

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:       STEPHEN W. MEADER: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
  AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Stephen W. Meader published forty-four books of adventure for children from 1920 through 1969. His books successfully captured important aspects of American life and values, and were very popular across these very different decades of American history. This dissertation examines each of Meader's books at least briefly while paying special attention to questions of values and formula in key and representative works. Meader wrote both historical tales and stories with contemporary settings, set in many regions and most historical eras of the United States; his heroes mature in some way during the course of his books. Meader emphasized important American values: self-reliance, honesty, community, courage, loyalty, friendship, and clear thinking. He used formulas, especially the ordeal, in which the protagonist is separated from responsible adult leadership, faces a challenge, and successfully meets that challenge. This approach allowed him to test his protagonists to see if they would stay true to their values. Meader's heroes usually had sidekicks and often had mentors as well. They often tangled

with memorable villains, received rewards, and sometimes found romance. Meader had an interest in entrepreneurial themes which he expressed most memorably in four contemporary novels in which the young hero starts a business. Along with the fictional story, Meader provides information to the reader in both general approach and specific costs, on how to start certain business ventures: trucking (*T-Model Tommy* 1938), fruit cultivation and production (*Blueberry Mountain* 1941), earthmoving (*Bulldozer* 1951), and ski resort management (*Snow on Blueberry Mountain* 1961). The protagonists of most of Meader's books are good at making do with what they have and at thinking on their feet. Two illustrative examples of his many historical novels are *Boy With a Pack* (1939), whose protagonist is a Yankee peddler and for which he won a Newbery honor award, and *Red Horse Hill* (1930) based on his New Hampshire boyhood. Meader wrote many historical stories of the sea in various eras. He also wrote on environmental themes throughout his career. Meader's work during World War II stood out among American juvenile authors because he confronted the war directly as it was happening while most such writers avoided the war until after it was over. An example is *The Long Trains Roll* (1944).

STEPHEN W. MEADER: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN  
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

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## DEDICATION

For my father, Chesley Hall Looney, and my mother Ida Ruth Courtright Looney, who first introduced me to the books of Stephen Meader, and who first enjoyed them herself as a young woman.

And for my wife Leslie Ann Ruby, and our children, Sarah Elizabeth Looney and Eric Chesley Looney, who, especially Eric, endured hours of listening to me read Stephen Meader's books aloud.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

In a long and productive writing career, Stephen Warren Meader published forty-four books of adventure for children, aimed primarily at boys. Meader's books were very popular, both with the children for whom he wrote, and with librarians serving those children. Phyllis Fenner, librarian and anthologist, noted that Meader's many excellent books appealed to both boys and girls, that "the children begin with one title and go right through everything he has written." During Meader's heyday, children would just say to librarians "Give me another Meader."<sup>1</sup> Meader's books successfully captured important aspects of American life and values, and were popular across five very different decades of American history and life during which Meader wrote: 1920 through the end of the 1960s. Meader emphasized in his young heroes what he described as "the old-fashioned virtues of honesty, loyalty, and self-reliance"<sup>2</sup> as they confronted problems of coming of age and finding their place in the world. Meader wrote both historical tales and stories with contemporary settings, set in many regions and most historical eras of the United States. Meader's heroes start successful businesses from scratch (rags-to-

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<sup>1</sup>Phyllis Fenner, *The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read* (New York: The John Day Co., 1957), 93-94.

<sup>2</sup>Cecile Magaliff, *The Junior Novel: Its Relationship to Adolescent Reading* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1964), 40, quoting Meader.

entrepreneurship), support widowed mothers, sail on all manner of vessels, participate in most American wars, foil spies, learn various occupations, receive rewards for their efforts, win football and basketball games, capture the affections of attractive young women, and always succeed, usually spectacularly. Meader's heroes mature in some way in his stories and, concerned throughout with notions of fair play and doing the right thing, demonstrate tolerance for people of different backgrounds. Meader painted such a compelling picture of the American way of life that his *Red Horse Hill* (1930) was translated into German and distributed in post-World War II Germany as an introduction to the American way of life for German children.

Stephen Meader was born on May 2, 1892, into a Quaker family in Rhode Island, and moved to New Hampshire when he was 12. He attended the Quaker college Haverford in Pennsylvania, married, and raised two sons and two daughters in Moorestown, New Jersey. In addition to his successful writing career, Meader worked full-time, first in publishing, and then for most of his career in the advertising business. He broke into print in 1920 with the newly formed publishing house of Harcourt, Brace and Howe, soon to become Harcourt, Brace and Company, which published all but one of his forty-four books. His writing career thus began at the start of a decade that became known as a golden age of publishing for children. His first book, *The Black Buccaneer*, a pirate tale, fit right into a decade also known for sea stories. During the 1930s, the decade of the Great Depression and economic worries for most Americans, Meader published his first contemporary tales. *T-Model Tommy* (1938) posed an entrepreneurial approach to making a living during rough times, and Meader produced a similar

entrepreneurial book in each of the next three decades, culminating in the 1960s with *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961). By that time the entrepreneurial approach seemed to be giving way to the idea of fitting into a large corporation, and teenagers, including several of Meader's protagonists, were more likely to be earning spending money than money to support a family. During the World War II years, Meader was one of the rare American authors of high-quality fiction for children who addressed the war directly in his writing (as opposed to an allegorical or indirect approach). He used his books to communicate basic information to his readers about the war and how they should behave during wartime. Meader continued writing contemporary and historical stories through the 1950s and 1960s, but by the end of the latter decade was perceived as increasingly out of touch. Children's literature was becoming "relevant" and confronting society's problems, after a long period in which juvenile writers to a large extent ignored such problems. After his long and distinguished writing career, Meader began to receive occasional negative comments in reviews. When he submitted "The Hawley House Mystery" on his regular schedule to his publisher, Harcourt, Brace, that firm rejected it. Meader reacted by attempting to make his work timely and relevant, but he never published again. Both Harcourt, Brace and Dodd, Mead (which had published *Trap-Lines North* [1936]), declined to publish his "The Fight for the Marsh," which contained both an anti-drug message and a pro-environment theme that was by no means new to his work. By 1990, all of Meader's books were out of print.

Very few works of scholarship have even touched on the work of Stephen Meader and not one has concentrated on him, though some briefly mention him as one of many

significant authors. The Cornelia Meigs *Critical History of Children's Literature* (1969) mentions Meader several times but briefly. Cecile Magaliff devotes a chapter to Meader in her *The Junior Novel: Its Relationship to Adolescent Reading* (1964). But by 1985, Hawes and Hiner's *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook* makes no mention of Meader nor does Gail Schmunk Murray's 1998 *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood*. Caroline C. Hunt also omits Meader in her "U.S. Children's Books about the World War II Period" (1994), in which she notes a handful of American juvenile authors who wrote about World War II as it happened, and leaves out Meader's significant books that do so. His books deserve more attention and analysis than they have received, both for the broad range of American historical eras and values they all portray, and for specific books such as his World War II books, which provide contemporaneous details on the war effort as Meader described it for his readers who were living it on the home front. As just one of many additional examples, Meader's contemporary entrepreneurial books are noteworthy for their values and for the practical information they convey concerning development of small business enterprises.

Historians of children's literature and library science have written widely on popular children's fiction and its role in American life. The popularity of Horatio Alger's novels, starting in the 1860s, is well known, as is the mediocre quality of the Alger's writing. Nonetheless, Alger's name is extremely recognizable and has come to symbolize success in America. Dee Garrison observes that librarians objected to Alger's poor quality of writing and the implausibly meteoric success of his protagonists (331-32).

Meader's books counter such objections: he wrote very skillfully, and he tended to develop his characters and their success gradually. Meader was arguably a successor to Horatio Alger who told Alger's story better than Alger did.

Meader's work can be productively examined by analyzing the formulas he used and the values he espoused. The once great popularity of Meader's books with young readers and their librarians may have been a result of improvements to Alger's formulas. Unlike the rapid rise that Alger's boys enjoy, the success of Meader's characters is gradual, and is built on their own efforts much more than by the intervention of a patron. Meader's entrepreneurial heroes create true independence for themselves by starting businesses. They are very different from Alger's heroes, about whom historian Michael Zuckerman asserts: "Not one of Alger's elect is ever self-employed at the end of the novel, nor do any of them really wish to be" (Zuckerman 204).

Both Alger and Meader used the device of the lucky break, but in quite different ways which illustrate their differences as writers. With Alger, the hero often received a lucky break at the end of the story that propelled him to immediate success and made his prior hard work seem ineffectual and irrelevant. With Meader, the protagonist who received a lucky break did so early in the narrative, and used that stroke of luck as a springboard to gradual development of success through diligent work during most of the narrative. An example is *Bulldozer* (1951), where at the start of the story Bill Crane finds a Caterpillar tractor abandoned in a pond, salvages it and its bulldozer, and develops an earthmoving and excavating business throughout the rest of the book.

Daniel T. Rodgers devotes a chapter of *The Work Ethic in Industrial America*

1850-1920 to the treatment of work and success in children's literature during the historical period he analyzes. He describes Alger's four principal formulas, including the one that came to predominate, that of lost and recovered fortunes (141). Rodgers also describes new patterns and modifications that other authors devised, including the school story. Wendy Saul also analyzed the school story in her dissertation: "The School Story in America, 1900-1940: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Genre;" she and Gordon Kelly then co-authored the article: "Christians, Brahmins, and other sporting fellows: an analysis of school sports stories." In some of his works Meader blends a rags-to-success formula with other patterns growing out of the genteel tradition and sports stories, thus combining a mass-market formula with an upper-class genteel one, much as Ralph Henry Barbour combined "Brahmin and Mass-market traditions" (Saul 177). Such improvements to and combinations of formula type may partially explain why librarians usually enthusiastically endorsed Meader.

Even though Meader was able to appeal to librarians, he made much use of formula. John Cawelti defines formulas as "ways in which specific cultural themes and stereotypes become embodied in more universal story archetypes" (*Adventure* 6). A formula is specific to a culture; an archetype is recognizable across cultures. Formula can be "a conventional way of treating some specific thing or person," or it can refer "to larger plot types" (*Adventure* 5). Formulaic fiction, both juvenile and adult, fulfills various functions for individuals and for the society which they comprise. For individuals, such fiction offers escape (*Adventure* 15-16), as well as comfort and reassurance (Saul 262). Formulaic fiction serves the function of socialization (Kelly,

“Historian” 154-55), and in a related function, offers instruction and education. Meader uses his fiction for all of these purposes.

Anne MacLeod wrote extensively about American children’s literature from library science and cultural history points of view. Much of her work was gathered and published in *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1994). In her preface to that book, MacLeod affirms her “interest in the connections between American children’s books and the culture that produced them” (vii), and she analyzes Alger in one of the chapters. Her final chapter, “The Transformation of Childhood in Twentieth-Century Children’s Literature,” discusses the fall of taboos and broadening of subject matter in children’s books in the 1960s that may have led to a decline in interest in Meader’s work when he did not follow that trend. MacLeod wrote on all aspects of American children’s literature throughout her career. Her article “Secret in the trash bin: on the perennial popularity of juvenile series books” is of interest for detail concerning series books and the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Meader wrote during some of the same years that MacLeod considers and some comparisons between his work and series fiction are possible, but Meader always created new protagonists for each of his novels as opposed to creating a series.

Cawelti and Gordon Kelly both argue against confining cultural analysis of literature to “great” works, and Kelly in particular argues for expanding such analysis to children’s fiction. Cawelti addresses the concern that the use of great literature favored by elites is too narrowly based to represent an entire culture’s interests. He argues that “formula is by definition a pattern characteristic of the widest possible range of literature

and other media” and does not draw “cultural inferences from a few select masterpieces in a medium which does not cover the entire culture” (*Formula* 33).

In calling for study of all types of literature that a society produces, including children’s fiction, Kelly opposes the privileging of works of “literary power” (“Historian” 142-45). He argues that formula embodies values and assumptions of a social group. Given the importance of socialization in a human society, he suggests that literature for children can be used to convey values and expectations to young people, who do not come to these concepts on their own (*Mother* 35-36). Values that Meader expressed in his books, such as self-reliance, patriotism, courage, doing the right thing, working diligently, loyalty, community, free enterprise and entrepreneurialism, and taking care of oneself and one’s family, are important in American society. His books were part of the socializing experience for many young Americans. Meader used elements of formula that were well-suited for promoting values he felt were important to American young people and their society.

In this study, I analyze Stephen Meader’s works in terms of their formulaic aspects, the values they depict, and the relationships between formula and values. I describe the types of formula that he employs as well as the functions these formulas fulfill, and the values expressed in his works. Meader’s formulas promote certain values such as honesty, loyalty, and self-reliance—his heroes display such values and succeed within these formulas. In some of his works, he develops an entrepreneurial approach to life and success. I analyze Meader’s works chronologically and for that purpose have divided his work into five time periods (described more fully later in this introduction).

As applicable, I bring in observations from the social and cultural history of the decades during which Meader wrote, as well as occasional examples from other literature for children, in order to provide context for his writing and accomplishments.

Meader's work can be analyzed through the two formulas that Gordon Kelly describes, the ordeal and the change of heart. He defines the ordeal formula as a story in which the young protagonist is isolated temporarily from adult influence, must react decisively to crises, and responds successfully (*Mother* 39). *The Sea Snake* (1943) typifies Meader's frequent use of the ordeal formula. The protagonist is a young American civilian, held captive on a German submarine in World War II, who spends much of the story in captivity, and who must maintain his values and loyalty during this lonely time. Many Meader characters endure such ordeals, though most are of shorter duration. Meader's use of the ordeal formula enables him to subject his hero to a stressful situation where he has to think on his feet, make decisions without the help of responsible adults, and demonstrate his abilities and values, especially self-reliance. Meader relied most on the ordeal in his earlier works.

Rags-to-entrepreneurship—a story of a poor young protagonist who starts a business—was a formula Meader found especially useful for showcasing self-reliance and hard work. Some of his heroes are very much like one major type that Horatio Alger used, according to Cawelti's analysis: the poor and uneducated boy of the street struggling to support himself and, sometimes, a widowed mother (*Apostles* 111). Meader's entrepreneurial formula has some similarity to that of Alger often identified by critics as "rags-to-respectability." The popular notion remains that Alger wrote of rags-

to-riches, but his heroes usually ended up as clerks working for someone else. Meader's characters were more likely to start their own businesses and achieve real independence. His protagonists seldom had two living, healthy parents: some heroes are orphans; many live with and care for an aging widowed mother; still others live with a grandfather or an aunt and uncle. Meader thus usually leaves some vestige of a family to his heroes. In this he followed earlier authors such as Kirk Munroe and William O. Stoddard who, as Daniel T. Rodgers has noted, "did not cast their boy heroes as completely adrift as did Alger" (143).

Most of Meader's sports stories, especially those about football and basketball, are also formulaic. His writing about sports bears comparison to that of Gilbert Patten, who often wrote as Burt L. Standish. Patten took advantage of a burgeoning interest in spectator sports at the beginning of the twentieth century, and thereby "opened up for his young readers a world that Alger never knew" (Nye 75). Russel B. Nye writes that Patten "convinced his readers that morals and manliness went together," arguing that while Alger's heroes reckoned success in material terms, Patten's heroes won out by doing the right thing, leading by example, and playing by the rules (Nye 76). In his entrepreneurial tales, Meader frequently combined these two indicators of success. His heroes succeed in the world of business while excelling on the athletic field, and they play by the rules on the field and off. The hero of *T-Model Tommy* does not want to run his trucks overweight or carry bootleg coal, and he coaches high school football with the same attention to the rules of the game and fair play.

Cecile Magaliff's chapter on Meader describes the following formula or pattern

that she finds in Meader's work: "two boys, one the hero, the other a good friend; a dog; two older men, one good, the other evil. In each book a girl is introduced, but usually her role is not too important. The variations on this theme are in the family backgrounds. Some of the boys are orphans, while some have families. All are in the fourteen- to sixteen-year-old-age group. All are self-reliant youngsters . . ." (41). The formula is not always that rigid: there is not always a girl or dog, and some of Meader's heroes are seventeen or eighteen years old. The good older man Magaliff mentions is the hero's mentor, a role that is often very important to Meader's stories.

Meader emphasized the values of hard work and ambition in his novels, especially through entrepreneurial stories in which the protagonist starts a business that will support himself and a widowed mother. Three of his four contemporary entrepreneurial stories fit this pattern: *T-Model Tommy* (1938), *Bulldozer* (1951) and *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961). In the fourth, *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), the father is alive but an invalid. Meader used entrepreneurial elements in many of his books, both contemporary and historical, but he emphasized entrepreneurialism particularly in these four contemporary books. They provided his readers instruction, in both general approach and specific costs, in how to start certain business ventures: trucking in *T-Model Tommy*, fruit cultivation and production in *Blueberry Mountain*, earthmoving in *Bulldozer*, and ski resort management in *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*. Aspiring young businessmen could actually have used these books to learn the rudiments of starting a business. Meader provides detailed information on costs, profits, and the steady growth of bank accounts, and lessons in salesmanship as well.

Another formula that Meader used, though much less frequently, is that of the change of heart identified by Gordon Kelly. Bruce Neal starts *T-Model Tommy* (1938) as a spoiled rich boy who is a foil to the hero. Ultimately Bruce ends up driving a truck for the protagonist, having apparently changed from a lazy person into a hard worker. This character is somewhat similar to a middle-class hero that Alger used whose father dies, leaving his son in severe financial difficulty. In *T-Model Tommy*, Meader developed the character Bruce, whose father dies and leaves behind financial difficulties so imposing that he swallows his pride and asks Tom for a job. In a similar pattern in Meader's *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953), a character's father has a heart attack. Though he does not die, there are monetary difficulties. In both cases, Meader uses the spoiled rich boy not as protagonist but rather as a snobby foil with whom the hero interacts. In each case the foil undergoes a transformation to a responsible, pleasant, hard-working person. Meader's use of such a snobby foil is rare, but he often creates a very different type of sidekick for his hero, a young man of about the same age, who serves as companion for the adventures of the story, and sometimes as business partner as well.

Another formulaic aspect of Meader's fiction is the minor subplot of romance for the hero, or lacking that, for one of his siblings or another character. Meader started including the romantic subplot after he had been writing for some time. His first developed it fully in *T-Model Tommy* (1938), after which he made frequent use of it. The protagonist's romantic interest is typically a young woman of about his age who is wealthier than he is, but who shares his values and can be won away from the rich boy. In three of the contemporary entrepreneurial tales, the rich young woman takes a keen

interest in the hero's business venture, even its financial details. In *Bulldozer* (1951), the young businessman hero dreams of marrying this well-to-do young woman as the book ends. In Meader's other entrepreneurial work, *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), the hero pursues a girl poorer than he is, and she and her siblings become his business partners.

Meader emphasized important American values and ideas in his books and through the formulas he used. Meader himself considered self-reliance, loyalty, and honesty to be very important in his writing (Magaliff 40); courage and ambition are also prominent in his works. Meader's characters offer clues to their values through their behavior and speech, through the thoughts they express, and through comments by the narrator. Sociologist Milton Rokeach in *The Nature of Human Values* developed an elaborate system of instrumental and terminal values which can be used to analyze Meader's works. Rokeach defined a value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (3). His system assigns eighteen values to each type, with instrumental values relating to desirable modes of conduct and terminal values concerning desirable end states. Rokeach's instrumental values of "honest" and "independent" equate to Meader's honesty and self-reliance, but Meader's loyalty does not have a close match on Rokeach's list. Rokeach's instrumental values of "ambitious," "broadminded," "courageous," "obedient," and "responsible;" and his terminal values of "equality," "freedom," "self-respect," and "true friendship" can also be applied to Meader's work (Rokeach 3-25, 359-61). The principal values that I have found and will discuss in Meader's work are courage, hard work and ambition, honesty,

loyalty and friendship, community, and self-reliance. I devote special attention to questions of values in key and representative works by Meader while examining each of his books at least briefly.

The entrepreneurial story eventually started to lose its hold on Meader and on American society. Concepts that sociologist Elizabeth Long developed in *The American Dream and the Popular Novel* (1985) may help explain why. Long posits a decline in the entrepreneurial adventure ideal in American bestselling novels for adults in the decade after World War II (1945-1955), accompanied by a movement toward corporate-suburban compromise. She defines an “entrepreneurial” conception of success that “unites individual and social amelioration” and suggests that when the notion of limitless expansion fades, it gives way to a “corporate-suburban” pattern where “work and family-centered leisure are seen as conflicting priorities” (8). Long then argues, concerning the next time period, that “inspirational and cautionary tales centered on the quest for success gave way, during this period [1956-1968], to books describing success as a state of being or mode of existence” (92). Although Meader wrote for children, he did celebrate the entrepreneurial adventure, and he published his last such book, *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, in 1961, late enough perhaps to be going against the grain of the new environment that Long describes. Five years earlier, however, Meader’s *Sabre Pilot* (commissioned by the United States Air Force, and criticized by some reviewers and critics as reading too much like a recruiting manual), was certainly partially about fitting into a bureaucratic organization. In that respect it may have been even more extreme than Sloan Wilson’s *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), which Long uses as a key

example of this change in the popular novel's vision of success. Perhaps the differences Rokeach posits between instrumental and terminal values correlate to differences between the two ideas of success Long develops: quest (instrumental values) and end state (terminal values). Possibly Meader's books describing non-entrepreneurial occupations such as *Sabre Pilot* and *The Long Trains Roll* emphasize terminal values while the entrepreneurial novels such as *T-Model Tommy* and *Bulldozer* emphasize instrumental values in the quest for business success. But even before Meader published his last entrepreneurial novel in 1961, his work was beginning to reflect a movement of American teenagers into employment opportunities that provided them with spending money, but not enough income to support a family. Examples include a newspaper delivery route in *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953) and the babysitting and fishing jobs in *Wild Pony Island* (1959). As Long had noted with respect to the adult bestseller market, the entrepreneurial idea in American culture was giving way to the idea of fitting into large American corporations, schools, and the military.

Even though Stephen Meader eventually abandoned the entrepreneurial model, it worked well for him for decades and captures an American idea that remains important to this day. His entrepreneurial tales describe the American dream of achieving independence by starting a business. An advertisement in *Advertising Age* in 1947 called for a new Horatio Alger to popularize the modern success story: "Wanted . . . A Modern Horatio Alger . . . There is an immediate need for an author who can popularize success

stories.”<sup>3</sup> By that time, Meader was already filling that role. His books celebrate the American entrepreneurial adventure in a way that Horatio Alger never really achieved, nor cared to. Zuckerman argues that Alger “was simply not very interested in business, and he was certainly no exponent of entrepreneurial individualism” (193). All in all, Meader does a better job of describing the American way of life and approaches to success than Alger did.

Along with the entrepreneurial flavor suffusing many of Meader’s books, he displays a strong environmental sensibility. In his third book, *Longshanks* (1928), young Abe Lincoln asks the character Allen Gentry not to shoot passenger pigeons. Many of Meader’s books contain incidents or entire themes that show a serious concern for the environment, starting well before Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* sounded an alarm in 1962. Many of Meader’s characters reveal environmental interests through their actions; some undertake demanding projects that involve inventorying, picturing, and protecting wildlife. *King of the Hills* (1933) features a protagonist, Breck Townsend, who seeks to photograph Old Scarback, the venerable buck deer who is the “King of the Hills.” Breck also becomes a deputy game warden who fights deer poachers and worries that the deer may become extinct. The hero of *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964) pursues a 4-H project of photographing the wildlife in his county in Pennsylvania, learning along the way about the balance of nature and how creatures fit into their ecosystems. Watching and learning about birds are important aspects of both *Wild Pony Island* (1959) and *Topsail Island*

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<sup>3</sup>The advertisement appeared on pages 18-19 of the December 1, 1947 *Advertising Age*. Both Wohl (395) and Cawelti (*Apostles* 102) refer to this advertisement.

*Treasure* (1966); a character modeled on Rachel Carson appears in *Wild Pony Island* and shares her love of birds with the characters in that book.

In addition to imparting values to his readers, Stephen Meader probably hoped that they would use his books to learn some history and geography, as well as reading them for escape and entertainment. He wrote about many areas of the United States and many historical time frames. Robert J. Gallagher quotes Meader as saying that after publishing twenty books or so he hit on a plan “to cover all of America, all the periods that were adventurous and romantic . . . all the . . . fascinating places . . . they cover the United States from Maine to Hawaii, Puget Sound to Florida. The bulk of the concept I have never fulfilled quite but it’s there” (Gallagher 30). Some of Meader’s readers probably used his books in these educational ways. His historical novels cover the principal American wars, and may have been helpful in enticing reluctant students to read and learn some history at the same time. During the centennial of the Civil War, Meader published a book from the point of view of each side in the struggle: protagonist Ben Everett of *The Muddy Road to Glory* (1963) is a foot soldier in the Union Army while Anse O’Neal pilots a Confederate blockade runner in *Phantom of the Blockade* (1962). Other characters serve on privateers in the Revolutionary War (*A Blow for Liberty* [1965]) and the War of 1812 (*The Cape May Packet* [1969]).<sup>4</sup> The hero of *Guns for the Saratoga* (1955) serves on both a privateer and an American warship in the Revolutionary War. The books that Meader wrote and set in World War II feature

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<sup>4</sup>A privateer is a privately owned ship commissioned by its government during war to attack and capture enemy vessels, including merchant ships.

nonmilitary protagonists who track down spies and help the American war effort in various ways. One example, *The Long Trains Roll* (1944), also depicts steam railroading in its last heyday, including the contribution the trains make to the war effort.

Meader's historical tales of the sea extend beyond wars to the clipper ships of the 1850s in *Voyage of the Javelin* (1959) and whaling in *Whaler 'Round the Horn* (1950). The latter contains information on Hawaii as well, and Herman Melville appears as a character and takes the young hero to the docks to start his voyage. *Boy With a Pack* (1939), a Newbery Honor winner, acquaints the reader with a Yankee peddler who at one point finds himself assisting on the Underground Railroad. *Jonathan Goes West* (1946) introduces the reader to most forms of American transportation of the 1840s (rail, schooner, steamboat, horse-drawn canal boat, walking, horseback, horse-drawn wagon), as the hero travels from New England to the western prairie and back. *Down the Big River* (1924) and *Longshanks* (1928) describe the life of men working on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, with young Abe Lincoln appearing in the latter as the hero's mentor on a trip down the river. *Buffalo and Beaver* (1960) features the mountain men of the American West of the 1820s; *Keep 'Em Rolling* (1967) tells the story of the Oregon Trail in the 1840s. Meader set other books in other historical eras and in geographical regions from Florida to Washington State.

Meader was a Quaker, and at times his writing reflects the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends. Quakers strongly oppose war and slavery. Some of Meader's characters are Quakers and must reconcile their religious beliefs with situations they encounter. His characters may attempt to defuse violent situations but

sometimes resort to violence themselves. Some of Meader's treatments of values take a Quaker slant; for example he views the value of honesty through a Quaker lens in situations where his protagonists encounter the Underground Railroad. His heroes and the Quakers with whom they interact in these situations are careful to word their communications with slave catchers so that while they don't actually lie, they also give no help and usually mislead these individuals. Meader's fairly frequent treatment of war in his novels seems unusual for a Quaker, especially his books concerning World War II and Korea that were supportive of the American military services in those conflicts. Meader was one of the few American authors for young people to write directly about World War II as it happened. He wrote *Sabre Pilot* (1956) about the United States Air Force and the Korean War at the urging of and with the cooperation of the Air Force, which intended the book as a recruiting tool aimed at young male readers. Gallagher quotes Meader as saying "I'm not a very good Quaker. I've written about wars. I'm not the perfect pacifist by any means" (15); John Meader, son of the author, believes that the quote was probably tongue in cheek, essentially a joke.<sup>5</sup> Stephen Meader was a serious Quaker who had to reconcile conflicts between his Quaker beliefs and the military, both in his books for boys and in his day job writing advertising—one of his clients with the advertising firm N. W. Ayer & Son was the United States Army, for which he wrote recruiting advertising. A sequence in *Sabre Pilot* (1956) where the young hero, Kirk Owen, struggles with his conscience the night before he first experiences aerial combat (126-29), probably reflects some of Meader's wrestling with his own conscience about

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<sup>5</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, Moorestown NJ, April 11, 1996.

his support of the United States military and American wars. Meader was an aircraft spotter on the East coast in World War II; his son John said that even that level of support for that generally popular war earned him extreme disapproval from some of “the little old ladies of the meeting.”<sup>6</sup> In a book set in the American Revolution, *A Blow for Liberty* (1965), Meader has his Quaker hero struggle, during Meeting for Worship, with the correctness of the American colonies’ fight with England. Jed Starbuck decides that, though he still believes that war and violence are generally wrong, the Americans are in the right, and that he is justified in serving on a privateer (34-36).

Although some of his activities and writing may have bothered some of his fellow Quakers, Meader put a portion of the money so earned toward a Quaker education for his children. John Meader said that his father enjoyed the writing and that it was “financially beneficial” with four children in private school.<sup>7</sup> To alleviate the financial pressures of the Great Depression (Meader’s hours and pay were reduced at the advertising agency), and to raise money to educate his children, Meader wrote short stories as well as novels, and recycled his literary work whenever possible, selling it to magazines, anthologies, and for foreign language editions. In discussing subsidiary rights and reuse of literary material, James West states that “American authors during the twentieth century have had to recycle their work” (114). Meader’s recycling of material is noteworthy because he was not making a primary living from his writing, but these pressures still pushed him to get as much money as he could from that writing. West writes of the practice of

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<sup>6</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, Moorestown NJ, April 11, 1996.

<sup>7</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, Moorestown NJ, April 11, 1996.

serialization of adult fiction prior to publication in book form. Meader's second book, *Down the Big River* (1924), appeared first as a serial in *Boys' Life*; his third book, *Longshanks* (1928), was serialized in *The American Boy*. Most of the short stories in Meader's *The Will to Win and Other Stories* (1936) had first appeared in magazines. Many of his works were excerpted in anthologies; some were reprinted as paperbacks. School editions with study questions and other supplementary educational material appeared for several of Meader's books. In addition to translations of *Red Horse Hill* (1930) into French and German, Meader sold portions of that story at least five other times. Other books were translated in French and German, and some into Swedish, Norwegian, and Dutch. Meader also recycled story ideas. The hero of his short story for adults, "Skis and Doughnuts" (1933), turns steep "useless" mountain property into a ski slope that will make money and support a family. Decades later, Meader expanded this same idea into the novel *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961).

The number of books that Meader wrote and published is astonishing considering his full-time job in advertising. According to his son John, after a day of writing advertising and then having dinner with the family, Meader would sit in his favorite chair without a desk but with a green felt-covered board and stack of yellow foolscap, and write. "He had a wonderful ability to concentrate. He never crumpled a page" though he might scratch out a phrase. "For the most part it flowed."<sup>8</sup> Occasionally Meader would read a passage aloud as he wrote, and he read the whole book to his family when he was done. His wrote in the family living room in the evenings with the radio on and the dog

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<sup>8</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, Moorestown NJ, April 11, 1996.

running around, while his children played games and asked questions about homework.<sup>9</sup> According to what Meader told Gallagher, more of the writing would take place starting at eight-thirty or nine after the children went to bed (29-30).

I have organized this dissertation along chronological lines, with thematic analysis within each time frame. A chapter outline follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Meader Learns his Craft: 1920 to 1936

Chapter III: An Entrepreneurial Emphasis Emerges: 1937-1941

Chapter IV: Stephen Meader and World War II: 1942-1945

Chapter V: War's End to Retirement From Advertising: 1946-1957

Chapter VI: Final Published Books (1958 to 1969) and Unpublished Works

Chapter VII: Conclusion

This approach breaks Meader's work into five segments for analysis. The first period of sixteen years, before he began to publish one every year, comprises nine books, some with similarities to those of Horatio Alger—ties that weaken as Meader's career progresses. The second period spans four years and six books; all of the books have some form of the ordeal formula and all but one contain entrepreneurial elements. His first two contemporary entrepreneurial books (*T-Model Tommy* and *Blueberry Mountain*) are in this period as well as *Boy With a Pack*, his Newbery Honor Book. The third period

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<sup>9</sup>I am familiar with Rick Kelsey's "Stephen W. Meader: He Loved to Write Books for Boys" and the biographical material concerning Meader on the southernskies.com website. I am not citing these works here in discussing Meader's writing habits because I have developed this material from an interview that I recorded with John Meader on April 11, 1996.

covers the four books published during World War II, three of which put a protagonist in the midst of war-related action, with Meader's approach to the war demonstrably different from that of most American juvenile authors. One of the books from this period, *The Long Trains Roll*, is also notable for its use of interchapters (which Steinbeck used in *The Grapes of Wrath*), the only time Meader used that device. The fourth period contains twelve novels and ends with Meader's retirement from advertising. The final period consists of his last thirteen published books as well as four unpublished manuscripts.

The material in this study should interest scholars of American culture, particularly those studying children's literature, formulaic fiction, and their impact on the larger culture. The use of imaginative literature, broadly defined and including children's literature, to examine social and cultural history, has long been a useful technique in the interdisciplinary endeavors of the American Studies academic enterprise. In an early and quite important work in this field, Henry Nash Smith's use of literature in *Virgin Land* (1950) was notable in terms of melding literature with history, and in considering dime novels as well as the works of James Fenimore Cooper.

According to Gene Wise's essay on the history of American Studies, some twenty-five years after *Virgin Land* appeared, Gordon Kelly offered "a new more social scientifically oriented pattern of explanations" based on the work of sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Wise 320). Kelly starts with "a concept of context that directs attention to the rules and definitions which order and govern the creation and consumption of literature rather than to begin with an ethnocentric commitment to a particular type of literary product" (Kelly "Literature,"

147). Wise comments: “Kelly insisted that imaginative literature, great or not, be treated as any other human product—as a particular construction of reality coming from a particular context” (Wise 321). The analysis that Kelly performed on late 19<sup>th</sup> century American children’s literature, and the formulas he identified, have been invaluable in my analysis of Stephen Meader. My analysis of Meader’s work follows American Studies traditions of employing thematic analysis to understand a society and its history, and broadening the cultural products studied to include popular children’s literature.

Meader’s writing career spanned five decades, but his books eventually declined in popularity and were out of print by 1990. In the 1960s children’s literature changed to include exploration of society’s problems in ways that had previously been essentially forbidden. Meader was slow to pick up this trend. Reviewers began to note archaic language, and anomalies in plot and character construction. As television joined comic books, radio, and employment opportunities in distracting young people from reading, Meader probably came to be viewed as old-fashioned. The entrepreneurial adventure that had informed many of his books faded. Later in his career, Meader tested his protagonists less often through the ordeal, and critics commented more frequently on how easy things seemed to be for his characters. But in the early years of the new millennium, Meader has enjoyed something of a resurgence, perhaps because of his focus on values such as courage, self-reliance, honesty, and hard work. Bethlehem Books, publisher of *Cleared for Action* (2001), a volume that compiles four of Meader’s nautical books, is dedicated to publishing (or republishing, as with Meader) “wholesome character building

literature,” and markets itself as a source of such literature for home-schoolers.<sup>10</sup> At almost the same time that Bethlehem published *Cleared for Action*, Southern-skies.com began reissuing Meader’s novels, beginning with *T-Model Tommy* (2000). Southern Skies is a partnership of three men who read Meader’s books as boys and wanted to make them available again for people like themselves, and for new generations of potential readers.<sup>11</sup>

Stephen W. Meader’s writing paints a portrait of the way of life and success in the United States. Whether telling a contemporary or historical story, he places his characters in challenging situations where their values, ambitions, and abilities emerge. Meader’s development of contemporary entrepreneurial heroes is particularly compelling as they start businesses and exemplify what he believed was the American way of life and success.

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<sup>10</sup><http://www.bethlehembooks.com/> (accessed 10 February 2005). *Cleared for Action* contains *Clear for Action*, *Whaler ’Round the Horn*, *Voyage of the Javelin*, and *Phantom of the Blockade*.

<sup>11</sup><http://www.southernskies.com/> (accessed 11 February 2005). Southern Skies still has *T-Model Tommy* in print, and in late 2004 reprinted *Down the Big River*, *Lumberjack*, *Trap-Lines North*, *Boy With a Pack*, *The Long Trains Roll*, *Jonathan Goes West*, *Bulldozer*, *Sabre Pilot*, *Buffalo and Beaver*, and *Phantom of the Blockade*.

## CHAPTER II

### Meador Learns his Craft: 1920 to 1936

In 1920 Stephen W. Meador published his first book, *The Black Buccaneer*, historical fiction about pirates. By 1936 he had published five more historical novels, a contemporary novel, a book of short stories, and a nonfiction book about Canadian trapping and hunting. Meador started his writing career by completing a book every four years, but by the end of this period he was writing and publishing a book each year, as he did for decades afterwards, until his writing career came to an end in 1969. In this early period of his career, he tried out several types of books as he settled into a routine and created a niche for himself in children's book publishing. In his first books Meador developed the values that he would endorse throughout his writing career—including courage, loyalty, honesty, hard work, and self-reliance. Meador also introduced formulaic structures that would recur throughout his books. He made frequent use of the formulaic ordeal, where the teenaged protagonist finds himself in a dangerous situation without responsible adult leadership and thus needs to make quick decisions on his own. Many of his protagonists were orphaned or had lost one parent. Meador's heroes often had sidekicks, characters similar in age who become very close to the protagonist and who share in most of the action, and sometimes mentors as well, older men whom the hero admires and who provide good advice. Meador also created some memorably evil villains as well as a few villains with admirable traits intermixed with the evil. Meador

often created rewards for the hero, and introduced romance in these early books in a limited way but not to the extent that he would in some later books.

*The Black Buccaneer* (1920), Meader's first published book, was longer in the making than most of those that followed. In 1915, six months after his engagement to Betty Hoyt, Meader, unemployed and living on his savings, started research for his pirate adventure at the Newark Public Library. He later described his approach to this first book as follows: "Knowing less about my craft than I do today, I started it without an outline and let the plot unfold as it would." He lived in a tiny \$2 a week garret room and ate turnips for lunch because they were cheap—bread and a big dish of mashed turnips for 20 cents—and after that, he never ate turnips again. The next year he obtained a job and set aside the manuscript, but started work on it again in 1918. By then he was married and had one child and another on the way, and found that he was "needing more income." His Haverford College classmate, Christopher Morley, placed the manuscript with the new firm Harcourt, Brace and Howe in New York, which was soon to become Harcourt, Brace and Company. According to Meader, *The Black Buccaneer* was Harcourt's first juvenile (Meader, "A Family Memoir," 30-35). Meader chose pirates as the topic for his first book, and specifically Stede Bonnet, because authors often wrote about Blackbeard, but Bonnet seemed more interesting (Gallagher, 24).<sup>12</sup> Bonnet was an unusual pirate—he was a retired British Army Major and gentleman planter in Barbados who owned and

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<sup>12</sup>Meader's finding Bonnet more interesting than Blackbeard comes from Robert J. Gallagher's "Stephen Meader: A Biography," from audiotapes that Gallagher made of conversations with Meader. Gallagher offers no further information about why Meader considered Bonnet to be more interesting.

outfitted his own ship (Botting 148-49). As he would in many of his historical novels, Meader took a real historical situation and inserted fictional youthful characters into that situation to create his story.

*The Black Buccaneer* is set in 1718 with protagonist Jeremy Swan, who is fourteen. Jeremy's father drops him off on a remote island off the coast of Maine with a herd of sheep, promising to return the next day with the rest of the sheep and Jeremy's older brother Tom. That night, however, Jeremy is captured by a band of pirates. They sail off with him and he becomes a cabin boy for the pirate captain, Stede Bonnet. Jeremy enjoys the company of Job Howland, one of the pirate crew. Job likes Jeremy and teaches him about sailing, initially in the context of piracy. Job eventually decides to renounce piracy, and informs Jeremy of this decision after Bonnet's ship, the *Royal James*, captures a prize. While the pirates are busy surveying their prize and getting drunk, Job cuts the *Royal James* loose with only himself and Jeremy on it. The two are recaptured but Job manages to escape. Soon after this incident, the pirates kidnap young Bob Curtis, the son of a prominent Delaware citizen, and hold him for ransom. Bob's bad luck is Jeremy's gain as the two boys become friends and allies, the inseparable sidekicks that Meader often created. Eventually the two friends escape when Job returns for them. Jeremy, Bob, and Job participate in the ultimately successful chase of Bonnet over the sea. During the final fight with Bonnet, Pharaoh Daggs, a member of Bonnet's crew, escapes capture and eventually goes to the Swans' island home in Maine seeking a rich treasure buried there years before by pirate Sol Briggs. Meanwhile, Bob and his father, Jeremy, and Job celebrate Bonnet's capture in Charles Town (Charleston) South

Carolina. They return Bob to his home in Delaware and then journey to Maine for Jeremy's happy reunion with his brother, father, and dog. Jeremy and Bob find the pirate treasure that had been hidden on the island for decades, but before they can recover much of it, Daggs captures Bob, and then escapes to sea with him. Job, Jeremy, and the others ultimately chase down Daggs over the water. After releasing Bob, Daggs dies in the fight that concludes the book.

In *The Black Buccaneer*, as in his other juvenile stories, Meader employs numerous literary formulaic conventions such as the ordeal and villains, a sidekick, a mentor, and a reward for the hero. Meader also emphasizes positive values including courage, loyalty, honesty, self-reliance, and ambition in this book, as he would in books to follow. Meader places hero Jeremy Swan in a long ordeal, a common formula in children's literature which separates a juvenile protagonist from responsible adult guidance, leaving him to his own judgment, values, and decisions. Meader made frequent use of the ordeal formula, which is especially appropriate for allowing the hero to demonstrate the value of self-reliance, since he endures the ordeal without adult help and must depend on himself. The value of courage frequently emerges during the ordeal as well; both self-reliance and courage are important values in *The Black Buccaneer*. The ordeal in *The Black Buccaneer* is quite long, lasting almost the entire book, with a somewhat shorter ordeal for the kidnaped Bob. Actually, Jeremy and Bob each endure two ordeals: Jeremy escapes from the pirate ship briefly, but is recaptured and continues as a prisoner on Bonnet's ship; Bob has a second ordeal when the outlaw band led by Pharaoh Daggs captures him on the Swans' island.

Jeremy matches wits throughout *The Black Buccaneer* with a villain who possesses no redeeming qualities—Pharaoh Daggs. There is nothing good about Daggs, the first of several such thoroughly wicked villains that Meader would create during his writing career. In contrast, Meader develops a significantly more complex villain whom Jeremy also encounters—the pirate captain Stede Bonnet. Bonnet has some admirable qualities—for example courage, intelligence, and loyalty—although he is still a pirate who survives by stealing and killing. Twice Bonnet saves Jeremy from punishment about to be delivered by Daggs. When Jeremy first meets Bonnet in his cabin, not only has the pirate been reading a book, but Jeremy gasps because he has never seen so many books before. Jeremy feels that the “man’s quietly gentle appearance” does not fit with his bloodthirsty reputation. Bonnet wears good clothes, has intelligent eyes, and his face reminds Jeremy of a Boston preacher (31).<sup>13</sup> Other than the act of reading, Jeremy’s first impressions are based on Bonnet’s appearance, and thus provide little insight into Bonnet’s character or values. Essentially, Jeremy doesn’t think Bonnet looks like a pirate. He certainly looks different from the “motley company,” the “desperate gang” of his crew, attired in various outlandish clothing and rags with many hangers (swords) and pistols, and clearly not the crew of an English or colonial sloop-of-war (15), although there is no information about where Jeremy has gotten his ideas about pirates. Meader as narrator describes Stede Bonnet’s library and his reading of books such as *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Paradise Lost* as inexplicable aspects of his career (170); his reading habits

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<sup>13</sup>Citations throughout the discussion of *The Black Buccaneer* are from the first edition (1920). The third edition (1942) with illustrations by Meader and Edward Shenton has identical pagination to the first edition.

certainly contribute to the complexity of his character. After Bonnet has been captured, Jeremy and Bob are given the opportunity to select one item each from the pirate captain's belongings. Since Bob has had ample educational opportunities, he chooses a fancy pistol with Bonnet's name engraved on it, but Jeremy immediately takes the biggest book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, which Meader describes for his reader: "Bunyan's great allegory had come at last into a place where it could do more good than in the cabin book-shelf of a ten-gun buccaneer . . . That ponderous leather book was read many times and thoroughly in after years, and it became the foundation of such a library as was not often met with in the colonies" (170-71). These items from Bonnet's possessions function as rewards for the hero and his sidekick, but they are not the large monetary rewards that Meader sometimes included in his later novels.

