

## Frontier Fantasies: Imagining the American West in the Dime Novel

Enormously popular and critically maligned, the dime novel was one of the first forms of mass culture in the United States. The Western adventure story dominated the dime novel industry in the 1860s and 1870s. Tales of the frontier, wherever it was – upstate New York, the Great Plains, or the California gold country – helped to define a mythical American identity. Come see these “Books for the Million!” that justified Western expansion with mail-order myths of violent transgressions, passionate romances, and thrilling rescues.

The exhibition was curated by Laura Braunstein and was on display in the Class of 1965 Galleries from August 15 to October 14, 2008.

### Materials Included in the Exhibition

1. Ann Sophia Stephens. *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. New York: Irwin P. Beadle, 1860. [Dime Novels 66](#)
1. Joseph E. Badger. *Old Bull's-Eye, the Lightning Shot of the Plains*. New York: Beadle and Adams, 1876. [Dime Novels 90](#)
2. James L. Bowen. *Mike, the Guide; or, Lost upon the Plains: A Story of Life in Texas*. New York: F. Starr & Co., 1874. [Dime Novels 191](#)
3. James L. Bowen. *Scouting Dave, or, The Winnebago Renegade: A Story of the Black Hawk War*. New York: American News Co., 1865. [Dime Novels 32](#)
4. Edward Ellis. *Seth Jones, or, The Captives of the Frontier*. London: Beadle and Company, 1861. [Dime Novels 57](#)
5. Hamilton Holmes. *Old Rube, the Hunter. Or, the Crow Captive. A Tale of the Great Plains*. New York: American News Co., 1866. [Dime Novels 162](#)
1. Harry Hazelton. *California Joe; or, The Angel of the Wilderness, a Story of the War in Virginia*. New York: Starr, 1876. [Dime Novels 196](#)
2. Roger Starbuck. *The Slaver Captain, or, Scuttled at Sea: A Story of a Cruise off the African Coast*. New York: Frank Starr & Co., 1874. [Dime Novels 189](#)
3. J. Thomas Warren. *Old Hal Williams, or, The Spy of Atlanta*. New York: F. Starr, 1876. [Dime Novels 138](#)
4. Edward Willett. *The Vicksburg Spy, or, Found and Lost*. New York: Frank Starr & Co., 1877. [Dime Novels 154](#)
1. Edward Sylvester Ellis. *The Fighting Trapper, or, Kit Carson to the Rescue: A Tale of Wild Life on the Plains*. New York : Frank Starr, 1874. [Dime Novels 177](#)
2. Edward Sylvester Ellis. *The Life and Times of Col. Daniel Boone, the Hunter of Kentucky. With sketches of his Cotemporaries [sic]; Narratives of St. Clair's Defeat; Mrs. Merrill's Adventures, etc., etc.* New York: Beadle, 1860. [Dime Novels 134](#)
3. George Thompson. *Life and Exploits of the Noted Criminal, Bristol Bill*. New York: M.J. Ivers & Co., 1851. [Dime Novels 88](#)

