest American writers, it has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. It is a difficult-to-believe but remarkable fact that *Critical Insights: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is the first entirely original collection of critical analyses of the novel ever published!

This volume, like all others in the *Critical Insights* series, is divided into several sections. It begins with an introductory "About This Volume" essay, followed by another work titled "*Editorial Notes*". This is followed by "On Mark Twain and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*." All three introductory pieces are written by volume editor R. Kent Rasmussen.

A collection of four critical contexts essays are intended to treat the novel

- 1) From a historical vantage point
- 2) In terms of its critical reception
- 3) Using a specific critical lens
- 4) And by comparing and contrasting it with another important work.

This section opens with an essay by Peter Messent titled, "*Tom Sawyer's Evasion of History*," followed by a piece by Alan Gribben, "*Tom Sawyer: A Classic Overshadowed by Its Successor*," This essay discusses how *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is linked to Twain's later classic *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but is often viewed by scholars and critics as a precursor to the later novel without pausing to analyze *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* as its own novel. The following two articles are written by Joe B. Fulton and Philip Bader. The first, "Thinking Like Jackson's Island; Or, Why *Tom Sawyer* Is Good for the Environment," by Fulton explores the theme present in the novel that immersing oneself in the natural world creates a greater appreciation not just for the earth, but for human beings as well. In the final essay, "Tom Sawyer and Harry Potter: The Boys Who Live," by Bader compares the two works titular boy characters and how Rowling may have been inspired by Twain, but more importantly, how each respective character continues to inspire young readers imaginations regardless of journey .

Following these four Critical Context essays is the **Critical Readings** section of this book, which contains the following essays:

- The *Tom Sawyer* Franchise' The Evolution (and Devolution) of a Character, by John Bird
- Tom Sawyer: From Boy-Book Hero to Coming-of-Age Hellion, by Kevin Mac Donnell
- Is *Tom Sawyer* and Idyllic Dream or a Boy's Nightmare?, by K. Patrick Ober

- Becky Thatcher and Aunt Polly in Three Dimensions, by Linda Morris
- Republican Motherhood and Tom Sawyer's Political Education, by Hannah J.D. Wells
- Injun Joe and Mark Twain's Attitudes toward Native Americans, by Kerry Driscoll
- Tom Sawyer as an Enduring Icon of Boyhood, by John H. Davis and Hugh H. Davis
- *Tom Sawyer's* Complicated Relationship with Mark Twain's Hometown, by Cindy Lovell
- Illustrating *Tom Sawyer*, by Barbara Schmidt
- The *Tom Sawyer* Movie That Hollywood Got (Almost) Right, by R. Kent Rasmussen
- Adventuring with Tom Sawyer in a Twenty-first-Century Classroom, by John R. Pascal

Each essay in *Critical Insights: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* includes a list of **Works Cited** and detailed endnotes. In the final section, **Resources**, easy-to-follow lists are provided to help guide the reader through important dates and moments in the author's life, beginning with *Tom Sawyer's* Cave: Fact vs. Fiction, by Danny Norman, a **Chronology of Mark Twain's Life and Legacy**. This is followed by a list of **Works by Mark Twain**, a **Bibliography**, **Notable Editions of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Its Characters***, and **Illustrators of American Editions of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer***. Finally, this section closes with a **Filmography** and **About the Editor** section, **Contributors**, and a detailed **Index**.

The *Critical Insights* Series distills the best of both classic and current literary criticism of the world's most studied literature. Edited and written by some of academia's most distinguished literary scholars, *Critical Insights: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* provides authoritative, in-depth scholarship that students and researchers will rely on for years. This volume is destined to become a valuable purchase for all.

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