In addition to the complex but flawed Bonnet and the cruel Daggs, Meader creates the character Job Howland, who begins the story as a villain, one of Bonnet's pirates, but ultimately becomes a role model and mentor to Jeremy and Bob. When the pirates first capture Jeremy, Job teaches him about many aspects of sailing and piracy. As he spends time with Jeremy, Job begins to reexamine his own life, and when he escapes, Job decides to renounce piracy and repent, and receives a pardon from the crown. Job leads a mission to rescue Jeremy and Bob, and ends up as one of the heroes of the story. Job fills the role of a mentor somewhat older than the protagonist, a role that Meader often created. In both Bonnet and Job Howland, Meader creates characters neither totally good nor completely bad, but drawn in shades of gray. Meader did not always use such complex characters, although he often created a one-sided evil character with no

redeeming characteristics, such as Daggs in this story.

Meader uses other formulaic conventions in his first book: the loss of one or both of the protagonist's parents, a missing treasure, and coincidence. As with many of Meader's protagonists, Jeremy has lost at least one parent, in this case his mother. And although *The Black Buccaneer* does have a missing pirate treasure that the heroes find, that treasure does not revert to the rightful owner or descendants as that formulaic technique usually functioned.<sup>14</sup> As in many of his books, Meader liberally uses coincidence in *The Black Buccaneer*: the island on which the Swans settle is the very same island on which the pirate Sol Briggs had previously buried a rich treasure; and there are two instances of one character chancing to see another in a tavern with important consequences for the narrative.<sup>15</sup>

Through his story, and the characters and formulaic conventions he uses in telling it, Meader emphasizes the values of courage, self-reliance, honesty, ambition, and loyalty. Courage was an important value throughout Meader's work. During Jeremy's very long ordeal as the pirates' captive, he has frequent opportunities to display his courage. Before he encounters the pirates, Jeremy almost sheds "unmanly" tears at the

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<sup>14</sup>For example, Meader was to use the formulaic device of a treasure reverting to the descendant of the rightful owner with the unclaimed farm belonging to the hero in *Red Horse Hill* (1930). The earlier juvenile author Horatio Alger used the missing inheritance formula frequently; Meader used it much less often and generally just early in his career as in *Red Horse Hill* and in *Down the Big River* (1924) where the hero's sidekick recovers an inheritance from his late father from the river pirates' cave.

<sup>15</sup>Job sees Curley, a member of Bonnet's crew, in a tavern and follows him as he delivers the ransom note to Bob's father (95); Jeremy sees Daggs in a New York tavern (193).

loneliness that he experiences when his father leaves him overnight at their new home while he goes to retrieve the rest of their sheep. But Jeremy is brave, does not cry, and realizes that his father and brother will be back the next day (5). Little does Jeremy realize that his family will return to find him missing, and will not know that he is a captive of Stede Bonnet and his pirates. Jeremy's courage and curiosity, "the hardy strain of adventure in his spirit," put him in this predicament, by prodding him to explore the island to see who else is out there (11). When the pirates capture him, Jeremy lies "manfully" (bravely) to them, claiming that there is a new, large settlement on the island—he is trying to save his family's sheep. When one of the pirates asks Jeremy what he thinks of being in their company, he shows no fear, which elicits an approving comment about the boy's pluck (22).

Jeremy and Job Howland escape briefly from the pirates when they have captured a brig. Howland has been considering mending his ways and leaving piracy, and when all the pirates except for himself and Jeremy are on the captured ship, he takes this opportunity to untie the *Royal James*, the pirates' home vessel, and try to escape in it. The pirates recapture them when Jeremy falls asleep on watch, and he is certain that death by torture awaits him for his treachery. Jeremy believes that he can die bravely if only there is no torture, and that he can meet a just God with his head held high, but as Daggs moves to keelhaul Jeremy, with an accusation of cowardice that makes Jeremy "white with anger," Bonnet intercedes, in a dramatic example of the differences between these two villains. Bonnet reminds Daggs that he, Bonnet, is in charge of doling out any punishment, and proclaims that there will be none for Jeremy at this time (60-63).

Bonnet blames Howland for the escape, and while Bonnet and Daggs are staring each other down, Howland dives off the ship and escapes for good. Soon after, wallowing in loneliness (Bob Curtis hasn't arrived yet), Jeremy comes close to tears, but forces his shoulders back, clamps his mouth shut, and resolves "that he would be a man, come what might" (73).

Jeremy's "determined courage" comes "to a low ebb" after he witnesses Bonnet shoot the captain of a ship that the pirates have captured (114). By now the pirates have kidnaped Bob, who tries to cheer Jeremy up and recommends rest. After their escape from the pirates, Jeremy has occasion to ride a horse in Delaware, and though he has only been on a horse a few times, he is without fear (177), which is fortunate because later in the ride he has to jump off his horse and shoot a rattlesnake that threatens Bob (182). Later in the same visit he has a similar opportunity when he shoots a buck deer that is attacking young Betty Cantwell, daughter of the household in which they are staying for a week (187). Jeremy's courage is mentioned specifically from time to time in the narrative, and shows through his actions in many instances, including those already cited, and in the final battle with the pirate band led by Daggs (271-76). In this scene the two boys, shivering with fear but not letting it stand in their way, sneak aboard the boat carrying the boarding party to the pirate ship *Revenge*, and have an important role in that fierce and deadly fighting in which their side ultimately triumphs. Courage is an important value for Meader—numerous characters besides Jeremy and Bob exhibit bravery—Job Howland and his crew, Colonel Rhett, Bob's mother, and even the villain Stede Bonnet.

The value of self-reliance, or independence and self-sufficiency, is important in most of Meader's books, including his first. "Danger and strife" have given Jeremy "an alert self-confidence beyond his years" (2-3). Their family's plan to move with their sheep to an uninhabited island shows great self-reliance on the part of the family; it is Jeremy's concern for the sheep that sends him out into the night to see what the strangers on the island are doing. Otherwise he would probably not have investigated but "one of the first things a backwoods boy learns is that it pays to mind your own business, *after* you know what the other fellow is going to do" (13, italics in original text). Much later in the narrative, after Bonnet is captured and imprisoned, Jeremy has a first taste of luxury in South Carolina. The author credits Jeremy's sturdy self-reliance for his being able to distinguish the fine things from the sham, and to feel a thrill for his father's "hard, rough-hewn life and his own" (168). One of the attractions to Job of the life of a pirate was that it is independent and adventurous (55). Of course the independence enjoyed by a pirate is a false one, preying on others and not independent at all, as Job ultimately realizes.

Jeremy's essential honesty shows up time after time in *The Black Buccaneer*. Early in the story he feels compelled to lie to the pirates about the size of his island settlement in an attempt to save his family's sheep—their livelihood—but this necessary lie bothers him because of his basic honesty, and he hopes he will be forgiven (19). This lie, however, also points out Jeremy's presence of mind in not revealing information to the pirates that is better kept to himself—this ability to think on one's feet is a character trait of great utility to many of Meader's protagonists. Later, as Jeremy and Bob are trying to get a look at a map that Daggs has, they both believe it would be dishonest to break into a

man's possessions, even if he is a pirate (120). Soon events occur so that Daggs leaves the map enough in the open that the boys' consciences allow them to study it and obtain the information they seek.

Meader also emphasizes the value of ambition and hard work in *The Black Buccaneer*. Meader describes Jeremy as "never one to watch while others work" as he lends a hand on Bonnet's ship as it escapes after the kidnaping of Bob (74). Later, as the pirates repair the ship in intense heat, there is plenty of hard work, especially cleaning, and since it is so hot that Jeremy and Bob will sweat whether they are working or not, they prefer "to sweat over something useful than over nothing at all" (139). Meader may be arguing that there is neither "good" hard work nor "bad" hard work—that hard work is just that, and seems to benefit those who perform it. Many aspects of the pirate's trade are hard work; for example, the pirates "were slaving like ants, preparing for the battle" (43). Another aspect of Jeremy's ambition is his "passion for an education," confided to Job (171) and confirmed by Jeremy's selection of *Pilgrim's Progress* as his reward from Stede Bonnet's belongings. Education was Jeremy's one point of jealousy with Bob, who had a very fine education while "Jeremy, poor lad" was "uneducated save for the rude lessons of his father and the training of the open" and "had longed for books ever since he could remember" (171).

Loyalty as a value looms large in *The Black Buccaneer* too. Jeremy, his brother Tom, and their father are steadfastly loyal to one another. Jeremy is loyal to the ships he is on, even to the pirate ship where Stede Bonnet holds him prisoner. Job is loyal to Jeremy and Bob, taking huge risks to rescue them from the pirate ship. Jeremy and Bob

are fiercely loyal to each other; the value of friendship combines with that of loyalty in their relationship as in all of Meader's stories where the protagonist has a sidekick who is a close friend and partner. When Bob is captured and brought aboard Bonnet's ship, "Jeremy, who twenty-four hours before had thought of the ship as a place of utter desolation, would not now have changed places with any boy alive. He knew, perhaps for the first time, the fulness of joy that comes into life with human companionship" (79).

Meader's books in this first period of his writing show little development of romance for the hero, but fourteen-year-old Jeremy responds to the femininity of twelve-year-old Betty Cantwell. When Jeremy first meets Betty, he forgets everything and stares, open-mouthed, at her; she has "the fairest face that Jeremy had ever seen" (178-79). Apparently, at some time after the action of *The Black Buccaneer* concludes, Jeremy marries Betty, because the concluding paragraphs of the book state that the Swans moved to Philadelphia, allowing Jeremy and Bob to continue their friendship, and that Jeremy's grandson was named Job Cantwell Swan (281). These several concluding paragraphs are unique in Meader's novels. While his heroes often look into a bright future filled with big plans as a book concludes, this view of a protagonist in old age, who has become a great American of his day, independent, rich, and honored, is different—Meader abandons it after his first book.

In *The Black Buccaneer* then, Jeremy Swan, finds himself in an extended ordeal, captured by pirates, working on their ship, distant from his family and their guidance. He is able to retain his positive values and continue to be honest and work diligently in this hostile environment while alertly watching for his chance to escape. Jeremy is young and

strong enough for his size, but must use his wits throughout the story. He is courageous (as are others in the book); he is loyal to his sidekick Bob, to his family, and to his ship. Meader uses traditional formulaic devices such as the ordeal, at least one missing parent, a lost treasure, rewards, and villains—devices to which he would often return. In this book Meader creates a thoroughly evil villain who is in many ways the antithesis of the hero, but also depicts two villains in shades of gray, through mixtures of values with good added to the bad.

*The Black Buccaneer* was one of many juvenile sea stories published in the 1920s. Ruth Hill Viguers, one of four co-authors of *A Critical History of Children's Literature* (Meigs, et al., 1953), described in that book an interest in the sea in the children's books of the 1920s (399). For example, Ralph D. Paine published *Blackbeard Buccaneer* in 1922, just two years after *The Black Buccaneer* appeared; there are several close similarities: the titles, the pair of young protagonists in each book, and their both featuring the pirate Stede Bonnet. The bibliography of pirate tales provided in the Discovery series edition of *The Black Buccaneer* (1942) includes Paine's *Blackbeard Buccaneer*.

In addition to the interest in sea stories, Viguers reported the republication of “old favorites with new illustrations” in “this period of experimentation” in the 1920s, citing the example of James Boyd's *Drums* being acclaimed by young people, after a reissue with “exciting illustrations in color by N. C. Wyeth” (Meigs, et al., 401). A similar reissue of a children's book with handsome new illustrations is the 1929 edition by Harcourt, Brace of Meader's *The Black Buccaneer*, illustrated by Mead Schaeffer.

These illustrations include eight color plates, color frontispiece, and color dust jacket, as well as various black and white illustrations.<sup>16</sup> This reissue also reflected the interest in stories about the sea as did a new 1922 Dodd, Mead edition of *Moby Dick*, also illustrated by Mead Schaeffer. Schaeffer similarly illustrated another Melville story of the sea, *Typee*, in a 1923 edition published by Dodd, Mead.<sup>17</sup> *The Black Buccaneer* was the only book by Meader that Schaeffer illustrated.<sup>18</sup> As late as 1951 a portion of the book was recycled in the anthology trade by editor Phyllis Fenner in *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates* as “The Capture of a Brig.”

After *The Black Buccaneer*, Meader continued writing historical fiction about pirates in his next book, *Down the Big River* (1924), but this novel portrays piracy that occurs on the rivers in the interior of the young and growing United States, in the year

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<sup>16</sup>The Mead Schaeffer edition of *The Black Buccaneer* shows the original 1920 publication date on the title page, but *The National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints* from the U. S. Library of Congress provides a publishing year of 1929. Meader remembered this Schaeffer edition as being issued two years after the first edition which would date it in 1922 (“A Family Memoir,” 35), but *Cumulative Book Index, (CBI)*, by the H. W. Wilson Company, also gives a 1929 publication date for the Mead Schaeffer edition.

<sup>17</sup>*The United States Catalog Supplement July 1921-June 1924* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1924) lists the Mead Schaeffer illustrated reissues of *Moby Dick* and *Typee*. Tebbel also reports the Mead Schaeffer *Moby Dick* (Vol. III, 93).

<sup>18</sup>Meader himself illustrated the first edition of *The Black Buccaneer*. The second edition is the one illustrated by Mead Schaeffer. A third edition of *The Black Buccaneer* featured illustrations, including a dust jacket, by Edward Shenton (who illustrated many of Meader’s other books), as well as some of Meader’s own illustrations from the first edition. One version of this edition of 1942 was a Discovery Series edition that added a six page introduction, study questions, and bibliographies of pirate and sea poems and other pirate books. Pagination is identical in the first and third editions. *Cumulative Book Index (CBI)* reports a Canadian edition of *The Black Buccaneer* in 1929, and the book was translated into Norwegian and Dutch.

1805.<sup>19</sup> Tom Lockwood, the protagonist, is an orphan who lives with his aunt and uncle, Phoebe Ann and Ezra Lockwood, a gunsmith. Tom's father had been a Quaker who "though he had fought under Washington . . . had tried to instill Quaker principles in his son" (22). Tom, Ezra, and Phoebe Ann are all heading west from Pennsylvania to the Missouri country. During the trip Tom makes a close friend of his own age, Andy Warren. As with *The Black Buccaneer*, the formulaic ordeal is important: Tom, Andy, Uncle Ezra, and Aunt Phoebe all suffer ordeals. Other formulaic aspects include an orphaned hero whose sidekick in this story is also orphaned, some very evil villains, and a missing and recovered inheritance. Meader also presents values like those of the preceding *The Black Buccaneer*: courage, honesty, self-reliance, loyalty, and hard work.

Ezra Lockwood pays to have a river boat, the *Phoebe Ann*, built in Pittsburgh. While walking around Pittsburgh, Tom encounters some river men who provoke a fight with him. First the young red-haired boy Andy Warren tries to get Tom to fight, but he resists the challenge; then the huge adult bully, Black Carnahan, slaps Tom, who beats him handily in a fight. Soon after this incident, Andy comes to see Tom and tells him that he lives with the river men only because they took him in as a young orphan, and he has nowhere else to go. Andy's initial situation is thus a formulaic ordeal—a young boy living with river pirates, without appropriate adult guidance. Andy asks to join Tom's family as

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<sup>19</sup>*Down the Big River* first appeared as a serial in *Boys' Life*. Meader illustrated the first edition; there was a later Harcourt edition with illustrations, including dust jacket, by Edward Shenton. These Harcourt hardback editions have identical pagination; page references are to these editions. *Down the Big River* was also republished in 1955 by Teen Age Books, Inc. as the only Scholastic Book Services paperback edition of a book by Meader. It was also translated into French.

they go “Down the Big River” but he must arrange to sneak away because he is too useful to the river men for them to let him go without a fight. Andy is a reluctant villain who turns away from evil when he gets the chance to throw in with Tom. Andy ultimately becomes Tom’s close friend and traveling companion. Andy is similar to Job Howland from *The Black Buccaneer* in this change, which he makes more quickly than Job does.

The Lockwoods’ troubles begin when Uncle Ezra unknowingly hires a river pirate, Jake Rogers, to be their guide and pilot. Uncle Ezra is slow to accept that Rogers is a villain, and at first suspects Andy of being their enemy, because when the Lockwood boat lands somewhat downstream from their starting point to pick up Andy as they have arranged, Tom and his family walk into an ambush. Ezra understandably believes that Andy has arranged the trap, although it is not true. At the ambush site, Tom finds a message from Andy to meet him four days down river, but Ezra will not agree to stop. Down river however, Andy finds Tom and comes onto the boat at night, and Tom hides him. Andy had not met them at the first meeting place because river pirates had surprised him and forced him to join them; thus he devised the plan to join Tom downstream once he could get away. Andy says he would have come onboard earlier but caught sight of Jake Rogers and stayed away until a private word with Tom was possible in order for Andy to reveal the true identity of the Lockwoods’ “pilot,” who is actually one of river pirate Jericho Wilson’s top allies. After the ambush, Ezra does not want Andy on board although he had initially agreed to the idea, but he eventually acquiesces. Ezra has trouble at first believing Andy’s accusations because he believes in his pilot’s ability on

the river, and figures that Rogers is merely a rough character like all river men (60-65).

Then Jake Rogers and his partners seize the *Phoebe Ann* and take Tom's aunt and uncle hostage, while Tom, Andy, and the dog Cub happen to be ashore (69-71). Andy and Tom pursue them in a dugout canoe that they make. Their pursuit can be seen as an ordeal because the boys are dealing with a dangerous challenge without help from adults (73-111). The pirates capture Tom as he tries to rescue his aunt and uncle, but Andy and Cub remain free. Tom now he has adult leadership, but it doesn't help much because they are all captives. When the *Phoebe Ann* arrives at the pirates' cave hideout, Tom tries to escape and is separated from the others in an upper chamber of the cave. Andy and Cub find Tom there and free him through a back opening (112-142). Andy, Tom, and Cub join forces with friendly backwoods hunters whom they have encountered previously, and together they run the river pirates out of their cave hideout for good.

In the cave, Tom has discovered a trunk that belonged to Andy's father, and Andy thus recovers a missing inheritance of some \$40,000—a substantial fortune at the time. This is an example of Meader's use of one of Horatio Alger's basic patterns, which Daniel T. Rodgers described as “the tale of lost and recovered fortunes” (141), and in this case, Meader uses the pattern in the traditional approach with the heir of the original owner recovering the fortune. Ultimately Tom and his family succeed in reaching Missouri where they will settle down near their old neighbors, the Colemans.

Throughout *Down the Big River*, Meader emphasizes values that he first presented in *The Black Buccaneer*: courage, self-reliance, honesty, and hard work. In his first encounter with river men in Pittsburgh, protagonist Tom Lockwood and his dog Cub

find their courage tested. The men are trying to start a fight with Tom when their black hound attacks the much smaller Cub. Tom is not worried; he knows that Cub is courageous as well as alert and fast, and Cub triumphs. Then Black Carnahan, a large man and bully, directs the boy Andy to provoke a fight with Tom, who resists: Andy is smaller, and Tom has no quarrel with him. After Andy insults Tom twice to no avail, Carnahan steps in and insults Tom as a Quaker and then slaps him, so that finally he does react, and ultimately prevails—Tom fights very well for a peaceful Quaker. The insult of Tom as a Quaker is apparently just a lucky guess because other insults have not worked. Meader, himself a Quaker, introduces Quakerism in the context of a fist fight, a rather unnatural situation for a member of that peaceful sect. Meader has already stated that Tom's late father had been a Quaker who had fought under Washington, and had tried to instill Quaker principles in his son and succeeded fairly well: Tom resists several obvious challenges until the slap in the face (19-24). In his second book Meader introduces this tension between his own Quaker principles of peace, and the violence often found in boys' adventure books, including his own. Meader introduces this tension along with his message that some Quakers can justify joining some fights, as Tom's father had fought with Washington, and as Tom defends himself after being slapped. Meader's characters tend to avoid violence when possible, but sometimes resort to it to resolve a situation when no peaceful approach seems feasible.

In other examples of courage in *Down the Big River*, when Tom first encounters his Uncle Ezra as a prisoner, the ten days of captivity have made him gaunt but “there was something of the old grim courage in his voice;” Ezra is ready to die trying to escape

(116). Andy, Tom, and his aunt and uncle all have their courage tested in their encounters with Rogers and the other villains throughout the narrative, and they all prove equal to the challenge; even the dog Cub is brave. Towards the end of the book we learn that Andy's father was also brave, "wasn't afeared o' nothin;" we learn this from none other than Daniel Boone (189). Boone makes the observation after Andy, Tom, and Tug have all proven their courage in a fight with a bear; Boone compliments Tom on his knife thrust that finishes the bear. At the time of this book Boone would have been approximately 70 years old; Meader describes him as white haired and weather-beaten but "sturdily built and active and . . . splendidly erect" with "features . . . rugged and strong" (185). Boone tells Tom that he is also from Pennsylvania "an' my folks was Quakers, too" (186).<sup>20</sup>

Early in the book Meader describes Tom as self-reliant (12), again stressing that value. Tom and Andy later demonstrate their self-reliance when they make a canoe, and, hunting and fishing for their food along the way, hurry down the river to attempt rescue Ezra and Phoebe from Rogers. More broadly, the entire Lockwood family demonstrates a confident self-reliance through this endeavor to move to the frontier west on their own, and carve out a new life in the wilderness.

Another important value is honesty. Tom and his family are honest throughout the book, as is Andy. Meader contrasts Andy's honesty with the dishonesty, treachery, and false loyalty of Jake Rogers, who claims to have guided the Lockwoods' friends the

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<sup>20</sup>John Mack Faragher in *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* verifies that Boone's parents were Quakers (9).

Colemans down the river the previous year. Ezra had mentioned the Colemans' name at an inn where they stayed early in the story. The innkeeper apparently is in cahoots with Rogers, and evidently passes the Coleman name to Rogers. Rogers uses the name to obtain Ezra's confidence. Ezra is very happy and feels lucky to find a pilot he can trust, little knowing how completely untrustworthy and dishonest Rogers is (33-34). Later, Tom points out that they have no proof that Rogers guided the Colemans, just his word (65), but Ezra refuses to accept this reasoning and initially distrusts Andy, but Rogers is the dishonest and disloyal person, not Andy, as Ezra ultimately discovers. Andy's loyalty eventually develops into a deep friendship with Tom.

Rogers and his friends are both rough in appearance as well as villainous. They are contrasted during the narrative with a group of rough frontiersmen and hunters originally from the Muskingum River area (48-51), led by Buckeye Ben Chandler—they are hunters on the upper Missouri, and are not villains at all but are honest and good friends to Tom throughout the story. Similarly, Daniel Boone is a rough looking outdoorsman and hunter, but turns out to be a loyal friend who knew Andy's father, and can vouch that the inheritance in the trunk in the cave does indeed belong to Andy. Meader may be making the point here that outward appearances are a poor indicator of the character and values of a person.

Meader presents the value of hard work in this book as he would in most of his books. Tom, throughout *Down the Big River*, is a hard worker and “never one to sleep long after dawn” (173). Tom and Andy work especially hard to make a dugout canoe quickly enough that they can catch up to the *Phoebe Ann* and try to rescue Tom's aunt

and uncle. There will be plenty of hard work for the Lockwoods in the Missouri country as they build a home, but their loyal friends the Colemans have cleared a lot and put in crops for them in expectation of their arrival.

In his second book, Meader uses similar values and formulaic devices as in his first book, and both portray piracy. Meader brings the historical figure Daniel Boone into the story of *Down the Big River* as he had centered *The Black Buccaneer* around the historical figure of Stede Bonnet, and introduces concepts of Quakerism in the book. Following *Down the Big River*, Meader wrote *Longshanks* (1928), the story of another trip down the Ohio River in the 1800s.<sup>21</sup>

In *Longshanks* fifteen-year-old Tad Hopkins starts for New Orleans to meet his father in the year 1828. Tad is Meader's only protagonist of a full-length book who is clearly wealthy.<sup>22</sup> He begins his journey in Wheeling<sup>23</sup> as a paid passenger on a steamboat. Gambler and villain John Murrell robs Tad and throws him off the steamboat into the river one night. Tad swims to the shore and for shelter crawls onto the *Katy*

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<sup>21</sup>*Longshanks* appeared in serial form in *The American Boy* in 1928. Harcourt also produced a later edition with illustrations by Edward Shenton. Pagination is identical in both editions.

<sup>22</sup>There are other boys who are obviously very rich in Meader's books, but they are not protagonists. The protagonist of *King of the Hills* (1933) is probably rich but not so clearly so as is Tad Hopkins. At least two short stories have rich boys as protagonists, "The Bush" and "Three Hundred Innings" from *The Will to Win and Other Stories* (1936).

<sup>23</sup>Wheeling is now in West Virginia, a state created during the Civil War in 1863 by its secession from Virginia, but at the time of this story, Wheeling was in Virginia. Meader forgets this fact when he writes of ferry boats plying "back and forth between the West Virginia and Ohio villages" (17).

*Roby*, a flatboat piloted by Allen Gentry and Abe Lincoln (although the reader only learns Abe's last name at the end of the story).<sup>24</sup> Abe and Allen are taking the boat to New Orleans with goods to sell for Allen's father. When Abe and Allen discover Tad on their boat in the morning, they agree to keep him on as a crew member after they hear his story. Allen at first wants to toss Tad off the boat, but Abe is interested in Tad's story, believes he is telling the truth, and points out the advantages of having an extra hand aboard. Tad learns and grows in many ways on the trip, and is especially influenced by the wisdom and ideas of Abe, who is important as a mentor to Tad, and to Allen to some extent, but Abe is also growing and learning on this trip. Abe is clearly in charge of the boat although Allen thinks he is in command since it is his father's boat, and Abe occasionally appears to defer to Allen as the owner's son (36). The book describes the journey down river to New Orleans, and Tad's continuing efforts to find his father while avoiding the villain Murrell. During the trip, Abe holds forth on politics and lawyers, on slavery, and briefly on environmental issues. Tad attempts unsuccessfully to get in touch with his father, who posts a \$5000 reward for Tad when he goes missing. The trip on the *Katy Roby* can be considered a variant of the ordeal for Tad because he is separated from his father and unable to communicate with him throughout the trip, although Tad does have excellent young adult leadership in the person of Abe (who is nineteen). Murrell the villain captures Tad and holds him prisoner in a farmhouse while attempting to obtain the \$5000 reward (or more—Murrell has ideas of ransom). This is a typical ordeal with

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<sup>24</sup>Meader is able to call him Abe throughout the story without using his last name and without appearing awkward in doing so.

Tad bound and held prisoner until he uses his wits to escape. Ultimately Tad has a happy reunion with his father in New Orleans, but must first talk his way past his father's officious secretary who won't let him in because he doesn't believe this ragged boy could possibly be his employer's son (239-40).

In *Longshanks*, Meader uses several conventional elements differently than he did in his other books. Because the protagonist is rich, the technique of the reward is different since it is a reward for the return of the protagonist to his father, not a reward that the hero may win for his own gain. The ordeal for the protagonist is different because Abe, though young himself, provides useful guidance to the even younger Tad. In addition, Meader constructs a second, more traditional ordeal, an ordeal within an ordeal, where Murrell holds Tad in an attempt to obtain the reward, or even a ransom, for his return; the existence of such a reward for Tad's return causes him to be kidnaped. In terms of a sidekick for Tad, Abe fills both that role and that of mentor. Allen is not generally a sidekick; his behavior serves as a contrast to the adult behavior of Abe and the rapidly maturing behavior of Tad. Allen gets into frequent trouble ashore that Abe is continually cleaning up; Tad is often in Abe's company on these adventures.

Tad differs in important ways from the heroes that Meader usually creates. Probably because of his wealthy background, when Tad arrives on the *Katy Roby*, he lacks basic skills that other Meader protagonists have as a matter of course: Tad cannot cook, catch fish, or chop wood, although as fellow adventurer Abe points out, Tad has the "spunk to wrestle with a robber, an' be dropped off a steamboat into cold water at midnight, an' run three miles, naked, with mean dogs after him," so Abe thinks that Tad

will learn these other basic skills quickly enough (34-35).

Meader relies on coincidence throughout *Longshanks*. Coincidence sets up the trip when Tad happens to crawl into Abe's boat instead of some other. Coincidence crops up again when Tad sends a letter to his father informing him he is safe, and the ship carrying the letter explodes. Additionally, Tad learns of the explosion just as he misses the departure of a boat that is apparently carrying his father, and can't reach that boat in time to look for him (120). During the time Murrell holds Tad prisoner in a leg iron in an attic, he keeps his wits about him and discovers two kind gifts of coincidence—that the leg iron had previously been filed part way through, and that there is a sharp file in a hole in the attic floorboards. Tad is able to file through the leg iron and escape from Murrell (130-48). In other formulaic constructions, in a typical pattern for one of Meader's protagonists, Tad's mother is dead. Murrell is also the typical evil villain, with absolutely nothing good in his character—he is a violent robber, kidnapper, gambler, and probable murderer, who hopes to extract a large ransom for Tad when a handsome reward is already offered for his return. There is no element of romance in Meader's third novel, however.

In addition to some unusual uses of conventional techniques, Meader also develops his presentation of some values somewhat differently in *Longshanks*. With essentially two co-protagonists in Tad and Abe, Meader uses both to present the value of honesty. Since most readers will quickly conclude that Abe is Abe Lincoln, Meader can use the ingrained cultural idea of "Honest Abe" as he develops the value of honesty through Abe's behavior and speech. For example, after they arrive in New Orleans,

Allen sells his father's goods and boat, and then loses the money by foolishly waving it around in a saloon. Abe gets the money back, and then is horrified to realize that he forgot to pay for supper and hurries back to do so, in an example of his scrupulous honesty (234-36). Abe also seems able to discern honesty in other people. When Tad is first explaining his presence on their boat and Allen wants to throw him off, doubting his entire story, Abe tells Allen that he can tell when a boy is telling the truth (31). In an interesting example of Tad's behavior that displays both honesty and presence of mind, after Tad's father posts the reward, a raft hand, with a pointed look in Tad's direction, asks the crew of the *Katy Roby* if they've seen the \$5000 reward notice for a boy about the size and looks of Tad. Tad grins and stretches to show ragged clothes and sunburned limbs and remarks: "Some rich city kid from back east, wasn't he?" (196). Tad is thus able to state the truth in a way that deflects attention from himself and demonstrates his quick thinking.

Tad's escape from Murrell's clutches also demonstrates courage, a quality and value that Meader specifically mentions in connection with Tad's escape (131). Tad's courage is obvious in various scenes, starting when Murrell first throws him from the steamboat, a situation that allows Tad to demonstrate both the value of courage, and that of self-reliance and independence. Tad the rich boy must immediately rely on his own abilities when he has to swim ashore from the steamboat, and begins to learn the skills he has lacked up to now that will enable him to survive on the river. Independence is a value so important that Davy Crockett tells Tad and Abe how much he values independence, and that he prefers country with more bears in it than people (86). Meader presents

Crockett as a tough, strong, self-reliant hunter who makes his living by hunting bears and selling the skins. Crockett and Abe wrestle for ownership of a bear cub that has been orphaned by Crockett and his dogs, and would have escaped had Abe not grabbed him as he swam towards freedom. The strong young Abe prevails, but barely (74-83).

In addition to presenting the values of honesty, courage, and independence, Meader introduces three important historical issues in *Longshanks*: slavery, the role of lawyers in American society, and environmental concerns. At several times, Abe, Tad, and Allen observe slaves working and singing along the river, and Abe states his views on the evils of slavery. At one point when Abe is discussing his concerns about slavery with Tad and Allen, Allen says slavery will never concern any of the three of them (72), which is ironic since Abe will become the President of the United States who signs the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves in the South. When the *Katy Roby* passes through the state of Mississippi, Allen comments that it looks like a great place to live, especially because the slaves wait on the elegant white men and women. Abe points out that this environment may be very nice for the rich white people who own slaves but not for the poor white people who are not born rich (115). In earlier comments Abe has pointed out the obvious unfairness of the institution to the slaves themselves—that the ones they see now may seem contented enough, but that their overseer could change so that slaves are “‘bein’ starved, or whipped, or sold down the river—families broke up—everything changed” (72). When they reach New Orleans, Abe and Tad go to a slave auction (220-23). Abe reacts “almost fiercely, ‘it’s all wrong—this whole slavery business—as wrong as murder’” (223). Few crimes are worse than taking another’s life,

and Abe's vehement declaration reveals how evil he considers slavery to be. At the auction they see slaves who have recently been smuggled into the United States, and who are scarred by the chains and fetters of their torturous trip from Africa, and are weak and scared. Meader would develop these concerns with slavery in much more detail in *Away to Sea* (1931).

In addition to using Davy Crockett to praise self-reliance, Meader also uses him to comment on the role of lawyers in American society. Crockett has mentioned his service as a Congressman from Tennessee, and asks Abe if he has considered a career in politics. Abe says he has thought of it because he likes to make speeches, but would most like to be a good lawyer. Crockett says he's sure Abe would be a good one but adds: "I don't hold much with lawyers, myself. They're too slick—always up to some crooked business" (84). Abe says that he wants "to be a good enough lawyer to beat some o' the smart ones at their own game. A good lawyer kin be a powerful lot o' help to folks that's in trouble" (85).

In probably Meader's first expression of environmental concern, Allen shoots at passenger pigeons for no good reason. Abe patiently explains that there are many excellent reasons not to kill them: they are pretty, they don't eat crops, they deserve to live, and there is not enough meat on them to be a good food source (52-54). Meader would develop environmental issues in much more depth in future books such as *King of the Hills* (1933) and *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964).

At the end of *Longshanks*, Meader reveals that the character "Abe" is Abe Lincoln. Tad realizes he doesn't know Abe's last name, and asks for it, in a twist not

unlike that of a short story: Abe calls out ““Lincoln”” from his departing steamboat. The alert reader has determined Abe’s last name well before this because, in addition to all the other hints, Meader sprinkles well-known stories about Lincoln throughout the book, as he endorses a widely held view of Lincoln. For instance, a keel-boat man asks Abe how long his “shanks” are; Abe responds ““Jest the proper length . . . They’re jest exactly long enough to reach the ground”” (105). Although Tad is the protagonist, Abe’s role is important enough that he is almost a co-protagonist, and he is the title character. This was the only time Meader made such extensive use of a famous historic figure throughout a novel. In *Longshanks* Meader creates a continuing comparison between Abe, the country boy seeing the world, and Tad, the rich boy learning to take care of himself, with much assistance in the project from Abe; Meader contrasts both Abe and Tad with the hapless Allen, who often finds himself in trouble, usually because of unwise decisions.

In *Longshanks*, his third book, Meader again presents familiar values: honesty, courage, and self-reliance. He uses familiar formulaic techniques, though some in unusual ways—such as the ordeal having some adult leadership from Abe Lincoln, an ordeal within an ordeal, and the reward being for the return of the protagonist, causing him at one point to be held hostage. Meader also touches for the first time on environmental concerns, and addresses the institution of slavery, which he would consider at length in *Away to Sea* (1931). But before that book, in *Red Horse Hill* (1930), Meader would move off the water and into more recent historical terrain.

*Red Horse Hill* is very important in Stephen Meader’s career. After three books

of historical fiction set well in the past, *Red Horse Hill* is the first of several of Meader's works that draw on his own childhood experiences and thus, while still historical fiction perhaps, it is more recent historical fiction set just several decades earlier. Meader emphasizes the values of courage, self-reliance, and ambition in this book. In formulaic aspects, *Red Horse Hill* is in the minority of Meader's early books in having no ordeal for the protagonist, although the secondary character, the boy Yance,<sup>25</sup> endures a formulaic ordeal. Hero Bud Martin is an orphan, and the story uses the lost will formula, which though not used much by Meader was popular with other authors of the era and before; for example, the first Nancy Drew book, *The Secret of the Old Clock*, also from 1930, revolves around a missing will.<sup>26</sup> There is no reward, but the \$1000 prize that Bud and the horse Cedar win functions as a reward. Meader also creates dastardly villains and uses formulaic coincidence in *Red Horse Hill*, and, as do many of Meader's protagonists, Bud finds a close friend with whom to share his adventures.

Bud Martin, recently orphaned by the death of his father, has been living in a Boston stable with his dog Tug. When the stable owner viciously kicks Tug, Bud knocks his hat off with a snowball (8), and must leave Boston in a hurry. Bud hops a freight train to New Hampshire, which he remembers as the birthplace of his long dead mother. In

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<sup>25</sup>Yance's last name is unknown: "His name he said vaguely was Yance. That was all. Just Yance" (125). Yance returns in *Cedar's Boy* (1949) as a grown man with a larger role but never seems to acquire a last name.

<sup>26</sup>Carolyn Keene, pseudonym, *The Secret of the Old Clock*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1930). The missing will is one example of "the tale of lost and recovered fortunes" that, according to Rodgers, came to predominate in Horatio Alger's work (141).

*Red Horse Hill*, Meader makes much use of coincidence. When Bud jumps off the freight train in the town of Riverdale, New Hampshire, his dog Tug happens to get in a fight with the dog owned by the Feltons (a pair of villains in the book, a father and son). As the elder Felton calls for the constable to lock up this obvious vagrant and shoot his unlicensed dog, John Mason comes on the scene and extricates Bud from the situation. Mason's wife Sarah just happens to be a distant cousin of Bud's late mother—they shared the maiden name Hartley which is also Bud's given name (20-25). The Masons end up adopting Bud. He calls them Uncle John and Aunt Sarah; both parties benefit from the arrangement. Bud needs a home; the Masons have no children and can use an extra hand on the farm. Bud begins to learn farming, goes to the local schools, meets Cal Hunter, and the two become close friends. In further coincidence, unknown to Bud, he is the lost heir of a fine local farm. While he and Cal are exploring the countryside one day, in the cellar hole of an old homestead, Bud finds a will that makes him the heir of the surrounding property. Bud and Cal also find and befriend the boy Yance at the abandoned farm; in a formulaic ordeal, Yance is essentially a prisoner there of the villain and horse thief Harko Dan. When Bud and Uncle John sort out the details of the farm Bud has inherited, they find that they need almost \$1000 to pay the back taxes, and John decides to enter his horse Cedar in a race with a \$1000 purse, in hopes of winning the prize to pay those taxes. John injures his hand severely just before the race; Bud fills in at the last minute and wins. When a blizzard closes down the railroad, Bud and John must use Cedar again to race, this time against the clock and the villain Felton, to the court house to pay the back taxes, and they win that race as well, even though Felton tries a

couple of underhanded tricks to stop them.

Bud Martin displays many positive values, especially courage, ambition, and loyalty. Both Bud and his friend Cal courageously stand their ground and refuse to run from the villain Harko Dan, even when the boy Yance they have befriended urges them to get away (144-45). “I ain’t afraid,” says Cal, and Bud says that they’ll stay to make sure Yance does not get hurt, revealing courage and loyalty as well. Bud and Cal similarly refuse to back down when the villain Sam Felton tries to steal a partridge that Bud has shot. Felton lets the boys have their bird only when the dog Tug threatens him (79-81). Courage is not limited to people in this book: Tug is noted for his bravery—“sixty pounds of whalebone and courage” (80)—as are the horses Caribou (58), Saco (200), and Cedar (214, 221). Even the horse thief who steals Cedar (later found to be Harko Dan) displays resourcefulness and courageous daring in the theft (168), although, of course, Meader’s villains have many more negative values associated with them than positive values such as these, which are made evil by their use in an evil act.

Throughout the book Bud reveals himself as hardworking, whether helping Long Bill Amos unload sacks of potatoes at the train station (13), or working with Uncle John Mason on the farm (96). And there is plenty of work to do on the farm. Bud helps with the numerous chores, getting down hay and taking care of the old mare, and keeping the wood boxes in the house full (41-45). He learns to milk the cows and starts milking regularly (63). “Bud worked hard that spring. Every minute he could spare he helped Uncle John with the farming. Saturdays he was up at four-thirty and toiling steadily until dark.” As soon as school is out for summer, haying commences: “For four weeks they

worked like Trojans” (96). Meader thus avoided a tendency that Anne Scott MacLeod has noted in modern historical fiction for children that “glides lightly over a basic reality of farm life in the last century: work. More than work, in fact—*toil*, a word that has all but disappeared from modern vocabularies” (MacLeod, 1998, 28, italics in original). Bud’s ambition is further revealed by his determination to go to college (82).

Bud discovers the values of family and community, friendship and loyalty, as he finds a new family with the Masons, and starts to become a member of the Riverdale community and appreciate the benefits of belonging to both family and community. He develops the friendship with Cal, and the strong loyalty they share strengthens quickly. Bud and Cal are deeply loyal to each other throughout the story, and are also loyal to the boy Yance whom they befriend. Bud and his dog Tug are exceptionally loyal to each other, from the start of the story when Bud’s loyalty to Tug loses them their lodgings in the stable. Tug returns the favor in a later incident when he leaps in to defend Bud, who is surrounded by a pack of half wild dogs and has no weapon. Tug, already limping when he attacks, is severely injured in this fight, but Bud and Aunt Sarah nurse him back to health (162-65). Bud also makes certain that Tug is fed properly even though he has little enough money to feed himself (6). The values of loyalty and community are stronger in this book than self-reliance, but Bud exhibits that value as well. Early on the author cites Bud’s “stubborn independence that was part of his character” (18) in explaining why he had not joined a gang during his time in Boston. Later, Bud further demonstrates his self-reliance as he rides Cedar in the race with the \$1000 prize.

That race is one of two climactic scenes in *Red Horse Hill* that contrast positive

values with negative. In the three-heat race, Bud and Cedar beat two well-known horses to win the \$1000 prize that Bud needs to pay the back taxes on his inherited farm. The opponents try two tricks. First they send a man to whisper in Bud's ear to use the whip on the second heat—to try to overtire Cedar—advice that Bud wisely ignores. Then in the final heat, two opponents try to box Cedar to slow him down, but he and Bud break out of the box. Bud successfully counters both tricks through presence of mind and relying on his own independent reasoning. The other climax is the race to the county seat to pay the back taxes. A blizzard has stopped all trains. The villain Felton hopes to pay the taxes and get the farm for himself; he attempts the trip in a Cadillac car equipped with ropes on the tires to provide traction. Bud and Uncle John make the trip under Cedar's power. After arranging an unsuccessful attack by a vicious dog on Bud, John, and Cedar—Cedar stomps on the dog—Felton tries to run them down with his car. Uncle John anticipates this attack and foils it, and Felton is immediately stuck behind a huge downed tree that he cannot pass. As Bud and Cedar make their way across the tree, Uncle John points out to Felton how unfair he has been, and leaves him flailing with his stuck car. Both climactic scenes reinforce the benefits of positive values, such as courage and honesty, in contrast to negative values of treachery and not playing fair.

Formulaic aspects of *Red Horse Hill* include the use of coincidence already cited, the fact that Bud is an orphan, and his development of a close friendship with Cal, his sidekick. Additional formulaic elements are the villains, the ordeal, and an interesting use of romance. Sam Felton is the typically evil villain with no apparent positive qualities. His son is an apprentice, on his way to becoming similarly unpleasant, greedy,

and selfish. Sam Felton, though quite well off, never seems to have enough, and frequently tries to enrich himself further through devious means on both a large and small scale, from attempting to steal Bud's farm to trying to keep the partridge that he and Cal have shot (79-81). Harko Dan is another very evil villain, a horse thief who steals Cedar, among many other horses, and who is quasi-kidnapper of the boy Yance. Harko Dan's treatment of Yance comprises a formulaic ordeal—Yance is essentially a prisoner whom Harko Dan keeps in a burned-out cellar. In another aspect of formulaic fiction, although there is no romantic interest shown by the protagonist in *Red Horse Hill*, at one point Bud and Cal hitch a one-way ride with Leo, a teamster working for Cal's father—Bud and Cal hitch their sleds to the back of Leo's cutter. Leo is going to see his girl and is not coming back till morning (142), a rather startling revelation for a children's book of this era and author.

As he did for the sidekick in *Down the Big River* (1924), Meader uses the formula that Daniel T. Rodgers describes as one of Horatio Alger's basic patterns, "lost and recovered fortunes," and in *Red Horse Hill*, Meader applies it to the hero, and the details of the pattern conform to the approach that Rodgers relates: "Almost invariably the quest began in a village where the Alger hero endured the persecution of the town's rich man and the snobbery of his prideful son," and usually ended there with the rich man proving to be the villain (Rodgers 141).<sup>27</sup> Sam Felton is a very rich citizen of Riverdale and does indeed prove to be the primary villain of the story. Bud's (and Tug's) disputes with

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<sup>27</sup>Meader does not follow this pattern again as closely as he does in *Red Horse Hill*.