4. Orville James Victor. *The Private and Public life of Abraham Lincoln; Comprising a Full Account of His Early Years, and a Succinct Record of His Career as Statesman and President*. New York: Beadle and Co., 1864. [Dime Novels 240](#)
1. *Beadle's Dime Song Book. No. 3: A Collection of New and Popular Comic and Sentimental Songs*. New York: Beadle and Adams, 1859. [Dime Novels 147](#)
  2. *The Dime Dialogues No. 6: A Fresh and Choice Collection of Original School and Parlor Dramas, Farces, Burlesques, Humorous Colloquies, Dramatic Episodes, Poetic Discourses, Etc., Etc.* New York: Beadle and Adams, 1867. [Dime Novels 122](#)
  3. *The Dime Dialogues No. 11: A New Collection of Original Colloquies, Minor Dramas, Comediettes, Farces and Dress Pieces, for Schools, Exhibitions, and Parlor Use*. New York: Beadle and Adams, Publishers, [186-?]. [Dime Novels 125](#)
  4. *The Dime Pocket Joke Book*. New York: Beadle and Adams, 1875. [Dime Novels 101](#)
  5. *The Dime School Speaker: Comprising I, The Popular and Dramatic Orator; II, The Sabbath School Orator. Drawn Chiefly from the Utterances of Our Most Popular Speakers, Writers and Thinkers*. New York: Beadle and Adams, 1871. [Dime Novels 131](#)
  6. United States. *The New National Tax Law. Complete Summary of Rates and Imposts, as Amended by Act of March 3, 1865*. New York: Beadle and Co., 1865. [Dime Novels 127](#)
1. Friedrich Gerstäcker. *The Giant Trailer, or, The Lost Scalp: A Romance of the Gold Regions*. New York: Frank Starr, 1875. [Dime Novels 168](#)
  2. Friedrich Gerstäcker. *War Axe, or, The Trapper's Revenge: A Romance of the Apache Trail*. New York: Frank Starr, 1875. [Dime Novels 170](#)
  3. St. George Rathborne. *Roaring Ralph Rockwood, the Reckless Ranger*. New York: M.J. Ivers & Co., 1878. [Dime Novels 16](#)
  4. *Tales, Traditions and Romance of Border and Revolutionary Times: The Little Sentinel; Tecumseh and the Prisoners; Horsecwhipping a Tyrant; The Mother's Trial*. New York: Beadle and Company, 1863. [Dime Novels 219](#)
  5. *Tales, Traditions and Romance of Border and Revolutionary Times: Magnanimity of Rohn-Yen-Ness; Woman Capturing the Hessian; Battle of Bloody Brook; The Heroic Dog*. New York: Beadle and Company, 1864. [Dime Novels 225](#)
  6. *Tales, Traditions and Romance of Border and Revolutionary Times: The Minnesota Captive; Stephen Ball Hung by Tories; Mrs. Palmer and Putnam; Kenton Saving Boone's Life*. New York: Beadle and Company, 1864. [Dime Novels 222](#)
1. J. Stanley Henderson. *The Willing Captive, or, The Woodyard Mystery: A Tale of Ohio River Life*. New York: Beadle and Company, 1864. [Dime Novels 115](#)
  2. Herrick Johnstone. *The Secret Shot, or, The Rivals of Misty Mount: A Romance of the Old North State*. New York: Frank Starr & Co., 1874. [Dime Novels 190](#)
  3. John J. Marshall. *The Deer-Hunters: or, Life and Love in the Ottawa Country*. New York: Beadle & Co., 1865. [Dime Novels 116](#)
  4. John J. Marshall. *The Outlaw Brothers, or, The Captive of the Harpes: A Tale of Early Kentucky*. New York: Beadle and Co., 1864. [Dime Novels 114](#)
  5. George Henry Prentice. *The Wood-Demon: A Legend of the Susquehanna*. New York: Frank Starr, 1877. [Dime Novels 177](#)

6. John Hovey Robinson. *Redpath, the Avenger, or, The Fair Huntress of the Southwest; A Tale of the Trapping Ground*. New York: Frank Starr, 1875. [Dime Novels 171](#)
  7. Metta Victoria Fuller Victor. *Maum Guinea, and Her Plantation "Children": or, Holiday-Week on a Louisiana Estate: A Slave Romance*. New York: Beadle and Company, 1861. [Dime Novels 64](#). Another copy is [available online](#).
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1. Henry M. Avery. *The Tangled Trail, or, Signals of Danger*. New York: Starr, 1872. [Dime Novels 202](#)
  2. Newton Mallory Curtis. *Old Tiger, the Patriot: or, The Heroine of the Mohawk: A Tale of Patriot Devotion and Tory Treachery*. New York: F. Starr, 1875. [Dime Novels 174](#)
  3. C. L. Edwards. *Silver Tongue, the Dacotah Queen, or, Pat among the Red-Skins: Romance of the Indian Country*. New York: Beadle and Adams, 1864. [Dime Novels 106](#)
  4. Edward Sylvester Ellis. *The Vulture's Bride, or, Jack Wyndon's Trail: A Tale of Oregon Life*. New York: Robert M. De Witt, 1870. [Dime Novels 39](#)
  5. George Henry Prentice. *On the Border, or, The Bride of the Wilderness: An Episode of the Border*. New York: Frank Starr, 1877. [Dime Novels 155](#)
  6. Metta Victoria Fuller Victor. *The Gold Hunters: A Picture of Western Character and Pike's Peak Life*. London: George Routledge, 1861. [Dime Novels 73](#)
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1. Ned Buntline. *The Red Warrior, or, Stella Delorme's Comanche Lover: A Romance of Savage Chivalry*. New York: Frank Starr, 1874. [Dime Novels 183](#)
  2. Ned Buntline. *Thayendanegea, the Terrible, or, The War-Eagle of the Mohawks: A Romance of Early New York*. New York: Frank Starr and Company, 1874. [Dime Novels 31](#)
  3. J. Stanley Henderson. *Prairie Chick, or, The Quaker among the Red-Skins*. New York: Frank Starr, 1877. [Dime Novels 160](#)
  4. Ann Sophia Stephens. *Ahmo's Plot, or, The Governor's Indian Child*. London, New York: Beadle and Company, 1863. [Dime Novels 41](#)
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1. Harry Hazelton. *Quindaro, or, The Heroine of Fort Laramie: A Tale of the Far West*. New York: Beadle and Co., 1865. [Dime Novels 108](#)
  2. George Henry Prentice. *The Marked Bullet, or, The Squaw's Reprieve: A Tale of Border Life*. New York: Beadle and Co., 1864. [Dime Novels 117](#)
  3. T. Benton Shields. *The Witch Queen, or, The Old Trapper's Big Trail: A Romance of Devil's Gulch*. New York: Frank Starr, 1873. [Dime Novels 210](#)