Felton and his “pasty-faced” and snobbish son continue throughout the book until Felton is foiled in his plans to rob Bud of his inheritance. Meader’s protagonist Bud is an orphan, as are many of Alger’s heroes. Meader uses the technique of the lucky break in *Red Horse Hill* with timing in the narrative similar to that often employed by Alger, with the luck occurring well along in the narrative (Alger’s lucky breaks are often at the very end of the story).

Meader drew heavily on his childhood in *Red Horse Hill*. Cedar was a real horse that Meader knew in his childhood. During a time when Meader’s father was running a portable sawmill with partner Frank Babb, “At least half the time Father drove Frank Babb’s Cedar, the sorrel pacer I made the hero of ‘Red Horse Hill.’ The horse was fourteen years old at the time, but still very fast on snow, and it was a delight to handle the reins when we had him hitched to the cutter” (“A Family Memoir” 20).

Meader managed to make use of the basic story of *Red Horse Hill* numerous times in a multiple recycling of literary material. His first telling of the story that grew into *Red Horse Hill* was the short story, “Son of the Blizzard,” which appeared in the magazine *Farm and Fireside*, in March 1922. This story tells of the birth of the horse Cedar and the climactic cutter race. Gallagher states that Meader lost his job with Curtis Publishing when he sold this story to *Farm and Fireside*, a competitor to *Country Gentleman* where he was an assistant editor. Meader had offered the story to his own publication for free, and they had approved it editorially, but had declined to publish it because they had recently printed several stories about horses. Meader confirms this

account in his “A Family Memoir”: “Mr. Curtis believed that he owned all the time of his employees. And the fact that I had sold the story to a competitor made the crime doubly heinous” (36, emphasis in the original).

Part of the basic story of *Red Horse Hill* appeared again in 1949 as “The Cutter Race,” reprinted in the Phyllis Fenner anthology *Horses, Horses, Horses* (189-205), marking the third appearance of this particular climactic scene. In 1958 a selection from *Red Horse Hill* appeared in *Adventures Here and There*, one volume of the *Through Golden Windows* series issued by Grolier. Entitled “Cedar of Red Horse Hill,” this excerpt featured Cedar’s climactic race in yet a fourth appearance (Beust 74-87). In this volume, several of the original illustrations by Lee Townsend from the book were enhanced with color and used for the occasion. That same year, the same basic selection of *Red Horse Hill* appeared in *Good Housekeeping’s Book of Horse Stories* (Pauline Rush Evans, ed., 147-166) as “Elimination Race” and “Final Race,” marking a fifth appearance (and sale) of Cedar’s race. The frontispiece for this book of stories by various authors is a color plate of “Cedar ... rocking along smoothly” from Meader’s story.<sup>28</sup>

*Red Horse Hill* can be considered historical fiction because its setting is approximately a generation before it was published. For his next book, *Away to Sea* (1931), Meader returned to historical fiction of the sea set well in the past, this time in

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<sup>28</sup>In addition, *Red Horse Hill* was translated into German and published in a postwar edition (1947, under U. S. Army Military Government Information Control License) and in a paperback edition published in 1972. In 1995 a new German edition was issued, preceding by five years the reemergence of Meader in the American publishing market with the reissue of *T-Model Tommy* in the United States in 2000 by Southern Skies. *Red Horse Hill* was also translated into French.

1821.<sup>29</sup> *Away to Sea* is the story of a young man, Jim Slater, who runs away from his home in Rhode Island to go to sea, but, in shipping out on the first vessel that is leaving port, has the misfortune to sail on a slaver bound for Africa. He has ample opportunity once at sea to ask himself why he did not inquire in detail, with more attention, concerning the type of cargo his new ship, the *White Angel*, was to carry. Meader had introduced the horrors of slavery in *Longshanks*; he develops ideas concerning slavery in much more depth in *Away to Sea*. Meader considers familiar values—courage, hard work, loyalty, presence of mind—but in the unusual context of the slave ship and Jim’s trying to learn all he can about his chosen profession, sailor, before he can escape the slaver *White Angel*.

This is Meader’s first book in which both parents of the protagonist are alive. Jim Slater is seventeen years old in 1821 and the son of a miller, but his mother’s father had been a ship’s captain, and Jim wants to pursue a career at sea. His father thinks Jim’s idea is “seafarin’ foolishness” and that he “should be the miller after him” (4-5), and although “obedience was part of his training” (10), Jim runs off to sea, and in such a hurry that he does not realize until much too late that the cargo his new ship carries is human slaves. When Jim first comes aboard the vessel, he finds it strange, and is uneasy, and then hears his father inquiring after him. Jim hides while the ship’s crew lies to his father that they’ve not seen him. Jim Slater’s entire time aboard the *White Angel* can be considered an ordeal, even though he did it to himself, while in most of Meader’s ordeals the protagonist finds himself in the ordeal through no or little fault of his own. As soon

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<sup>29</sup>*Away to Sea* was translated into French.

as Jim realizes he is on a slaver, he starts trying to escape. To add to the loneliness of his ordeal, Jim does not have a sidekick of his own age.

After the *White Angel* returns from Africa to American coastal waters with her cargo of slaves, Jim is able to escape. Soon after, he witnesses pirates inflict a mortal wound on the young man Dieudonne LeGros, who is trying to escape their vessel where he has been captive for two months. Jim nurses LeGros through his final agony of dying and takes the dying man's clothes, gun, and dog Dodo at his request, and then buries him (106-12). Later, as he travels through the swamps of Louisiana, Jim spends time with Jacques, later identified as John James Audubon, who functions as a mentor to Jim. In a second ordeal, after Jim has escaped his first on the slaver, both he and Jacques are captured and almost burned to death by escaped slaves living deep in the wilderness. A convenient coincidence—some of these escapees had been on the *White Angel*—saves Jim and Jacques. Jim, at great risk to himself, had given water to a baby suffering from thirst, and was flogged by the captain for this act. This baby is the child of the chief of these escapees; their captors free Jim and Jacques when they come to this realization (213-17). After much arduous traveling, Jim arrives in New Orleans, and is offered passage home by Gaston LeGros, the father of the young man he buried. Jim makes LeGros aware of his ambition to follow the sea as he politely declines free passage, and requests the opportunity to ship before the mast so that he can obtain more experience (230-31). When Jim arrives home, his father is reconciled to his son's ambition, saying sailing is in his blood from his mother's side of the family, and asserting proudly that Jim will make a good sailor (233).

Meador's treatment of the specific horrors of the slave trade make *Away to Sea* unique in his work. When the *White Angel* is underway and it is too late to back out, Jim is shocked to learn he is on a slaver. Crew member Matt Beckett teaches Jim about knots, and then about the horrors of slaving ships, including the one he is on. Jim witnesses the very tight packing in of the slaves, with the men in chains on their sides (55), the cutting back of the already meager water ration (67), and a mutiny of the slaves brutally suppressed, with four dead blacks tossed overboard without ceremony (75-76). Beckett is always cold, no matter how hot the sun or air. He has never been able to be warm since he was on a slaving ship where, as authorities approached, the captain ordered that 600 recently enslaved Africans be chained together, dumped, and drowned because there was no penalty to a slaver unless the ship was caught with slaves on board. "The big cook-kettles was simmerin' with food fer six hundred mouths. But there was no black soul aboard. They couldn't lay hands on us" (32-35). Meador informs the reader that the slave trade had been outlawed by the United States and principal European countries for a decade when his story takes place, but that the slave trade was still profitable as the slavers eluded authorities (50). Indeed, in the story Beckett relates, the ship returned to Africa for another cargo of slaves, and still made a profit on the voyage (35).

Jim witnesses the horrors of the slave trade first-hand, from the barracoons on the African coast where the newly enslaved are held and dickered for (48-54), to the brutal voyage back without enough water. Jim responds to these horrors with great courage as Meador again develops that value. After the *White Angel* has crossed the ocean with its

cargo of slaves on board, Jim sees the thirsty suffering of one baby, and endangering himself, smuggles some water to the mother and child to relieve their thirst. Captain Hack witnesses his act, and whips him for it. “Jim Slater was no coward, but his cheeks went white as he saw Hack reach up to . . . his favorite cat-o’-nine-tails” (84). That night Jim is able to escape, and soon has the spaniel dog Dodo with him. Dodo is also brave, “valorously facing the gaunt yellow hound” (123) they encounter when a pack of dogs and then shrimping watermen attack them. Boy and dog are able to fight off these enemies and escape with “the courageous little spaniel . . . apparently undaunted by his encounter” (125). Jim and Dodo reinforce each other’s courage. When they hear the bellowing roars of bull alligators challenging each other in the Louisiana swamps, they don’t know what the sound is but Jim is able to “bolster his own courage by reassuring the frightened spaniel” (139).

Another example of Jim’s courage also relates to the next value to be considered, that of hard work and ambition. As Jim is attempting to arrange passage home from Louisiana, he continues to try to follow his ambition of sailing on deep water, and screws “his courage a notch higher” to ask for a job on an English ship (153). That attempt fails, but Jim is ultimately able to sail home before the mast, and has a sailing position when he is reunited with his parents. In other examples of the values of hard work and ambition, Jim asserts “I’m not afraid of work” as he interviews for a position on the *White Angel* (20). As he realizes what he has done to himself, and resolves to escape the slaver, he also decides “to learn everything he could about the job of being a sailor” (36) because he still wants to follow the sea, and thinks that such knowledge will also help

him to escape. His strong ambition to go to sea, against the desire of his father, has helped to land him in this predicament, but he intends to make the most of it. Jim does a good job at his sailor's tasks, and wins the grudging admission of his competence from the mates who run the ship. His escape from the *White Angel* requires exceptionally hard work at rowing: "Hour after hour of back-breaking labor that seemed to get him nowhere" (93).

The values of loyalty and patriotism arise primarily as a contrast to the situation Jim finds himself in as the *White Angel* approaches the American coast and encounters an American Navy vessel but manages to outrun her. "All his life he had dreamed of fighting for his country" and now "thanks to his own folly" he is "aboard a filthy slaver" and he feels shame (61). In terms of loyalty, Jim is loyal to traveling companions Jacques and to Dodo, and to suffering mankind when he demonstrates compassion to the thirsty slave mother and child.

Another value that comes to play in *Away to Sea* is presence of mind. Though Jim suffers a major lapse of this value when he fails to inquire closely about the *White Angel's* cargo when he signs on, after that he shows more skill at thinking on his feet. When he goes to fill a water jug for the thirsty baby below decks, a crew member sees him, but thinks he is only getting extra water for himself. "Meanwhile he had presence of mind enough to wipe his mouth with the other" hand as he plugged the stopper with the first to reinforce that impression (82). In other examples of presence of mind, Jim quietly gets all the officers of the *White Angel* drunk in his capacity as cabin boy so he can make his escape (84-88), and does not let himself be seen by the pirates who hold LeGros

(102).

Meader uses the Audubon character (Jacques) to move the story along, to demonstrate the values of loyalty and human compassion, and to inform his readers about Audubon's biography. Jim has demonstrated his compassion when he brought water to the thirsty slaves and nursed young LeGros through his final hours. Jacques shows the same concern towards Jim when he first finds him sick and passed out in the swamp. Dodo has brought Jacques, who nurses Jim back to health. After they have spent some time together, Jim finds Jacques missing and captured by runaway slaves who are living on their own deep in the swamp. Jim loyally rushes to Jacques and tries to rescue him, but is captured also. Jim's act of loyalty causes him to be caught, but then his earlier act of compassion saves Jacques and himself from death when the young mother whom Jim helped on the *White Angel* recognizes him, and has her husband set them free.

As Jim is first getting acquainted with Jacques, he watches as he sketches a dead bird, a Mississippi kite, and then rushes off to shoot and bring back a turkey to eat. Jim finds him an enigma, a "polished gentleman in spite of his rough clothes and evident familiarity with the wilderness." Jim asks him if he is an artist or a hunter. Jacques says he has been many things: "a city merchant, a backwoods storekeeper, a portrait painter, a teacher of the violin—of the dance—of drawing—even of the French language" (188). Meader terms him a "hunter-naturalist" (189).

A minor scene in *Away to Sea* hints at formulaic romances to come in some future books by Meader. Jim and Jacques stop at the Louisiana plantation Oakley on their way to New Orleans. Madame LeGros happens to be visiting there so that Jim can give

her the tragic news about her son and return the dog Dodo to her. The “madcap” Miss Pirrie of Oakley gives the protagonist a kiss to remember Louisiana by, much to his embarrassment (229). According to Constance Rourke’s *Audubon* published five years after *Away to Sea*, Oakley was a plantation where Mrs. James Pirrie offered Audubon a summer position teaching drawing and French to her daughter Eliza Pirrie, age 16. (*Audubon* 163).

In *Away to Sea*, Meader delves deeply into the horrors of slavery, highlights the historical character John James Audubon by having him travel with protagonist Jim Slater, and emphasizes the value of courage. For his next book, Meader would go in an entirely new direction, but courage would still be a vital value. After five historical novels, Meader wrote *King of the Hills* (1933), set in New Hampshire and his first contemporary novel, set in the present time. There is no indication why Meader decided at this time to write a contemporary novel after concentrating previously on historical fiction, but it would have been advantageous for him not to need to perform historical research. Instead he could draw on his knowledge of New Hampshire from childhood time and his honeymoon spent there. Meader develops two related environmental themes in this book: poaching—illegal hunting and selling of deer—and concern for endangering species or causing their extinction, a topic already touched on in *Longshanks* in connection with the passenger pigeon. Meader emphasizes the values of courage and honesty in *King of the Hills*, and the book exemplifies many of Meader’s formulaic hallmarks: the protagonist has a sidekick of similar age and interests with whom he shares the adventures of the narrative, a reward is involved, and the hero suffers an

ordeal. There is no romantic interest in this story, however. It is also interesting to note that although the Great Depression was well established by the time this book came out, Meader does not mention it at all.<sup>30</sup>

The protagonist is Breck Townsend, a nature photography enthusiast: Breck wants to take a picture of the magnificent buck, Old Scar-back, also known as “The King of the Hills.” A deer poaching ring run by hardened criminals is a major part of the story line, along with Breck’s photographic quest. At eighteen years old, Breck is the oldest protagonist in a Meader book—most are sixteen or seventeen, some are fourteen or fifteen. Breck is off to New Hampshire for a couple weeks of ““mountain air and exercise to build me up”” after some cracked ribs in a football game and failure to get his weight back (11). He is on a hunt during hunting season, looking the famous large buck deer Old Scar-back, the King, but Breck’s goal is not to kill this deer but to photograph him, using a large battery-powered light for illumination. In possession of this light, he is at first taken for a jacklighting poacher by the local game warden (18-20), but after Breck explains himself, the warden’s son, Sam McArdle, becomes Breck’s friend, sidekick, and partner, in both the photographic search for the King and the manhunt for the poachers who are operating in the vicinity. Sam and Breck are sworn in as deputy game wardens to fight the poachers. *King of the Hills* is thus the story of a dual and interrelated quest: the photographic hunt for Old Scar-back, the very smart and experienced buck, and the pursuit of the poachers. These hunts converge when Breck and Sam capture the villain

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<sup>30</sup>Although in his story for an adult audience published the same year, the hero loses his job during the economic difficulties of the Depression (“Skis and Doughnuts” in *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1933).

Saranac Slim just in time to prevent his shooting Old Scar-back (224-25).

Meador concentrates on the values of courage and honesty in *King of the Hills*.

Examples of courage occur throughout the book. After the villains have run down Sam's father, the game warden, with a car, Breck answers the McArdle's phone and receives a threat against the warden (54-65). Warden McArdle recovers quickly and rejoins the fray. Soon after that incident, Breck and Sam are shot at when they first stumble on the poachers' hideout: the shot goes through the car "not six inches from Sam's head" (78-79). Clearly meant to scare off searchers, the shot just encourages the brave, youthful heroes even as it disconcerts their elders. Breck further displays his courage when he plays the dangerous undercover role of an unsuccessful city "hunter" who tries to buy a deer from the poachers (154-61). Breck and Sam play a prominent role in the capture of almost the entire poaching gang (210-215), and they are the ones who catch the last villain, Saranac Slim, in courageous fashion: Sam leaps on the armed villain to prevent him from shooting Old Scar-back; after Breck and Sam arrest Slim and march him four miles back to the car, they have a moment of inattention and Slim starts to escape in Breck's car. Breck jumps on the running board, and even though Slim smashes and breaks Breck's hand, he wrestles Slim for the ignition key and gets it (225-30). The boys display their courage in their pursuit of the "King of the Hills" as well. On one occasion they track the old stag all day with their friend, Forest Ranger Jim Borden. "That was an afternoon to test the boys' courage (191)." They track their quarry into the night with little prospect of dinner or breakfast.

Meador considers aspects of honesty as a value. It is clear that Breck is an honest,

law-abiding person. He is sometimes so good that he is unbelievable; for example, he does not know what jacklighting is. In order to explain the term to his readers, Meader has Breck ask his host, innkeeper John Turner, to define it. Turner describes the process of shining a bright light at the deer to dazzle it into immobility and make it easy to shoot (12). Breck doesn't realize that with his bright photographic light he may be taken for a jacker rather than a photographer, as happens a couple of times (6, 19-20). Breck's honesty causes him difficulty when he goes undercover as a game warden to play the role of an unsuccessful city "hunter" who wants to buy a trophy buck. Breck almost gives his real name to the crooked hotel clerk, not having considered his need for an "alias" for this enterprise (his name had been in the newspaper the day before), but has the presence of mind to think up a name quickly, while pretending to test the point of the pen (156). In order to catch a villain, the honest hero must create a false persona, a lie, which does not come easily. In additional exploration of honesty, Meader characterizes innkeeper John Turner partially in shades of gray. For his first meal at Turner's inn, Breck enjoys the "mountain veal." Breck thinks it is out of season venison, because the hunting season doesn't start until the morrow, and Turner doesn't especially want to discuss the meat (17-18). Meader leaves this situation unresolved—it never is clear to the reader what the mystery meat is and whether Turner has broken or bent some law to obtain meat for his inn's table.

Meader also touches on hard work and the related value of ambition in *King of the Hills*. Breck's goal of photographing the scarred old King is ambitious—even according to Warden McArdle and innkeeper Turner (17-20). The old buck has not lived

so long, and avoided so many hunters' guns, by being easy to find. Much of the trailing of this quarry involves "back-breaking work" (219). Breck and Sam also work very long hours and diligently at their deputy game warden jobs. In addition, Sam's ambition of going to college will be helped by the reward that he and Breck earn.

In *King of the Hills* Meader considers environmental issues in detail for the first time. Concerning the deer and the worry at one time that they might become extinct, Forest Ranger Borden states that the deer are coming back in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and throughout the East. Borden adds that when he left Pennsylvania for Idaho fifteen years earlier (approximately 1918) "there were mighty few deer in my home county" but "last year" (about 1932)<sup>31</sup> "the State estimated there was close to a million deer in Pennsylvania" (178). Borden figures that the few remaining deer had hidden deep in the woods where they had been driven by market hunters who "used to shoot 'em all year 'round in the old days. Freight the venison, dried an' salted, to the towns by wagon-loads. It was cheaper than beef or mutton—poor folks' meat. That was before the game laws were so strict or so well-enforced. I sometimes think it's a miracle the deer didn't follow the buffalo and passenger pigeon right out o' the picture" (179).<sup>32</sup> Louis Warren in *The Hunter's Game* seems to echo Ranger Borden in describing the explosion of deer in Pennsylvania from near extinction in the late 1800s to a huge population of deer eating farmers' crops, especially in the 1920s and later. Warren also

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<sup>31</sup>Dates based on the publication of *King of the Hills* in 1933.

<sup>32</sup>Although Ranger Borden is correct about the extinction of the passenger pigeon, the American bison survived.

notes the impact of subsistence hunting and market hunting on the deer population of Pennsylvania, and subsequent efforts to control market hunting (48-55).

*King of the Hills* character John Turner comments on subsistence hunting, remarking that jacking is ““against the law, o’ course, but most of us have done it . . . when we needed meat.”” Turner goes on to say that the wardens mostly left the local people alone when they took deer this way, because they didn’t kill many, but that recently “a mess o’ pot-hunters from outside have been jackin’ deer by the hundreds an’ sellin’ ’em.”” Most are sold to hunters from Boston and New York who haven’t been successful themselves. ““Then some are smuggled out o’ the state an’ sold to hotels and restaurants in the cities.”” Hard-boiled gunmen are running this racket (12-13). One of the contemporary reviews of this book used strong terms to characterize the poaching operation, describing “a racket to make any sportsman’s blood boil. Organized gangsters from the city, using illegal jack-lights and operating with machine-like efficiency, are carrying out what amounts to mass-murder of deer.” This review further mentions Breck’s courage and initiative in helping “head off the assassins and find the storehouses from which the carcasses are sold to bad shots—and worse sportsmen.”<sup>33</sup>

There is hostility between rural and urban interests in *King of the Hills*: “. . . some duffer ate dinner here and left his cook-fire burning’ . . . ‘That’s another thing I’ve got against these town hunters,’ Sam observed on the way back to the car. ‘Not more than one in ten of ’em knows the first thing about how to act in the woods’”(72). Warren

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<sup>33</sup>May Lambertson Becker, ed., review of *King of the Hills* in *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 16 December 1933, 9.

describes similar conflict in *The Hunter's Game* with evidence from Pennsylvania, Ranger Borden's home state. Warren's argument is that such friction between rural and urban interests was often centered on conflicts arising from immigrants' habits brought from Europe of hunting and eating songbirds, for example, and was also part of a move from subsistence hunting to sport hunting. Warren also suggests that farmers were not happy with city-dwellers coming to the country to hunt on their farms (Warren Chapter 2).

Breck's ordeal in *King of the Hills* starts when he is trying out his light on a deer, just to see how well it will work, and the villains take advantage of his light to kill the immobilized deer and take Breck prisoner. Sam has gone for coffee. The villains take Breck to the abandoned farmhouse where they have their headquarters. They lock him in a bedroom from which he observes seven cash transactions between frustrated city hunters and the jackers and begins to appreciate how lucrative this illegal hunting is, and "why men of the type of Durfee and Pasquale had left rum-running for the jacking racket" (131). The racketeers have to pull out in a hurry, and take Breck away from the house with them, and release him in the woods, blindfolded, in a snowstorm with night coming, giving him an opportunity to demonstrate his self-reliance. Breck quickly sheds the blindfold, and fortunately has matches and starts a fire, so that although he has not eaten for a long time, he can stay warm and melt snow to drink, in a birch bark container that he fashions—an example of a Meader hero making do with what is at hand. In the morning, after a nighttime visit from the huge buck deer he seeks to photograph, he finds a town, a telephone, and a lunch wagon (119-47).

Ultimately Breck is successful in his quest to photograph the King (241), and Breck and Sam receive a \$1000 Federal reward for capturing one of the villains. Breck insists that Sam receive the entire reward to go towards his college and states: ““My people give me all that’s good for me and maybe more”” (246-48). Thus it appears that Breck’s family may be well off, but this is the only time it comes up in the story, and Breck is not clearly from a rich family as is Tad in *Longshanks*.

Details from Meader’s “A Family Memoir” about his honeymoon in December 1916 reveal a source of his knowledge of this region and accord with particulars of *King of the Hills*. The honeymoon was at an inn 12 miles from Whittier station in the snowy White Mountains of New Hampshire. They snowshoed—“this was before the era of skiing,” and climbed “Mt. Catherine, and the lower reaches of Whiteface and Passaconaway. The food was delicious . . . Venison was served at every meal - - luscious, tender collops that never palled on our mountain appetites” (“A Family Memoir” 34). This inn seems much like Turner’s establishment in the novel with the delicious “mountain veal,” which is probably venison.

In his first contemporary novel, Meader again made use of his knowledge of New Hampshire, and while he emphasized the values of courage and honesty, he also delved into environmental concerns about possible extinction of deer through poaching and excessive hunting. Meader considered environmental issues in his early writing, and returned to those concerns throughout his career. His next book, *Lumberjack*, would also be set in New Hampshire, and would draw on his childhood, and his father’s experience in the lumbering business.

*Lumberjack* (1934), though set in New Hampshire like *King of the Hills*, is more like *Red Horse Hill* in that it draws on some of Stephen Meader's childhood memories, and appears to be set to a large extent in the time of his childhood, and thus qualifies as historical fiction. Meader's Foreword to *Lumberjack* mentions his father's operation of a portable sawmill some twenty-five years prior to the writing of the book. This book is set somewhere around 1900 to 1910, and may be of most interest because of its connections to Meader's childhood and his father's timbering business. Meader's father, Walter Sidney Meader, was a math teacher at the Friends' School in Providence, Rhode Island ("A Family Memoir" 6). In 1904, he was passed over for the principalship of the school, so he quit teaching and moved the family to New Hampshire where he began a timbering business ("A Family Memoir" 17). His partner Frank Babb had the portable sawmill and the horse Cedar, already featured in *Red Horse Hill*. According to Stephen Meader: "Father hired and bossed the crews, bought the work horses and oxen, cruised the timber lots and bargained with their owners ("A Family Memoir" 17). As each lot was cut off the whole operation - - mill, bunkhouse, cookhouse and supply wagons had to be moved ("A Family Memoir" 20). "A number of times during those winters I spent a week in camp with Father. I got to know the sawyer, the boss teamster, the famous one-armed marker and, of course, the cook....Much of the detail in "Lumberjack" is taken directly from those experiences" ("A Family Memoir" 20). "Most of the French choppers and swampers were pretty wild and got drunk as often as they could find liquor. Father had one showdown with a pair of young huskies, knocking them out one after the other. After that his orders were obeyed. He slept in a small but comfortable cabin, which I shared

with him on my visits. It was mounted on runners in the winter - - wheels in the summer” (“A Family Memoir” 20). As Meader states, many of these details flowed right into *Lumberjack*, which portrays the lumbering profession from the favorable point of view of Meader’s memories of his father’s role in the business.

The protagonist of *Lumberjack* is Dan Garland, who is apparently an orphan. Dan lives with his grandfather, Judge Garland, in New Hampshire near the same town of Riverdale that is the setting of *Red Horse Hill*. The Judge, at age 80, has decided to sell his magnificent stand of pine timber, which has been growing since his own childhood. He is concerned with the possibility of fire and wants money for Dan’s college tuition. Dan obtains a job with the timbering crew cutting his Grandfather’s pines; the story concentrates on the job of cutting the timber. As in Meader’s father’s operation, the sawmill is portable (32) and there is a one-armed marker (85). The boss of the operation, Ben Buckalew, seems to be modeled on Meader’s father. Both had to be vigilant in rooting out liquor. The operation in *Lumberjack* is hindered by villain Ike Daggett, who provides liquor to the men while he is working on the crew (65), and after being fired for that incident, sets a forest fire that threatens the Garland pines (272). Dan has a major role in catching the culprit. Ultimately, through the efforts of the firefighters and with the help of some well-timed rain, Daggett’s fire is extinguished, and the Garland pines are safely harvested.

Values in *Lumberjack* are similar to those of Meader’s other books, especially courage and hard work. Dan must screw up his courage to ask Ben Buckalew for a job with the crew that will be operating the portable sawmill (29); Dan has his courage tested

in the capture of the villain Daggett (248-54). All who fight the forest fire show bravery. Hard work is prevalent in *Lumberjack*. The sawmill crew with whom Dan works is “good-natured, hard-working, keen-witted” (67). The marker “never sat down or stopped working for an instant” (85). Dan’s grandfather speaks of the labor of their ancestors at the old Garland farmhouse: “There was plenty o’ work for the whole family on a place like that.” (89) As his lumbering continues, Dan “felt himself hardening up with the work.” (105). Cutting timber with two-man saws and getting it out of the woods to market is unrelenting toil. Though Meader showcases typical values of courage and hard work, the primary interest of *Lumberjack* is in the detailed descriptions of logging operations, and the ties to Meader’s childhood in New Hampshire and the logging that his father did.<sup>34</sup>

From the steady work in the New Hampshire woods, Meader moves to the almost round-the-clock toil of trappers in the far northern Canadian wilderness with *Trap-Lines North: A True Story of the Canadian Woods* (1936). This book is different in several ways from Meader's other books. Though a book for children, it is essentially nonfiction (and usually catalogued as such), based on the diaries of Jim Vanderbeck, relating his experiences of hunting and trapping in the far north of Ontario in the winter of 1932-1933. This is Meader’s only book not published by Harcourt—the publisher was Dodd, Mead.

Even with these major differences, there are also some striking similarities

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<sup>34</sup>A British edition of *Lumberjack* was published in 1955 by Richard Bell, London. Part of the dust jacket states that “More than twenty successful adventure stories have made him [Meader] well known to the Americans.”

between this nonfiction book and many of Meader's fictional tales. Teen-aged protagonists support a family—there is an entrepreneurial angle to the story and the first instance of the detailed description of earnings that Meader later uses in his four entrepreneurial novels (*T-Model Tommy*, *Blueberry Mountain*, *Bulldozer*, and *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*). *Trap-Lines North* also describes several situations comparable to the ordeal formula in juvenile fiction: teenage brothers Jim and Lindsay Vanderbeck pursue separate trapping territories and trap-lines, coming together from time to time to help each other out or for companionship. *Trap-Lines North* is the story of a young teenager (and his dogs) on his own against the very hostile environment of the far north.

It is almost as if fate handed Stephen Meader a real teenaged hero very much like the fictional heroes he created in his stories. According to Meader's son John, the publisher Dodd, Mead approached Meader with this opportunity (they had the trapper's diaries); the project was acceptable to Meader's usual publisher Harcourt as long as Meader kept up with his annual book to them.<sup>35</sup> Jim Vanderbeck, age eighteen, and his younger brother Lindsay, age sixteen, have the weight of supporting a family fall on them, while their father is in a hospital 700 miles away. The family business is a combination of guiding in the short northern Canadian summers, and trapping and hunting, especially for fur, in the winters. As reviewer May Lamberton Becker pointed out, *Trap-Lines North* "for all its instances [*sic*] of courage and quick wits, is essentially a story of the fur business from the ground up—frozen ground."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, 11 April 1996, Moorestown, NJ.

<sup>36</sup>*New York Herald Tribune Books*, 6 September 1936, 8.

Because of the non-fiction nature of *Trap-Lines North*, there is no plot or conflict with resolution; Meader follows Jim Vanderbeck's diaries as he traps his way through the woods, occasionally meeting his brother or father, or briefly returning to the family winter quarters at Wababimiga, or the town of Nakina. Thus there are some critical comments such as "In *Trap Lines North* there is much information about Canada but the pacing is slower than in his other books."<sup>37</sup> Meader says much the same at one point in the book: "Now, in the dead of the far northern winter, one day was much like another" (168).

The Vanderbeck brothers are exceptional examples of the values of self-reliance, courage, and presence of mind. In the howling winter wilderness of the frozen Canadian north, whether they are together or alone, they are at home and comfortable, carrying what they need on their backs and dogsleds, supplementing trail rations with fresh meat, thinking on their feet

and recovering with no problem, from setbacks such as loss of cached rations and a missing rifle sight that they replace with a coin (19-20). The entire family moves from their home in the small town of Nakina, on the railroad, into the even more remote bush for the winter: "Ever since the children were small, they had spent their winters deep in the bush. Living was cheaper there, where game was plentiful, and the family camp was handy to the trap-lines on which so much of their livelihood depended" (52). As Jim leaves his brother (who takes a different route and trap-line) and family behind, and

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<sup>37</sup>Charlotte S. Huck and Doris A. Young, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1961), 355.

confronts his first night alone, he is a little lonely but “not afraid” (55).

Meader makes his main point on the value of honesty in this book through the Hudson Bay Cree Indian Joe Leake who has the “scrupulous honesty that made all white men of the North respect a woods Indian.” Leake travels thirty miles to return a two inch piece of pencil his boy took from the Vanderbeck cabin at Waba, and gives Jim a newly-made pair of moose-hide moccasins as well, as thanks for the dose of medicine the Vanderbecks provided to his boy (108-09). When the stub of pencil disappears after the Vanderbecks use it to write down the term castor oil, so that Leake knows what to obtain for his ailing son (jack-pine being too cold to yield sap), after a quick search for the pencil, they think nothing more of it, and Jim just gets another from the cupboard to write in his diary. They have forgotten the pencil stub until Joe returns days later (84-88). Jim knows that his mother has also received a similar present of moccasins, and marvels both at the effort to maintain honesty, and that books and “tenderfoot sportsmen remark that the redskin was no better than a thieving crook” (109).

Because *Trap-Lines North* is a book about hunting and trapping in Canada, the game laws of Canada come up from time to time as did the New Hampshire game laws in *King of the Hills*. There is little urban influence in this part of Canada to cause the conflict between urban and rural that plays out in the deer hunts in *King of the Hills*, but there is some tension here between white people and Indians in terms of the hunting laws of Ontario: “No white man is allowed to kill beaver and otter in Ontario. These two valuable furs are reserved as part of the immemorial heritage of the Indian hunter” (37). In another comment on the game laws, Jim sees three caribou that are tempting targets

but remembers that “Caribou were protected game” (66).

Though the Vanderbecks commend Joe Leake for his honesty, they think he is greedy in hunting, though the laws and wardens allow it. Leake has killed 12 or 13 moose this fall. Says Jim Vanderbeck: “Killing moose at that rate is pretty bad. They let Indians have a moose a month, but a dozen of ’em in five weeks—boy that’s wicked! I’d complain about it to the game warden, only I know he doesn’t like to meddle into Indian affairs. These treaty Indians are just like children. They’ve always killed any animal they want for food, and I guess that’s fair enough. But the government ought to tell ’em where to stop, when it comes to slaughtering moose this way.” Jim’s mother replies: “there’s plenty of moose in this country, and I reckon one Indian won’t exterminate ’em” (87).

Meador makes another interesting point about the Canadian hunting laws as Jim seeks a balsam for bedding. This passage describes the “birch partridge—the silliest and most helpless of all birds in the North Woods. He could have reached it with a stick as it sat there watching him with a foolish eye. However, the Canadian game laws wisely protect birch partridges. That is to give an unarmed man, lost in the bush, some assurance of finding fresh meat” (30).<sup>38</sup>

*Trap-Lines North* (1936) touches on the Great Depression and provides a transition from *King of the Hills* (1933), which does not mention the ongoing Depression, to *T-Model Tommy* (1938), which makes frequent reference to the Depression and the

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<sup>38</sup>Decades later (1987), Gary Paulsen has his fictional character Brian, who is the protagonist of five juvenile survival novels set in the northern wilds of Canada, call this bird the foolbird in *Hatchet*. Brian makes heavy use of the foolbird for his survival, as Meador says the law was intended to function.

governmental projects it stimulated. Hunters and fishermen had come to be guided by the Vanderbecks “in steadily increasing numbers . . . until two years before. Then, with the grip of the Depression tightening over the continent, guides and outfitters had found themselves almost without employment. The Vanderbecks had been more fortunate than some. They had among their patrons a few loyal sportsmen with enough wealth to go into the bush regardless of conditions. But even so, there had not been enough business for the last two years to make a living” (7). After the winter described in the book, the family’s prospects for the summer are adequate. There is a fishing party coming from Chicago, several regulars for the moose season, and a friend of a regular who wants a three week canoe trip: “It’s not like boom times, but there’ll be enough to keep us busy an’ pay expenses” (268). Big Lindsay Vanderbeck, head of the family and father of Jim and Lindsay, who have handled the trapping for the winter and spring, goes through a detailed financial accounting, similar to those to come in Meader’s entrepreneurial novels: winter furs and wolf bounties, \$910, muskrats, \$275, and a final bounty on a huge wolf Jim kills at story’s end, for a total of over \$1200. In a happy surprise the Government of Ontario provides an additional \$250 for that wolf’s skin to be mounted and displayed (265-67). The market value of various furs comes up throughout the book as the Vanderbecks tend their trap-lines, and there are intermediate accountings of the values of the furs as they take them to sell to the shrewd old fur merchant who comes through Nakina on the train periodically (156, 209). *Trap-Lines North* was non-fiction and thus different from Meader’s other books; his next book was also unusual—though fiction, it was a book of short stories.

Since his regular publisher, Harcourt, Brace, wanted Meader to continue to provide a book each year for them, they published his *The Will to Win and Other Stories* (1936) the same year as *Trap-Lines North* issued from Dodd, Mead. Thus although Meader produced two books in 1936, most of *The Will to Win* was already written, since many of the children's stories comprising it had previously been published in magazines. One of the stories, "The Bush," about a wilderness canoe trip, has clear similarities to *Trap-Lines North*. Another about canoeing is "The Carrabescook Doubles," featuring a canoe race. Many of the stories in *The Will to Win* concern the team sports of baseball ("Crooked Arm" and "Three Hundred Innings") and football ("Cow Pasture Backfield" and "Quick Kick"), and the varsity sport of track ("The Will to Win" and "Anchor Man"). Stories about winter sports include "The Curly-Nose Skates" concerning both ice skating and a bank robbery, "Ice on the Horse Killer" about bobsled racing, and "The Long, Tall Dogs of Kettle River" about dogsled racing. "Ice on the Horse-Killer" concludes with a courageous bobsled ride to take an injured young woman to the doctor. Similarly, "The Long, Tall Dogs of Kettle River" concerns a sled-dog race in northern Ontario, followed by a race by the winning team to take an injured child to meet an express train to get her to medical attention. In the final story, "Straws in the Wind" the young protagonist ponders possible future professions for himself as he attempts to rid the family cornfield of a hated woodchuck.

"The Bush" features protagonist Luke Castleman, a spoiled rich boy from a Long Island prep school, who has been sent by his father to northern Ontario for a trip in the bush. Luke would prefer a dude ranch in Wyoming, and has traveled previously to

Switzerland, Glacier Park, and the California redwoods. Luke has expensive bags, rises to be brushed off by the railway porter, and is irritated at the lack of a redcap and the necessity to carry one of his own bags on his arrival in the small town of Lac Rideaux. Young Don Crombie will guide Luke from this town on a journey into the bush, of which he is scornful. He is also irritated to have to help with the packing out of supplies from the Crombie storehouse. Don treats Luke fairly respectfully, but at times calls him tenderfoot to his further irritation. Luke learns that a canoe trip in the bush can be very tiring, and evinces a very stubborn side in a couple of incidents, but starts to enjoy the trip: “grudgingly, the city boy admitted to himself that this voyaging through the wilderness was fun” (267). Then disaster strikes as Luke takes a picture of a moose while he and Don are in heavy rapids, and delays following Don’s urgent instructions to paddle as he takes a second picture. The canoe hits rocks and is ruined past patching. Don is severely injured and requires medical attention. Luke overcomes fear and marginal competence to prove himself more than a spoiled soft city person by forging cross country, and finding a doctor who is with another expedition led by Don’s family.

Although Meader only uses a rich boy as a protagonist in one of his novels (*Longshanks*), he has such a hero in two of the short stories in *The Will to Win and Other Stories*, Luke in “The Bush” and Red (Raymond J.) Lassiter in “Three Hundred Innings.” Red is the catcher for State’s baseball team, displaying grace, fearlessness, consistency, “the real mainspring of our ball-team.” Red is from a wealthy family, “rightly or wrongly regarded as ‘high-hat’ and a publicity seeker,” and not especially popular (230-31). His fraternity is a “rich and exclusive one;” Red exhibits “a certain arrogance in his easy

stride” (236). The backup catcher is Beefy Gilman who never misses a practice, works very hard, and never gets to play in the big games. Beefy exhibits “perspiring eagerness and everlasting good nature” (234), and is not at all jealous of Red, but finds it an honor “just to . . . sit on the same bench with him” (237). In Red’s last game, if he lasts the entire contest (and he has never been taken out of a game), he will have completed 300 innings as a college player. This game is with Sheldon, the big rival, and no one gets a letter who has not been in at least part of that game. Red fakes an injury in the bottom of the seventh so that Beefy has to bat for him and take over as catcher, “his first inning in a big game” (248). State still manages to win, and the only ones who realize what Red has done are the narrator (sports editor of *The Daily*) and the coach, who asks the narrator to keep quiet about what he has seen. Red demonstrates an unexpected dimension of his personality as he sacrifices his record 300 innings to give Beefy a chance at a big game and a letter.

“The Will to Win” and “Anchor Man” are stories about track. In the first, the hero, nicknamed Win, learns to give it his all and try to win, no matter what. So that a teammate can earn his varsity letter, Win is letting him win until he realizes too late that it is not his teammate at all but a rival—Win redeems himself in a later race. This story also has an early use of the replay of a sports event when the team manager takes movies of that first race. The movies show that Win was deferring to his apparent teammate rather than quitting for lack of grit as some supposed. In “Anchor Man” the same athlete runs both the first lap and the last (anchor) leg of a mile relay race when his teammate is injured, and his Riverdale team sets a new high school record.

The canoe race of “The Carrabescook Doubles” sounds very much like a canoe race that Meader participated in as a teenager. “When I was sixteen, a younger boy and I entered it [Meader’s first canoe] in the doubles races and came in inches behind a pair of husky guides, beating two teams of Yale men who were camp counselors” (“A Family Memoir” 23). This was in Maine near a summer home that Meader’s father built. In the story, Meader improves on history by having his two young heroes win the race by inches.

Children’s stories such as those in *The Will to Win* were part of Meader’s usual market. He also published four stories in adult magazines during this period, including “Son of the Blizzard” (1922), already considered in the discussion of *Red Horse Hill* as a predecessor to that book. The other three stories, “Ruined Biscuits” (1921) and “Texans Can Ride” (1925), both published in *Top-Notch*, and “Skis and Doughnuts” (1933) from *Ladies Home Journal*, were different from Meader’s usual children’s adventures. In these adult stories, the protagonists are older and have more mature concerns than his usual juvenile protagonists. Each of the stories in *Top-Notch* features a spoiled rich boy with troubles in love, who has an opportunity to redeem himself in an unfamiliar environment. In “Skis and Doughnuts,” the young hero loses his job, but finds an entrepreneurial approach to making a living using the assets of his family.

The years of publication of the two stories in *Top-Notch* correspond approximately to the birth years of Meader’s third and fourth children, so it is probable that this expansion of his family prompted him to seek more income by writing stories for the young adult market. With the 1933 story, he had four children in private school,

Moorestown Friends School, where they started in kindergarten. Because of the Depression, his employer N. W. Ayer cut his hours and salary. “In addition to a straight 20 percent cut in salary, I worked only four days a week. Using the extra time to write, I was lucky enough to sell a number of short stories” (“A Family Memoir” 36-38). Meader sold five of the juvenile stories he wrote with this extra time to *The American Boy* where they first appeared in 1932 and 1933 before being republished in *The Will to Win*; another of these stories he sold to *Boys’ Life* in 1936.

*Top-Notch* was a Street & Smith publication started in 1910. Erin Smith states: “*Top-Notch* targeted ‘the up-and-coming young man.’”<sup>39</sup> Quentin Reynolds, in *The Fiction Factory or From Pulp Row to Quality Street*, Street & Smith’s own history of itself, argues that while the editor of *Top-Notch* described it as a publication of adventure stories for adults, the publishers were aiming for a successful and high quality magazine for boys stories, and that the editor actually selected stories that were “juveniles of a rather superior class.”<sup>40</sup> The heroes of Meader’s two stories in *Top-Notch* have adult concerns but their adventures would have appealed to both boys and young adults.

In the first story Meader sold to *Top-Notch*, lazy Larry Larkin of “Ruined Biscuits” (1921) is the laziest of the lazy students who attend Columbine College in the

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<sup>39</sup>Erin A. Smith, “‘The ragtag and bobtail of the fiction parade’: Pulp Magazines and the Literary Marketplace,” in *Scorned Literature: Essays on the History and Criticism of Popular Mass-Produced Fiction in America*, ed. Lydia Cushman Schurman and Deidre Johnson (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 131. Smith is quoting from the “Street & Smith News Trade Bulletin, June 1930.”

<sup>40</sup>Quentin Reynolds, *The Fiction Factory or From Pulp Row to Quality Street*, (New York: Random House, 1955), 162-66.

mid-West. He is rich, with about \$10,000 per year income from his father's estate. Larry makes a study of not wasting any effort. His college "room was a marvel of completeness in the way of labor-saving devices. Without rising from his morris chair Larkin could reach, by means of strings, pulleys, and electric wires, nearly anything that he wanted" (67). Larry has a girl friend, Lois Graydon, who has no parents but lives with her Uncle Alexander Craig, who owns Craig Motor Works, an automobile manufacturing company. Craig disapproves of Larry, because he lacks specific ambitions and is especially lazy.

In his last semester of college, Larry receives bad news from a lawyer: "the investments selected by your late father have been wholly wiped out in the recent market disturbances" (71). Larry has \$110 to his name. He responds by quitting college, weeks from graduation, although his tuition and board are paid. He goes to the city to seek a job, avoiding offices where he has friends so that he can get the job on his own. He tries almost a hundred places with no luck. At the last, the interviewer ascertains that Larry has no sales or office experience and is not ready to gamble on him.

After several more weeks of drifting in the city, he catches sight of Lois, but realizes that he doesn't want her to see him in his ragged condition. After a long walk, he finds himself at the gates of the Craig Motor Works, goes in, and, using the name Jim Jones, gets a job adjusting bolts on engines as cars are assembled. "Jones" devises a cart to ease the movement of each motor from one work station to the next—the men have picked up the heavy engines and carried them before. This improvement is in line with improvements that competitors at the time would have been making to keep up with Ford's development of the moving assembly line. Almost before he knows it, Larry

receives a raise and a new job as an efficiency expert, “discovering ways to get jobs done with less effort” (77). After some success in this role, Larry discovers that his father’s money is not gone—a check arrives, and his friend Billy Winslow reveals that he hired an actor to play the part of the lawyer with the bad financial news. Winslow was trying to shake his friend out of his laziness and get him to treat life more seriously. Meanwhile, Larry has reconnected with Lois and the two intend to marry.

The continuing success of “Jim Jones” attracts the attention of factory owner Alexander Craig, who decides that “Jones” has some excellent ideas to improve the efficiency of the entire automobile manufacturing plant, and creates a new position for him as efficiency manager. Craig offers “Jones” the job, but also informs him that he prefers for his important managers to be stable and married. When “Jones” mentions his intended and that her relatives have questions about his suitability and financial status, Craig doubles his salary, and tells him to marry the young woman right away. Because Larry also has the money from his father’s estate, he buys a house, and marries Lois immediately. Craig is incensed when he finds his niece missing with a note that she has eloped with Larkin. Because of Larry’s dual identity, Craig thinks very highly of him as “Jones” but detests Larry Larkin. The next morning, Craig cuts short a meeting with “Jones” because his detectives have found Lois at her new marital home, and Craig wants to confront her. “Jones”/Larkin follows Craig to the new home, and everything falls into place in the final scene as Craig realizes “Jones” and Larkin are the same. Besides this “twist” is the one in the story’s title (“Ruined Biscuits”) as Lois forgets her biscuits and they burn, while Larry also has forgotten the thick steak he was to bring from

the butcher's shop, and dashes out to buy it.

The hero of Meader's other *Top-Notch* story, "Texans Can Ride" (1925), is also a spoiled rich young man, Ricky Jordan, age twenty-three, who has a huge talent in polo but is bumping along in the world of the rich in New York, drinking too much. Although alcohol sometimes afflicts villains in Meader's juvenile stories, only in such an adult story would his protagonist have a drinking problem, and Ricky ultimately succeeds in overcoming the problem.

Ricky's very rich father dies; little is left after the estate is settled. Ricky keeps a ranch in Texas and goes out to look it over. To get a laugh, the ranch hands give the new owner the most difficult horse on the ranch to ride, telling him the horse is "quiet." Ricky wins the support and admiration of everyone at the ranch when he handles the bucking horse with aplomb, much to their surprise (6-7). Ricky finds he likes the healthy living in the west and doesn't crave whisky anymore (9). He starts a polo team with his ranch hands and horses that ultimately beats the championship New York team. His rival in polo and love in New York, Morton Rand, also becomes a rival in the land and oil business in Texas. Rand operates unfairly in all three arenas, but ultimately Ricky's polo team beats Rand's, and Ricky wins the girl and a boundary dispute as well, as Rand quits the scene in confusion and defeat.

Meader's final short story of the period is "Skis and Doughnuts" which appeared in *Ladies' Home Journal* (1933). This short story is noteworthy for several reasons. It is a short story following the traditions of being short enough to read in one sitting, and having a "twist" at the end. In this story, in contrast to "Ruined Biscuits" from 1921,

where Meader has an actor play a lawyer to deliver false bad economic news to the protagonist, in this Depression era story, no such actor is needed because the hero actually does lose his job. There is an autobiographical element to this story. The hero is a young advertising writer who loses his job; in Meader's advertising career, he did not lose his job during these Depression years but had his hours cut back as previously noted. This story contains a basic idea that Meader would develop much more fully years later in *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961)—taking steep property and turning it into a ski slope operation that will eventually make enough money to support a family.

Protagonist Jimmy Norton loses his job in advertising when the Handy Soap account goes to a small agency with “an ‘idea’ for comic strip advertisements” (10). Jimmy takes his sickly wife of seven months, Marianne, to the mountain farm of his aunt Susan in Connecticut. Marianne's doctor has suggested that she move to a higher altitude from New York City to help overcome a cough she has and to help her gain a little weight. Aunt Susan has her own problems—investments that have stopped paying dividends. Her hundred acres and solid house have elicited an offer of \$3000; Jimmy is certain it's worth at least \$7500. Jimmy hits on the idea of turning the property into a ski area. He places an advertisement in a New York paper, buys fifteen pairs of skis well below wholesale, and talks long enough about the idea to persuade a magazine columnist, Gary Thompson, to mention the ski area in his column. Business starts slowly but picks up steadily. Both the skiing and Aunt Susan's doughnuts are profitable. Thompson says the ski business is probably a good idea because skiing is taking off as

swimming did before,<sup>41</sup> and at his suggestion, and calling on his former experience, Jimmy writes an extremely effective advertisement for the ski area to place in “a half column in one of the smart town weeklies” (47). The most important reader of that advertisement comes on such a snowy weekend that no one else ventures out, and he doesn’t want to ski. In the classic short story “twist” at the end, this is Huntly Reardon, President of Handy Soap, but Jimmy doesn’t know him, and Reardon obviously does not know Jimmy’s employment history. Reardon asks if Jimmy has written any advertising (yes, four years) and then asks if he wrote the piece in Gotham Life on the doughnuts at his ski area. Huntly asserts that the Handy Soap account has been badly mishandled the last few months and he is going to give it back to the prior agency, but only after they hire Jimmy to write the ads (47). In the end, Jimmy saves his aunt’s farm and gets his job back. Meader would take the basic idea of this story and expand it into a novel with *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* in 1961.

In this first period of his writing, from 1920 to 1936, Stephen Meader experimented with a number of types of novels and stories as he learned the craft of writing as well as settling into his professional and family life. When the period was over, Meader was firmly established in the advertising business with N. W. Ayer and was a successful author. He had published seven novels for children, one contemporary and six historical; a book of juvenile short stories; and a nonfiction book of Canadian trapping and hunting. He had sold short stories in both the juvenile and the young adult

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<sup>41</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen states “the skiing craze grew rapidly during the Depression, stimulated in 1932 by the holding at Lake Placid, New York, of the Winter Olympics” (149).

market. Meader established values and formulaic aspects in his writing that would continue throughout his career, especially the values of courage, self-reliance, ambition, honesty, and loyalty, and the formulaic constructions of the ordeal, evil villains, orphaned protagonists, sidekicks, mentors, coincidence, and romance. The Depression saw Meader's work hours and salary cut back in his day job, and he was happy to be able to sell some stories that the time off allowed him to write. The Depression started to creep into some of his work. He started to experiment with entrepreneurial ideas in *Trap-Lines North* and "Skis and Doughnuts." He would develop these much more fully in future novels. He introduced Quakerism in this period, a topic that would recur in his work. All of this work set the stage for his next period of writing, when he would continue with historical fiction and would start to develop the entrepreneurial idea more fully in two contemporary novels as well as in parts of his historical fiction. In the next phase of his writing, which lasted until the United States entered World War II, Meader would also try one final experimental novel, told from the point of view of a canine protagonist.

## CHAPTER III

### An Entrepreneurial Emphasis Emerges (1937-1941)

As Meader settled into a productive and successful stretch of writing during the late 1930s, he began to emphasize an entrepreneurial theme that examined aspects of starting, organizing, and managing a business enterprise. In some cases the main story of the book is the protagonist's founding and development of a business that is sufficient to support himself and a family; in others Meader treats entrepreneurial themes more lightly. He would return to entrepreneurial themes from time to time throughout his career. Such themes were excellent vehicles for the values Meader emphasized, and they allowed him to provide his readers with information about the economy and how to negotiate that economy as they as they grew up and found a place for themselves within the world of work as well as the entire adult world.

By this time in his life, Meader had experienced a fairly long period of learning as a writer and had tried some experiments in his writing; by now he was a recognized and accomplished writer for children. After trying several different day jobs he had his family and work life settled into a routine; he had been working for the advertising firm N. W. Ayer and Son since 1927. Of the books in this period, 1937 to 1941, only *Bat: The Story of a Bull Terrier* (1939) is without recognizable entrepreneurial elements. The entrepreneurial story is the core of both *T-Model Tommy* (1938) and *Blueberry Mountain* (1941). Newbery Honor book *Boy With a Pack* (1939) concerns an 1830s Yankee

peddler, so the entrepreneurial aspects of that life form a large part of the tale.

Entrepreneurial concerns, presented through the person of the innkeeper in *Who Rides in the Dark?* (1937), are one important aspect of that book although it is primarily the story of Dan Drew's growth to manhood in a New Hampshire town in 1827. Towards the end of *Clear For Action* (1940), Meader's War of 1812 sea story, he develops some entrepreneurial ideas as the heroes decide what to do with a treasure they have found.

During this period, Meader also started to confront some controversial issues that he had avoided in his earlier writing, such as the Great Depression. His *T-Model Tommy* (1938) deals extensively with the Depression, while the earlier *King of the Hills* (1934) does not mention it at all and *Trap-Lines North* (1936) only briefly touches on it. *Bat: The Story of a Bull Terrier* (1939) is the last of his experimental books, this one told from the point of view of the canine protagonist. One other work of this era is the short story "Trouble at the Blue Buck" (1938), which is historical fiction concerning the Constitutional Convention. During this time, in addition to the entrepreneurial theme, Meader also started to emphasize the value of belonging to a community as he retained a focus on values such as courage, hard work, and honesty.

Meader sets his first book of this period, *Who Rides in the Dark?* (1937), in 1827 with protagonist Dan Drew, a 15-year old orphan who is looking for a home. As the story opens, a very hungry Dan trudges west through the rain, away from the New Hampshire coast where his mother has recently died. Freight wagon driver Silas Penny gives Dan a ride to the Fox and Stars Inn in the town of Deptford, New Hampshire, and helps Dan obtain a job there with proprietor Skilly Bassett. Skilly hires Dan to be a stable boy at

the inn, working with hostler Tim Garrity. Dan soon makes friends with Ethan Hayes, a farm boy who lives near the inn, and then with Molly Crandall, a girl of the village—both are close to Dan’s age. When Dan arrives, masked highwaymen and horse thieves known as the “Stingers” are operating in the area, led by the infamous Captain Hairtrigger. As the story opens, Dan encounters Hairtrigger on the road but doesn’t recognize him as an outlaw. Hairtrigger tries to rob the inn’s till later that night, but Dan awakes and sounds the alarm in time. The town is in almost constant fear of Captain Hairtrigger and the “Stingers,” who are holding up stage coaches and stealing horses across the countryside. Winter sets in, and after a blizzard, as the town men and boys clear the road with oxen-drawn plows, they find a stranded horse drawn carriage, with the driver and young woman passenger frozen to death, but a three-year-old girl named Dolores has survived, and eventually goes to live with Molly Crandall and her family. Soon after this tragedy occurs, a mysterious Doctor Barlow comes to stay at the inn; Barlow ultimately turns out to be Hairtrigger in disguise, and the father of Dolores. Throughout the story, Dan is right in the thick of events, and undergoes a formulaic ordeal at the villains’ hands, as he solves the mystery of who has been terrorizing the community, and helps capture the Stinger highwaymen. Ultimately, because of these successes as well as his growth to manhood and responsible citizenship, Dan is welcomed wholeheartedly into the community of Deptford as a full-fledged member. At story’s end, Silas Penny, the teamster who first befriended Dan and helped him to get the job at the inn, purchases a Deptford farm and decides to adopt Dan, who thus obtains a true home of his own.

Throughout the story, Dan exemplifies important values such as courage. Dan is a

brave young man, making his way in the world after the recent death of his mother. At the beginning of the story, as Dan walks along the road, tired, hungry, sad, and homeless, he retrieves the windblown hat of the infamous Captain Hairtrigger—the outlaw tosses a dollar to Dan, which renews his flagging courage; he knows he can eat that night (4). Later, when he is working for the tavern and considers the idea of retrieving a horse and sleigh for his employer, and driving back alone for a long distance, Dan claims not to be afraid of traveling alone with highwaymen abroad (139); in fact the task makes him feel responsible and important (143). Dan needs every bit of his courage for this assignment, but weather, not highwaymen, is the threat in this case. Dan had seen people frozen to death in an earlier blizzard and he almost meets the same fate in a howling snowstorm. He is fortunate to have a strong, fresh horse—they endure six hours in the blowing snow seeing no one and end up safe at home while Dan thinks they are still one village farther away—they have passed through the intervening village without even seeing it in the snow. When Dan arrives, Mrs. Bassett, the tavern keeper’s wife, insists that Skilly stop chastising Dan for being foolish in taking on the blizzard, and admire his spunk and gumption instead (149-50). Later, after winning a shooting contest that establishes him as a marksman, Dan is asked to perform an assignment that will prove his courage as well; he rides on the stage coach as armed guard for a shipment of money. When the highwaymen attack the stage, Dan shows great bravery in taking them on, but his gun misfires (197-98). Soon after, the outlaws capture Dan when he goes to the home of Newt and Big Liz Nixon, who have been masquerading as law-abiding townspeople, to enlist their aid in seeking the highwaymen. Dan has had his doubts about the Nixons

before, and when he arrives and hears the voice of Liz, he realizes that she is one of the armed robbers who held up the stage, but the Nixons take Dan prisoner before he can escape. Although initially scared, Dan soon finds his “fear was giving way before a rising temper” (213). His outrage at the actions of the outlaws pushes out his fear, allowing his natural courage to emerge, but he is helpless in this situation; the outlaws keep Dan tied up for two days without food or water.

In addition to courage, Dan displays the values of hard work and ambition. Dan goes “to work eagerly” upon obtaining a job at the inn (22), and finds plenty of work, but pleasant tasks for a boy fond of horses (30). Just keeping the four massive fireplaces of the tavern supplied with firewood is a big job for Dan: “It took real muscle to handle an armful of those solid oak and maple chunks” (44). That work, along with sufficient sleep and food, help Dan to strengthen and build himself up from the thin youngster he had been when he arrived in Deptford. Dan’s benefactor, Silas Penny, after arranging for Dan to work at the inn, tells him that the innkeeper is ““mean, an’ he’ll work ye hard, but he keeps his word”” (25). Dan’s good friend Ethan Hayes is also an industrious worker, from a prosperous farm family in which all members are “used to hard work,” (88) which, Meader emphasizes, creates the prosperity they enjoy.

Meader demonstrates the value of hard work and ambition through several characters, but his treatment of the related concept of entrepreneurship in *Who Rides in the Dark?* centers on Skilly Bassett, the innkeeper. Although Meader portrays Skilly as stingy and quite focused on making money, he also develops other aspects of the innkeeper’s personality such as his willingness to take in the orphan Dan. As Meader

develops Skilly's penny-pinching approach to entrepreneurship, Dan observes Skilly's actions and learns aspects of the business from him, but also sometimes acts in ways that soften Skilly's stance. When Dan cuts down a Christmas tree and installs it in the keeping room of the inn, Skilly doesn't want it cluttering up the place until a customer remarks that the tree puts him in a festive mood and makes him want to purchase another glass of flip, a hot drink, Meader informs his readers, made of rum, ale, cream, and eggs (72). After that comment, the tree is acceptable, and remains on display (120). Meader enjoys making innkeepers the butt of several jokes that characters in the story tell, and sometimes Meader has Skilly not quite understand the point of such a joke—to Skilly it's never funny for an innkeeper to lose money.

Both innkeeper and wife have rough exteriors that hide sometimes generous dispositions. Dan himself provides an accurate description of the partnership between the innkeeper Skilly Bassett and his wife, Maria. Skilly is widely known as parsimonious; when another innkeeper is surprised that Dan could have put such meat on his bones working for Bassett, Dan replies "I work for Mr. Bassett but it's his wife that cooks the meals" (141). Maria Bassett complains about Dan and his colleague Tim bringing dirt into her kitchen, but she also surprises Dan with new boots custom made for him by a traveling cobbler. Mrs. Bassett also provides the first home for the orphaned child Dolores, and is saddened when Dolores goes to live with Molly Crandall and her family, although she realizes that the Crandalls' home is a better place to raise a child than a tavern.

Meader emphasizes self reliance and independence less in this story than

community and courage, but they are still important values. Dan is able to get along on his own—demonstrated, for example, by his long solitary ride in the blizzard—but he wants a home, community, and friends, all of which he finds in Deptford. The values of self reliance, courage, and community all intersect for Dan in the episode where he rides the stage as armed guard. Dan is pleased to be selected for the task, “a man’s job—a post of danger and responsibility” (194). Dan is growing up and becoming an important member of the Deptford community. He has the self reliance to qualify for guard. But Dan still has some growing up to do: though he gathers his courage to shoot at the outlaws when they strike, he has lacked the courage to awaken the slumbering driver just beforehand even though instinct and the faint sound of a horse in the distance warned Dan to sound the alarm—he is so worried about being brave that he does something stupid rather than appear to be frightened. Dan doesn’t want to bother the driver and be perceived as a youngster with an overactive imagination but it is the driver, the older responsible adult, who has irresponsibly fallen asleep, leaving the inexperienced Dan as the only watch.

Meader portrays additional personal characteristics as useful values. Dan and other characters display the trait of presence of mind. Throughout the story Dan retains his presence of mind in difficult situations. When the outlaw Hairtrigger attempts to rob the inn’s till during Dan’s first night there, Dan sounds the alarm and then has the “presence of mind to open the door and run into the yard” in an attempt to prevent the thief’s escape on horseback (17). Meader uses that specific term again, during the raid that frees Dan from the Nixons, to describe the behavior of Ethan’s brother Elijah Hayes, who shoots the outlaw Newt Nixon who is about to escape on horseback. In that incident,

Nixon is not badly wounded and fights on, threatening both Hayes brothers. Dan then has the presence of mind to cover Nixon with an empty rifle. The bluff works because Nixon doesn't realize that the gun is empty, and he knows that Dan is willing to shoot since he did so before during the stage robbery (235-36).

Dan also has an ability to focus and concentrate, and appears to be a better judge of character than most of the adults in Deptford. He is not distracted by the appearances that sometimes fool his elders. Most of the townspeople find Dr. Barlow, who is staying at the inn while he recuperates from an illness, to be charming, polite, and educated. Dan thinks there is "something in the doctor's personality that didn't ring true." Another teenager, Molly Crandall, doesn't trust Barlow either, even if the adults think he is a gentleman who is good with the orphaned Dolores (159). Ultimately the townspeople learn that Barlow is Captain Hairtrigger in disguise—a trained medical doctor who had killed a man in a duel, and unable to find work, took up robbery to feed his wife and daughter, the Dolores character in the story (262-64).

Molly Crandall provides a hint of romantic interest in *Who Rides in the Dark?* Tim Garrity, Dan's colleague, describes Molly as "'the prettiest young' un in the township'" (50). Molly makes sure that Dan is invited to join the games with the other village children after the annual "harvest-home" feast and party, where Dan and Molly first meet. She urges him to attend school and takes "for granted that he was a fixture of the community," inspiring his first thoughts of staying in the town of Deptford permanently (49-53). At Christmas, Dan receives a red woolen muffler knitted by Molly, and his face reddens when the kitchen "girls" comment and "titter" after he opens the

gift (125). Molly is a strong female character who is as accomplished as, and a match for, any boy. Gunticus (the only remaining native-American of the community) makes snowshoes for Dan, who lets Molly try them. She catches on quickly, and Dan notes this fact along with: ““you’re all right, fer a girl.”” Molly responds angrily: ““I can do anything you can do, Dan Drew.”” She calms down, and Dan starts to say ““I didn’t mean . . .”” Molly cuts him off with: ““you menfolks never mean to belittle us women.”” (160-61). In addition to this strong young female character who provides a hint of romance for the protagonist, Meader employs another strong female character who is evil: Big Liz Nixon, apparently an ordinary citizen, who dresses as a man when she is operating as one of the highwaymen. Her husband Newt helps deflect attention from Liz and himself by being a self-promoting braggart who makes a lot of noise about his importance in defending the town from the highwaymen.

In addition to villains and a touch of romance, Meader uses formulaic techniques of the ordeal and the reward in *Who Rides in the Dark?* Dan’s trip back to the tavern in the blizzard after retrieving the horse is one example of an ordeal, as is his lengthy captivity at the hands of the highwaymen. In both situations Dan is away from responsible adult leadership and must make the best of a challenging situation on his own. Two \$100 rewards have been offered for stopping the highwaymen. Dan receives one of the rewards; the Indian Gunticus gets the other for his help in tracking down the thieves. This concluding scene, where the rewards are conferred, welcomes Dan into the Deptford community as a full-fledged member, an important man of the community. When some of the citizens question giving the first reward to Gunticus, Dan’s

endorsement of the idea overcomes any opposition. Dan's reward is justified by the town's blacksmith Ben Tucker: "He ain't lived among us very long, but I fer one'll say he's as good a Dep'ford man as anybody in this room. Ye all know who I mean. Dan Drew!" (280).

Dan has been made a welcome member of the Deptford community, and helps secure for Gunticus a reward he well deserves. Without the skills of Gunticus in tracking the thieves, they would have probably killed Dan and escaped. Yet this same community that welcomes Dan has failed Gunticus. Gunticus is instrumental in ridding the town of the outlaws who have been terrorizing it, yet he is not welcome to sleep on the floor of the inn with the drivers who pass the night there (112-13). One night when Skilly evicts Gunticus from the floor of the tavern, he comes out to the barn to sleep along with Dan who regularly beds down there. At first a little uneasy about sharing quarters with Gunticus, Dan's natural friendliness soon overcomes his concerns, and he asks how to make snowshoes. Gunticus responds that he will make a pair for the boy. Gunticus is the last remnant of a once proud community of native Americans; Dan is the only person to make Gunticus feel important. Perhaps Dan's residence in the community and his continuing friendship with Gunticus will lead others to see what Gunticus has to offer, and perhaps this story will open the eyes of some of Meader's readers to the potential of forgotten members of their own communities.

Silas Penny also joins the Deptford community. Silas has been a hard worker who has saved money from long distance hauling, and wants to buy a farm, settle down, and make a home that includes Dan. The farm across the road from Ethan's goes to sale at

auction. The only serious bidder at first is Squire Peirce, who wants it only to get a bargain. Ethan had been glum before the sale at the prospect of the squire buying the neighboring farm because the Hayes family can use a good neighbor—Peirce will be merely an absentee owner. At first Silas is a mystery bidder at the back of the room; no one can see who the squire's competition is. Silas would value the farm, and be a generous neighbor and valuable addition to the community. Most residents of Deptford are pleased when Silas prevails at the auction. Skilly Bassett will miss Dan's services at the tavern, but Tim will get along as he did before Dan arrived, and as Skilly points out, Dan ought to be in school, which this new arrangement will allow.

Critical comment on *Who Rides in the Dark?* was positive. For example, Ellen Lewis Buell, in a contemporary review of the book for *The New York Times*, cites the pleasure of Meader's brisk prose in this story of a "plucky boy" in "a narrative which has the flavor of real living in those lusty days."<sup>42</sup> The book attracted scholarly attention in 1944 when Marie Rankin, in her dissertation, "Children's Interests in Library Books of Fiction," commented on Meader's use of the historical setting of *Who Rides in the Dark?* arguing that "The incidents and setting are not portrayed as strange and outdated events but are the sort that could happen to modern readers now."<sup>43</sup> *Who Rides in the Dark?* is one of ten popular books that Rankin considers and compares against ten less popular Newbery books, where the young reader has difficulty in identifying with the strange and

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<sup>42</sup>Ellen Lewis Buell, review of *Who Rides in the Dark?*, by Stephen W. Meader, in *The New York Times* 12 October 1937, 112.

<sup>43</sup>Marie Rankin, "Children's Interests in Library Books of Fiction." PhD. diss., Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944, 89.

distant setting and events. Newbery books that Rankin considers include *The White Stag* by Kate Seredy, *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly, and *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Popularity is based on library circulation figures. In 1957 Phyllis Fenner chose *Who Rides in the Dark?* to consider at some length in *The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read*, noting the “atmosphere of the period” that Meader captured in this book (94).

In Meader’s *Who Rides in the Dark?*, Dan Drew goes from a recently orphaned homeless boy to a maturing, capable young man with a real place in the community, with respect and friends. Meader’s next book, *T-Model Tommy* (1938), deals with similar issues surrounding a young contemporary protagonist who is growing to manhood and full adult membership in his community. With *T-Model Tommy*, the first of Meader’s four contemporary entrepreneurial novels, the protagonist creates and develops a business, and responds to the Great Depression with this entrepreneurial answer: don’t take the easy way out—start a business.<sup>44</sup> This approach is a significant departure from Meader’s first contemporary book, *King of the Hills*, which never mentions the Great Depression though it was published in 1933 when the Depression was already a harsh reality for many Americans. In contrast, *T-Model Tommy* confronts the Depression directly and repeatedly.

The protagonist of *T-Model Tommy*, Tom Ballard, is a recent high school graduate with a widowed mother to support. Throughout the book Tom works diligently

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<sup>44</sup>The other three contemporary entrepreneurial novels are *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), *Bulldozer* (1951) and *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961).

to establish a trucking business, avoiding the lure of various Government jobs with, for example, the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) or the WPA (Works Progress Administration). From junkyard parts, before he even has a driver's license, Tom has rebuilt a Model T truck, and is now trying to make a success of a trucking business (10-12). Tom lives in New Jersey but must travel in search of trucking jobs such as hauling coal from central Pennsylvania. He starts with the dilapidated Model T and works his way up to more and better trucks as the story progresses. As Tom gains experience he also develops business sense, and throughout the book he displays familiar values exemplified by Meader's protagonists: independence, ambition, honesty, and bravery. Meader describes Tom Ballard as industrious and ambitious: building the Model T truck almost from scratch, spending weeks of hard work sawing, splitting, and gathering firewood to sell, scrambling after lawn mowing and small hauling jobs. As a contrast to Tommy, Meader develops the character Bruce Neal, a rich boy who has never had to work, has plenty of spending money and free time, is condescending to Tom and lazy, and is also Tom's rival for the affections of Linda Carroll, the most important female character in the book. Ultimately, two murderous hijackers take Tom and his truck hostage in a formulaic ordeal. Tom is able to escape and get help in time to capture the crooks and recover his truck. At the story's conclusion Tom receives a large reward for the capture of the hijackers, and has clearly won the affections of Linda as well.

As Tom develops his trucking business to support himself and his mother, he also rejects the opportunities afforded by the WPA and CCC, New Deal programs designed to counteract the Great Depression. Some of Tom's friends have applied for WPA jobs

while others have “gone to CCC Camps to work in the woods” (15). Though these programs were controversial and some considered them to be “make-work,” many facilities built by the CCC are still in use today in National and State Parks, National Forests, and similar sites. The WPA was a work program drawing people from the relief rolls, but with the idea of getting some useful work from people who received relief money.<sup>45</sup>

Meader seems to oppose these New Deal programs and is rather harsh in his assessment of them. In describing Tommy’s rejection of such opportunities, Meader states that “some stubborn streak of independence made the boy refuse these easy ways out,” and further, Tom thinks “Maybe sometime he would be glad to let the Government take care of him, but first he was going to have a try at fighting his own way out” (15). Meader’s treatment suggests that he considered the New Deal employment programs to be an easy way out for some people who should have shown some initiative and worked diligently at some other way of supporting themselves, tough though the economy was at the time. One wonders how realistic the entrepreneurial approach may have been to

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<sup>45</sup>There was opposition to the WPA program from three directions, William R. Brock argues: “Some conservative Republicans opposed relief in any form; a group drawn from both parties, but including some leading Southern Democrats, wanted to cut the federal works program and resume grants to the states for direct relief; and a number of liberal New Dealers (and, outside Congress, most social workers) supported the WPA but as an addition to a restored FERA” (William R. Brock, *Welfare, Democracy, and the New Deal* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 272). FERA was the Federal Emergency Relief Administration established in 1933. Even though the WPA was getting work from the people to whom it gave money, as Paul K. Conkin observes: “the WPA could not escape some of the stigma of relief. In fact, derisive opponents would not let it” (Paul K. Conkin, *The New Deal* 2nd ed. [Arlington Heights IL: AHM Publishing Corp, 1967, 1975], 57).

Meader's readers, but it is clear that he was presenting it as a realistic option in 1938, and his protagonist finds WPA work to be equivalent to giving up and letting the Government take care of himself and his mother.

Throughout *T-Model Tommy*, the WPA looms as a symbol of failure for Bruce Neal, as well as for Tom. At the beginning of the book, Tom rejects the WPA and CCC as options for himself, at least until he has tried to make a living on his own. Tom discovers that he is not doing as well as necessary early in his trucking career when he figures his profits for a week and finds that "It wasn't enough. The boys on the WPA jobs were making more than that" (57). Meader provides an additional contrast between his industrious protagonist and the less fortunate people of the era when Tommy has a job moving a welfare family: "In twenty years of living on charity they had accumulated so much trash that it required four trips to carry it all" (41). After Tom has worked at the trucking business for a while longer, he is still having difficulty making ends meet: he has a grocery bill to pay, no cash on hand to pay it, and no immediate trucking jobs lined up. He tells his mother that he has to have some sort of job to tide them over and will go down to the WPA office. Just before he gets there, however, he has the idea of trying to trade coal to the grocer to pay that bill, and the grocer agrees, so instead of the entering the WPA office, which would signify defeat for him, Tom is off to Pennsylvania for a load of coal (101-03).

When Tom does eventually enter the WPA office, it is to attempt to obtain a trucking contract. Apparently Tom sees a pick and shovel job with the WPA as giving up, but considers a trucking contract with them to be acceptable, even highly desirable. The

director of the local WPA office is glad to talk to someone who isn't hungry and gives Tom the information he needs to apply for the hauling contract, which he'll have a good chance of securing as a local man. But as Tom emerges from the WPA office, Bruce Neal spots him and interprets his visit to that office as the failure it would have been had he been seeking a laborer's job. Bruce asks if the venerable flivver, Tom's Model T, has died, and Tom says that it has. (He has already moved up from Model T to Model A to his current truck, a 1935 Ford V-8.) But "Let the rich boy think what he might. He wouldn't trouble to enlighten him" (198-200). After Tom is awarded a WPA hauling contract, he becomes impatient with the slow pace of the WPA laborers (who slow Tom down), and notices their warning "a green newcomer who started putting his back into it. 'Don't you know this job's got to last all summer?'" (219). Meader's criticism of the WPA caught the attention of the anonymous reviewer for *Christian Science Monitor*, who commented that Tom's "adventures in building up a trucking business so that he would not be an applicant for the WPA are speedy and exciting."<sup>46</sup>

Throughout *T-Model Tommy*, Meader provides business advice to his young readers. He presents a framework for starting a trucking business, spicing it up with technical truck information; guides the reader through the details of business costs and the growth of Tom's bank account; and occasionally provides specific suggestions for developing new business. Tom has two mentors, young men somewhat older than he is, who are the device Meader adopts to present business advice: Dan Page, a struggling young attorney and Tom's (and Bruce Neal's) former scoutmaster, and Mike Foster, part

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<sup>46</sup>*Christian Science Monitor*, 29 September 1938, 6.

owner of the gas station where Tom sometimes works at night pumping gas.

Mike Foster provides Tom with a lesson in salesmanship by pointing out that the question ““Don't want any hauling done, do you, Mister?”” will elicit “No” for an answer—the best approach is to start out with ““Morning Mr. Brown,”” (having gotten the name off the mailbox), and then ask when the crop will be ripe. This makes the questioner sound like a potential buyer, so the farmer warms up and probably answers truthfully. Then Tom can ask how the farmer plans to get the crop to market if it ripens all at once. Tom has something to offer the farmer in addition to basic transport—he can take a load first thing in the morning while the crop is fresh, looks good, sells for more, and while the farmer continues harvesting, and while the receiving platforms are less crowded so that Tom doesn't waste a lot of his time waiting to unload (70-71). Both trucker and farmer prosper under such an arrangement, but Tom has to introduce and sell the concept for it to occur. Mike Foster also helps Tom with a short term business loan for license plates for the Model T, when Tom has moved on to the Model A, allowing him to put the old truck back on the road. Tom's younger friend Dink Chester will drive the second vehicle to help deal with a bumper crop of tomatoes that need to be hauled to market. Tom had thought of this idea but had no money for license plates so the unsolicited offer of a loan of a couple of weeks' wages “almost took Tom's breath away” (72-73).

The attorney Dan Page advises Tom when he is considering applying for the WPA road contract. Tom tells Dan: ““I've worked hard this winter and got a little stake ahead. Now it's a case of either playing it safe and just making a living—or taking a

chance” on getting the WPA road building contract, trading in his current truck in order to buy two trucks, and hiring someone to drive the second truck. Dan tells Tom it sounds like he has already made up his mind and that ““nobody ever made a big success without taking chances”” (201). In this episode, and an earlier one where Tom persuades his mother to dip into their meager savings to move up to a Model A truck from the Model T (47), Tom demonstrates the value of taking risks on occasion.

Meader's financial descriptions made real the possibility of starting a business on a shoestring to his young readers. In describing Tom's trucking adventures, Meader includes detail on the costs of most aspects of the trucking business: the trucks themselves, accessories, parts and fuel, license plates, wages to hired drivers, coal to be resold. Tom starts his trucking business with a Model T Ford truck which he puts together from parts he scrounges from junk yards: a three dollar chassis, spark plugs for a dime, a battery for 50 cents (10-11). Meader introduces the concept of financing a business capital asset as Tom moves up to a Model A Ford truck for \$190: \$65 down and \$13 per month. He refuses to trade in the Model T for \$10: “Nothing doing. She's worth more than that to me.” (45, 49). Not only does Tom’s “sweat equity” in the Model T greatly exceed \$10, he will end up putting that truck back on the road with a hired driver as his business expands. Meader portrays his hero as thinking “big” and encourages his readers to do the same. When Tom next moves up to a 1935 Ford V-8 truck, Meader lists details of the trade-in of the Model A and payments, including \$10 to the village blacksmith for various repairs to the truck body (174-82). As Tom continues to seek ways to enlarge his business, he builds a “dummy rear” for his new truck, using the rear axle

off the Model T—this lets him haul eight tons of coal legally instead of just five (190-91). As Tom’s success grows, so does his bank account. The reader follows the details of Tommy's bank account and profits per load as both increase slowly but steadily.

In *T-Model Tommy* and his other contemporary entrepreneurial books, Meader describes business costs, and the detailed financial planning and frugality that enable a beginning entrepreneur to start a business. Meader uses techniques similar to those which Anne MacLeod describes in discussing the novels of Horatio Alger, whose books are “littered . . . with small-scale financial transactions . . . the accumulation of small sums of money in savings accounts ... the very meagerness of the money matters . . . put them within the grasp of his reader as large figures could not have done; they made the process of accumulation seem not only comprehensible but real, and, above all, possible.”<sup>47</sup>

In *T-Model Tommy*, Meader uses the spoiled rich boy, Bruce Neal, as an ongoing point of comparison to Tom as he builds his business. Early in the story, Bruce is a stark contrast to Tom. While Tom scrambles looking for work, Bruce can hardly bestir himself to cash his father’s allowance check. Bruce is a constant irritant to Tom. When the reader first encounters him, Bruce is yelling something sarcastic at Tom about his old Model T truck. Tom ignores him though his ears are burning: “He had never liked Bruce Neal” though they had played together on Elmsville’s winning football team. “Bruce had had things easy all his life. Too much money. Too much prestige. He was the only son of one of the town’s wealthy men . . . but he spent a lot of time with high-school friends who

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<sup>47</sup>Anne Scott MacLeod, "Secret in the trash bin: on the perennial popularity of juvenile series books," *Children's Literature in Education* 15, no. 3 (1984): 134.

were always ready to drink his sodas and laugh at his jokes” (25). Bruce keeps up a condescending banter throughout most of the book. When he sees Tommy mowing lawns he says it “Does me good to see you straining away.” Tom advises Bruce to try it himself, it might do him good, and Bruce, little knowing that soon he will have to do exactly that, says that maybe he will try it sometime (55). Dan Page tells Tom that Bruce is not really such ““a bad sort under that snooty manner he puts on. Actually I shouldn’t wonder if he envied you your independence”” (201).

When his father dies suddenly, Bruce must go to work. He fails in a stint at selling expensive cars. Tom predicts that Bruce will be unlikely to sell many of these “rich man’s” models in their working-class town (240), and indeed he never sells a single car. Eventually he becomes more realistic in his search for a job and shows up at Tom’s house seeking work. Tom doesn’t recognize Bruce at first in his dirty working clothes. He has just washed ““two cars at fifty cents apiece. The first dollar I ever earned.”” Bruce says he ““was trying to be a kid-glove salesman, but I’ve learned better. Now I’m looking for odd jobs—dirty work—anything I can get. I came here to see if you—well, if you needed your truck washed or greased or anything.”” By convenient coincidence, Tommy desperately needs a driver just now because his regular driver is ill. Needing to keep up with his WPA contract, he hires Bruce, whose “unexpected earnestness” has broken through Tom’s defenses (299). This shift in roles fits a pattern in juvenile fiction that Deidre Johnson notes—a condescending character ending up on a lower social rung than

the hero.<sup>48</sup> Dan Page had observed to Tom that Bruce ““wasn’t a bad sort”” (201); he is not the totally evil person that Meader depicts in truck hijackers and robbers. When Bruce no longer has the luxury of being lazy, he becomes an industrious worker and his condescending manner evaporates. Contemporary reviewer Eleanor Kidder, however, found Bruce’s turnabout to be too extreme, writing in *Library Journal* that “the false note of the book is the humbling of the snobbish rich young man by having him seek work of Tom.”<sup>49</sup> Meader presumably does not consider it too extreme at all, using Bruce Neal to send a message to those who had unexpected sudden downturns in their fortunes in the Depression, but who had no experience in scratching out a living: find a job working for an entrepreneur, if you don’t have the skills, temperament, experience, and drive to start a business yourself.

Though it might not suit either Tom or Bruce, Meader suggests another career option through an offer a Pennsylvania State Police Sergeant makes to Tom after he has spotted “clip thieves,” called the police, and then helped in the capture of the thieves. A clip thief, Meader explains, “would get aboard a moving truck, cut the tarp if there was one, and toss the load piece by piece into the ditch for his confederates to pick up” (165). By police motorcycle, Tom travels to the place where he had seen a bolt of silk tossed

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<sup>48</sup>Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 33, quoting Gary Scharnhorst. Meader does not seem to repeat this pattern in subsequent books, however.

<sup>49</sup>“Eleanor Kidder, review of *T-Model Tommy*, by Stephen W. Meader, *Library Journal* 63 (15 October 1938): 799.

from a truck into the road.<sup>50</sup> When the clip thieves try to retrieve the silk, they shoot a policeman in the leg, but then Tom tackles one of the thieves. After the dust settles, the police sergeant on the scene tells Tom he is rugged, can handle himself, and can keep his head in an emergency: ““We could use a lad like you on the force. If you ever want a good steady job, come to me and I’ll recommend you for the police school up at Hershey”” (172). For the right man, a police job could have been the ticket out of the unemployment of the Depression. Tom barely seems to consider this offer, saying he wants to see if he can succeed at trucking. One wonders why Tom doesn’t give himself a little time to consider the idea thoughtfully during such an uncertain economy, with his trucking operation still so chancy, and with both himself and his mother to support. A state police job would be certain and steady government employment with some amount of excitement, adventure, and even driving; it would be a real job and not make-work like the WPA. But Tom is committed to his trucking business by the time this episode occurs and wants to persevere with the business rather than consider a police career, and apparently Meader sees being one’s own employer as “better” on some scale of values.

Along with the rich boy character in *T-Model Tommy*, Meader develops the character Linda Carroll, a girl friend for Tom, and someone in whom he confides his

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<sup>50</sup>That ride may have been an autobiographical reference inspired by a similar ride that Meader received when he was working in advertising and one of his clients was the Pennsylvania State Police. Meader was assigned to write a story on the state police training academy and went through two weeks of the training course. “These burley men tried to scare me by having me take a harrowing ride in a sidecar. I thoroughly enjoyed that assignment. I think I got a good story from the experience.” Robert J. Gallagher, “Stephen W. Meader: A Biography,” (Glassboro State College, Glassboro, N.J., 1973), 28, quoting Meader.

business dreams. Meader used the idea of romance for the protagonist sparingly, but it is present in the entrepreneurial novels, probably because of the opportunity thus afforded the hero to bounce business ideas off his girl friend. Linda shows a keen interest in Tom's business venture and offers him numerous useful tips and advice. Linda serves as a sounding board for the hero's business ideas as will the girl friends in the later entrepreneurial books, *Bulldozer* (1951) and *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961). The romantic angle in *T-Model Tommy* also includes the rivalry between Tom and Bruce for Linda, and this rivalry is heightened by the fact that Linda is in Bruce's social and economic class, not in Tom's. In the three entrepreneurial stories where the hero pursues a rich girl, it is almost as if the hero is trying to negotiate his successful passage to a higher class by marrying into it as well as by reaching it through his business success.

The role of Linda Carroll in *T-Model Tommy* starts early in the book, when Tom goes to the lake for a swim. He walks the three miles to save gas and to avoid exposing himself to possible ridicule of his dilapidated truck. "He didn't mind its scarecrow shabbiness when he was hauling something but it didn't look exactly like a pleasure vehicle. Suppose Linda Carroll should be there" (29). This is the first the reader hears of Linda. Almost immediately Linda enters the story, a passenger in Bruce Neal's big roadster, and as they drive by, in his patronizing drawl Bruce offers Tom a ride on the running board of the roadster. Bruce zooms along at 50 miles per hour so that Tom cannot talk to Linda then, but it turns out that she likes and admires Tom, is out with Bruce because he asked her (and Tom didn't), and so she asks Tom out in front of Bruce in such a way that he can hardly say no: "You'll come over some evening next week?"

she said. "That's fine. I'll be looking for you." Tommy is surprised—it is the first he had heard of this date—and stammers his acceptance. This all happens just as Bruce has arrived from changing into his swimming clothes—Linda had been talking with Tom about his trucking business—and Bruce has invited Linda to swim up the cove if she can tear herself "away from the horny-handed son of toil" (32-34). Tom had not asked Linda out because he works all the time and has no extra money, while Bruce has plenty of time and money to entertain Linda, but she continually makes it clear that she is interested in Tom. Throughout the book, Tom rarely asks Linda out because he is working day and night, but he ultimately wins her heart. Perhaps Meader has some messages here for his young male readers: if you are hard-working and ambitious, even if you have little time and money for entertaining women, you are more likely to hold the interest of the intelligent and attractive young woman, and win her over, than the lazy rich fellow with time, money, and roadsters on his hands, so find the courage and time to ask the girl out; she may be waiting for your invitation, but may not take the initiative as Linda does. Reviewer May Lamberton Becker, writing in *New York Herald Tribune Books*, described Linda as "a nice girl, not too prominent in the story for a boys' book, but a good sort throughout."<sup>51</sup> Linda is more prominent than many of Meader's protagonists' girl friends, however, and in some of Meader's books there is no romantic angle, or if there is one, it does not concern the hero. Linda's behavior in asking Tom out reveals an independent nature and fits Elaine Tyler May's description of "strong and autonomous

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<sup>51</sup>May Lamberton Becker, ed., Review of *T-Model Tommy* in *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 1 Jan 1939, 6.

women of the thirties” and more “equality of the sexes.”<sup>52</sup> May points out that the movie industry remained strong during the 1930s (Tom and Linda go to a movie to celebrate at the conclusion of *T-Model Tommy*), and argues that “movies and fan magazines reflected and stimulated strategies for coping with the depression” (41). Books such as *T-Model Tommy* also reflected and may have stimulated such coping strategies, ones oriented towards making a living by developing a business of one’s own.

In addition to romance, the struggling widowed mother, and mentors, Meader uses other formulaic techniques in *T-Model Tommy*: the ordeal, evil villains, and rewards. Tom experiences an ordeal when murderous hijackers kidnap him and his truck, and hold him prisoner (246-65). The ordeal is a common formula in children’s literature where the hero is in danger, needs to make quick decisions, and does not have adult leadership available. Tom is able to escape and find Dan Page at a nearby Boy Scout camp, and together they alert police and aid in the capture of the gang who are using Tom’s truck to try to hijack a tractor trailer load of cigarettes (269-90). Meader also employs a female villain in *T-Model Tommy*, a technique he uses occasionally. Willie Mae, a waitress in a roadside diner, whom Tom instinctively dislikes (124), provides information to hijackers about truckers traveling alone who are potential targets. Tom receives two rewards of a thousand dollars each, one for the capture of each of his kidnappers (303-04).

Throughout the story of Tom’s developing success in the trucking business, his

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<sup>52</sup>Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, (n.p.: Basic Books, 1988), 37-44.

behavior exemplifies several important values. His ambition and hard work should already be clear. Tommy works literally day and night at times when he coaches football in the afternoon and then drives all night for a load of coal. His self-reliance and independence are illustrated by his desire to start his own business to support himself instead of working for someone else or seeking government aid. In addition, the North Carolina trucker whom Tom meets and befriends, Yancey, who works for a big trucking company, tells Tom that the company pays good wages “‘but I’d rather be like you—independent. Maybe I’ll buy me a little truck some time an’ go on my own’” (61).

In addition to Tom’s self reliance, Meader emphasizes his honesty. Tom knows that he can safely carry more coal than is legal. He does not want to pay a fine, but more importantly, does not “like to think of himself as a deliberate law-breaker” (183). Tom also decides not to buy bootleg coal (85, 106) but only deal in legally mined coal. Meader here adverts to another group with their own approach to weathering the Depression—unemployed miners who dig coal for their own use and sometimes to sell. Meader presents their case sympathetically but with no solution: the coal belongs to someone else but the bootleg miners know nothing but mining, and are stealing the coal under dangerous working conditions to scratch out a living.

Finally, Tom is brave. He takes a berry hauling job when he knows there is a truckers’ strike—he is an owner, not in a union, and thinks being out of state will help, but he is still attacked and fights his way free, with limited police assistance (207-10). He is courageous and keeps his wits about him both in the capture of the clip thieves, and during his ordeal at the hands of the hijackers. When the hijackers seize him at gunpoint,

Tom is extremely frightened, experiencing previously unknown “cold, leaden fear ... like a lump at the pit of his stomach.” He has “to control the trembling in his knees” in order to drive his truck as the criminals command (247). He is able to control his fear and keeps his wits about him so that he can escape safely. Throughout these experiences, Tom displays the presence of mind praised by the state police sergeant after the clip-thieves incident.

Contemporary reviewers pointed out some of the values demonstrated by Tom Ballard that made him a successful entrepreneur as well as an excellent role model. May Lamberton Becker observed that *T-Model Tommy* “is a success story which uses the same old grit they had in Alger’s day” and that Tommy has discovered “the secret of a twenty-eight-hour day.” Eleanor Kidder in *Library Journal* cited a long list of Tom's virtues: “dogged hard work and careful planning,” “sheer physical work, energy and self-reliance.” The reviewer for *Saturday Review* mentioned Tommy's determination and ingenuity. With apparent concerns over negative role models, two different reviews of *T-Model Tommy* in *Library Journal* mentioned the gangsters in the story as a concern to librarians, even though the story is Tom’s, not the gangsters’, Tom triumphs over them, and Meader is certainly not encouraging criminal behavior in his story. Kidder’s review makes this point: “the interest in the story lies not in them [the gangsters], but in Tom’s struggle to make a success of his business”<sup>53</sup> By this stage in his career, Meader was

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<sup>53</sup>Reviews of *T-Model Tommy*, by Stephen W. Meader: May Lamberton Becker, ed., *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 1 January 1939, 6; Eleanor Kidder, *Library Journal* 63 (15 October 1938), 799; *Saturday Review*, 10 December 1938, 18; Margaret C. Scoggin, *Library Journal* 63 (1 November 1938), 826.

being reviewed by most of the periodicals reviewing books for children, including *The Saturday Review* and *Horn Book*. Most of Meader's books were reviewed in *The New York Times Book Review*, although *T-Model Tommy* was an exception.

After *T-Model Tommy*, Meader turned to one final experimental book with *Bat: The Story of a Bull Terrier* (1939).<sup>54</sup> Meader tells this story from the point of view of Bat, the canine protagonist. Meader's other experiments include *Trap-Lines North* (1936) which is essentially nonfiction and based on diaries of a young Canadian trapper, and *Longshanks* (1928), the only novel by Meader with a wealthy boy as protagonist, and with a famous historical figure as the title character. As with *Bat*, Meader tried each of these experiments one time and did not repeat them; he also published one book of short stories, *The Will to Win and Other Stories* (1936). By this time, Meader had apparently stopped publishing stories in the adult market such as the two he published in *Top-Notch* in the 1920s and "Skis and Doughnuts" which appeared in *Ladies Home Journal* in 1933.

*Bat* is a purebred bull terrier, formally named Snowboy of Battersby, who belongs to Ben Avery, a Pennsylvania farmer. June Faulkner, a very well off young woman, meets Bat when she accidentally crashes her horse into Avery's fence during a fox chase. June and her father return to pay Avery for the damaged fence and to buy Bat, if possible. Avery is not inclined to sell, but Mr. Faulkner argues successfully that Bat deserves a chance to be the show dog he was bred to be. Bat spends some time as a champion show dog, winning best of breed in the puppy class at a big show at Madison Square Garden.

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<sup>54</sup>*Bat* was subsequently reprinted by Grosset & Dunlap in its *Famous Dog Stories* Series.

June becomes extremely fond of Bat, and when the Faulkner family moves from their suburban estate to a “palatial summer home” (100) in Atlantic City for the summer, Bat accompanies them as one of the family.

During the summer, two villains lure Bat away, take him to Philadelphia, and have him fight for bets half a dozen times in one night, leaving him for dead afterwards (125-42). Young Tony Donato finds Bat, nurses him back to life, and names him Beppo (153-60). Tony, an orphan, lives with his grandparents and sister Marie. Meanwhile June Faulkner has posted a \$500 reward for Bat. Tony’s sister writes to the Faulkners, but unfortunately Tony has spoken too loudly of the reward, and the men who had originally stolen Bat steal him back to try to get the reward. They lock Bat in a cellar while deciding how to extract the reward from the Faulkners. Bat escapes by leaping up and crashing through a high cellar window, and in an extraordinary journey finds his way back to the Faulkner beach house (194-209). Unfortunately, by the time he arrives, the house is deserted for the season. Bat doesn’t know that June is gone and stays under the house, hoping she will return. He ekes out the existence of a stray and is out scavenging when June does make one visit to the house (210-43). Meanwhile, Marie’s boyfriend Tim thinks he sees the dog in a newspaper photograph. Tim, Marie, and Tony go to Atlantic City, find Bat, and ultimately deliver him to the Faulkners. At first the Faulkners’ butler states emphatically that this “battered and disreputable terrier” is not the dog in question, and is showing them the door when Bat starts barking. June comes down to investigate and has a joyful reunion with her dog (244-69).

Bat’s experience in Atlantic City under the Faulkner’s beach house fits the

criteria for an ordeal. Bat's time with Tony, after he rescues and nurses the abandoned, injured dog, is a shorter ordeal within an ordeal, because Bat still wants to get back to June, even though Tony is very nice. Experimental though *Bat* is, the canine hero exemplifies values identical to those of Meader's human heroes. Bat is brave. As a puppy he attacks and runs off two full-grown German shepherds who attack the Faulkners' cocker spaniel (35-38). Later Bat alerts the house to the presence of a burglar who has been working this wealthy neighborhood, stealing items from upstairs rooms during downstairs dinner parties, and then catches the burglar as he tries to escape (71-75). Bat also perseveres quite courageously when forced to fight by his kidnappers. Bat's loyalty is also strong although he is forced to shift it from Avery to June Faulkner, and then temporarily to Tony Donato, although by then it is clear that Bat's true loyalty is to June. That loyalty leads him to make the difficult journey from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, when he escapes his kidnappers and is trying to find his way back to June.

Although *Bat* is Meader's only book of the period without some entrepreneurial angle, it showcases many of the values that Meader employs in his entrepreneurial books: bravery, loyalty, presence of mind, self reliance, industriousness. Meader develops these same values in his next book, *Boy With a Pack* (1939), as he returns to an historical setting with some entrepreneurial aspects, and also explores the value of honesty in some detail and through a Quaker lens.

In *Boy With a Pack*, set in 1837, Yankee peddler Bill Crawford, age 17, turns his back on the local textile mill and heads to Ohio selling notions from the pack he carries

on his back.<sup>55</sup> The journey affords Bill the opportunity to see the countryside from New Hampshire to Ohio, and as he starts learning to sell his wares, he acquires several animals: a dog, a mare, and eventually, a colt. Along the way, he tangles with a horse trader and thief, Alonzo Peel, and helps a young lad to freedom on his way along the Underground Railroad. Bill crosses paths several times with Mary Ann Bennett and ultimately ends up at Mary Ann's brother's house in Ohio; it becomes apparent that they will see much more of each other when Bill decides to work in the brother's grist mill. Meader examines the values of courage, honesty, ambition, and self-reliance throughout the book, paying particular attention to the concept of honesty. Peel, the horse thief, is totally dishonest while Quakers involved with the Underground Railroad sometimes bend the idea of honesty when questioned about runaway slaves.

Bill wants to get to Ohio fairly quickly where he figures there will be a better market for his goods. He generally accepts rides when they are offered. When he first encounters Alonzo Peel, horse trader (and thief as it turns out), Bill hesitates to accept a ride with him, and then has difficulty in getting away. Peel's words are sensible—essentially why walk when you can ride?— but his body language is intimidating, so Bill watches for a chance to run, and escapes. Soon after the experience with Peel, Bill gets a ride from a doctor who had encountered Peel some time back, when Peel stole the doctor's horse. The doctor feeds Bill and sends him on his way, encouraging him to give Yankee traders a good name: “‘A reputation for honest dealin’

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<sup>55</sup>The year 1837 is not explicitly stated but can be inferred from the discussion by the characters of the election of Van Buren to the Presidency in the previous autumn (6).

is one o' the best things a man can have.'" (73) Meader thus juxtaposes honest trading with Peel's literal thievery.

As Bill continues west, he secures a job driving horses on the Erie Canal on the *Mohawk Tiger*, a canal-boat owned by Buck Hoyle. Mary Ann Bennett is the cook for the *Tiger*. After a few days' travel on the canal, Bill is fairly certain that he sees Peel in Utica, and avoids him. That night boater Ben Egan's pair of black horses is stolen. Peel is accused, with a reward of \$100 for his capture, dead or alive (108-15). Soon after Bill finishes his canal trip, he is back on foot near Buffalo, when he comes on the scene of the hanging of a horse thief—Peel's ways have caught up with him. Bill arrives after the hanging but in time for the auction of any of Peel's horses not spoken for by owners. Ben Egan is trying to prove his ownership of the two horses stolen from him in Utica, and Bill vouches for Egan so that the horses are not auctioned. Egan rewards Bill by purchasing Peel's mare at the auction and giving the horse to Bill. Bill had bid on the mare to the limit of his money, primarily because he felt sorry for her and did not want to see her mistreated. He doesn't particularly need a horse and she slows him down though she does carry his pack (127-36). Eventually, to Bill's happy surprise, Martha foals, and the young colt joins his company.

Entrepreneurial concerns arise in many of Meader's books in addition to the contemporary entrepreneurial novels such as *T-Model Tommy*. There are certainly entrepreneurial aspects to this book about a Yankee peddler. When Bill gets into Ohio, he begins his peddling in earnest. He is awkward at first but finds that if he smiles and is cheerful, he will usually be welcomed into a frontier house, if only for any news he may

have. Since these potential customers have little cash, Bill devises a system of barter. He only accepts in trade items he is certain he can sell: homespun cloth, maple sugar, bacon, a deerskin (179-80). After he takes a beaver skin in trade, Bill decides to follow a thinly settled route in search of further beaver skins which are more valuable than greenbacks (181-83).

Bill enters an area with a significant Quaker population south of Cambridge, Ohio in the Muskingum Valley. He has heard that the Quakers are thrifty, dress in plain fashion, and may be helping runaway slaves to freedom (228-29). Bill encounters “prim Quaker ladies” at prosperous farms who greet him with “gentle politeness” but do not buy the shiny glass beaded items he sells (though one looks at the beads wistfully), and tell Bill about the Quaker tenet of plain dressing. In quick succession, Bill meets Ransome Cawley, a Virginia slave owner who is seeking two runaway slaves, hears two old men in town discussing a certain Tobias who seems to be helping runaways, hears running noises in the night and sees a footprint next morning which seems to belong to an adult runaway, and then finds himself at the farm of Tobias Halsey. These Quakers seem less rigid than some of the others Bill has encountered. The Halsey daughter, Phoebe, is happily excited to find a peddler at the door; her mother says that Phoebe may buy Bill’s beads with her own money if she wants them enough, but may not wear them to meeting because of what some of the “plain Friends” would say. Bill sells his final trade goods to the Halseys, who urge him to stay the night (231-244).

Bill catches a glimpse of a runaway slave boy in the hay in the Halsey barn. He has already told his hosts about being questioned on the road by the Virginia slave

catcher Cawley who is looking for an escaped male adult slave and a boy. Young Eben Halsey, when he sees that Bill has caught sight of the boy Banjo hiding in the barn, first suggests that Bill has heard rats, but then states that he will tell Bill the truth, and that “Father says it doesn’t pay to tell a lie, even to protect a runaway” (246). The Halseys are harboring the boy only (the man has already gone ahead), so when Cawley and a deputy marshal come in the night looking for two runaways, Tobias Halsey can truthfully assure the men: “I can tell thee plainly that no two Negroes of thine or anyone else’s are on this farm” (252). This response is not technically a lie since the Halseys are harboring only one runaway, not two. In this clash between the values of freedom and honesty, Halsey does not have to lie because his visitors ask the wrong question. Meader illustrates this Quaker interpretation of the precept of honesty as it related to the Underground Railroad through this incident, and one at the next Underground station, where the Quaker woman whom Bill encounters is careful not to see the runaway, but talks only to Bill, so that if questioned later she can truthfully say that she has not seen any runaway slaves. Robert Lawrence Smith, in *A Quaker Book of Wisdom* (1998), addressing the issue of truth and the Underground Railroad, provides a similar example, asserting that some “Quakers brought food and money to runaway slaves in total darkness so that if they were asked whether they’d seen any runaway Negroes, they could truthfully respond in the negative.” Smith also argues that “When asked if any runaway slaves were being sheltered on his property, a Friend did not lie when he replied ‘There are no slaves here,’ because it was his belief that no human being could be a slave.” (39).

Since the Halseys are being watched closely, Bill volunteers to carry the boy

Banjo, hidden in a bag of corn, on the mare Martha. This approach fools Cawley and the deputy, though Bill must draw on his courage to bluff his way past Cawley. Bill and Banjo make it to the next station, but the husband of that household is away and cannot carry the “package,” so Bill must go on to the next station near Newcomerstown. Here, as he has been instructed, Bill hails the canal-boat *Susanna Jones* and uses the password “William Penn” to put Banjo on that boat to freedom (257-85).

Bill shows his spunk and courage when he stands up to Cawley, soon after Banjo has escaped. Bill is camped out in a grove by the canal when Cawley arrives to question him at gunpoint. Angered and confused, Cawley thinks that Banjo is hidden nearby and orders Bill to move on. Bill refuses, points out that his colt is tired, and invites Cawley to keep looking and spend the night if he wants, but to put away the gun: ““This is a free country an’ you can’t go ‘round shooting folks that are minding their own business”” (289). The wording about a free country is ironic given the immediate circumstances of slaves trying to escape to freedom. Cawley is amused at ““a frozen-faced Yankee showin’ fire”” and then realizes that Banjo has probably escaped by canal-boat (287-89). Two days later, Bill sees the *Susanna Jones* and asks if his “package” got through. Bill learns that Cawley chased down the boat, and searched the stable and cargo hold to no avail. When he asked to see inside a curtained bunk, the Captain requested that he not intrude on his “wife’s” privacy, and the southern gentleman Cawley agreed, so Banjo was safe.

Bill shows his courage throughout the book, especially in this episode concerning the runaway slave. In addition, early in his journey Bill encounters an odd and then frightening situation at a brickyard which has been abandoned in a hurry. He overcomes

his initial fears, stays the night, and keeps the brickyard fires burning, for which he receives thanks and cash from the owner in the morning. It turns out that the brickyard cook had gone crazy and attacked the other employees with a knife (20-28). Further on, Bill has to work up his courage to ask Buck Hoyle for a job driving horses on the canal (78). Mary Ann also shows a lot of spunk, courage, and independence, often to Bill's chagrin and frustration. Mary Ann runs off from Buck Hoyle, when the canal boat captain won't let her quit her job with him. Bill aids in her escape and thinks the two of them will journey on together, but Mary Ann has other ideas and takes off on her own.

Alonzo Peel, horse trader and thief, accounts for Bill's one short ordeal in this book. Peel has first pressured Bill to ride with him, then tried to steal his pack by whipping his horses when Bill gets off the wagon to tend his limping dog. Peel claims that the horses took off on their own, but Bill had heard the whip and starts planning to get away. Peel takes them to a deserted house for the night and rifles Bill's pack while he goes for firewood. After dinner, Bill goes to wash dishes at Peel's behest and takes the opportunity to grab his pack and run away (47-64).

Although Bill escapes from a New Hampshire textile mill at the beginning of the book, he later seems happy with the prospect of working in a grist mill in Ohio. Perhaps Bill is blinded to this apparent discrepancy by a touch of romantic interest in Mary Ann. Bill has been thinking about her as he nears her brother's mill and even arranges for a haircut before his arrival. One wonders if Bill will tire of mill work soon. Of course the Ohio grist mill is different, certainly smaller, than the mill which employs Bill's brother and a hundred spinners and weavers back in New Hampshire (10). The only job open

there to Bill had been as a sweeper boy because of hard times, and Ohio seems to have more opportunity. He has found that he likes the country there and after his peddling adventure is ready to settle down.

Bill's journey is complete. He has seen the countryside from New Hampshire to Ohio, has been a Yankee peddler and sold all his goods, has acquired several animals, and is ready to see more of Mary Ann and try working at a grist mill. Bill has helped a runaway slave on his way, and has interacted with the Quaker community. He has observed in others and displayed in his own behavior key values of courage, loyalty, industry, honesty, and thinking on his feet; and he has seen the Quaker view of slavery, a contentious issue of his day, and the Quaker approach to honesty regarding slavery.

After describing the adventures of an 1830s Yankee peddler in the developing heartland of the United States in *Boy With a Pack*, for which he won a Newbery Honor (or Runner-up as it was termed at the time), Meader turned to the sea for *Clear for Action!* (1940), his historical novel of the War of 1812.<sup>56</sup> Protagonist Jeff Robbins, age 17, ships out of Shinnecquid, province of Maine, state of Massachusetts, on the schooner *Abigail* shortly before the War of 1812 begins. By the time war is declared, Jeff has had the misfortune to be impressed into the British frigate *Albatross*. Jeff endures two consecutive, related ordeals, first on the *Albatross*, and then on an island where he and his hometown friend Amos manage to hide and stay behind when the *Albatross* stops for water. Ultimately Jeff is able to escape from the island and return home, with his fortunes greatly enhanced by a treasure he and Amos have found. As the novel ends, Jeff

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<sup>56</sup>*Clear For Action!* was translated into Norwegian and Swedish.

and Amos are part owners of the ship *Wanderer*, providing an entrepreneurial angle to this sea story, and Jeff has secured the hand of Patience Deering.

Patriotism and loyalty are central values in *Clear For Action!* The tension between the fledgling United States and Great Britain comes up often in this tale of impressment, a decisive factor in the American decision to go to war with Great Britain. Before their impressment, Jeff and fellow crew member Nate Winslow overhear one of the frequent disagreements between the Captain and Mate of the *Abigail*, who frequently squabble and “jaw each other.” Nate comments that Americans get things done in their own way with much discussion and even dissension rather than the harsh and rigid discipline that the British have and think they need. (32). After Jeff is forced to join the crew of *Albatross*, and then when that ship receives word that the United States has declared war, Jeff retains a “stubborn inner pride” in his own country, even though he has seen “something of the formidable character of British seamanship and gunnery” (139).

Amos and Jeff’s escape from the British is foolhardy; they are left stranded on an island with drinking water and minimal food but little chance to return home. In a cave, they find a chest of treasure: gold, silver, and pearls, that is of course useless to them while they remain trapped on the island. Eventually, the two build a raft which Jeff uses to try to get to the other side of the island. They misjudge; Jeff is swept out to sea and into a storm. Things look bleak indeed but Jeff lets loose a frustrated cry for help with no hope of response, but by coincidence a ship happens to be nearby, hears Jeff’s cry, and rescues him. The ship takes Jeff back to the island to retrieve Amos and the treasure.

Upon Jeff's triumphant return to Shinnequid, he calls on the Deering family. His real interest is Patience, but he must first talk with her father. Jeff realizes that Patience was born to wealth and that he is "a rough sailorman" who "might become her equal in wealth" but "it behooved him to become a gentleman as well" (319). Jeff is in a situation in which several of Meader's contemporary entrepreneurial heroes, such as *T-Model Tommy*, find themselves, as they start to succeed in their business ventures at the same time they are pursuing rich girls, and must determine how to negotiate a successful transition to a higher class. Jeff considers attending Bowdoin College when the war is over. He explains to Mr. Deering that he now has \$10,000 in the bank, and that he and Amos jointly own one third of the brig *Wanderer*. Jeff gives the pearls that he found to Patience, asking her to wait for him until he finishes his first voyage on the *Wanderer*. She agrees to wait as the story ends.

After two historical novels, *Boy With a Pack* and *Clear For Action*, both with some entrepreneurial aspects, Meader returned to a contemporary setting with *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), a full-blown entrepreneurial story with some parallels to *T-Model Tommy*. *Blueberry Mountain* is a story about the blueberry business in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The hero, Buck Evans, starts out as a young hard scrabble mountain farmer who also picks wild berries while they last, before the forest returns to a burned-over area. Buck ends the story as a successful, future-oriented blueberry businessman, developing and managing numerous aspects of the blueberry business, which ultimately will be able to support many families in this mountainous area, thus having wide-reaching positive effects for his entire community. Meader presents three

important concepts in *Blueberry Mountain*: an entrepreneurial model for the blueberry business, consideration of several distinct communities portrayed in the story, and unusual constructions of masculinity and femininity. Meader develops contrasts within Buck's mountain community, as well as between that hard scrabble rural community and the local Beaver Lake colony of summer people from the city, which represents crowded urban areas and the city-dwellers who inhabit them. Throughout the story, Meader stresses important traditional values. Buck Evans, the protagonist of *Blueberry Mountain*, finds his career and starts to make his way in the world, as do most of Meader's protagonists. In this story, Buck's community will undergo some changes similar to those Buck experiences, as both discover some new ways to make a living, particularly through the efforts of Buck and his partners, Joe Sullivan and the Wilkins family.

Initially Buck and Joe, both age 16, pick and sell local wild blueberries, as do many of their neighbors. As the wild berries begin to ripen, the race is on to pick the best ones quickly and sell them along the roadside. First blueberries to market bring the best price but once they start to ripen in earnest, prices begin to fall. The best and most productive berry bushes grow in a burned-over area created by a forest fire ten years earlier. This tract of land is starting to return to forest, so the berries will eventually die out. Buck and his partner Joe Sullivan hurry to pick the berries while they can (8). Ultimately, they decide to start a blueberry plantation and grow their own berries to supplement the wild ones.

As with *T-Model Tommy*, *Blueberry Mountain* is an entrepreneurial story providing numerous ideas and details concerning starting a business. The reader follows

as dollar by dollar, idea by idea, Buck and Joe build their business. Once when Buck sells two quarts of berries from their roadside stand, an impulse leads him to suggest to that customer, Mrs. Thornhill, that he could deliver berries to her throughout the season. This encounter leads to a big increase in business through delivery of berries in addition to roadside sales (39). Mrs. Thornhill is staying at the summer colony at Beaver Lake, so Buck begins to deliver blueberries on a regular basis to that community of about 200 summer cottages. This innovation provides Buck and Joe with an established customer base for which they no longer have to compete with other sellers. Buck also sells his excess berries to the community dining-camp at Beaver Lake and to various grocery stores at wholesale. Buck is as good a salesman as “T-Model Tommy”: he first sells his excess berries to the Beaver Lake cook by asking if the summer people she feeds like blueberry muffins, and then offers his mother’s blueberry muffin recipe as part of the deal. The cook commends Buck’s abilities as a salesman (79). Buck has already shown his aptitude for sales by placing his berries next to mediocre berries in a grocery store without permission. When confronted by the store manager, Buck has him watch the positive reaction of shoppers to Buck’s berries, and quickly sells the remainder of that day’s picking (57-59).

Buck’s delivery trips introduce him to cultivated Jersey Jumbo blueberries when Mrs. Elliott of Beaver Lake looks with disdain at his local berries and says she only buys Jersey Jumbos. She is not the only one in Beaver Lake who prefers cultivated blueberries (54-55). Buck has never heard of the Jumbos and when he finds some at a local store, he is amazed at their size and flavor. He starts to think about how to grow blueberries on his

own family farm. His idea is to gather roots and cuttings from the best plants in the local barrens, and to use those for selective breeding, along with some Jersey Jumbos, if he can buy some for breeding stock. Buck's father and Joe both think the idea has promise (65-66, 76-77). Buck decides to hire the neighboring Wilkins children to tell him about especially big berries as they cruise the woods doing their picking. Buck will give them a reward of 25 cents per bush, and doesn't want the berries, just the location of the bush. Buck makes up pieces of cardboard with holes in them: if a berry is too big to go through the hole, Buck will hand over the quarter (75-76, 90-91).

Meanwhile Joe comes up with "a plan that was to pay them dividends for years to come"— hiring the Wilkins family to pick berries for their partnership (98-99). The many Wilkins children can provide a large quantity of high-quality blueberries, and Buck and Joe's expanding business can afford to pay as much as the prevailing roadside price. The idea provides the Wilkinses with a guaranteed buyer for the berries they pick, and frees some of Buck's time to make deliveries to Beaver Lake. In addition, since the Wilkins siblings are no longer selling by the roadside, they have more time to pick berries.

Throughout the story, Buck displays traits and ideas of an innovative, though young and inexperienced, businessman. Early on, the partners pursue modest innovations. Buck decides to try putting cellophane sheets atop the boxes of berries they sell (37-41). Unlike some of their competitors, Buck and Joe pick berries cleanly, without green berries or twigs. The cellophane makes the berries look even cleaner, accentuating their color and gleam, and protecting them from roadside dust. In his first season using cellophane, Buck buys all that the local stores have in stock (55-56). In later

seasons, Buck has learned the value of buying in bulk to save money and ensure availability, and orders boxes and cellophane sheets by the gross and the hundred through the mail (200). As Buck moves from merely picking berries and selling them by the road to various innovations, he is pioneering approaches that will change the way of life for many in his hard scrabble mountain community. Selling to the summer residents at Beaver Lake and hiring the Wilkins family to provide berries for that market are innovations. The biggest innovation that Buck pursues is trying to grow his own berries on his own plantation. After he starts the Wilkins children looking for outstanding local plants, Buck visits the County Agricultural Agent, Mr. Johnson. Buck brings along some soil samples, one from the barrens where an especially good bush is thriving, and one from the pasture bottomland that he intends to use for his blueberry plantation. Buck is somewhat embarrassed and defensive as he begins to present his idea, and Mr. Johnson, who at first thinks the soil is for growing potatoes, doesn't help initially by laughing at the idea of cultivating blueberries. Johnson sees that Buck is serious, and quickly warms to the idea, promising to send Buck a Government pamphlet about blueberry cultivation, and sending the soil samples off for analysis. He warns Buck that the big berries in the store come from hybrid stock produced by many years of cross-breeding, but also informs Buck that if he is serious the agricultural agent will back him in any way he can and "There's just a chance that this idea of yours might turn out to be a way for folks on the mountain to make a living" (92-93).

Buck and Joe go to visit Anna Winton at her Gardner's Mills, New Jersey, blueberry plantation, home of the Jersey Jumbo (145-58). They go unannounced, but

Miss Winton is extremely gracious and helpful to them, although they are potential competitors. Buck finds that he has independently stumbled on ideas that Miss Winton had previously discovered, such as his card with holes in it—she shows him thin metal sheets with holes, for her workers to evaluate wild berry size, that she had used as she started her business. In her early days, her employees had been local people who knew every inch of the woods and could find the best berry bushes, just as the Wilkins children intimately know the Pocono woods and blueberry bushes.

Miss Winton explains that her enterprise has taken her more than twenty years to develop and she wonders if Buck and Joe will have the staying power to see the effort through. She says that while they can take some short cuts through buying bushes from her, it will still take three years to get a crop of any size. Joe seems disappointed but Buck had figured on about that much time and is not deterred. Miss Winton says that she would like to see them get a start, and offers them a very good price on plants that she will guarantee to produce if tended properly and will select for them based on their climate, including early and late bearing varieties. She also agrees that Buck's plan of gathering cuttings of native plants should be successful.<sup>57</sup>

Buck expands his business throughout the story, and continues to plan for future expansion. As Buck and Joe continue to cultivate blueberries, they clear and plant all the available, suitable land on the Evans farm, so Buck negotiates for additional land for

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<sup>57</sup>Miss Winton is modeled on "Elizabeth C. White, of Whitesbog, New Jersey, pioneer in blueberry culture," one of two people to whom Meader dedicates this book. The other is "Egbert S. Cary, for many years superintendent of Pocono Lake Preserve," the model for Beaver Lake in *Blueberry Mountain*.

growing more blueberries. Buck visits the widow Mason, who owns land bordering that of the Evans family. Mrs. Mason lives in town and has been holding this farm for an investment; she is a shrewd businessperson. She prefers to sell the whole parcel at once. Buck wants to buy only part of her land, five acres back from the road. “For years the land had been unused, even as pasture. It was grown up to a tangle of scrub hardwood and brush. . .” (254). Mrs. Mason wants \$25 per acre. Buck points out that the land he wants isn’t worth much for anything but growing blueberries, and that she could sell him that piece and still have land along the road to sell for tourist camps, filling stations, or refreshment stands. He offers \$15 an acre, and “after some further dickering” they settle on \$20—Buck acquires five acres for \$100 (255).

*Blueberry Mountain* is not only the story of Buck Evans as he grows to manhood and takes his place as a businessman in his community; it is also the story of that community. The idea of community is pervasive throughout *Blueberry Mountain*. Buck is finding his place in his community as he changes and strengthens it through his business enterprise. There are several contrasts within the local community, especially between industrious people like Joe and Buck, and lazy ne’er-do-wells such as the villain Mort Tuttle and his gang. Buck also represents new ideas which in many cases conflict with the old ways of doing things.

The economy of Buck’s hard scrabble mountain community operates with little cash and much barter. Buck functions as the head of his family because his father has no use of his legs—they had been burned horribly years ago in the fire that created the barrens where blueberries now grow. In the family’s best year since Mr. Evans was hurt,

they took in \$400 cash from good apple and potato crops, sales of milk to men working on the road, and more eggs than usual from the chickens. They get the taxes paid but have little cash. They trade firewood and produce for clothes. It is normally rare to be even five or ten dollars ahead (66). Other families are similarly situated. Most people scramble after blueberries, if not to sell, certainly to supplement the family diet. At one point Buck notices pickers coming out of the brush all along the plateau. "It was discouraging to realize how many others besides himself depended on the berry crop to earn a little money" (56). The Wilkins family has less cash than the Evanses. Mr. Wilkins is a writer who has been working on a novel for five years. When his family becomes desperate for cash, Mr. Wilkins pounds out a short story for the pulps which may bring in \$40 or \$50, but Bess Wilkins tells Buck: "we don't want him to waste his time on anything but the novel" (261).

The local year-round hard scrabble mountain community contrasts sharply with the Beaver Lake summer colony of rich people from the city, and by extension there is a contrast of the mountain community with the city itself. The mountain people and the summer people are so differently situated that they often have trouble understanding each other. As Buck drives through Beaver Lake on his first blueberry sales trip, he wonders what it would be like to play all summer and decides it might be boring (52). Buck's first friend in Beaver Lake, Mrs. Thornhill, the one who inspired his idea of delivering blueberries to the lake, has a similar thought from the opposite perspective, wondering what it would be like to live on the mountain in the winter, probably thinking that it would be boring. She asks Buck, frankly curious: "What do you people do up here in

winter-time anyway?” Buck tells her that winter is when they are really busy, getting firewood in, and going to football games, church suppers, “spellin’ bees, an’ sings an’ square dances . . . we don’t generally have much time to sit around” (135). Not only does Buck deliver blueberries to customers at Beaver Lake, but after he graduates from high school, he goes to work there as a member of the forestry crew. The national community makes itself felt in the story when Congress passes the Selective Service Act, and Buck gets his job when another worker is drafted (253, 256). This reflection of national concerns hints at the subject Meader will pursue in his next several books, World War II.

Mrs. Elliott’s distaste for local berries is an example of the tension between the year-round and summer communities: “There was no mistaking the slighting reference to the size and quality of his [Buck’s] own berries.” Mrs. Elliott tells Buck that her family always buys Jersey Jumbos: “They’re so much bigger and their flavor is finer. I always think cultivated fruit is better than wild. You never know where the berries come from or who may have handled them” (54-55). Buck very much enjoys selling Mrs. Elliott the first two boxes of Pocono Sky Blues, his own new brand name. Other customers want to buy them, but Buck saves them for Mrs. Elliott, who at first tries to shoo him away when he comes to her door, reminding him that she only buys cultivated berries. She is rendered speechless at the size and quality of Buck’s berries, and purchases them. It is amusing to note that these particular berries are not cultivated, but come from the best wild blueberry bush that Buddy Wilkins has found on the mountain, one which Buck and Joe will be using for cross-breeding (107).

Meader provides another example of the conflict between city and country people with the character Effie, who is a clerk at Bonham's, the local country store. Buck clearly dislikes Effie, who flirts with him although she is apparently Mort Tuttle's girl friend, but it is telling that Buck's dislike of Effie is expressed in terms negative towards the city instead of describing her personal shortcomings and opportunism: "Effie and her citified airs made him sick. As soon as the resort season was over and school started she would be back in the eleventh grade room making a mess of her geometry problems" (37-38).

There are tensions and contrasts within the mountain community as well. Most of the mountain people are industrious and hard-working; these qualities are essential to their survival. There are some lazy, shiftless people, but they are not the norm. After Buck and Joe start their plantation and some of the cultivated plants are producing, Buck takes a deposit to the bank and has a conversation with the teller. The teller informs Buck that there is some resentment towards his expanding business—some of the local people have trouble selling their berries because people want Buck's, and some of Buck's neighbors may start their own plantations. Buck says fine, let others start, he'll sell them good bushes to get them started. Joe's opinion, in response to Buck's description of his conversation with the teller, is that it's the lazy pickers who include green berries, sticks, and leaves who can't sell their product (243-44). But these are not the only pickers with some resentment—there are also hardworking people supplementing their incomes who are concerned that the supply of wild berries will shrink drastically. In a later discussion, Joe thinks that they should try to keep all the business for themselves, but Buck doesn't want to make it hard on "decent folks, tryin' to get along on little farms with what work

they can find.”” Buck sees continuing success and expansion in their own business, and has ideas for more changes in the local economy which may help some of these small farmers. Buck suggests the idea of a cooperative, with a dozen berry-farms putting their crops together to sell in wholesale lots to the city. He brings that idea up with Mr. Johnson, the agricultural agent, who suggests trying it out, but slowly, with a few good people. Johnson points out that there are some lazy people around and that they are likely to want to join such a cooperative and would expect quick money with little work, so he suggests sending any prospective blueberry farmers around for a chat if they come to Buck to buy plants. Mr. Johnson will know if their soil, as well as their work-ethic, is suitable for such a venture (297-301). At the end of the book, Johnson reveals that he has been approached by a national concern that is looking for a location for a quick-freeze plant for high quality blueberries, so it seems likely that the future of the area will be involved with blueberry cultivation, processing, and distribution, and that the local economy will expand and improve (308).

Mort Tuttle, Buck’s nemesis throughout the story, represents a final contrast within the mountain community. Tuttle is not only lazy, but mean, cruel, and criminal as well: a totally evil villain with no redeeming attributes. His sidekicks, Slim Waters and Ray Gilley, are primarily lazy, and “have never done an honest day’s work in their lives (47). Mort’s idea of picking berries ““is to pick up a pailful under a tree,”” (17) a scheme he had used on Buck a few years earlier when Buck was too young to prevent it (19). Mort tries to steal a full bucket of berries from Buddy Wilkins before Buck intervenes with his fists (68-74). Buck and his praiseworthy values are further highlighted by his

struggles against these miscreants. Almost any community has such misfits; these are useful in the story as a stark contrast to Buck and his values.

Meader's third major thrust in *Blueberry Mountain* is an exploration of constructions of masculinity and femininity, including some unusual constructions in addition to more traditional ones. Buck, though young and emerging into manhood, is a traditional strong, competent man. Because of his father's disability, Buck is the primary support of his family. Examples of Buck's competence and traditional masculinity abound. He is a mainstay of the high school football and basketball teams; Meader includes a few sports anecdotes to show Buck's prowess in these traditional areas of masculine performance, both to the reader, and in one case to Bess Wilkins, the object of his masculine romantic interest (168-69). Often, Buck comes to the rescue of those weaker than himself. Early in the narrative, Buck returns to his and Joe's blueberry sales stand along the highway, and chases away Ray Gilley and Slim Waters, who have attacked Joe while Buck was at lunch. Joe has a limp from a childhood accident in which his ankle was crushed under a wagon wheel (5), and is ineffectual at protecting the berries and himself. Gilley and Waters had waited until Joe was alone, and they had the advantage of two healthy, grown men against one teenager with a limp (44-46). Buck rescues Buddy Wilkins twice from Tuttle's gang, first when Tuttle tries to steal Buddy's pail of berries. In that case, Buddy holds his ground until Buck arrives and runs Tuttle off. Buddy tells Buck afterwards that Tuttle was not going to get the berries, that Buddy would have scattered them on the ground first (68-74). The second time, Tuttle and two of his friends threaten to hang Buddy if he doesn't show them the prize wild bush he

found and reported to Buck (126-32). Buddy is just a little boy but has much spunk and little fear, but also little chance against grown men. Buck shows no fear in these situations; his courage takes over and he jumps in and sets matters right.

Another example of Buck in a traditional masculine role of courageous rescuer occurs one evening when the school bus gets stuck in a blizzard. Buck, Joe Sullivan, and Bess Wilkins are all students on the bus. When it is clear that the bus is stranded, Buck instructs Joe and Bess to amuse the younger children, and the driver to keep the heat going as long as possible, and ventures forth on his skis to get help, in a variant of the ordeal formula. Fortunately he has his skis on the bus—he had used them to get to the bus stop that morning through the snow that was already falling. Buck manages to get back to the village, and urges Bonham, proprietor of Bonham’s store and township road commissioner, to get some help headed toward the bus. Bonham gives Buck the bad news that the telephone lines are down and there is no way to call for assistance from the state highway plow, and hesitantly suggests that he can get some men together to start toward the bus on snowshoes. Buck tells him to do that, gets an idea from him of where the plow was last headed, and starts off on skis to find it. Hours later he gets to a railroad depot where the plow crew is taking a warming break. Buck and plow head for the bus and get there in time, before the help from the village arrives (216-32).

Except for Buck, Mr. Johnson, and the police, most men in *Blueberry Mountain* are weak, ineffectual, or damaged in some way. In the blizzard episode, the bus driver and Bonham, both grown men, are indecisive and ineffectual; Buck tells them what to do while he goes out on the actual rescue mission. Joe is an excellent partner for Buck, but

does have the handicap of the limp which holds him back physically. Buck's father, James Evans, has a much more severe handicap: no use at all of his legs. Buck's mother suggests that Buck enlist his father to cut large cellophane sheets into smaller pieces to cover berry boxes. James is pleased to be able to help even in this small way, and as Mrs. Evans tells Buck, "he uses a pair o' scissors real nice" (40). James clearly wishes he could do more. Later, when Buck discusses the idea of cultivating berries on their land, James says sadly, after looking at his wasted knees, that he'd like to have a go at the project if he were "half a man" (65).

Another non-traditional, ineffectual man is Mr. Wilkins, father of Buddy and Bess, and putative head of the Wilkins family—though Bess seems to be the one actually running the family. Mr. Wilkins is initially introduced as shiftless, with an overworked wife. Rumors abound that Wilkins runs a still and that the family eats deer meat killed out of season (27-28). Wilkins is painfully shy and reclusive, but Bess tells Buck that her father is a writer, who is working diligently on a novel. Bess tells Buck about her father after some of the village loafers decide to claim that Mr. Wilkins is a livestock thief since he has no apparent job, and domestic animals have been disappearing regularly from the neighborhood. The loafers form a mob and go to the Wilkins house to take a pig slightly resembling one that disappeared. Buck gets the state police sergeant to help repulse the mob. Buck and the police, not the ineffectual and absent Wilkins, are the ones who protect the Wilkins pig from the mob. Wilkins later brings Buck a present of homemade maple sugar. When Buck suggests that Wilkins come meet his parents, he almost panics at that idea, and is surprised he has been talking so freely with Buck (290-

91). It turns out that Mort Tuttle, who has been hiding in the woods, is the livestock thief.

In contrast to the few traditional, strong, competent men, and the damaged and somewhat ineffectual ones, are the defective and useless ones: the totally evil villain, Mort Tuttle, and his lazy sidekicks. Mort Tuttle is pure evil, a mean villain with no redeeming attributes. He steals Buck's and Joe's earnings when Buck speaks too loudly at a community dance about the box of money under his bed, but fortunately, with police help, Buck gets almost all the money back (113-23). Tuttle hides in the woods, living on stolen livestock that he butchers for meat, until Buck finds his hideout and brings the police (272-85). In that encounter, Tuttle shoots Buck and escapes but will show up again, older but just as evil, as the villain in Meader's *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961). Tuttle's sidekicks, Ray Gilley and Slim Waters, are more lazy than evil, and their attack on the smaller and weaker Joe exposes them as cowards as well (46-48). Tuttle is also a coward. When he tries to steal Buddy's berries, Tuttle cringes when Buck approaches: "There was fear in the bully's eyes" (73).

Meader reverses aspects of the traditional roles of both women and men. While creating relatively few strong, undamaged men in this book, Meader develops several strong women as characters: Miss Winton, blueberry entrepreneur, Buck's mother Mrs. Evans, Bess Wilkins, and even the widow Mason, the shrewd neighbor from whom Buck buys land. Miss Winton is a strong and successful businesswoman. She has pioneered aspects of the blueberry cultivation business. In a time when women in business were unusual, Miss Winton has done very well for herself in the business world, and is a stronger and more successful businessperson than any man in the story. Mrs. Evans has

to be a strong person too since her husband is disabled and cannot work, and she must hold the Evans family and farm together until Buck grows to full manhood and into the role of family provider.

Bess Wilkins is another very strong and capable female character in this story. There are parallels between Buck's situation and that of Bess. Both are emerging into adulthood; each is becoming essentially the head of the family because of a defective father. Bess is cooking for her many younger siblings when her mother is sick, is running her family's blueberry business, and is the one keeping her family together with little support from her parents and with scant money. When the school bus is stuck in the snow and Buck goes for help, Bess is the one who keeps the children on the bus occupied. Bess is strong, brave, and spunky. She doesn't have enough boxes to include them with the blueberries she sells, but uses the few boxes she does have to measure berries out into bags for her customers. Joe comments that Bess is "spunky as a terrier pup" when they discover that she cannot afford boxes (99-101). Bess also cannot afford the 50 cents to take the bus to see her high school football game, but she hitches a ride on a truck and watches Buck's successes on the gridiron (168-69). Her younger siblings toe the mark with Bess; Buddy, who is also a strong, self-assured character, does not want to cross Bess, and wants to get home on time so she won't skin him alive (75).

Elaine Tyler May, in setting the historical stage for her *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, discusses aspects of the Depression which are relevant to the children's literature of the period. She argues that many single women supported themselves, often helping out parents as well, and that both men and women

were hesitant to marry with the economy as unstable as it was. “The popular culture . . . glamorized single working women . . . these tough and rugged career women were admired *as women*, not as wives.”<sup>58</sup> Miss Winton in *Blueberry Mountain* is a woman very much in this mold. The contrast between the strong Miss Winton and some of the male characters is striking: Joe walks with a limp from a childhood accident; Buck’s father has no use of his legs; Mr. Wilkins is ineffectual and mostly absent. Miss Winton shakes hands “man-fashion” with no stigma (240); the successful businesswoman exhibits that masculine trait in addition to being a strong, self-supporting entrepreneur.

In another example of reversal of gender roles, at one point Buck and Joe have picked their blueberries so neatly and with so few green ones, that Buck's mother exclaims: “Why there's hardly any green ones in the whole pile. An’ I thought it took a woman to pick berries neat” (21). Buck’s and Joe’s picking is also contrasted with the sloppy picking of Tuttle and his gang, whose boxes of berries include numerous sticks, leaves, and green berries.

One final aspect of gender role construction is Buck’s romantic pursuit of Bess, the poor girl. In Meader’s other contemporary entrepreneurial, and in *The Commodore’s Cup* (1958), the hero pursues a rich girl. In *Blueberry Mountain*, the poor hero is romantically interested in a girl even poorer than himself. Thus the situation is very different from Meader’s other entrepreneurial where the protagonist’s rise in social status through business success is accompanied by his successful pursuit of a rich girl of

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<sup>58</sup>Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (np.: Basic Books, 1988), 41-42, italics in original.

the status he is seeking to attain through that business success.

In *Blueberry Mountain*, Meader once again emphasizes important values, with hard work and ambition predominating. Buck is clearly an industrious and diligent worker. He performs all the farm chores; his father cannot help at all because of his disability. The chores must always be done no matter what other work there is to do with blueberries. That business involves lots of hard work, from picking, preparing, and selling berries to clearing new land and cultivating berries. There is also the delivering of berries once Buck develops that aspect of the business. When Buck goes to work on the woods crew at Beaver Lake, he must do the farm chores before daybreak and in the evening by lantern light (256). The Wilkins family is also very industrious. Bess is the oldest of the children. She helps her mother with household chores, and takes over when her mother is sick. Bess also picks and sells blueberries. Her many young siblings range far and wide through the burnt over berry lands, picking berries to sell, and finding plants with big berries for Buck.

The value of courage ranks with that of ambition in *Blueberry Mountain*. Buck's courage is an integral part of the story, from his standing up to bullies, to doing whatever needs to be done on the football field or going for help for a stranded school bus in a howling blizzard, to trying new approaches for making a living in the face of community opposition. Bess and Buddy Wilkins are also brave under various daunting circumstances. Buddy's first reaction to the mention of many older male characters is that they don't scare him. Buddy holds up well to the harassment of Mort Tuttle. Even when Tuttle and his gang threaten to hang Buddy, he is relatively calm about the

situation. From carrying groceries home for miles in the rain to staffing her family's blueberry stand, Bess is brave and shows a lot of spunk and grit. If her family falls apart, it won't be from any cowardice or laziness on her part.

In *Blueberry Mountain*, Meader develops the entrepreneurial theme as he did in *T-Model Tommy*, and introduces ways in which Buck's entrepreneurial ideas might be used to help many people supplement their income in the local economy, which has traditionally used little cash and lots of barter and neighborly mutual aid, and which is still struggling to overcome the effects of the Depression. As with *T-Model Tommy*, *Blueberry Mountain* can be viewed as offering strategies for coping with the economy, as had similar success-oriented children's books for generations. The ideas which Meader presented in *Blueberry Mountain* were deemed to be so useful by reviewer May Lamberton Becker that she suggested: "The book might well be added to a rural library for practical as well as literary reasons," apparently with the idea that this book, though of fiction, might provide information sufficient to launch a blueberry business. Elsie T. Dobbins of *The Library Journal* also mentioned the business angle of blueberry cultivation.<sup>59</sup> Meader explores various communities in the book, conflicts within Buck's mountain community, and conflicts between it and the summer colony of wealthy city people at Beaver Lake. Meader explores facets of gender identity construction including some non-traditional roles such as the successful businesswoman, and men who can do a neat job of picking blueberries. Throughout *Blueberry Mountain*, Meader emphasizes the

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<sup>59</sup>Reviews of *Blueberry Mountain*, by Stephen W. Meader, May Lamberton Becker, ed., *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 2 November 1941, 18; Elsie T. Dobbins, *Library Journal* 66 (1 September 1941): 737.

values of courage and ambition. Some reviewers commented on specific values which Meader showcased in the book: “the farsightedness and determined efforts” as well as the brains, industry, and perseverance of the protagonist.<sup>60</sup>

Meader published one other work in this time period: the short story “Trouble at the Blue Buck,” published in two parts in *Open Road for Boys* in March and April 1938. Protagonist Toby Wayne is a sixteen year old page at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. As a page, Toby is bound to secrecy concerning what happens behind the closed doors of the Convention. In another example of Meader’s use of the ordeal, after a session where the first draft of the new Constitution is distributed, Toby is taken prisoner by Antifederalist foes of the Constitutional Convention, and they beat him, trying to discover the provisions of the new Constitution. Even when his captors beat him, Toby refuses to answer questions, and is held without food and water overnight, with torture by heated fireplace poker promised in the morning. During the night, Toby’s faithful dog Tige finds his master, and Toby sends him for help, which Tige brings just in time. Toby shows presence of mind and ability to improvise as he figures out how to send for help. Toby has with him some buttons and ribbons, wrapped in a scrap of newspaper, that he was supposed to deliver for his mother. The newspaper scrap becomes the vehicle for his message. Toby is prisoner in a disreputable tavern called the Blue Buck. The small piece of newspaper tells both of a new cask of rum now available at the Blue Buck as well as reporting on Antifederalist activities. Toby uses blood from his wounds to circle these

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<sup>60</sup>Review of *Blueberry Mountain* by Stephen W. Meader, *Booklist* 38 (1 October 1941): 38; Review of *Blueberry Mountain* by Stephen W. Meader, Alice M. Jordan, *Horn Book* 17 (September 1941) 369.

two items and then ties the message to his dog's collar with one of the pieces of ribbon. The well-trained dog unwillingly goes home when ordered.

In the morning, formidable Sergeant Buff from the Constitutional Convention rescues Toby as the Antifederalists are about to use the hot fire poker to persuade him to reveal the details of the proposed Constitution. Buff knocks some heads and takes Toby back to the convention, where he receives a warm welcome from his mother and the members of the convention. Toby finds himself held up to the members, by none other than Gouverneur Morris, as a model of honor and courage in keeping the pledge of secrecy to which all participants in the convention were bound. The delegates have taken up a collection to replace Toby's good suit of clothes, now ruined through his ordeal, and each greets him warmly as they leave for the day. Toby's courage has been tested through an ordeal, and he has successfully met the test. Even George Washington and Benjamin Franklin are effusive in their praise.<sup>61</sup>

During this period, 1937-1941, Meader's work started to show an interest in community and an entrepreneurial emphasis, ending with his entrepreneurial *Blueberry Mountain*. World War II approached; Meader's next three books would deal with that war in detail. Meader hints at the impending war when Buck of *Blueberry Mountain* is hired at Beaver Lake to replace a worker who has been drafted. As this period of Meader's career drew to a close, he wrote his final experimental work, *Bat: The Story of a Bull Terrier* (1939). He introduced his contemporary entrepreneurial stories with T-

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<sup>61</sup>This story was republished in 1940 in an anthology *Reading is Fun* probably for school use (The L. W. Singer Co., Syracuse, ed. Frances Bragan Richman).

*Model Tommy* (1938) and *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), and published three historical novels. Meader continued to emphasize the same basic values as in his early work: courage, ambition, hard work, honesty, loyalty, and friendship. He continued to use formulaic techniques such as rewards, occasional romance, villains, and the ordeal. Every work of this period, including the short story, contained some variant of the ordeal. Meader's writing during World War II would deal almost exclusively with that conflict, in contrast to the work of most American authors of fiction for children. The next chapter will consider Meader's writing during World War II, in which he especially emphasized the values of patriotism and loyalty.

## CHAPTER IV

### Stephen Meader and World War II

If Stephen Meader was slow to respond to the events of the Great Depression in his juvenile novels, he was almost unique among American authors of nonpulp books for children in his extensive treatment of World War II as it unfolded. All four of his books published during the war years dealt with the war, extensively in the case of the first three, *Shadow in the Pines* (1942), *The Sea Snake* (1943), and *The Long Trains Roll* (1944), at a time when most American authors for children were avoiding the war. These books feature young American patriots who fight against enemy spies and saboteurs operating in the United States. They are adventure books similar in ways to his others, but in these Meader brought the current events of the war into his plots, an approach of reacting to the present that he did not employ in his other books. Meader portrayed the war effort, especially activities on the home front, in all of these books, and had his characters behave in ways illustrating positive values, such as courage, loyalty, and presence of mind, in the wartime situations they encountered. Meader's wartime books stand out from those of other American authors for children during the war, and from his own books from other eras, and warrant a chapter of their own.

Gail Murray in her *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood* (1998) argues that, in general, American authors of juvenile nonpulp fiction ignored World War II as it was in progress. Authors such as Walter Farley, Mary O'Hara,

Esther Forbes, and Margret and H. A. Rey either wrote as if nothing abnormal were occurring, or turned to fantasy, historical settings, or animal stories during the war years. Of some dozen writers she considers who were actively writing for children during the war, Murray offers only two examples of authors who confronted the war as it happened: Florence Crannell Means, whose novel *The Moved-Outers* (1945) follows a Japanese-American family from California as they are sent off to an internment camp soon after the United States enters the war; and Gregor Felsen, who wrote books such as *Navy Diver* (1942) and *Submarine Sailor* (1943). “The only other children’s books to address World War II directly during wartime were some of the Syndicate or pulp books,” she asserts.<sup>62</sup> Murray draws to some extent on earlier work by Caroline Hunt, who points out that this American avoidance of the war contrasts with British authors of juvenile fiction who dealt with the war from its beginning.<sup>63</sup> Examples of British stories of the war include *We Couldn’t Leave Dinah* by Mary Treadgold and *May I Keep Dogs* by Kitty Barne.<sup>64</sup> Treadgold’s plot deals with the mythical Clerinel island in the English channel where protagonists Mick and Caroline Templeton are accidentally left behind when the

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<sup>62</sup>Gail Murray, *American Children’s Literature and the Construction of Childhood* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 167-74, the quotation is from 173. Murray also discusses the work of John Tunis and the messages against totalitarianism and discrimination that he included in the fiction he wrote during the war, and then points out that the novels that Tunis wrote which are actually set in World War II were written well after the war was over.

<sup>63</sup>Murray does not address British authors on the war because she is considering American authors only.

<sup>64</sup>Mary Treadgold, *We Couldn’t Leave Dinah* (Middlesex, Baltimore, and Ringwood, Australia: Penguin Books, 1941, rpt. 1967); Kitty Barne, *May I Keep Dogs?* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1942).

island is abandoned to the Nazis; they are able to gather vital intelligence which they pass along to the English authorities when they are finally evacuated.

Caroline Hunt also discusses Walter Farley and cites his animal story, *The Black Stallion* (1941), as one of the books contemporary with the war which does not deal with it, but Hunt notes (as Murray does not) that Farley also wrote *Larry and the Undersea Raider* (1942) which has a war-related theme. That story is set in Hawaii just before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Larry Wilson, the 17 year old son of an American Naval Officer, learns of a secret Japanese submarine base on a little known isolated island. Captured and imprisoned there, he escapes and sneaks aboard a Japanese submarine where he stays hidden until opportunity presents itself. He floods a torpedo tube and escapes as the submarine starts to sink. The book ends as Larry and his American rescuers approach Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, to find the base in flames. Although Hunt takes note of Farley's war-related *Larry and the Undersea Raider*, she cites Farley's sequels to *The Black Stallion* produced during the war or right after it, which continue that fantasy, to advance her argument that American authors avoided the war. Hunt then adds that Farley was interested in writing more World War II fiction but ". . . his earlier type of book [fantasy] clearly appealed more to the public (and publishers) than surfers and submarines could hope to."<sup>65</sup>

Both Murray and Hunt fail to discuss Stephen Meader, who by 1940 was a prominent author. Meader had won a Newbery Honor for *Boy With a Pack* (1939). He

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<sup>65</sup>Caroline C. Hunt, "U.S. Children's Books about the World War II Period." *The Lion and Unicorn* 18 (December 1994): 192.

was not a pulp writer. Meader's *Shadow in the Pines* features a protagonist growing up in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey who helps thwart German attempts to sabotage nearby Fort Dix, a large military facility where many army units are training before deploying to the battlefields of the war. In *The Sea Snake*, the hero is the son of a fisherman on the Outer Banks of North Carolina whose inquisitiveness, prompted by patriotism, lands him in a Nazi U-boat, where he is held prisoner for about a week. *The Long Trains Roll* is both a description of the American railroad industry in the heyday of the steam locomotive and a World War II adventure story in which the protagonist foils a Nazi-sponsored sabotage attempt to blow up a crucial Pennsylvania mountain pass through which a huge volume of rail traffic moves. And although *Skippy's Family* (1945) differs from Meader's other books—it is not an adventure story but a barely disguised account of Stephen Meader's family life centering on the family dog, Skippy—the war is present in this book also, from victory gardens to aircraft spotting on the coast to reducing time spent in college so that young men (including John Meader, son of the author and one of the people in Skippy's life) can finish earlier and join the army sooner. Meanwhile, even as Stephen Meader was distinguishing himself as an American juvenile writer willing to embrace World War II, his publisher, Harcourt, Brace, was reprinting some of his earlier work to take advantage of the wartime trend toward fantasy and historical fiction. They re-issued his first book, *The Black Buccaneer*, historical fiction about pirates from 1920, in a new (1942) "Discovery Series" edition with an introduction, study questions, and a

bibliography pointing to more works on pirates.<sup>66</sup>

Meader's first book dealing with World War II, *Shadow in the Pines*, appeared in 1942, the first full year of the conflict. Protagonist Ted Winslow, age fifteen, lives with his grandfather (a Spanish-American war veteran), in the pine barrens of New Jersey near the Army's Fort Dix, and roams the barrens in his free time. Fort Dix is an attractive target for enemy agents bent on sabotage; Ted seems more effective at catching such saboteurs than the Army intelligence men tasked with guarding the fort. Ted undergoes two separate "ordeals," where he is in danger, needs to make quick decisions, and has no responsible adult leadership available on which to call. In the first such episode, Ted hides himself in a truck making a getaway from the scene of a fire that arsonists have started with gasoline on the fort grounds. The saboteurs unknowingly take Ted to a coastal hideout they maintain; Ted is able to alert the Coast Guard and Army in time to capture many of the enemy agents. In the second ordeal, Ted finds a hiding place the saboteurs keep in an old mansion deep in the barrens, the home of the iron-master of an ancient and now lost forge. The ill-timed return of the villains traps Ted in the mansion, but soon Ted's dog brings help to capture the villains and rescue Ted. Early in the story, Ted makes an alliance with Bill Gates, the Army intelligence officer charged with

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<sup>66</sup>Murray and Hunt have also missed another American book of fiction for children that deals with the war as it happens, *Junior Air Raid Wardens* (1942) by Jack Bechdolt. It received a brief positive review in *The Saturday Review of Literature*: "two American heroes, enemy spies, and ubiquitous G-men make this a sensationally good novel for today" (November 14, 1942, 26). This book gives an extremely detailed description of what to do with an incendiary bomb: shovel sand onto the bomb to disable it (31-35). This passage is obviously meant to convey information to readers who may confront such a bomb about how to react in such a situation.

protecting Fort Dix; Gates fits the traditional role of mentor for a Meader protagonist. Throughout the story Ted exhibits values such as courage and loyalty.

When Ted first encounters stranger Bill Gates in the woods, Gates appears to be merely a bird-watcher from the city. Gates spends the night with Ted and his Grandfather. They discuss ghost towns in the Pines, and Grandpa Winslow remarks that the woods could take Fort Dix back over time also. Gates says that is true, and it might take way less time than forty years (17-18). This remark strikes Ted as ominous and makes him suspect that Gates intends harm to Fort Dix. Ted sees Gates in a couple of situations where the older man is clearly not watching birds, and Ted's doubts grow much stronger. Gates is aware that Ted has found his actions suspicious, and it is obvious that Gates will have difficulty in hiding his actions from the observant Ted, so he brings Ted into his confidence and reveals his true role: Gates is a lieutenant in United States Army Intelligence, and his job is to keep Fort Dix safe from harm, spies, and saboteurs. Gates also realizes that the wide-ranging and alert local teenager can be a big help to the Army's efforts to protect the fort. Gates tells Ted that they can work together and compliments Ted on his attentiveness: "“You were the only one who didn't accept me at face value, as a harmless city man with a weakness for birds”" (61). Bill Gates informs Ted that enemy saboteurs have targeted Fort Dix. He thinks that they are operating from a long abandoned iron forge, deep in the barrens, now forgotten. Gates has heard rumors and found clues to the lost forge, but not the forge itself. As a native "Piney," Ted takes this as a challenge: he wants to find the forge if it exists.

The saboteurs try to burn Fort Dix by dumping and igniting gasoline to start a

large forest fire near the boundary of the fort. Ted manages to hide in their truck as they flee the scene so that they unwittingly take him to a second hideout they have along the coast. Ted displays great courage when he jumps on the truck—he doesn't feel brave however. He realizes that he has committed to an adventure on his own because he left in a hurry without letting anyone know where he had gone: "That meant there would be no pursuit—no rescue. He was all alone on this job now." He resists the temptation to jump off the truck. "He was so scared that his stomach felt like a small, tight knot in his middle, but the shame of knowing he wasn't brave kept him there" (113). He believes that "the U.S. Army was depending on him, and he didn't want Bill Gates to find out he was afraid." Gates had told him to keep an eye on the truck, but their phone conversation was cut off when the saboteurs cut the phone line. For Ted, the request from Gates feels like a wartime order from his Government. Ted acts on his impulse to jump on the truck, and then is scared, but feeling a responsibility to try to help his country, he somehow ends up resisting another impulse to jump off the truck, and so becomes what he is afraid he is not: brave.

Later, after hours stuck in the back of the truck, waiting, and after one close call when it looked as if the saboteurs would open the back of the truck to discard incriminating gasoline cans and thus find Ted, he has a chance to escape, but he decides against saving himself because then these enemies of his country would escape "scot-free" (123). Ted chooses loyalty to his country over saving himself, thus proving himself both loyal and brave. Once the saboteurs arrive at a coastal fishing shack hideout, Ted is able to escape, and after a long night of being lost while seeking help, Ted finally arrives

at a Coast Guard station in the morning. Ted calls his Army contact while Coast Guard personnel call for a cutter. Bill Gates shows up as the villains try to escape offshore to a ship disguised as a fishing vessel, but the cutter turns them back, and they return to the fishing shack where Ted had originally tracked them. Gates will not let Ted accompany him on the initial attack, but a Coast Guard officer allows Ted to come along on the second wave. The American military men shoot at the enemies, and disable their skiff and truck, but they return fire. The Americans capture half a dozen men, but several escape in a sedan (131-167).

Ultimately Ted finds the other hiding place of the saboteurs, the abandoned mansion of the iron-master of the lost forge. Trapped there by the arrival of enemy agents Gus and Jake, Ted hides in the house, thus beginning a second ordeal. Both of Ted's ordeals are unusual because in neither case do his captors know they have him trapped. Gus and Jake eventually discover Ted, but too late to help their cause because Ted's dog has brought help, led by Bill Gates.

In this first of his World War II books, Meader continued emphasizing the same values as in his earlier work, especially courage and loyalty, and suggested that a boy who followed Ted's example in being observant and courageously looking out for the interests of his country might receive a special citation from the War department, as Bill Gates intends to arrange for Ted: "A boy with your spunk is worth as much to the country as a first-class soldier" (279). There is also a lost treasure element to this story. While trapped in the iron-master's house, Ted finds a copy of the very rare Elephant Folio edition of Audubon's *Birds of America* (1827-39). Ted does not recognize the box

of beautiful pictures of birds for the rarity that it is, but Gates does, and says that he will do all he can to make sure that Ted gets to keep the Folio: ““Ted, there’s a college education and just about anything else you want, in that box. And you’ve sure earned it, this last week...” (279). The rare Audubon Folio functions as a monetary reward for Ted’s courage and loyalty; furthermore, it represents a stroke of good luck of the type noted by Anne Scott MacLeod in the context of the Horatio Alger hero “catapulted ... across the class gap” by such good fortune.<sup>67</sup> With Ted’s limited family resources he seems unlikely to get to college without such a stroke of luck.

The military concepts of “need-to-know” and of classified, sensitive, vital military information come up in this book as in Meader’s next two wartime books. The military “need-to-know” idea is that only those people who absolutely need to know an item of information, in order to accomplish their jobs or a mission, are provided with that information, even if otherwise they are cleared for access to information classified at that level. Ted is upset when he finds out that Joe Lucas, the local forest fire warden and lookout, knew that Gates was an Army intelligence officer while Ted was still concerned that Gates might be a spy, and was relaying those suspicions to Joe. Ted was having the “need-to-know” idea used on himself and didn’t like it (46-47, 89-90).

As the war escalated, Meader wrote *Shadow in the Pines* about a brave and alert hero, Ted Winslow, who proved his loyalty and usefulness to his country by effectively

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<sup>67</sup>Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 81-82.

fighting the enemy saboteurs and fifth columnists operating in the United States.<sup>68</sup>

Meader presents Ted Winslow as just an average American schoolboy, but he is able to provide a large wartime service to his country, as other young Americans might presumably be able to do, and as does Barney Cannon, the hero in Meader's next book, *The Sea Snake*.

In *The Sea Snake*, which came out a year after *Shadow in the Pines*, Meader not only confronts the war in progress, he turns from the Home Front emphasis to the war itself as he places his protagonist in two different combat settings: a German submarine and an American bomber. Meader uses these two settings to contrast the military of the United States and Germany and to present the U-boat and the American bomber as microcosms of German and American society. Meader portrays a German crew comprised of both hard-core Nazis and Germans who are not members of the Nazi party, and in so doing puts a human face on the German submariners when he might have been tempted to demonize them all. He also draws a distinction between the older, professional Captain, and the younger, fanatical Nazi Lieutenant. Meader also touches on several Home Front issues such as patrolling of the American coast by civilian boats, scientific research in support of the war effort, rationing, the possibility that German U-boats are obtaining supplies from American friends, and the situation of refugees who have been displaced by the war. Barney Cannon, the hero of *The Sea Snake*, keeps his

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<sup>68</sup>The term fifth column came into widespread use during World War II, meaning "individuals and groups engaged in sabotage, espionage, or other subversive activities," apparently having originated in the Spanish Civil War. Paul Dickson, *War Slang: Fighting Words and Phrases of Americans From the Civil War to the Gulf War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 155.

wits about him, is brave and inquisitive, and pays close attention to his surroundings so that he is able to make real contributions to the war effort such as guiding a bombing mission to a secret German submarine base in the Bahamas, and obtaining a secret chemical used in manufacturing fuel for the U-boat so that American scientists can analyze it.<sup>69</sup>

Barney Cannon is sixteen years old and a resident of North Carolina's Outer Banks near Kitty Hawk when *The Sea Snake* takes place. Barney's father owns and operates a fishing boat on which Barney often works, and as part of the ongoing war effort, Barney also serves every other day as a citizen volunteer watching for and reporting aircraft from a lookout post attached to the Army Fighter Command (3-5). Anna, a teenaged Austrian refugee who has lived with Barney's family since her ship was torpedoed and sunk off the coast nearby, is teaching Barney the German language. Barney has a friend at a nearby Army airfield, Slug Martin, a pilot, who signals him from the air occasionally. Also nearby is the Caldee Island hunting lodge, a twenty room house which an outsider named Ohlgren has built without using any local labor. Local people know the place as Caldee Castle. Ohlgren claims to be Swedish though there is suspicion that he is German; he has not been friendly to his neighbors. Slug encourages Barney to keep his eye on Caldee Island. Barney and Slug have a good clue that someone nearby is supplying U-boats: a fresh loaf of bread from a local bakery which Barney found in the water after an apparent kill of a German sub. Slug's commanding officer is away so they

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<sup>69</sup>This secret chemical is fictional but is illustrative of the types of scientific research pursued during the war effort.

are unable to discuss the situation with him before Barney's investigation ends with his capture. Barney sometimes sells fish at Caldee, so he knows his way around the place and goes there twice after dark to snoop around. The first time, Barney sees naval officers arrive at Caldee and tells Slug these visitors may be German. Later Slug signals Barney to go out again because it looks like the mysterious visitors may still be there. On Barney's second nighttime expedition to Caldee he is captured. He escapes death by being shipped out on a Nazi submarine where much of the story takes place, in an extended ordeal. Barney's rudimentary knowledge of German allows him to understand what is happening on the U-boat—crew members speak openly in front of him, assuming he knows no German. Barney eventually escapes and brings back to the American military his knowledge of a secret German base in the Bahamas and a sample of the secret powder used in U-boat propulsion. Barney guides American warplanes to bomb the secret base; on the way Barney's bomber destroys the very submarine on which he was captive. Barney ultimately gets to tell his story to President Roosevelt.

Barney exhibits values typical of a Meader hero: he is a loyal and patriotic young American citizen. He is inquisitive and brave, and keeps his wits about him in difficult situations. He uses all these attributes when he finds himself imprisoned on the German U-boat. This U-boat is indeed the source of the visitors at Caldee; Barney is not allowed to return to his daily life and report that Ohlgren is providing the Nazis with a coastal safe haven. Barney's inquisitiveness in the interests of patriotism thus lands him in an enemy submarine. Barney's values and qualities allow him to bide his time and make the most of his opportunities while he is captive. He has the presence of mind to conceal his

knowledge of the German language at several key junctures, including when he is first captured, so that he is able to learn many crucial facts as his captors speak freely in front of him.

Meador portrays the U-boat officers and crew as a diverse group of people, ranging from fanatical Nazis through competent military veterans to German citizens only in the military because of the war. Meador does not paint the picture of the U-boat crew as a harmonious, homogeneous group, and they are certainly not all Nazis: many do not participate in the “heiling” of the Nazi party loyal. As Barney gets to know the crew, Meador makes them seem human when there was probably a temptation to demonize them because of the ongoing war. The crew member Grauner, a gunner and not a Nazi though a German citizen, is of particular interest to the story because he becomes Barney’s ally and has spent enough time in the United States to speak American English and have some sympathy for the American cause.

Meador develops a contrast between the two German officers, Captain Von Sturm and Lieutenant Rasch. Von Sturm is a respected, experienced, competent, professional naval officer who is not a Nazi. He is also a decent and humane man who suggests taking Barney on his submarine rather than killing him when Ohlgren, his steward Kramer, and Rasch are all ready to kill the boy, who has seen too much. Barney’s first impression of the German Captain is that he “was a man of courage and brains. He had all the earmarks of a good sailor and an able commander . . . the boy felt he would get fair treatment as far as the Captain was concerned” (82). After some time on the U-boat, Barney comes to the realization that “all the sailors aboard respected Von Sturm” (127). After Barney’s

escape, an American Navy Captain describes Van Sturm as ““a first-class sailor out of the old German navy”” (212).

On the other hand, Meader portrays the German Lieutenant Rasch as a young, condescending, pompous, brutal, fanatical Nazi. Early in Barney’s captivity the Lieutenant reveals that as a youth he had participated in an exchange program: ““Fifty or sixty silly American children went on a ship to Germany, and the same number of Hitler youth came over to New York.”” There was sightseeing in the eastern cities and discussions that were intended to inculcate ideas of liberty and democracy, to Rasch’s obvious disgust as he tells the story. Trained to hold his tongue, Rasch especially disliked being ““forced into arguments with American boys. They even sneered at our Fuehrer!”” (88).<sup>70</sup> Rasch believes that ““all democrats will be servants of the master race when we have won the war”” (89); however, he seems easily perturbed and Barney’s first impression is that Rasch’s “youth made him less certain of himself, perhaps more proud and domineering [than the German Captain]” (82-83).

After Barney has been on the U-boat for a short time, Captain Van Sturm is injured when he falls as a depth charge explodes; Lieutenant Rasch assumes command. Meader continues to emphasize the contrast between Van Sturm and Rasch even after the Captain has been taken off the submarine to undergo medical treatment, and Lt. Rasch has command: “The submarine’s larder had been replenished with several hundred cans of food ... that bore good American brands” from Ohlgren at Caldee, but only the officers

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<sup>70</sup>I have not been able to find any historical basis for the idea of an exchange program of youth between the United States and Germany in the years prior to World War II.

get the good food. The crew grumbles and curses as they get the usual stale shipboard food: “‘It wasn’t like this when the *Herr Kapitan* was aboard.’ Barney heard one man mutter to his neighbor. ‘We got a taste of the good things at least’”(169).

Meader further develops this differentiation when Rasch orders his men to shoot helpless, unarmed, civilian fishermen in the water. This behavior clearly contrasts with Van Sturm’s suggestion that he take Barney on his ship rather than see him killed. In the first chapter of the book, Meader had introduced the idea of German U-Boats following up their attacks on cargo ships by machine-gunning helpless survivors in the water. In that incident, while on duty as a coastal spotter, Barney witnesses a U-boat attack on a tramp steamer out of Havana. Barney goes with his father’s boat to see if there are survivors and helps pull five from a raft. “There had been one other, they said, but he had died with a bullet through his head when the U-boat turned a machine gun on them” (15). Later Barney witnesses such behavior firsthand when Rasch directs the massive power of the U-boat against a civilian schooner. Rasch has the gunner Grauner use the main gun to shell the schooner at close range until it sinks. Rasch then orders Grauner to the machine gun to shoot a helpless survivor. Grauner refuses, Rasch orders Grauner to the brig, and even as Barney grabs at the life-preserver to throw it to the swimmer, another crew member shoots the victim (151-56). Did Meader base this incident in his novel on actual events of the War of the Atlantic? There is evidence that some incidents of this sort occurred and were reported both in contemporary magazine accounts and in histories afterwards. Samuel Eliot Morison asserts that although U-boats “invariably attacked without warning, they commonly gave the crew a chance to get away before opening

gunfire, and refrained from machine-gunning survivors in lifeboats as had been done freely in the early part of the war.”<sup>71</sup> *Time* reported an incident in early 1942: “The crew of the *Norness* [torpedoed off Long Island] asserted they were strafed by machine guns as they tossed in life boats. U-boats that sank ships frequently stood by and watched helpless sailors drowning in the water.”<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, Michael Gannon describes an incident where survivors of a U-boat attack jumped out of lifeboats because they thought the Germans would try to attack them, but the survivors were not molested. Gannon notes “that the shooting of survivors in lifeboats was not a common practice” but that “suggestions that inhumanity of this kind occurred off the U.S. mainland first appeared in Morison’s *Battle of the Atlantic*” already cited.<sup>73</sup> C. L. Sulzberger, however, asserts that in the early days of U-Boat attacks, survivors in lifeboats “were sometimes overhauled, questioned on their destinations and cargoes, offered provisions and cigarettes” but that “more and more frequently, survivors were machine-gunned as they tried to swim through viscous oil slicks. . .”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Battle of the Atlantic September 1939-May 1943*, Volume I of *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950), 130. In his note to this passage, Morison gives three examples of machine-gunnings by U-boats of survivors of the S.S. *Cardonia*, the *Esso Bolivar*, and the S.S. *Oregon* in February and March, 1942.

<sup>72</sup>*Time* 2 February 1942, 28.

<sup>73</sup>Michael Gannon, *Operation Drumbeat: The Dramatic True Story of Germany’s First U-Boat Attacks Along the American Coast in World War II*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 365 and note 460-61. Gannon also refers to John Terraine, *The U-Boat Wars 1916-1945*, (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1989), 498, but I was unable to find anything there about the shooting of survivors of U-boat attacks.

<sup>74</sup>C. L. Sulzberger, *World War II*, (New York: American Heritage, 1985), 95.

In *The Sea Snake*, when Van Sturm is injured, the sailor Froelich reports to the crew that command has passed to Rasch. Grauner immediately casts aspersions on Rasch's ability to command, as the sub is ordered to surface in daylight, but there is a fog so it turns out to be not such a bad decision after all. Froelich has no doubt heard Grauner's comment, however (115). Later Froelich implies that Rasch might have attacked the Captain. Froelich says he witnessed the Captain's fall and that he should have shaken off the injury in ten minutes. Then Froelich asks: "who knows what happened when the Lieutenant had him alone in his cabin?" (127) clearly attempting to plant doubt in the crew's minds, and to intimate that Rasch attacked Van Sturm after his fall. After Froelich says this, Barney thinks he hears Grauner say "*verdammt Nazi Schwein!*" (127). Later, while in the brig for refusing Rasch's order to shoot the unarmed fisherman in the water, Grauner says Froelich is a member of the Gestapo<sup>75</sup> planted on the crew to trap them into talking: "I should have spotted him before I shot off my big mouth" (164-65). Anna had already told Barney of the general Nazi approach of having "secret friends helping them everywhere" in the context of suspicion that Ohlgren is a Nazi (36).

As well as contrasting the German captain and lieutenant, Meader develops a picture of life on the German sub as a microcosm of German society that contrasts sharply with American society. Life on the German submarine is hierarchical with a clear

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<sup>75</sup>The Gestapo were the Nazi State Secret Police whose mission was to ensure loyalty to the Nazis and to crush opposition; a primary tool of the Gestapo was a network of spies and informers who passed along information on any disloyalty. See Charles Whiting, *The Home Front: Germany*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1982), 38.

differentiation between officers and crew—quite different from the equal treatment of officers and enlisted men that Barney will find on the American bomber crew. American military personnel are much more free to speak their minds than are the Germans, who must worry about reprisals from the Gestapo if they are too outspoken, as must German civilians in their own homeland. The German enlisted personnel also must watch their tongues around the officers, while Barney will find that in the American bomber crew, the officers and enlisted men are unified as one team with little concern about the official distinction between officer and enlisted.

Barney learns to hold his tongue also. The German sailor Hans is friendly to Barney, and understands some English; Barney almost gives away his own knowledge of German to Hans in an effort to make friends and communicate “but common sense warned him in time . . . it was a secret that might come in handy some day” (81). Along with the reader, Barney learns that most of the crew members are normal human beings: “Hans seemed a stupid, decent sort, not at all the vicious Hun he had expected to find on a U-boat” (83). Barney is put to work helping the cook prepare meals, and sometimes polishing machinery under the direction of the bosun. Neither man understands much English. Barney performs well at these duties and begins to blend into the crew, and starts exploring the vessel occasionally. At one point the submarine docks at a secret German base in the Bahamas. Barney sneaks away from the submarine in a futile escape attempt (there is no place to go on the small island); Grauner helps him get safely back on the German submarine without anyone else finding out.

By contrasting the humane, professional, non-Nazi German Captain with the

fanatical, brutal, Nazi Lieutenant, and by not demonizing the entire U-boat crew, but portraying many of them as everyday citizens serving in the wartime military, with only some being evil and vicious, Meader appears to encourage his readers to resist condemning all Germans for the actions of the Nazis. Some reviewers noted these points. Gertrude Andrus, writing in *Library Journal*, complimented Meader: “Nice touch is the contrast between gallantry and fairness of deposed German Captain and attitude of fanatical Nazi who usurps his post.”<sup>76</sup> An anonymous reviewer for *The Chicago Sun* observed: “The brutality which exists under Nazi rule is believably pictured, but the point is made that all Germans are not like that.”<sup>77</sup>

A final brutal attack by Rasch motivates Grauner and then Barney to jump ship. Rasch had tossed Grauner in the brig for refusing to shoot a helpless fisherman. Rasch now lets Grauner out of the brig in order to get him to use the sub’s big gun to shell oceanfront Atlantic City hotels which Rasch says Nazi agents have found to be full of American soldiers (178-79).<sup>78</sup> Grauner intentionally shoots low at his Atlantic City target, and when Rasch berates him, Grauner laughs and jumps into the water. Barney quickly follows. Rasch shoots at Barney and Grauner after they leap from the sub and are swimming towards the shore (185).

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<sup>76</sup>Gertrude Andrus, Review of *The Sea Snake* by Stephen Meader, *Library Journal* 1 Sept. 1943, 673.

<sup>77</sup>Review of *The Sea Snake* by Stephen Meader, *Chicago Sun* 14 Nov. 1943.

<sup>78</sup>Those agents would only have had to read *Time* magazine to learn this: the July 13, 1942 edition reported that the Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City would be housing 2000 Air Corps cadets; the accompanying picture shows how close the hotel is to the beach (page 16).

Americans take Barney and Grauner into custody and question them. Grauner again exemplifies the division between ordinary Germans and Nazis as he states that though he is a German subject, the enemy, he is no Nazi. Barney assures the Americans that Grauner is not a spy and not a Nazi, and should be treated as a prisoner of war but the Americans holding them doubt that Barney is American since he has just jumped off a German vessel. Grauner tells their captors of the spy Ohlgren, and states that they are crazy not to believe Barney's story. In a handy coincidence, when Barney asks to get Slug Martin to verify his identity, one of the interrogators had roomed with Slug at Randolph Field (196-99).

Meader's story illustrates the use of privately owned American boats to help protect the coast. After they dive off the U-boat, Barney and Grauner are picked up by a civilian motorboat, a cabin cruiser, the owner/captain of which is "one of the dozens of sportsmen boat-owners who had volunteered for auxiliary patrol duty. He might have been a prosperous lawyer or dentist in ordinary life, but tonight he was the Navy" (193). The *Saturday Evening Post* reported on this use of civilian boats by the American military, especially in Florida, to protect Americans from German submarines. "Civilian sailors" signed up with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and one of their primary duties was to rescue people when U-boats sank ships, but also to provide reconnaissance and to try to disrupt German naval maneuvers in any way possible.<sup>79</sup>

After Barney successfully makes the case that he is a loyal American citizen,

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<sup>79</sup>Philip Wylie and Laurence Schwab, "The Battle of Florida," *Saturday Evening Post* 11 March 1944, 14, 15, 52, 54, 58.

Meader contrives to introduce the reader to an American bomber crew which contrasts sharply with the German U-boat crew. Barney is invited by high ranking officers to guide a mission to bomb the hidden German base in the Bahamas, if he can find it. As Barney prepares to embark on the bombing mission, he notices that “officers and non-coms all seemed to be on first-name terms on this bomber team,” after one of the mechanics calls an officer by his first name (224). Stephen Ambrose comments on this phenomenon, stating that while “the AAF [Army Air Forces] had a rule that men and officers were not allowed to fraternize . . . Most officers and the sergeants considered the rule absurd;” crews did everything together.<sup>80</sup>

As Meader used the German U-boat crew to represent a microcosm of German society, he used the American bomber team to represent a microcosm of democratic American society. The men comprising the crew of the bomber in which Barney flies come from different states and territories of the union: Iowa, Massachusetts, Arizona, Alaska, New York, Tennessee (223-24). They have their different duties as well: pilot, copilot, navigator, bombardier, radio operator, and gunners, but despite their differences, they are unified and work together as a team. John Steinbeck, in a book commissioned by the Army Air Corps, described the typical bomber crew as “truly a team, each member responsible to the whole and the whole responsible to the members . . . Here is no commander with subordinates, but a group of responsible individuals functioning as a

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<sup>80</sup> Stephen Ambrose, *The Wild Blue: The Men and Boys who Flew the B-24s Over Germany* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 150.

unit,” and added that “The Air Force is much more a collaboration than a command.”<sup>81</sup>

Barney and Slug Martin, who has also been asked along on the mission to locate the German base, are quickly accepted into the bomber team and made equal members.

When Slug chastises Barney for asking questions on the radio, Slug is rebuked by another crew member: ““Who let that guy in? . . . I ask you—who’s the most important man on this mission? Barney Cannon. Let him talk if he likes”” (229). Barney is amazed that he is allowed to see the Norden bombsight, which is “carefully . . . protected from spying eyes” (229). The bombardier tells Barney it’s okay since the colonel ordered him to ride there; Barney is guiding the mission after all. Steinbeck confirms the secrecy and security accorded the bombsight.<sup>82</sup> Ultimately the American attack, which Barney guides, is successful, and though his plane is hit and damaged during the attack, it returns to its base with just enough fuel to land safely (246-48).

Along with his knowledge of the Nazi base in the Bahamas, Barney has brought back a sample of a mysterious chemical which the Nazi submariners use to power their U-boats, in lieu of the batteries which were known to be a vulnerability of submarines of the era. The Nazis use evaporators to produce fresh water, and then add the chemical to produce fuel from the water, thus enabling them to run the submarine without diesel oil

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<sup>81</sup>John Steinbeck, *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), 23, 33.

<sup>82</sup>According to Steinbeck’s account of the training of the bomber crews, the role of the bombardier in safeguarding the bombsight is that “he must guard and protect and in a final emergency destroy the secret bombsight.” “The bombardier goes always armed when he has the sight.” It is never left unguarded. It may not be discussed with or shown to an unauthorized person. “Packed in its canvas case, it is never opened except in a guarded classroom, a trainer center, or in the nose of a bomber” (*Bombs Away*, 50).

(103, 143, 213). Slug says that the British captured a U-boat which had no batteries but ran on a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen below the surface (209). Although this element of the story is entirely without factual basis, the incident points to the concerted research efforts made by American scientists on the Home Front to aid not only in antisubmarine warfare but in all aspects of the broader overall war effort as well.<sup>83</sup>

Although much of the activity of *The Sea Snake* occurs in combat settings, Meader also pays attention to Home Front issues such as this concern with scientific research to aid the war effort, and the patrolling of Home Front waters by civilian American boats such as the one that picks up Barney and Grauner. Three more points about the Home Front also emerge in *The Sea Snake*: rationing, the question of whether German U-boats were getting American supplies, and the refugee situation. Rationing and other wartime controls were a way of life for Americans by 1943 when the novel appeared. “The Cannons’ gasoline was rationed, like everyone else’s along the Eastern Seaboard. And even though working boats were allowed more than pleasure craft, they had to be careful not to waste it” (54-55). Barney finds that the German submariners are aware of American gasoline shortages and believe ““that the American government shoots people if they are caught driving automobiles”” because the U-boats had sunk so many gasoline tankers. Barney emphatically tells the German crew that these tales are false—no one is shot for driving a car (102). In another example of rationing, Caldee bought huge amounts of sugar, bacon, and butter before they were rationed (52). After

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<sup>83</sup>For example, see Montgomery C. Meigs, *Slide Rules and Submarines: American Scientists and Subsurface Warfare in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1990), 24 and passim.

Barney sells some fish to Caldee, Ohlgren's boat approaches and Barney "wondered if the big motorboat had a permit to go outside. Probably a rich man like Ohlgren would manage to get one, even when the government was so strict with the ordinary fishermen" (34). The Government instituted strict wartime controls on the movement of boats, especially in ports, controlled and enforced by the Coast Guard.<sup>84</sup>

A second Home Front issue in *The Sea Snake* is the question of whether German submarines were getting American supplies. At the beginning of the novel, Barney finds a loaf of bread from an Elizabeth City bakery floating in the water at the site where a U-boat has gone down (20). Later, soon after Barney becomes a prisoner on the U-boat, he finds a familiar American brand of soap and is surprised: "He had heard that the Jerries were short of soap" (85). In addition, good American brands of canned goods from Caldee are in frequent use on the U-boat. "A commonly heard Florida story," according to Gannon, "holds that a sunken U-boat recently entered by divers was found to contain Holsum Bakery bread wrappers." Widespread rumors "held that U-boatmen were coming ashore to purchase fresh groceries and to attend the movies" (Gannon 379). In actuality, personnel left U-boats only to visit other U-boats or to set ashore saboteurs. Gannon does not cite any sources for these rumors of U-boats acquiring groceries ashore in the United States, but apparently the idea was common enough during the war for Meader to use it in *The Sea Snake*.

By this time the war had caused so much destruction and disruption that many

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<sup>84</sup>See Malcolm F. Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1957, rpt. 1989), Chapter 5, "The Security of our Ports," 55-74.

people had become refugees and were trying to find safe places to wait out the war. Meader raises this third Home Front issue by his inclusion of the Austrian refugee Anna in the story, which may be his way of putting a human face on the refugee problem, possibly suggesting that Americans open their hearts and even homes to refugees as Barney's family has done. This aspect of *The Sea Snake* bears comparison with *The Moved-Outers* (1945) by Florence Crannell Means which concerned the plight of Japanese-Americans who were moved to internment camps. Gregor Felsen, the other writer cited earlier who wrote about the war as it happened, also noted the situation that Means describes. Felsen creates a Japanese-American character in his *Navy Diver* (1942), Taro, who asserts that he is loyal to the United States, where he was born, and mentions that he has never been to Japan, as was the situation for many people of Japanese descent in America when the war started (25). Meader, Means, and Felsen all appear to ask Americans to consider the problems of persons displaced by the war and be sympathetic.

Barney's adventure concludes with a meeting with President Roosevelt in which Barney relates his story.<sup>85</sup> Roosevelt enjoys a good sea story and will not be rushed with Barney's, which takes half an hour of the Commander-in-Chief's time. Barney even stands up mildly to the President who suggests that he might want to join the Navy. Barney replies that he hopes to be an Army flier and that he ought to finish high school

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<sup>85</sup>From time to time, Meader used famous historical personages in his historical novels (Abe Lincoln in *Longshanks* and Herman Melville in *Whaler 'Round the Horn* as two examples of many), but this is the only instance I have found where Meader used such an important real person in a contemporary book.

first. “The President rocked back in his chair and roared with laughter. ‘Serves us right, Frank!’<sup>86</sup> he said. ‘The boy has his own plans. And I, for one, say he’s entitled to them’”(251-52). The President promises to recognize Barney for the job he has done ““even if it takes an act of Congress”” (252).

In *The Sea Snake*, Stephen Meader takes his hero, civilian teenager Barney Cannon, and places him in two military combat settings, a German submarine and an American bomber plane, and uses these settings as microcosms to develop a contrast between the German and American societies. Barney shows himself to be brave and inquisitive, loyal and patriotic, and to be able to keep his wits and presence of mind about him during trying, even very frightening, circumstances. Meader’s next book features a hero who uses similar traits to further the American war effort on the Home Front.

In 1944, Meader brought out his third book dealing with the war, *The Long Trains Roll*. Randy MacDougal, the hero of the story, lives on a small farm in the mountains of central Pennsylvania near Altoona. He is a 17-year-old railroad employee working as a section hand. His father and two older brothers are locomotive engineers, his sister is a secretary in the car shops of the railroad, and Randy aspires to be an engineer someday, but is still in high school and can only work in the summer. *The Long Trains Roll* is both Randy MacDougal’s story as he starts to climb the ladder of success in the railroading business by becoming a fireman, and the story of how Randy helps catch a gang of Nazi saboteurs and thus prevents their wrecking the railroad at a critical gap. Although

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<sup>86</sup>Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy from 1940 to 1944.

Meador disguises its location, deductions place this gap near Altoona, Pennsylvania. Countless defense goods and personnel flow through this gap where the trains must move very slowly through large horseshoe bends. Since this is a wartime book there was a good reason for Meador's lack of specificity in identifying the gap.

Through the words, thoughts, and actions of Randy MacDougal, Meador presents the values he emphasized throughout his work: bravery, loyalty and patriotism, hard work and ambition. He also offered practical advice about supporting the war effort, such as avoiding gossip which could provide enemy agents with valuable information. Evidence of the war abounds in the book, particularly in the interchapters, a literary device that Meador used exclusively in this book to provide the reader with general information about the war effort that Randy MacDougal could not be expected to know.

*The Long Trains Roll* offers an extensive portrait of the heyday of the American steam locomotive and its vital role in World War II. At the beginning of the book, as Randy is catching a ride to work on a freight, he remembers a poster—"Loose Talk Costs Lives"—and closes "his mouth tight" rather than repeat the rumor, even to a trusted acquaintance, brakeman Joe Roan, that the army has posted troops in the woods to guard the rail line (10). Randy is concerned about his two brothers who are locomotive engineers with the Army overseas. By having his hero act in this fashion early on, Meador appears to be recommending this approach to his young readers as a way for them to support the war effort. He also may be saying that the Army is on the job protecting the Home Front as well as the war front; Meador reinforces that idea later in the story when Randy encounters a soldier posted in the woods who makes him go all the

way around a mountain to get home, an extra fifteen miles (134-35). Randy's discussion with Joe Roan also introduces Calico Gap as a potential military target for the Germans. Joe asks Randy if he remembers a couple of years back when spies landed on the coast in a rubber boat: "“when they caught ‘em, those guys had maps that showed ... where they could do the best job o’ slowin’ up the war effort . . . some o’ these airplane plants—an’ ol’ Calico Gap, where the big freights haul through”” (9). This story is an instance of Meader's incorporating incidents of the war from the press into his stories. *The New York Times* for June 28, 1942 reported this spies from U-boats episode as its lead story with the headline "FBI Seizes 8 Saboteurs landed by U-boats Here and in Florida to Blow up War Plants." According to the story, the captured agents carried a list of objectives which included the "Horseshoe curves of railroads at Altoona, Pa., in the coal district," the curves which are so important to *The Long Trains Roll*.<sup>87</sup> Late in the book Meader reveals that Calico Gap is a made-up name which thinly disguises a real place (252).

Randy's section gang reflects the war and associated changes in the labor market. It is comprised of youngsters like Randy, several women of various ages, and men either too old or disabled to be fit for active service (13). As Randy and young Mike Hubka work with the section gang, they watch not only for different railroad names on the cars that go by, but also scan the skies for aircraft: Mike is quite knowledgeable and very specific as he identifies "“an old O-46—Army observation job”” (22). There may be a

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<sup>87</sup>*The New York Times* June 28, 1942, pages 1, 30. Later books described this incident in detail, for example: Eugene Rachlis, *They Came to Kill* (New York: Popular Library, 1961, rpt 1962), and Michael Dobbs, *Saboteurs: The Nazi Raid on America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

message here for the reader: learn the types of planes and watch the skies, and let the authorities know if something seems amiss. In addition, the reader also learns that the women on the section gang acquit themselves favorably: “The women worked right along with the men on all but the hardest tasks” (18).

Soon a new worker, Lew Burns, arrives to join the gang: he is pale, in his mid-forties, and explains his taking a section hand’s job by saying that although he has been a bookkeeper for most of his career, he has decided to take this job to support the war effort directly. His poor eyesight precluded his even working in a munition plant (26-31). He has a pleasant smile and is eager to please and to succeed at this, his first physical labor job. He appears to know nothing of railroads and wears hot, unsuitable office clothes for his first day on the job. When Randy observes Burns writing in a small notebook, Burns explains that he is making a note to himself to buy a work shirt like Randy’s. Randy concludes that Burns is as helpless as a baby (33). Burns makes so much use of the notebook, however, that he arouses Randy’s curiosity; when questioned Burns explains to Randy that he is a writer and uses the notebook to capture ideas for his writing. In actuality, Burns is a German spy who is gathering information about the trains moving through the gap—numbers and types (tanker, troop, guns and tanks). He even asks Randy how many men each passenger car can carry.

When Burns loses the red notebook, Randy finds it and at first tries to return it. Though Randy is an honest person, and suffers some minor qualms about snooping, he opens the notebook, because he is curious about how a writer works at his craft. It doesn’t take Randy long to figure out what Burns’s notes mean, and soon he is trying to

expose Burns for the spy he is, and help capture him. When Ben Small, a railroad detective, calls for Randy at the beginning of work one morning, to have him brief K. P. Harrow from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) about Burns, Dan Leary, Randy's boss on the section gang, knows Randy is not involved in any wrongdoing, but the gang is left to think otherwise, and they avoid Randy at lunch and appear to gossip about him. "This was tough treatment, but he knew it was better for them to suspect him of having run afoul of the law than to guess his real errand. As long as the section boss understood, he was willing to take it" (102). There is no further explanation of why this approach is taken, but it appears to be another instance of the idea of saying nothing, so that nothing gets to the enemy. Randy's exclusion because his coworkers are not told why he had talked to a detective also typifies the "need-to-know" principle. Dan Leary later acts in accordance with this "need-to-know" approach, when Randy asks him to get a message to Ben Small that Randy is going up on the mountain to meet his friend Stan from the valley on the other side. Stan has found something that he wants to show Randy. Randy tells Dan that Small may tell him what is going on if he asks. "Big Dan shut one eye and nodded. 'That'll be up to him,' he said. 'I'll ask no questions.'" (154-55) Apparently there are two related messages here for the reader concerning wartime behavior: keep your mouth shut and don't ask unnecessary questions.

Randy misses Stan on the mountain, but the saboteurs discover Randy and attack him. When he regains consciousness, it is morning and he has been dumped at an abandoned cabin, and his clothes are missing. This experience is an example of the ordeal formula: though not held prisoner, Randy is temporarily kept from pursuing the

saboteurs until he puts together a garment of leaves. Eventually as he stumbles along in an almost hallucinatory haze, he meets Stan, and between them they stop the dynamiting of the gap. Adult help, brought by Randy's dog, arrives in time to capture two of the villains, but Burns escapes.

With the gap safe for the time being—two of the saboteurs captured and Burns on the run—the narrative turns to Randy's career ambitions. He wants to be a locomotive engineer like his father and brothers; becoming a fireman is the way to start towards that goal. The war creates frequent openings for firemen because the draft regularly calls up railroad workers. Randy is scheduled to take physical, oral, and written tests to be a fireman, and with some time to kill one morning before those tests, he shows up at the section gang house in a business suit. Dan Leary scowls and asks coldly if Randy is quitting the railroad but warms right up when Randy informs him of his morning errand. Recognizing Randy's ambition, Leary says: “. . . it's proud of you I am . . . I'd never expect a hogger's [engineer's] son to stick wid the section gang.” (201).

The war intrudes frequently as Randy takes the tests to be an engineer. His eyes are so good that the doctor administering his physical examination remarks: “Twenty-twenty vision . . . even the Air Forces'll take eyes like that” (202). Randy passes all the tests and becomes an “extra” fireman: he has no regular run yet and must be ready on short notice to take runs when they become available. An extra usually has a telephone or lives in town so the call-boy can reach him quickly. Randy's family does not have a telephone, and they are in short supply with the war on, but his father tells the phone company that his son needs a phone for a war-essential job, and they get a phone (205-

07). Randy's first job as a fireman is with his father because his regular fireman has to take his physical exam for the draft that day.

Clearly, Randy is ambitious, and is working diligently on fulfilling his ambition. Another aspect of the value of ambition is hard work, and Randy has no fear of work, whether it is the physical labor of the section gang, keeping the locomotive fuel boxes full as fireman, or performing chores around his farm. He actually thrives on work and becomes "restless" when forced into inactivity for a couple of days when his foot is injured during the encounter with the saboteurs. He has little use for the soap operas on the radio (195).

In addition to Randy's ambition, courage is another important value in *The Long Trains Roll*. Randy displays courage when he takes on the saboteurs, chasing them on the mountain at night, and then with Stan after the overnight ordeal on the mountain, when finding Stan gives Randy "fresh courage" (171). Later Randy does not hesitate when a train he is on makes an abrupt, unscheduled stop, and he sees someone who has apparently tampered with one of the train's cars. Randy launches himself at the man, who turns out to have a gun, but he manages to get the gun and knocks the man out with it, and finds that, at last, he has captured Burns (251-54). Flawed though his character is, Burns is also brave. While Burns is working on the section gang, a large rock falls and almost kills him; Randy shoves him out of the way just in time. Randy is amazed at how cool Burns is. Burns has been a smart, fast, and strong adversary, quite different from the image he has cultivated of a soft indoor bookkeeper with poor eyesight, but Randy has persevered and prevailed.

Loyalty is another value which Randy MacDougal finds important. He is loyal to his family. He is faithful to his country, and when he realizes the men he is chasing on the mountain are spies, saboteurs, “enemies of his country,” he is frightened but also angry and wants to foil their treachery and protect his country (163-64). He is loyal to his section gang, and when he leaves the gang he stays with the railroad. Dan Leary, as a mentor for Dan, reinforces the value of loyalty. Dan is extremely loyal, to the railroad and his section gang, constantly watching over the members of his gang, proud that he has never lost a man in forty years on the railroad (19). Dan is steadfast in his support of Randy, wanting to take care him and each member of his gang, but he also wants to make sure they are right. Once when Randy runs up the track to warn a train of a sprung rail, the engineer questions Randy’s diligence in his effort to warn him. Randy responds angrily and a shouting match follows. Dan backs Randy, and later, in a quiet, solitary moment, states that he always backs his men, but wants them to be right, but also knows Randy did his best to flag the freight. The interchange leaves Randy feeling less cocky but also with a deepened respect for Dan Leary (37-39). Randy realizes that Dan’s loyalty is strong and automatic, but also complex and reasoned.

In addition to formulaic techniques such as the ordeal at the hands of the evil villain, Meader rewards Stan and Randy as they split a reward of \$1000 for their roles in the capture of the saboteurs (259). K. P. Harrow, the F.B.I. agent, holds out an additional potential reward to Stan. Harrow says that he’ll tell the Department about the day’s work in preventing the sabotage, and that Stan can get a job as a G-man when he finishes school. This possibility encourages Stan to consider studying a little harder (191-92).

In *The Long Trains Roll*, as noted earlier, Meader uses the device of the interchapter to present general information concerning railroading and the war. John Steinbeck had earlier used the technique in *The Grapes of Wrath* as had Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*. Meader's interchapters in *The Long Trains Roll* are short, one page each in keeping with his juvenile audience, and are set off typographically in italics at the beginning of each chapter. Together they supplement the specific story of the novel with general information about geography, railroading, and World War II; Meader uses the interchapters in some cases to convey information about which Randy MacDougal would know little, especially about the ongoing war. Several interchapters discuss how the railroads are instrumental in the effort to win the war. Often the interchapters touch on a topic which is connected to Randy's story in the following chapter.

Early interchapters describe the day and night flow of the railroads as “the lifeblood of a mighty nation” and discuss the mountains that railroads must cross in the eastern United States (2, 14). The interchapter introducing Chapter 3 is the first to mention the war, describing the GIs traveling across America by train: “carrying a million soldiers a month, hard-worked railroad crews do their best for those boys. They know there are some of them that won't come back” (28).<sup>88</sup> Meader ties this interchapter

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<sup>88</sup>A million soldiers a month is probably fairly accurate. Joseph R. Rose in *American Wartime Transportation*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953, page 72) states that in April, 1943, 1,059,000 troops traveled by rail in the interior of the United States in groups of 40 or more. The actual total would have been higher counting smaller groups. Chester Wardlow in *The Transportation Corps: Movements, Training, and Supply*, (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Army, 1956), devotes an entire chapter to “Army Passenger Traffic in the United States” (Chapter 1), most of which concerns rail travel (a small number of troops were moved by bus). From Wardlow's chapter (Chart 1 on page 31) it appears that although not every month was a million-man month, some,

to Randy's story as Randy notices a particular troop train which he recalls later in breaking the code of Burns's notebook. Randy had noticed Burns writing in his notebook as this train passed though Burns claimed to be making a note to himself to buy a proper work shirt (32-33). After the war-related interchapter for Chapter 3, those for chapters 4 through 10 concern railroading, geography, or geology generally, though sometimes they tie into the main narrative. For example, the interchapter for Chapter 6 concerns the railroad town boarding-house (68); Meader ties this in with the main story as Randy goes to Mrs. Ryan's boarding-house seeking Burns in order to return his notebook (69-70).

After one war-related interchapter for the first ten chapters (of a total of twenty), Meader uses five interchapters with a connection to war in the second ten chapters. The Chapter 11 interchapter concerns preference freights, and asserts that the crews for these freights are most definitely performing a war job when they move a block of tanks from Detroit to Hoboken overnight. In Chapter 13's interchapter Meader considers war generally, and shows his Quaker heritage as he argues that modern wars are fought by entire populations, not just the military and concludes "so the vicious cycle must continue until the day when all peoples join to make a final end of wars" (158). Chapter 14's interchapter continues the discussion of large scale wars by discussing Alfred Nobel, his invention of dynamite, and his concern about its potential for misuse in war along with its benefits in construction (169). In Chapter 14 Randy tells Stan about finding a

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including April 1943, were. Stan Cohen, in *V For Victory: America's Home Front During World War II* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991), gives a figure 43.7 million military personnel moved by railroads during the period of December 1941 to August 1945, which is very close to a million soldiers a month (page 256).

stick of dynamite, and the boys start trying to stop the bombing of the gap (170-71).

The interchapter for Chapter 15 is tied directly to the ongoing war: below a picture of a Nazi orator in front of a swastika is a discussion of a quote from Goebbels to the German people claiming that American production and transport of war materiel would never get started because of the strong network of Nazi sabotage to be carried out by men who had been in the United States for years. Meader asserts: “The keenest and most ruthless brains in Naziland had organized that Fifth Column;” he then credits the F.B.I. and its counterespionage program for stopping the sabotage and allowing “the greatest program of production and transportation in world history” to proceed (181). As with many of the interchapters, this one is tied into its following chapter where Stan and Randy stop the bombing, and Harrow of the F.B.I. arrives in time to help with the capture of two of the saboteurs.

Chapter 16’s interchapter sings the praises of the steam locomotive: “grandly impressive, so vitally alive . . . something akin to the human soul . . . Every boy and man breathes quicker at the sight and sound of a big locomotive storming down the rails” (194). But there is a newer, faster, more efficient locomotive coming: the oil burner or diesel. This interchapter has pictures of a steam locomotive above and a diesel below the text. It shows a remarkable similarity to advertisements of the time that were designed to publicize companies’ efforts in support of the war, and to keep the names of the companies in the public eye when they had no consumer products available because they were making war products instead. For example, a General Motors advertisement for its Electro-Motive Division shows an old steam locomotive next to a modern diesel

locomotive,<sup>89</sup> a similar juxtaposition to that in interchapter 16 of *The Long Trains Roll*. The advertisement and interchapter contain similar amounts of text. The advertisement states “These swift, dependable giants of power are contributing heavily to the astonishing war record of the railroads.” Although interchapter 16 does not specifically address the war contribution of the locomotive, other interchapters do. Stephen Meader, as an advertising man, was publicizing the war to his young readers in *The Long Trains Roll* in the same fashion that he and his colleagues used in advertisements to older readers in publications such as *The Saturday Evening Post*. Meader’s interchapters “advertising” the war effort are interleaved between his fictional chapters in a fashion similar to that of wartime advertisements interspersed with stories in magazines.

In discussing this wartime use of advertising, historian John Morton Blum states that “In 1942 and 1943, industry, exercising some restraints, had emphasized institutional advertising designed to keep the name of the firm in the public eye.”<sup>90</sup> Ralph M. Hower, in his history of N.W. Ayer & Son, the advertising agency for which Stephen Meader worked, discusses the difficulties in automobile advertising of presenting technical features in printed copy, and the aggravation of this problem in World War II when cars were not being built for civilian use but companies “wanted to keep their names before the public.” He gives the example of an advertisement for Plymouth with a man

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<sup>89</sup>*The Saturday Evening Post*, January 1, 1944, 5.

<sup>90</sup>John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, 1976), 100.

pretending to drive a car in his living room when no actual car is available.<sup>91</sup>

The interchapter preceding Chapter 19 states that new munitions plants were built deep within the borders of the United States because “when America went to war there was every expectation that we would be bombed by the enemy from the air” (235).<sup>92</sup> This interchapter also mentions and pictures the civilian defense volunteers who staffed air spotting posts across the country (as Meader himself did as well as Barney Cannon in *The Sea Snake*). The interchapter for the final chapter, Chapter 20, starts the process of concluding the book. Meader tells the reader that someday he’ll ride west on a crack express and recognize Calico Gap (though the real name is different) and perhaps Randy MacDougal will be driving the train.

The final scene of *The Long Trains Roll* is Army Day at Gaptown. Randy and Stan are guests of honor, introduced by the presiding Army Major General as “fighters on the home front.” Randy’s two brothers who are serving in the Army as locomotive engineers are there; Randy doesn’t realize who they are at first. He just gets a quick glance of some soldiers in uniform on the platform with him. After the ceremony, with her whole family there, Randy’s mother is at first overcome with tears of joy: ““All my

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<sup>91</sup>Ralph M. Hower, *The History of an Advertising Agency: N. W. Ayer & Son at Work 1869-1949* Revised Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 322-23, 329. The advertisement is from 1945.

<sup>92</sup>Dr. Alan Gropman, (Professor at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, Washington, D.C. and mobilization expert), states that although this is true to some extent, politics also drove the placement of such factories (E-mail from Dr. Gropman to the author, 13 March 2002). Gropman suggests Donald M. Nelson’s *Arsenal of Democracy: The Story of American War Production* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946) for further information on this topic. Nelson states that plants were situated in the mid-west and south also to take advantage of available labor (150).

big lads safe” but then springs into action to cook a big dinner for all of them. ““There’s chickens to fry, an’ string beans an’ carrots an’ early potatoes, an’ I’ll make biscuits to eat wi’ honey, an’ blueberry pie—”” (256-59). This conclusion to Meader’s World War II novel illustrates concepts developed by Amy Bentley in *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (1998). Randy’s mother is an example of Bentley’s Wartime Homemaker, providing stability during the chaos of the war; the meal she rushes off to prepare is an example of the icon of the Ordered Meal, most especially remembered in Norman Rockwell’s 1943 painting *Freedom From Want*, featuring a traditional extended Euro-American family seated around a large turkey dinner (Bentley, page 5; chapters 2 and 3). With many women going into the military or working in various war-related jobs, and with food rationing, the traditional ideas represented by the Wartime Homemaker and the Ordered Meal gave Americans accustomed concepts to hold onto as the chaos of war and its changes swirled around them. Although Randy’s sister has gone to work for the railroad, his mother is a traditional stay-at-home mother and homemaker. As a farm woman, the meal she rushes off to prepare is less affected by rationing than many families’ meals would be, and it is a traditional meal with servings of meat, vegetables, bread, and dessert.

*The Long Trains Roll* is both a railroading book and a World War II book, unusual in that an American author wrote it for a juvenile audience as the war happened. World War II is omnipresent in the book, from the spies Randy battles to scarce consumer goods to the draft calling up railroad workers. Meader provides messages in this book for readers who want to work on the railroad some day, and information for

those who just want to know more about railroads. Meader also emphasizes culturally important values, with loyalty, ambition, and courage being especially important during wartime; he makes suggestions for wartime behavior, for example, pointing out that loose talk can cost lives. As in his other war books, Meader also seems to say to his readers that they should pay attention to what happens in their daily lives, and if they notice something amiss they may be able to help the war effort. In his only use of interchapters, Meader conveys additional information about railroading, railroads and the war, and the war effort generally. In some ways, Meader can be seen as advertising the war to his young readers, as he was advertising the war for the United States Army in his day job with the N.W. Ayer & Son advertising agency. As Meader states in his preface to *Sabre Pilot* (1956), “During World War II, I was deeply involved in military aviation—writing advertising for Boeing and for Air Corps Recruiting.”<sup>93</sup>

After three novels featuring protagonists fighting for America on the home front, Stephen Meader turned to something entirely different with *Skippy's Family* (1945) for his final wartime book. *Skippy's Family* is not a typical Meader adventure story but is the story of the dog Skippy and his family, the Meaders, and contains a fair amount of reference to World War II. During the bombing of Britain in the winter of 1940-1941, English refugees started to show up in the Meaders' neighborhood in Moorestown, New

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<sup>93</sup>*Sabre Pilot*, ix. Margaret Meader Hofmann, daughter of Stephen Meader, told me that her father was a “dollar-a-year man” for a year in Washington writing advertising for the Army as he did for the Ayer agency (Interview with Ms. Hofmann, Fredericksburg, Virginia, June 2000). Sanford H. Margolis and Morton Silverstein begin their article on Meader's advertising career and techniques with a discussion of his Army recruiting advertisements (“The Quaker who wouldn't say ‘thee’ to madmen,” *Printers' Ink* Vol. 243, No. 6 [8 May 1953]: 38-40).

Jersey, and to make friends with the family dog Skippy (117). In the summer of 1941, Steve (Stephen Meader, Jr.) tells his Dad he won't wait to be drafted, but prefers to fight in the air when the time comes and wants to learn about airplanes anyway. By autumn, Steve is in the Army and stationed at an air mechanics' school in northern New Jersey, close enough for frequent visits so that Skippy starts to get over his lifelong distaste for uniforms (118). When the news of the Pearl Harbor attack comes, the excited voice announcing the news on the radio wakes Skippy, and soon more war-related events intrude into his life. "Within a month Dad [author Stephen Meader] was going out at queer times of day and night, dressed like an eskimo, to take his turn at the air spotters' post." (119-20). Even this level of cooperation with the war effort earned Stephen Meader the disapproval of "some of the little old ladies" of the Friends Meeting of which he was a member,<sup>94</sup> but also prepared him to write of Barney Cannon's aircraft spotting in *The Sea Snake*.

By spring "the family adjusted to a new kind of life, in which the central fact was war." Events of the war continue to confuse Skippy who is an elderly dog by now. Steve graduates as an air mechanic and goes on to aviation cadet training. There are pails of sand on the stairs, lights are turned off, there are sirens. These air raid drills send Skippy to bed whenever they occur (121). In some final examples of the war in *Skippy's Family*, Meader's son John, known as Beef, "was starting his senior year in college in June, on the new accelerated schedule" (122). Gas rationing sends the family to the South Jersey

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<sup>94</sup>Interview with John H. Meader, son of Stephen Meader, April 1996, Moorestown, New Jersey.

shore, instead of the Pennsylvania mountains because “Dad” can commute to the coast by train. Beach “traffic was fairly heavy in spite of wartime restrictions, and at night cars and trucks ran with parking lights only, for the blackout was maintained all along the shore” (124). “Dad” has a victory garden which Skippy supervises (135-36). Some misguided victory gardeners try to impose a leash law. Meader uses his writing skills in a letter to the editor on Skippy’s behalf opposing the leash law, arguing that dogs are not interested in vegetables or growing plants. “If they dig in tilled earth it is to bury one of the rare bones they find in these rationed days” (142). The meeting where this proposed law is discussed at length breaks up when an air raid siren sounds. “Everybody rushed off, trying to get home before the ‘Red’ warning signal and the blackout.” “The family shivered in sweaters, for the house was kept at a temperature of 65 to save rationed fuel” (144-46). Thus Stephen Meader’s final book of the World War II era, though more autobiographical than fictional, still conveys the atmosphere of the American Home Front in World War II in that part of the book dealing with the war era. Details of the war emerge in the book including blackouts, air raid drills, rationing, aircraft spotting volunteer work, and college schedules compressed to get men finished with college and into the military.

Throughout his four books published during World War II, Stephen Meader was virtually alone among American authors of juvenile nonpulp fiction in writing about that war. Why did American authors avoid the war and concentrate on fantasy, historical fiction, and animals? One reason may be that before the United States entered the war, “Although most adults (including writers) were aware of the inevitability of U.S.

involvement in the war, a reluctance to think about the implications kept even distant echoes of it out of most children's books except for propagandistic adventures" (Hunt 205). According to Murray, "Hunt theorizes that adults hoped the war would be short lived and that it would not intrude too directly on children's lives" (169), possible additional reasons that may have diminished the number of books of war-related fiction that American authors wrote for the juvenile audience.

Children's literature experts noticed the lack of American war-related books for children. "In Boston, the writers for *Horn Book* had consistently referred to the European war and its impact on children beginning noticeably in 1940. But neither Hogarth [of Macmillan] nor the *Horn Book* could review nonexistent books, and although their commentaries grow more relevant, still the animal stories, fantasies, and family stories persist" (Hunt 199). For example, Flora Straus wrote "Let Them Face it" in the January/February 1945 *Horn Book*, where she argued, as the title suggests, that American youth should be exposed to the world's problems in their books, that through stories "young people can gain a better understanding of the pressing economic and social problems of today" if the stories are "good enough—real enough—inspiring enough" (63).

Another reason for downplaying the war in American juvenile literature may have been to protect young readers from the cruelties of the war. Sally Allen McNall states that despite trends toward realism in writing for children, American children's books "avoided such topics" as the Great Depression and World War II, and quotes from *A Critical History of Children's Literature* on not thrusting the happily unaware American child into the devastation of the war, with stories of either of the world wars being

“adventures, removed from the scenes of devastation.” McNall cites works published during the war which do not mention it, such as Robert McCloskey’s *Homer Price* (1943), who confronts amusing but timeless problems, and the “jolly tone” of Elizabeth Enright’s Melendy family and the Moffatts of Eleanor Estes, both of which series started in 1941.<sup>95</sup> Historian Anne MacLeod describes “an image of trust and tranquility in children’s books of the 1930s . . . literature for children that promised them the shelter of adult protection, a future with hope,” and then contrasts that image of tranquility both with that decade’s economic depression and then world war, and with today’s children’s literature which portrays all of society’s problems, along with adults who seem to know little more than children about how to deal with these problems.<sup>96</sup> MacLeod argues that until well into the 1960s, children’s literature had a protective barrier around it that kept out most of society’s problems such as war.

Caroline Hunt concludes that “The U.S. children’s books of the 1940s, unless they are in effect simple propaganda, rarely acknowledge the existence of the war at all. In contrast, British children’s stories show shortages, rationing, and evacuation to countryside occurring all the time, in fiction as in real life” (Hunt 205). Meader’s four novels during and about World War II, especially *Shadow in the Pines*, *The Sea Snake*,

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<sup>95</sup>Sally Allen McNall, “American Children’s Literature, 1880-Present,” Chapter 10 in *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, ed. Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 388. McNall quotes from *A Critical History of Children’s Literature* by Cornelia Meigs, Anne Thaxter Eaton, Elizabeth Nesbitt, and Ruth Hill Viguers (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953).

<sup>96</sup>Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 205-06.

and *The Long Trains Roll*, require modifying Hunt's generalization. His wartime books not only acknowledge the war; their heroes actively fight enemy spies and saboteurs. Meader's fourth book of the era, *Skippy's Family*, although offering somewhat less excitement than the first three, also takes place against the backdrop of the war. As in all of his books, Meader wrote of values such as courage, honesty, ambition, and loyalty. Meader's books were more than simple propaganda. While on the one hand, he clearly believed in and supported the American cause and provided suggestions for behavior that his readers could adopt to support the war effort, on the other hand, he appeared to show some sympathy for non-Nazis and professional military on the enemy side, and certainly did not demonize all enemy personnel whatever the temptation might have been to do so. While many American authors for children ignored World War II as it happened, Stephen Meader can be added to the short list of those authors who embraced the ongoing war as a subject.

## CHAPTER V

### War's End to Retirement From Advertising (1946-1957)

After World War II ended, Meader turned from the war back to the types of books he had written before the conflict, and wrote twelve more books before his 1957 retirement from his day job in advertising. These twelve books included historical and contemporary novels largely similar to his past efforts. *Sabre Pilot* (1956), a contemporary novel, was a departure in that the United States Air Force commissioned it, and although he had written about sports such as basketball and football before, *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953) was Meader's first book with such a sport (basketball) as the primary focus. *Bulldozer* (1951) was the one contemporary entrepreneurial novel of this period, which ended with the historical *Everglades Adventure* (1957). In two books of this period, *Cedar's Boy* (1949) and *The Buckboard Stranger* (1954), Meader drew heavily on his New Hampshire childhood experiences as he had done in two books in his first period of writing, *Red Horse Hill* (1930) and *Lumberjack* (1934).

For his first book of this period, *Jonathan Goes West* (1946), Meader also returned to familiar material: a book of historical fiction with similarities to his *Boy With a Pack* (1939). Protagonist Jonathan Brent, age sixteen in the year 1845, heads west from his home in Maine where he lives with his Uncle Eli and Aunt Polly. Jonathan is to join his father, Matthew Brent, who has sent a letter summoning him to Illinois. Jonathan has not heard often from his father and resents his summons; he would prefer to stay in

Maine where he has lived for the last twelve years. Jonathan's mother is dead. Jonathan's father wants him to bring money from an inheritance, and also believes that Jonathan is big enough to help on the farm that Matthew and his new wife have established in Illinois.

Villain Rusty McKee robs Jonathan of the inheritance money in New York City. McKee helps Jonathan on the street when someone else has tried to rob him, takes him to dinner and befriends him, and after dinner hits him on the head and steals his \$500. The values of honesty and trust emerge in this incident and throughout the book. As Jonathan awakes after McKee's attack "he vowed that he would never trust a stranger again" (46), although fairly soon his optimism and trust return. When Jonathan tells a policeman about being robbed, he won't believe Jonathan's story which is extremely upsetting to him: "It was the first time in his experience that anyone had ever doubted his word" (48).

Jonathan is able to work his way to Baltimore on the Maine ship that had brought him to New York. Jonathan takes the train from Baltimore to York, Pennsylvania, and then continues his journey on foot. Jonathan and McKee continue to cross paths throughout the story. At Harrisburg Jonathan sees McKee jump aboard a canal boat as it is pulling out. Jonathan jumps on too and stows away. After 30 hours he comes out for water and immediately encounters McKee; Jonathan jumps overboard when McKee threatens to call the captain. Fortunately, in the morning, Jonathan finds the campsite of a blind itinerant bookseller, Nathaniel Greenfield. Greenfield is the proprietor of the Traveling Atheneum ("Books Bought & Sold, Letters Written"), a covered wagon carrying hundreds of books, "more books than Jonathan had ever seen in one place

before” (88). Greenfield’s driver has just quit without notice, so Jonathan takes the job of driving the Traveling Atheneum.

McKee is an astonishing one man crime wave throughout the book. When Jonathan and Mr. Greenfield spend the night with “Uncle Billy” Flood in his backwoods cabin, Flood tells them that McKee stole his life savings of more than \$800 from under a loose brick in his fireplace (101-03). In Pittsburgh, Jonathan witnesses McKee hasten away from an alley where he has just assaulted and robbed a drunk (125-26), and as Jonathan and Mr. Greenfield near Cincinnati, they learn that McKee has robbed and beaten a widow, who later dies after regaining consciousness for just long enough to describe her attacker (132-44). McKee robs a farmer on the street in Cincinnati (149) where Jonathan and Mr. Greenfield stay for a while to pick up books they have ordered.

A couple of nights out of Cincinnati, when the travelers stop to camp for the night, Jonathan returns from getting water to find that McKee has hit Mr. Greenfield on the head and is going through his pockets. Finally, after McKee shoots first, Jonathan is able to capture the villain with a pistol though Jonathan must both shoot and then club McKee with the gun (159-66). Jonathan gets both men to a doctor, who happens to be a Quaker. McKee goes to jail and Jonathan recovers most of the money he stole. Mr. Greenfield stays with the doctor’s family to recuperate and Jonathan continues west to join his father. During his stay, Jonathan has learned about the Underground Railway from the doctor’s family, and the next night helps a runaway slave on the road to freedom. When Jonathan finally arrives in Illinois he finds that his father has died there. With nothing to hold him, he hurries back to New England.

Throughout *Jonathan Goes West* Meader displays an interest in the communication and diffusion of cultural and reading material in the United States of 1845, especially through the character of Nathaniel Greenfield. The story starts with Jonathan's Uncle Eli trying to persuade Jonathan that the trip west is a good idea by quoting Horace Greeley's "Go west, young man" admonition from his weekly *New York Tribune*, with Meader adding, for the benefit of his readers, that the *Tribune* was "regarded as second only to the Bible by New England country people" of that time. Neither Jonathan nor his aunt and uncle want him to go but his uncle is trying to help him to make the best of the situation (6). Meader describes Nathaniel Greenfield's network of customers, essentially arguing that people on the frontier were both literate and anxious to obtain reading material. Mr. Greenfield tells Jonathan: "there's hardly a farmhouse or trapper's cabin betwixt Philadelphia and the Wabash that hasn't a book in it bought from my stock" (93). Meader goes into some detail about the books Greenfield sells and prices he charges, giving the reader some idea of the range and costs of reading material available in the 1840s. Besides the Bible and Farmer's Almanac one would expect him to sell, Greenfield sells a lot of Cooper's and Scott's novels, writings by Parson Weems, and "even texts in Greek and Latin" (93). Prices range from ten cents or a quarter for the almanac or "Brief Compendium of Veterinary Medicine" to four dollars for the complete works of Shakespeare (93). Sometimes the books fulfill functions not originally intended: for one dollar Mr. Greenfield is happy to sell *The Complete Tavern Keeper* to an innkeeper who is using his last purchase from Mr. Greenfield, a copy of *Paradise Lost*, as a door stop (94-95), and who asks for something more in his line this

year. The newlywed Quaker couple, Amos and Sophia Cope, who live near Cincinnati, already have a dozen books,<sup>97</sup> but add to their library with a book of Daniel Webster's speeches and a book of poetry by the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier (155-59).

In additional discussion of the flow of information through the country, Meader comments on the post office of the time—Mr. Greenfield has Jonathan send a letter from Cincinnati to Philadelphia to order more books. It costs ten cents at the new rates; the postal clerk remembers when it cost 40 cents to send a letter to Philadelphia and says that this letter will arrive in a week or ten days: ““We shore live in an age o’ speed an’ progress!”” (124).<sup>98</sup>

In addition to the flow of cultural products, Meader uses *Jonathan Goes West* to describe the movement of runaway slaves through the United States as he had seven years earlier in *Boy With a Pack* (1939). Jonathan is not as deeply involved with the escape of the runaway he helps as is Bill Crawford of *Boy With a Pack* with his, but Jonathan is still an accomplice in helping a wounded runaway with first aid, food, and an introduction to a Quaker who will take him to the “Railroad.” Even though Jonathan was quite upset when the New York policeman did not believe he had been robbed, he does

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<sup>97</sup>Meader does not specify the titles in the Copes' library.

<sup>98</sup>Richard W. Clement's *Books on the Frontier: Print Culture in the American West 1763-1875* (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 2003) discusses book culture on the frontier, including the role of Cincinnati as an important supplier of books on the early frontier, and the importance of Philadelphia in supplying books to the Cincinnati market, especially Chapter One, “The First Frontier,” pages 21-44. Clement states that by the 1830s and 1840s, Chicago had taken over from Cincinnati as the West's principal city and commercial hub, but that Cincinnati remained important to the book trade, especially school books (44).

not hesitate to tell a United States Marshal that when he last saw the runaway, the man was headed west, which while technically true is not the whole truth since the runaway was headed west in the company of the Quaker who had promised to get him to the Underground. In this choice between the whole truth and what he thinks is right and human, Jonathan chooses to protect the wounded runaway (182), using the approach to honesty that Quakers often employed in such situations, and that Meader used in *Boy With a Pack* (1939), discussed in the analysis of that book in Chapter 3.

In addition to the especially nasty villain Rusty McKee, other formulaic techniques Meader uses in this book include a \$500 reward that Jonathan receives for the capture of McKee (212), and Jonathan's romantic interest in Prudence Foster, daughter of Captain Foster whose schooner carries Jonathan to New York. When Jonathan sees Prudence on his return east, she tells him how much he has grown up in the three months he has been gone, and they make arrangements to see each other again since it is clear that they enjoy a mutual attraction (235-39).

Meader uses part of his family history in this book. Jonathan helps his aunt prepare butter for market by shaping "it in a round wooden mold, leaving the imprint of a carved strawberry and leaves on top of each half-pound pat . . . the Brent trade-mark" (13) as Meader's own "Grandma's clever hands . . . patted it [the butter] into round, half-pound wooden molds that left a strawberry leaf design on top" ("A Family Memoir" 8).

The basic story line of *Jonathan Goes West* is a twist on the usual running away from home story such as Meader had already written with *Away to Sea* (1931) and to which he returned in *Whaler 'Round the Horn* (1950) and *The Muddy Road to Glory*

(1963). In those the protagonist is running from home to something he really wants to do: go to sea, or to defend the Union in the Civil War, but Jonathan is forced to leave a home where he loves both the physical setting, and his aunt and uncle and their life together, to respond to the imperious summons of the father who abandoned him twelve years earlier (9), and hasn't been back since. In many ways this book is reminiscent of Meader's *Boy With a Pack* (1939), but in that novel the protagonist wants to go west, and stays there, while in this book, which could be called "Jonathan Goes West and Comes Back," the hero reluctantly goes west, and hurries back east when there is nothing in Illinois to hold him since his father is dead. At least six positive reviews appeared but, on a not so positive note, *Booklist* said: "In spite of the exciting times—early steamboat and railroad days—and the boy's encounters with and capture of a notorious highwayman, the story is somehow lacking in vigor. Not the author's best book, but will probably be well liked."<sup>99</sup>

After the historical *Jonathan Goes West*, Meader produced the contemporary *Behind the Ranges* (1947).<sup>100</sup> Protagonist Dick Randolph, seventeen and just finishing high school, travels to Olympic National Park with his botanist father who is doing some work for the Smithsonian Institution. Dick arranges to collect silver marmots for a Smithsonian exhibit. He does not enjoy killing the animals but realizes that their collection serves the scientific pursuit of knowledge. Dick is a nature photographer as were Meader heroes before (*King of the Hills*, 1933) and after (*Stranger on Big Hickory*, 1964). The villain is a Nazi prisoner of war who escaped when a transport plane went

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<sup>99</sup>*Booklist* Vol 43, page 60, Oct 15, 1946.

<sup>100</sup>*Behind the Ranges* was translated into French.

down in the park during the war, and who has been surviving alone in the wilderness ever since, living in a cave. This man captures Dick, who endures a formulaic ordeal at his hands. Displaying the usual values of a Meader protagonist, Dick courageously endures his ordeal, and keeps his presence of mind so that he can find and use an opportunity to escape. Though his hands are bound, while his captor is out hunting, Dick is able to find and conceal for later use a discarded aluminum arrowhead, crafted from the crashed transport plane. After Dick does escape, he does very well with his photography on this trip by selling his story and his pictures of the villain (before he is cleaned up, shaved, and shorn) and his mountain lair to the press.

Dick is able to “take” the two marmots he needs fairly quickly. He is sad to have to kill them even in the cause of science: “In a manner of seconds the marmot’s chunky body stopped quivering and it lay dead at his feet. The wild sense of triumph that had filled the boy turned to regret . . . He felt like a murderer” (120). Fortunately for Dick, this is the only killing he is obliged to perform in the story. Meader could write of such regret from personal experience. One autumn, as a teenager, Meader visited his “Uncle John at his cottage on Lake Winnetoesaukee . . . Of course, I took along my rifle.” Meader’s Uncle John told him of a good place to shoot at squirrels and he “spent a blissful afternoon shooting at the wary little beasts. Then I knocked one out of a tree. Looking at its bright eyes, now glazing, and feeling of the soft, furry body, I knew I was through killing animals forever” (“A Family Memoir” 21).

From the contemporary *Behind the Ranges*, Meader returned again to history in *River of the Wolves* (1948), featuring fifteen-year-old Dave Foster, who one July during

the French and Indian Wars travels from his home in Dover, New Hampshire, to his Uncle Jed's farm farther north in the Hampshire Grants. Dave has only been there for a couple of days when Abenaki Indians attack the farm, scalp Uncle Jed and leave him for dead, and take Dave prisoner. Dave and other captives are forced to travel with the Abenaki for many days to their home village in Canada, and are prisoners there through the winter, until Dave is able to escape and make his way back to New Hampshire. Dave has a very capable female sidekick a little younger than he is, Nancy Morrison, also kidnaped by the Indians, who escapes with him, and so both endure and then escape a very long formulaic ordeal. Both Dave and Nancy do the best they can at fitting into their new situation and learning as much as possible, and their new skills help in their escape. Dave also has the young Abenaki brave Nequanis as a sidekick, but Dave is always watching for the chance to escape, so Nequanis is not the usual sidekick for a Meader protagonist. As far as Nequanis is concerned, Dave is his blood brother and is making excellent progress toward becoming a full fledged fellow warrior. As a comparison to Dave and Nancy, Meader creates the character Joshua Boles, another teenager kidnaped with them who is fat, lazy, and focused getting as much food for himself as possible. Meader emphasizes the values of loyalty and courage through the actions of Dave and Nancy, with further emphasis of these values through the contrast of their behavior with that of Josh Boles.

Soon after their capture, Dave speaks to Nancy as they are being taken toward Canada; he had not met her before their capture. One of the young braves threatens Dave, who meets "the threat in the Indian's eyes with a steady gaze. He might be bound and

helpless, but he wasn't going to let any half-fledged brave know that he was scared" (38). As they travel, Dave is impressed with Nancy's spunk (41); her uncomplaining courage wins Dave's respect (49) and he notes the "whalebone toughness in the girl" (87).

Dave displays great courage when the Abenaki force him to run the gauntlet: "his fear was gone in a surge of bright anger." Dave runs straight at the warrior Bemokis, grabs his club, and runs the rest of the gauntlet whacking at anyone who gets near him. Josh Boles does poorly at running the gauntlet. He just holds up his hands while the Indians hit him repeatedly. Dave aids Josh afterwards, helping him lie down and telling him he won't be bothered anymore. After Dave's performance at running the gauntlet, the Indians vote to take him into their tribe (122-25).

Dave is loyal to Nancy and the other prisoners. Early in their captivity, Dave realizes that it would be unthinkable to leave Nancy (66); he promises Nancy that he will take her home (101). Dave broaches the idea of escape to Josh, but he rejects the idea saying "It's too far . . . This ain't so bad if we get enough to eat" (83). Dave has little respect for Josh, but ministers to him when he is beaten in the gauntlet. After Dave has been in the Abenaki village for several months, during the cold and snows of winter, the French Catholic priest assigned to the village asks Dave to come visit, and shows him a hand-drawn map depicting the route back to New England. As Dave finalizes his escape plans, he feels guilty about not including Josh, but does not think Josh can endure the journey since he is "clumsy, a glutton, and a chronic whiner" (202).

They must wait several more months, until the beginning of May when the ice breaks up, but ultimately, in a long and difficult journey, Dave and Nancy successfully

escape back to New Hampshire. They are able to get a good start ahead of any pursuit when a French military officer comes to recruit warriors to fight the English, and brings a barrel of brandy to the village as an inducement. Once most of the villagers are drunk, Dave and Nancy make good their escape, and travel quickly at first, but after several days their canoe capsizes in rapids, and they lose their provisions and most weapons. With his bow and one remaining arrow, and the help of the dog Buck, Dave kills a deer, and they are fortified for the rest of the journey. “Nancy had learned the squaw’s method of smoking meat, and when they started down the river again they had fifty or sixty pounds of cured venison” (240).

On their return, Dave is ecstatic to find that his Uncle, though scalped, has survived. Nancy is deeply saddened to learn that her parents were murdered, but fortunately her brother escaped, and has been taken into Dave’s Uncle’s home, where Nancy will now live as well. Although romance has not bubbled to the surface of this story often, it is clear that Dave and Nancy like and respect each other very much, and that they will continue to see much of each other.

Meader followed the historical *River of the Wolves* with the contemporary *Cedar’s Boy* (1949). *Cedar’s Boy* is in many respects a sequel to *Red Horse Hill* (1930), which Meader set in his childhood, and because of that, and because most of the action takes place at the timeless fairgrounds and racetrack, *Cedar’s Boy* can seem at first to be historical. The television that is demonstrated at the Riverdale Fair shows that the book is meant to be contemporary, however, as does the picture on the last page of the hero’s Groom Pass, dated 1949. Several characters who were boys in *Red Horse Hill* are grown

men in *Cedar's Boy*—as he sets up the story Meader states that thirty years have passed (18)—and the illustrator, Lee Townsend, is even the same. There is a new protagonist though: sixteen-year-old Melvin Davis, known as Shad. Bud Martin, protagonist of *Red Horse Hill*, is now more often called Hartley and is a prosperous dairy farmer who appears from time to time in *Cedar's Boy*. Hartley Martin's son, Bud Martin Jr., befriends Shad. The Martin family owns the horse Cedar's Boy, grandson of Cedar from *Red Horse Hill*, as well as Sequoia and Redwood, also offspring of Cedar. Yance, who was a boy in *Red Horse Hill*, is now a trainer for Bud Martin, Sr., and still has no last name. Yance is scheduled to ride Cedar's Boy in the races at the Riverdale County Fair. Harko Dan, villain from *Red Horse Hill*, is back in this book, escaped from prison and still very dangerous. Billy Randall, horse trainer and driver extraordinaire, mostly retired, is back as well, as is Uncle John Mason, Bud Martin's adopted father in *Red Horse Hill*, who makes a cameo appearance.

Shad lands a job as a stable hand for the Martin horses during the Fair, working directly for the trainer Yance. Shad proves to be an excellent groom, and Yance soon has him driving the horses for some workouts as well. Early on, after word has come of Harko Dan's escape from prison, Shad realizes that illicit gambling is happening in the back of a tent at the fair, and suspects that one of the loafers there might be Harko Dan. He is, but he is as slippery as ever and a couple of police raids fail to catch him.

One of Shad's duties is to sleep in the stable with the horses to help prevent any foul play. One night Shad hears something, and finds a can of kerosene the next morning, but that is apparently a false alarm—kerosene used by a slightly deranged character to

keep mosquitos away (143).<sup>101</sup> A few nights later, an arsonist successfully burns the stable where Bud and Cedar's Boy are sleeping, after poisoning the dog Tug and injuring Yance (176). Fortunately, Shad gets Cedar's Boy out in time, and moves him to a replacement stall. On a later night, Shad awakes to find Harko Dan in the new stable, intent on killing Cedar's Boy, but Shad tackles the villain, and, with the help Tug and a police officer assigned to Cedar's Boy because of the threat, Harko Dan is subdued and arrested (207-10).

Meanwhile, because of Yance's injuries, Hartley Martin needs a new driver to handle Cedar's Boy for the big race, The Granite State Stake, with a \$5000 purse for the winner. Mr. Martin tries to interest Billy Randall in the opportunity, but Billy says he is too old for the job and then surprises both Martin and Shad with the recommendation that Shad do the job. Like the teenaged Bud (Hartley) Martin before him in *Red Horse Hill*, Shad makes his racing debut as a last minute replacement for the primary driver, driving the red horse in a race with huge stakes. With thirty hours to go before the race, Shad takes a crash course in racing with Billy Randall, absorbing the lore of the racetrack to prepare for his big race. Just before the race, for inspiration apparently, Hartley Martin shows Shad a check for a \$500 reward he is receiving for capturing Harko Dan. Shad does exceptionally well for a rookie driver, and in a three-heat contest, Shad and Cedar's Boy win the Granite State Stake. During the races, Shad keeps his wits about him and,

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<sup>101</sup>Horace Kephart in *Camping and Woodcraft*, published in 1917, stated that country people sometimes found kerosene to be an effective repellent for chiggers (*Camping and Woodcraft: A Handbook for Vacation Campers and for Travelers in the Wilderness*, 1917; reprint, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988, 253-54).

for example, realizes when a veteran driver is bluffing and doesn't get out of his way (222-23), and then, in the next heat, breaks out of a box by dropping back and then giving Cedar's Boy his head (228-30). After the race, Hartley Martin offers Shad a permanent job, but only after he finishes school, and Shad's mother, not a big fan at first of this idea, tells him he's a natural, and that she won't stand in his way.

Meador describes the connection between his own childhood and *Cedar's Boy* thus: "We Gonic boys were particularly blessed in one respect. Every autumn, about the last week of September, school let out for the Rochester Fair. We were there all day, every day, though none of us ever paid to get in. Going two miles up the Cocheco by rowboat we could climb a high bank, pry loose a board in the fence and sneak into the Fair Grounds at a hidden spot behind the row of stables. All this is faithfully recorded in 'Cedar's Boy'" ("A Family Memoir" 21).

Meador followed *Cedar's Boy* with an historical novel set about 1850, *Whaler 'Round the Horn* (1950), which he considered a *Moby Dick* for young readers.<sup>102</sup> Rodney Glenn, not quite seventeen, leaves home to go to sea and catches a ride from Durham, New Hampshire, with none other than Herman Melville. Rod is following his dream of shipping out on a whaler and learns all about whaling firsthand as a crew member of the *Pelican*. Once Rodney is a seasoned whaler, and after a stop in Oahu where he meets Mahina Kea, a half-Hawaiian, half-Scottish girl his own age, Rod's boat launches from the *Pelican* and tries to capture a white whale. The whale destroys the boat, which is too far from the *Pelican* for Rod to be rescued. He alone survives the whale's attack, and

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<sup>102</sup>*Whaler 'Round the Horn* was translated into German.

manages to get safely to land to an isolated island valley where he is trapped and can survive, but he is lonely, even after a native boy, Kokua, shows up to keep him company. Ultimately Rod and Kokua escape this formulaic ordeal when they find a canoe that they can use to get away. Ultimately, Rod makes his way back to Oahu, where he secures a job with Mahina Kea's father, Robert MacNair, a shipbuilder, and reaches an understanding with Mahina Kea, who has hoped he would be back. *Whaler 'Round the Horn* is essentially two stories featuring Rod Glenn: the first describing his time on the whaler, the second his time on a Hawaiian island after he is marooned.

Rodney, an orphan, is living with his aunt and uncle in Durham, New Hampshire, when Melville stops by looking for a place to spend the night. Rodney's aunt and uncle happen to be away overnight so Rod invites the stranger to spend the night with him, but without asking his name. The stranger is quite knowledgeable about whaling, provides the boy with information and helpful hints, and offers him a ride to Boston from where he can easily get to New Bedford. Rod has been arguing with his uncle, a farmer, for some time about wanting to go to sea. Rod's father had been a mate on a ship, but his uncle thinks Rod's idea of going to sea is "foolishness" but as Rod puts it: "I don't aim to spend all my days hoeing an' clamming" (8). The astute reader has already identified the writer who gives Rod a ride, but to make it clear, when Rod asks his name, the reply is "Call me Ishmael" (15).

Both a barkeep and a ship chandler in New Bedford tell Rod that the *Pelican* is a good whaling ship. As he is trying to find her captain, Rod meets the boy who becomes his sidekick on the *Pelican*, Seth Norton, a Quaker from New Bedford. On the *Pelican*,

Rod learns the ropes of whaling from being lookout to chasing and harpooning whales in the smaller boats to stripping off the blubber. Not far out of the islands, just past Kauai, Rod's boat launches to chase a white whale, and when they have harpooned it, it surfaces under the boat and destroys it, killing everyone but Rod: "With a splintering crash, the jaw closed, chopping through the oak keel and cedar planking—through flesh and blood and bone" (155). The boat is too far from the *Pelican* for Rod to get back to it, or for its crew to find him, but he swims on and eventually lands on an inaccessible part of the island of Kauai, apparently deserted, cut off from the rest of the island by cliffs.

In the morning he finds that Kokua, a young native Hawaiian is also stranded in the same place. Rod and Kokua get along well and soon become friends and sidekicks during this formulaic ordeal for Rod. He is anxious to escape the valley, but they have no boat, which is the only way out. Rod finds a cave where long ago a chief was interred in a canoe, and with appropriate apologies to the dead man, they take his boat. The old canoe has some dry rot but is salvageable; ultimately Rod and Kokua use it to get out to the inhabited part of the island. From there Rod is fortunate to catch a ride on a schooner to Honolulu.

The value of hard work and ambition is especially prevalent in *Whaler 'Round the Horn*. There is plenty of work on the whaling ship *Pelican*: all the usual work on any sailing ship as well as the hunting of the whales and the heavy work of stripping the blubber and processing of it. Meader creates the exceptionally lazy character Fred Girty on the ship, as a contrast to Rod and Seth Norton. During a hurricane, Girty hides under the forecandle hatch, and is presumed lost overboard, until he is found emerging when the

gale subsides. That act almost lands him in irons (95-99). Girty does not leap to tasks with the alacrity expected and required of sailors on a whaler, and manages to be in the way and make frequent mistakes at just the wrong time. On one occasion, a strip of blubber knocks Girty down as his colleagues remove it from a whale carcass (71); on another, Girty “catches a crab” (misses a stroke) and spoils the harpooner’s aim (113).

When Rod is stranded with the native Kokua, the islander provides similar contrast to the ambitious, hard-working Yankee. “Like many Hawaiians, Kokua was an easy-going sort of person. Unless there was something that really needed doing he was content to loaf in the sunshine, and he laughed at Rod’s unwillingness to sit still” (189). “He was as good-natured and irresponsible as a puppy where hard work was involved” (206). As they work to get the canoe they have found out to the beach using log rollers, “Rod had difficulty in keeping Kokua interested in the tiresome task. The Hawaiian boy saw no need to hurry. He pointed out that they were well enough off in their valley. It made little difference whether they got their canoe out now or a month from now. The young Yankee has different ideas. He had started a job and he meant to stick to it until he finished” (207). When Kokua would rather nap or hunt, Rod keeps him at work by telling interesting and amusing stories, both of whaling and of New England winters. When Rod gets to Honolulu, he talks with Robert McNair and gets a job in McNair’s boatyard. As he discusses his future with McNair, Rod mentions this relaxed approach the islands can engender: “I’ve come to like the Islands. If a boy worked hard here, and didn’t let the sunshine spoil him, maybe he could make a good life for himself” (237). Of course, an additional benefit of this job is access to McNair’s daughter, Rod’s romantic interest,

Mahina Kea.

Other values of importance in *Whaler 'Round the Horn* include honesty and keeping one's word, especially in the context of not jumping ship when one has signed on for an entire voyage. After Rod meets Mahina Kea, he is hoping for another day of liberty before the *Pelican* departs so that he can see her again. Rod is extremely disappointed when this does not happen, and considers deserting the crew for another chance to see her, but in "one of the toughest decisions in his life," though it would have been easy to swim ashore during his night watch, Rod decides against it: "When he signed the ship's paper he had given his word to serve for the voyage, and a man's word was a matter of honor. Something told him that neither Robert McNair nor his gracious wife would have much respect for a ship-jumping sailor as a companion for their daughter" (148-49). Of course Rod's supposition is correct. When he goes to see McNair on his return to Oahu, and tells him he had been through a few months earlier with the *Pelican*, McNair asks coolly if Rod deserted, and he is quite happy to be able to state that he was cast away when the whale destroyed his boat. McNair is aware of the incident because he encountered Captain Beale a few days afterward still searching for his missing men (235-36).

At least six reviewers noted Meader's technique of launching young Rod into the story of *Whaler 'Round the Horn* through the device of having Herman Melville himself give the protagonist a ride on his way to his whaling adventure, and Bechtel in *The New York Herald Tribune* added that the book "labors under an odd connection with

Melville's books."<sup>103</sup> Reviewers also continued to praise the values that Meader incorporated into his stories. For example, *The Saturday Review* points out that Rod escapes his remote island through "ingenuity and pluck" and the *Washington Post* review mentions the hard work encountered throughout the narrative.<sup>104</sup>

Meader followed the ambition and hard work described in the historical *Whaler 'Round the Horn*, with more of the same in a contemporary story featuring an ambitious lad who would work diligently throughout the story of *Bulldozer* (1951).<sup>105</sup> *Bulldozer* is a striking entrepreneurial story, informed by Meader's personal knowledge of the Caterpillar company's machines. Meader was clearly familiar with and fond of the Caterpillar D2 tractor that his hero uses in this story. During his advertising career with N. W. Ayer & Son, Meader became familiar with all the Caterpillar products. He managed the Ayer account with Caterpillar: four times a year he would take copy writers and artists to the Caterpillar plant in Peoria where they would all "drive tractors, bulldozers and all kinds of big yellow machines. We learn first-hand how Caterpillar

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<sup>103</sup>The following six reviews of *Whaler 'Round the Horn* comment on Meader's use of Melville as a character in the book or its connection with Melville: *Kirkus Reviews* 18 (15 September 1950): 561; Howard Pease, "There She Blows," *The New York Times Book Review*, 1 October 1950, 24; *Horn Book* 26 (November 1950): 483; *Wisconsin Library Bulletin* 46 (November 1950): 24; Edward B. Hungerford, *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 12 November 1950, Part 4, 12; Louise S. Bechtel, *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, 11 November 1950, Part 2, page 16.

<sup>104</sup>Reviews of Meader's *Whaler 'Round the Horn*: *Washington Post*, 29 October 1950, 9, and *Saturday Review of Literature* 33 (11 November 1950): 54.

<sup>105</sup>*Bulldozer* was translated into German in 1960.

equipment is used by lumbermen, road builders, commercial fishermen and the like.”<sup>106</sup> Readers of *Bulldozer* also learn about many of the jobs a tractor and bulldozer can do. Eighteen-year-old protagonist Bill Crane discovers a Caterpillar D2 tractor sunk in a pond in the northern Maine woods, abandoned along with the bulldozer lying on the ground nearby. He acquires and refurbishes both, and builds an earthmoving business that will support himself and his widowed mother. In doing so, he displays the values of hard work, self-reliance, honesty, and courage emphasized throughout Meader’s works.

The story takes the reader through the various jobs Bill obtains and performs, the business risks he takes, and various business techniques that he employs. Bill tangles with two villains, and finds romance and reward. Bill grows to manhood and into a role in his community, and finds most older members of the community willing to give a young person a chance to prove himself. Meader makes this important point in this book for boys—they will need a chance to get started in life, but most adults are glad to give such a chance, having needed such chances earlier in their own lives. Meader also notes benefits of competition through the continuing comparison of Bill’s efforts with those of the large Rawdon Construction Company.

Bill and his friend Ducky Davis are camping and fishing in the backwoods of Maine when they find the abandoned tractor and bulldozer. They locate the owner, a military veteran, and purchase the salvage rights. The reader learns to be cagy when acquiring salvage rights to something sitting in a pond and possibly not salvageable. Bill

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<sup>106</sup>Sanford H. Margolis and Morton Silverstein, “The Quaker who couldn't say ‘thee’ to madmen,” *Printers’ Ink* 243 (8 May 1953), 39. The quotation here is by Stephen Meader as quoted by the authors.

wants to be fair the owner of the sunken tractor, Herb Willis. Ducky points out to Bill that the D2 is of no use to anyone right now, and that Willis has stated that he's already written it off. Because he's afraid that Bill's conscience will be a problem, Ducky manages these negotiations for Bill, whose concern dissipates when Willis, now a car salesman, crows about dumping a lemon on an unsuspecting customer (25-31). Bill obtains tractor and bulldozer for a total of one hundred dollars, which turns out to be a bargain when he finds that the equipment is serviceable.

Bill and Ducky pull the tractor from the pond, applying plenty of Yankee ingenuity. Using a block and tackle and steel cable attached to the tractor in the pond and to a large hemlock on the shore, they partially fell the tree, and pull it down with a truck, thus yanking the tractor up onto the shore of the pond. Ducky, a former military mechanic who worked on "Cats" while in the service, gets the D2 running, and it builds its own loading platform by digging a cut in the earth for the truck to back up to (31-42).

They bring the machinery home for further repair and maintenance. Bill's gamble, informed by the experience of his friend, pays off as the tractor turns out to be completely useable. While Ducky works on the machine, Bill goes looking for jobs he can do with his new "Cat" as he begins to develop an earthmoving and excavating business. At this point Bill is primarily a salesman. He is relying on Bucky to perform the mechanical work while he serves as occasional helper and student. During school vacation jobs, Bill has gained some basic experience operating such machines, but relies on Bucky to show him how to perform more complicated operations and to teach him about some of the mechanical aspects of the machinery. Bill insists on paying Bucky for

his time—Bucky insists it’s so much fun he doesn’t need to be paid—and sometimes Bill has to push Bucky away somewhat so that he learns for himself. In order to develop this necessary self-reliance, Bill sometimes hurts Bucky’s feelings, revealing a tension between the value of self-reliance and that of friendship and loyalty.

Meader leads the reader through a progression of jobs that Bill performs as he learns to use his newly salvaged equipment and starts to develop a business. The story takes place from the early summer into the winter of one year. Meader describes the different jobs that Bill accomplishes during each season and, as much as possible, organizes the jobs from smaller to larger, culminating with Bill’s bid on a very large project to build an athletic field for his town. Bill’s first job is pulling out two hundred old apple trees past their usefulness for farmer Alonzo Green, at a dollar per tree. Green is not having much success in removing the trees with his horses. Green has Bill put the estimate in writing, which he does, including the note “Terms: Cash on completion.” Bill has come up with the dollar per tree idea so that he doesn’t scare off his customer with a large hourly rate (46-59). Bill also figures that “even if he lost money he would be getting experience. And next time he’d have a better idea of what to charge” (48). Bill does fine on this tree removal job, but on his next job he gets more experience than money. Bill has used his tractor to pull another farmer’s tractor out of wet ground (56-58), refusing any pay for this neighborly act, but also parlaying it into a mowing job. He quotes this farmer a regular rate of seven-fifty an hour—when Bucky asks where that came from, Bill says it sounded better, more businesslike, than eight an hour (61)—and offers a flat rate of \$15 for what he thinks will be a two hour job. That job runs five hours but Bill sticks to

his quoted price even when the farmer offers him more, saying ““I got my money’s worth in experience.”” Next time he’ll allow extra for unexpected difficulties (62-64).

Bill’s next job is to remove an old shed, and clear and level a lot overgrown with brush, for local mechanics Joe and Ben Martin. This job attracts the attention of Gus Frake, who wants to know why the Martin brothers have hired Bill instead of the Rawdon Construction Company for whom Frake works. Joe Martin says that he wants to see what a local kid can do, and he and his brother are completely satisfied with Bill’s work (74-79). Bill’s next job, digging twenty-four cellars for new houses is much bigger, and he starts to compete directly with Rawdon. For this Bill will need additional equipment, a Traxcavator, which is a lift shovel designed for this type of job. Bucky knows of a good used one available at the Haskell Brothers Caterpillar dealership, so Bill goes to see it. Ed Haskell says he’d like to see Bill get a start, that it will be up him to see if he has the spunk to make good, and offers him the Traxcavator for \$600, the amount of money he has invested in it, leaving himself no profit. Haskell also says it would probably be a good idea for Mike Rawdon to have a little competition (81-83).

Bill talks to Orville Beale, the builder of the 24 houses, to get the details of the cellar digging job so that he can prepare a bid, and does so with Bucky’s help. Bill goes to the bank to obtain a business loan to purchase the Traxcavator. Eldridge Blaine, the banker, thinks Bill is too young for this job, and isn’t sure of the worth of the Traxcavator. After he talks to Ed Haskell, however, Blaine realizes the Traxcavator is a bargain, and figures the bank will get it if Bill fails. Blaine, in an unethical act for a banker, passes information to Rawdon that Bill provides in his loan application. Rawdon

has already submitted a bid higher than Bill's, but claims his first bid was erroneous and submits another barely undercutting Bill's. Beale gives the job to Bill anyway (85-98).

The big job digging cellars goes fairly smoothly at first although Bill and Bucky catch Rawdon Construction's Gus Frake trying to sabotage Bill's machinery on the job site, and miss his trial when the constable gives them the wrong time for trial—the constable and Frake are old fishing and drinking friends. Then Bill hits rock while digging the last two cellars. He is able to recruit former quarryman Ephraim Doane to do the necessary blasting of the rock, but Frake gets Doane drunk and Bill must finish some of the drilling himself. Doane recovers enough to help with the actual blasting. Bill successfully finishes the job and very happily (and early) pays off the loan on the Traxcavator, to banker Blaine's chagrin (99-140).

Busy though he is with his various jobs, Bill manages to acquire a girl friend along the way, Betty Barlow, whose father, Anson Barlow, is a respected farmer. Barlow raises potatoes, apples, and cattle on a "big place of five or six hundred acres" (105), and wants to have a pond built on their farm. When Bill gives him an estimate on that job, Barlow says its about what he expected, but big wages for someone so young. As Bill bristles, Barlow tells him to calm down, he just wanted to see how he'd react and states that he'll take a chance on Bill (just as the Martin Brothers did). Just as Bill finishes the pond, there is a forest fire, and Bill and his machine go to fight the fire. Frake has been one of the firefighters, happy to get that pay because Rawdon has fired him for getting drunk and wrecking a tractor (148-160). After Bill is called in to fight another fire, it turns out that it had been set by Frake, probably to collect more firefighting pay. Frake

disappears with an arson charge on his head (161-69).

Bill moves on to fall plowing jobs for most of October (173-80), and after various other jobs, takes his bulldozer to the woods for winter logging (185-197). Meader is on familiar ground here because of his father's lumbering experiences, which provided background for his book *Lumberjack* (1934), and for this part of *Bulldozer*. Bill is adding modern technology to this business, using his machinery to build roads and drag out logs after they are cut down. When Bill returns to the camp after Thanksgiving weekend while the foreman is still away, he finds a drunken riot. Frake has returned and supplied the liquor. Bill and the cook capture Frake and hand him over to the police (204-12).

Meanwhile there is a very big job to bid on—the town's new athletic field. Meader has occasionally acquainted the reader with details of the costs of materials, equipment, and labor in the earthmoving business. For this big job, as Bill figures out his estimate with Bucky's help, Meader shows the reader the process for preparing a bid on such a job (198-201).

When the bids for the athletic field are opened, Bill's is lowest, but Rawdon's is competitive, and because of Bill's youth and relative lack of experience, the issue goes to a meeting of all town residents for a decision. Bill learns in this meeting that his hard work, honesty, and good business sense have earned him a fine reputation, and banker Blaine's comments on Bill's youth mean little as a procession of Bill's customers praise his work, including Orville Beale who mentions Bill's overcoming the attempts made to sabotage his cellar digging. After praising Bill, Ed Haskell makes his Caterpillar dealership available to Bill to provide any engineering expertise he might need, and the

town overwhelmingly selects him for the job, collectively giving him an additional chance to prove what he can do, despite his youth (220-27). As the meeting ends, the participants emerge into a blizzard, and later that night Bill is awakened by a call from the police asking him to take his tractor to pull a car out of a snowdrift. Bill finds Betty Barlow in the car—her father has gone for help—and Bill is just in time to save her from suffocating (228-35).

Protagonist Bill Crane in *Bulldozer* exhibits values Meader showcased throughout his work. Bill is clearly ambitious and a hard worker. He is brave, weighing risks and taking the chances necessary to start a business. He is honest, standing by his word and commitments to his customers. He enjoys the friendship and loyalty of his friend Bucky, but distances himself at times so that he can develop the self-reliance necessary to make a go of his business.

Bill encounters two villains in *Bulldozer*. Gus Frake is a totally evil character. The nicest thing he does to Bill is to spit tobacco juice at him. Frake sabotages Bill's tractor by loosening nuts and later tries to put a charge of dynamite on the tractor that will blow up when it starts up. Frake gets Bill's blasting man drunk in an attempt to make Bill late on a contract, and sets a woodland fire that almost burns the town of New Jericho where Bill lives. Banker Blaine is also a villain although he is smooth and seems pleasant. Blaine leaks Bill's bid information to Rawdon, seems pleased at the possibility of getting the Traxcavator if Bill can't pay the loan on time, and drags his feet about getting Bill the proper paperwork when he pays off that loan. When the town meets to decide if Bill or Rawdon should get the large contract to build athletic fields for the

school, Blaine seems reasonable but speaks against Bill's youth and relative lack of experience.

In addition to the formulaic device of these villains, Bill also encounters romance with Betty Barlow, and receives a monetary reward for his part in the capture of Gus Frake (213-14). Meader also lightly touches on conservation and environmental issues. As Bill cuts logging roads, he tries to preserve the young trees in order to conserve dwindling forest resources (188). Bill takes notice of Ephraim Doane's hunting out of season of ruffed grouse and rabbits, though Bill helps Doane eat the "delicious" stew he makes from that game (125-26).

As with his earlier entrepreneurial novels, in *Bulldozer* Meader suggests an approach to starting a business, and provides everything from small business hints to descriptions of how to prepare a bid in this business. Meader has his hero take some business risks that pay off for him: salvaging the D2, innovative pricing of a dollar per tree for removal, obtaining a business loan to buy the Traxcavator, and bidding on some big jobs. Meader also mentions the importance of advertising in the local newspaper, having and using a telephone and a yellow pages listing, insisting on cash payments, putting estimates in writing and even better, typing them on letterhead stationery printed for the business. Bill drives his tractor in the town's 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and finds that to be good advertising as well.

A Kirkus review asserted that *Bulldozer* was a "literary come-on for mechanically minded boys who scorn straight fiction,"<sup>107</sup> and a 1955 School Edition included detailed

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<sup>107</sup>Kirkus Reviews 19 (15 September 1951): 534.

study questions for school use, much as the similarly mechanically oriented *T-Model Tommy* offered an edition with study questions. Throughout *Bulldozer* protagonist Bill Crane displays good business sense and related traditional values favored by Meader: hard work, courage, self-reliance, and honesty. Bill also finds that as he works to develop a business and find a place in the community, the members of that community are generally open to giving a young person a chance to prove himself.

Meader's next book, *The Fish Hawk's Nest* (1952), was historical fiction but featured similar values to those in *Bulldozer*, especially courage and hard work.<sup>108</sup> Meader set this book in Cape May, New Jersey, the first of several, and dedicated it to his college roommate Jesse Ludlam and his wife Patience Ludlam. Jesse Ludlam was from Cape May and first introduced Meader to that area while they were in college.<sup>109</sup>

The protagonist is Andy Corson, age fifteen, who lives on a farm in Cape May County, New Jersey, near the coast, in 1820. Early in the story, on a trip to a coastal island to check on the family cattle, Andy sees the first signs of smuggling in which one of his neighbors, Beasley Gillen, is involved. Gillen and his cohorts sneak in foreign goods, such as silk, to avoid the American duty. Andy finds various clues to the smuggling ring, and his nosy ways ultimately get him captured by the smugglers—he spends a formulaic ordeal imprisoned on their ship. When the U.S. Revenue Service Cutter *Valiant*, Lt. Craig commanding, attacks that ship, Andy is trapped in the hold and

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<sup>108</sup>*The Fish Hawk's Nest* was translated into German in both hardback and paperback editions.

<sup>109</sup>After Stephen Meader and Patience Ludlam were both widowed, the two married, and made their home in Cape May.

bravely prepares to meet his end but breaks out just in time to hurl himself courageously into the battle and save Lt. Craig's life (193-98).

Andy demonstrates the value of courage by plunging into that shipboard battle. Another example arises earlier when an angry Gillen comes by the Corson farm with a shotgun and orders Andy to get his father. Andy is scared at first, but then becomes angry and stands up to Gillen, telling him no one orders him or his father around that way. Gillen tells Andy that he and his father had better stay away from a barn he has purchased, and where, they learn later, he is keeping smuggled goods (117-19).

Examples of hard work abound in *The Fish Hawk's Nest*. Jim, a freed slave who works for Gillen, is a hard worker, but doesn't realize that his boss is a smuggler (116). The Gillens work their indentured girl, Prudence Mayhew, quite hard. Most of Andy Corson's neighbors "believed that plenty of hard work was what boys needed." Fortunately for him his father, Jeremiah Corson, remembers his own childhood, and lets Andy go hunting and fishing from time to time, if just to the coastal island where they keep their cattle, with the excuse that it is time to check on the cattle (4-5), and Andy shares the value enough to do that job before going fishing (10). On a Cape May farm in 1820 there is plenty of work, even when it rains. When that happens Andy's father assigns him and his brothers the indoor jobs that have been building up (141).

Meador also touches on the value of community in *The Fish Hawk's Nest*, as he had in more depth in, for example, *Who Rides in the Dark?* (1937) and *Blueberry Mountain* (1941). The smuggler Gillen's barn catches fire, and though he is not particularly well liked, the whole community turns out to fight the fire with a bucket

brigade (152-54). Gillen does little towards starting on a new barn; Andy's brother Luke points out that most other people would "have invited the neighbors for a barn-raising an' it'd been up and roofed by now" (166). Gillen is suspicious of everyone, and worried that people will discover his smuggling activities, so does not avail himself of this opportunity.

In addition to the formulaic technique of the ordeal, the novel offers a romantic subplot when Andy's brother Luke is drawn to Prudence Mayhew, the sixteen-year-old orphan girl indentured to the Gillens, in whose home she encounters "constant labor" and little affection (47). Money recovered from the smugglers functions as a reward for Andy, another common motif throughout Meader's work. Andy's father informs him: "The cutter crew gets prize money for ships an' cargoes they capture, an' they've voted you a full share" (235). Andy will use the money to go "to the famous college at Princeton."<sup>110</sup>

In *The Fish Hawk's Nest*, Meader emphasized the values of courage and hard work, and addressed belonging to a community. As he alternated between historical and contemporary stories during the 1950s, Meader followed *The Fish Hawk's Nest* with *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953), which also emphasized the values of hard work and belonging to both community and an athletic team. Meader had included some sports scenes in the prior contemporary novel *Blueberry Mountain* (1940), and many of his

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<sup>110</sup>Meader does not say why Andy chooses the College of New Jersey at Princeton (before 1896, Princeton University was the College of New Jersey). It may have been a combination of geographical proximity and that fewer colleges existed in 1820 than today.

short stories published in *The Will to Win and Other Stories* (1936) were about sports, but *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953) is his first book where the primary story is sports oriented, as noted in *The New York Herald Tribune Book Review*: “By the author of a good many boys’ books making his debut in sports.”<sup>111</sup> Greg (Peewee) Carson is the hero; his family has moved from the city to the small upstate town of Hackersville.<sup>112</sup> Peewee is only five foot three, but he ends up being both a star and a team player for the Hackersville High School basketball team. Peewee’s coach is Elmer Brent, who also becomes a boyfriend for Peewee’s sister, while Peewee starts a romance with cheerleader Dotty Gordon. Meader develops an entrepreneurial angle with Peewee’s newspaper route, but he is delivering papers for spending money, not to support a family or widowed mother as in *T-Model Tommy* (1938), *Blueberry Mountain* (1940), and *Bulldozer* (1951). As basketball takes center stage in this book, it pushes the entrepreneurial angle to the side, to a diminished role of obtaining spending money for a middle-class teenager, the first time this had happened in a book by Meader. The story includes a spoiled rich boy, Thornton Sedgely, who has also recently moved to Hackersville, but takes a little longer to learn to appreciate its virtues than Peewee does. Throughout the novel Meader emphasizes values of hard work, courage, friendship, loyalty and belonging—to a community and a team.

As the story unfolds, both Peewee and his basketball team learn and mature. The team endures many challenges including at first a general lack of respect, but ultimately

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<sup>111</sup>Part II, page 20, 15 November 1953.

<sup>112</sup>Hackersville is probably in New York but Meader does not specify.

wins the state basketball championship, with the winning play started by Peewee, who leaps higher than seems possible to intercept a pass and get it to his teammate who scores the winning basket. Thornton Sedgely, the rich boy with an attitude, eventually matures too, especially in reaction to a serious automobile wreck in which he is hurt and his father critically injured.

The values of hard work and ambition are important in this story, fueling Peewee's interest in playing varsity basketball, and winning a state championship. Peewee also finds that delivering newspapers entails hard work. Thornton discovers the importance of toil and perseverance in achieving success as well (159). The importance of loyalty and belonging to a team are vital throughout the story. After Hackersville wins a game against an undefeated urban team, a city sports writer dubs Peewee "Sparky," and he finds the hero worship that follows unsettling: "Actually, as he well knew, his part in beating Roosevelt had been no more commendable than of any of his team-mates. He felt he deserved a lot less credit than Clem Johnson, for instance, who had played beautifully every minute of the game" (177-78). Courage is another important value in this book, from Peewee's courage in pursuing a game he is "too short" to play, to his entire team's courage in persevering and winning the state championship (242). Courage is also important in Thornton's turnaround, and in his father's recovery.

Thornton makes a poor first impression on Peewee in their initial meeting when Peewee is delivering newspapers and Thornton yells at him "Hey kid . . . hey you," to see if he can buy a newspaper from him to save a trip to the store. Peewee only has enough for his customers and finds Thornton's bossy and commanding tone irritating

(55). When the coach takes a look at Thornton's basketball skills, Thornton, not realizing that the coach is trying to see if he's a team player, takes shots instead of passing to his teammates (62), but eventually he finds a place on the team. Early on, Thornton tells Peewee about a car his Dad gave him for his birthday, a convertible with leather seats—Thornton says it was to “make it up to me for moving to a hick town like this” (63-64). Peewee has only been in town a couple months longer than Thornton, but loyally defends the town. Elmer Brent, the basketball coach, says of Thornton: “He's got the makings of a pretty good man, once he stops looking down his nose at ordinary people” (73-74). The statement is reminiscent of one that lawyer Dan Page makes about the rich boy Bruce Neal in *T-Model Tommy* (1938), and Thornton undergoes a transformation similar to that of Bruce Neal—both grow from being spoiled condescending rich boys to industrious young men who try to fit in. Meader describes Thornton's change as follows: “The smiling self-assurance he had shown when he first moved to Hackersville was gone now. He was quiet, cooperative, and hard-working” (159). It takes the death of Bruce Neal's father to cause his change; Thornton's transformation occurs after his father is severely injured in a car crash. Thornton's father survives—and becomes a big fan of the Hackersville basketball team. Thornton feels guilty because he was driving when the crash occurred, and because he had been so vocal in his complaints about having to move to this “hick town,” and then found that the quiet support of his new community and basketball team have helped him to get on with his life and achieve this self-improvement while his father recovers (76-78, 164).

Peewee's paper route plays a secondary role in this basketball story, but Meader

provides enough detail for it to be realistic as well as furnishing information to his readers who might be contemplating taking such a job. Peewee earns a penny for each paper he delivers (27), and has to buy out the current carrier, who wants ten dollars for the route. Peewee offers him five, which he accepts, and he grudgingly interprets his smudged and almost illegible customer list (27-29).

Meador also provides two low-key romantic stories in *Sparkplug of the Hornets*. Dotty Gordon, cheerleader and 4-H member, asks Peewee to a 4-H party. She insists on calling him Greg. He has not noticed girls much before (89, 96), but enjoys the party and Dotty's company. After the party, he feels "a warm glow inside—a sense of really belonging to this friendly countryside and its young people" (124). This is the first of Meador's books in which he introduces 4-H activity for the protagonist, and he provides some information about 4-H to his readers, including the point that city youngsters can belong. He would explore these ideas about 4-H in more depth in *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964). Meador also develops a romance between Peewee's basketball coach Elmer Brent and his sister Jane, who are engaged by the end of the story.

After the contemporary basketball story, *Sparkplug of the Hornets*, Meador published *The Buckboard Stranger* (1954), returning to his New Hampshire childhood as a basis for this historical story. Tex Hawley, "the buckboard stranger," arrives in the town of Quimby, New Hampshire, in early 1906, driving a buckboard, and really stirs things up in the small town. Tex is vague about his past; he is from Texas and loves to gamble—on almost anything—and he has a temper, which he hides more carefully from the adults in Quimby than from the teenagers. The protagonist is Chuck Randall, age

fourteen; Chuck's friend and sidekick is Barney Burke. *The Buckboard Stranger* is notable for incidents taken from Meader's childhood; Meader introduces the book with a Foreword explaining that in his childhood, a real buckboard stranger did show up in his small town in New Hampshire, "out of nowhere, stayed in our midst long enough to win most of the money in town, and left as suddenly as he had come" (vi), although Meader admits to making the character more villainous in his novel.

Meader tells the story from Chuck Randall's point of view, from summer jobs to Independence Day celebrations to the arrival and activities of "the buckboard stranger." Hawley organizes a cockfight (35-39) and then a regular Saturday night poker game at the hotel (71-77), bets on a boys' baseball game (45-51), and sets up a horse race with \$1000 stakes, between horses owned by himself and the son of the owner of the town's woolen mill. Hawley wins the \$1000 race but has a bigger prize in mind: the safe at the mill. As Hawley slips out of town just after the race, Chuck Randall gets in his way, so Hawley takes him prisoner for a short ordeal. Chuck is able to escape and help capture Hawley as he attempts to rob the safe. After his capture, it turns out that Hawley has murdered snake oil salesman Cherokee Sam, whose medicine show Chuck and Barney had attended earlier—Hawley was afraid Sam would blow his cover. Rewards figure in the resolution of the story. Chuck receives a gold watch from the owner of the mill for his part in thwarting the robbery, and a \$1000 reward for the capture of Hawley offered by a bank in Kansas City that Hawley robbed. Barney receives Hawley's fast mare, Mockingbird, for his efforts.

Incidents inspired by Meader's childhood include the first scene in the book

where Chuck and Barney spear suckers (a type of fish). Meader and his childhood friend did the same: “Chandler Grant was a year older than I and lived in the same block. We were fast friends . . . We speared suckers . . .” (“A Family Memoir” 18). In that memoir, Meader states that *The Buckboard Stranger* chronicles spring and summer of 1906 just after he turned fourteen. He saw his first movie and medicine show, and “a burly Texan . . . rode into town on a buckboard . . . I invented the attempted robbery of the mill safe, but he did leave town under a cloud, following a series of gambling incidents and a horse race down Main Street. There were rumors of illegal cock-fighting, and Chandler Grant and I peeked through a rear window of the hotel one night to watch a poker game” (“A Family Memoir” 20).

In formulaic aspects of *The Buckboard Stranger*, Chuck does undergo a short ordeal. Romance is not a major concern but its possibility figures slightly. Chuck and Barney go to visit Flossie Kates from their eighth grade class on the occasion of her birthday. Chuck brings cookies he has asked his mother to bake; Barney has purchased oranges. Flossie is flustered by their visit, which does not go well. Affie Robbins, at least seventeen, and with an Oldsmobile, has come to pick up Flossie. On the way out, Barney grabs his bag of oranges (58-65). This incident is almost identical to one Meader relates from his own life in “A Family Memoir” (22) with young Steve Meader and his friend Chandler Grant playing the roles of Chuck and Barney. Flossie in real life is Flossie Keats; the nineteen-year-old Oldsmobile owner who picks her up is Alfie Robertson.

In further parallels between *The Buckboard Stranger* and Meader’s life, Chuck Randall’s father is head bookkeeper for the woolen mill in Quimby (4); Meader’s father

“took a job keeping books at the Gonic manufacturing company” after his partner Frank Babb absconded with their logging funds. Chuck works for the summer in the mill’s finishing room as did Meader who “inspected bolts of flannel in the finishing room, nailed cases in the shipping department, and toiled in the inferno of the drier where steady heat was applied to the goods that came wet from the dye-house” (“A Family Memoir” 24).

Meader presents his usual values in *The Buckboard Stranger*, especially hard work and courage. While Chuck labors at the mill, Barney is hard at work at the town hotel’s stable. “In that thrifty New England community it was taken for granted that any boy worth his salt would work during vacation. Money for a boy’s own clothes and a few extras was supposed to be earned between June and September” (66). Meader contrasts the boys’ hard work and that of the other townspeople, both in the mill and in nearby brickyards, with Hawley’s approach to life of gambling as well as the ultimately revealed robbery and murder. Chuck has the opportunity to display his courage when he realizes that Hawley may try to leave by the back door of the mill after he robs the safe, and Chuck is first on the scene with his trusty .22 rifle. He wants to cut and run but holds onto his bravery and shoots the culprit, not fatally but injuring him so that he can be captured (201-05).

Meader’s childhood as a basis for a book truly makes it historical fiction by this time in the author’s career, but he reached even farther back in history for his next book, *Guns for the Saratoga* (1955), set in the American Revolutionary War. Meader uses *The First Saratoga* by American naval historian William Bell Clark as the historical basis for

his novel.<sup>113</sup> Meader states in his Foreword that he read Clark's book and thought: "here was the historical material for an adventure novel boys and girls would like" (vii). Meader used the actual crew names from the historical record as the characters' names in this book except for protagonist Gideon Jones and his friend Aaron Mathis, whose names he made up (viii). Gideon Jones is seventeen, then eighteen years old as he goes to sea during the Revolutionary War. Gid lives in the Mullica River country in the pine barrens of New Jersey where his father Reuben Jones runs the Batsto ironworks, which is now making war goods. Gid also works in the Batsto foundry, and then has a chance to serve on the privateer *Rattlesnake*.<sup>114</sup> After that service, he works at the foundry again; among other jobs, he works on guns for the *Saratoga*, a new American sloop-of-war. Gid also helps to deliver the guns to the *Saratoga* and signs up to be a midshipman when she sails. After serving with distinction, Gid captains a captured prize ship to Philadelphia. Thus he is not on the *Saratoga* when it disappears in a howling storm; he is on shore leave awaiting her return. Meanwhile, Gid starts making fancy castings in iron to sell in the city, and marries his romantic interest in the book, Peggy Lane. It is quite unusual for a Meader protagonist to be married during the story though sometimes a wedding is impending as the story ends, as in Meader's next book, *Sabre Pilot*.

*Sabre Pilot* (1956) is unique for Meader in that the United States Air Force

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<sup>113</sup>William Bell Clark, *The First Saratoga: Being the Saga of John Young and his Sloop-of-War*, Louisiana University Press, 1953; reprint, Sandwich, MA: Chapman Billies, 1995.

<sup>114</sup>The *Rattlesnake* was a Revolutionary War privateer which actually saw service some years later than in Meader's story.

commissioned it, much as their predecessor, the U. S. Army Air Forces, had commissioned John Steinbeck's *Bombs Away: the Story of a Bomber Team* at the beginning of World War II.<sup>115</sup> *Sabre Pilot* protagonist Kirk Owen lives in Clarksdale, "a town of ten or twelve thousand people in the heart of the Corn Belt" (10). Kirk is seventeen and had started college but dropped out and returned home after his father had a heart attack. He mows lawns but, as his father puts it, "Sorry you couldn't get a regular summer job, but I know it's tough when the draft board may call you any time" (12). Kirk has mechanical ability and interest; he has built a fast car out of pieces of junked Austins and MGs. Kirk and two friends are racing their cars on what they think is an abandoned air strip when they learn that the strip and its Air Force Base are being reactivated because of the Korean War. The Air Force Security Policeman who stops Kirk and his friends is also an Air Force mechanic, and befriends Kirk. Ultimately Kirk decides to join the Air Force rather than be drafted.

*Sabre Pilot* follows Kirk Owen's entire Air Force career, starting with his induction through basic training and mechanic's training. Events propel him into a pilot's career, and the reader follows Kirk through his pilot's training stateside and in Korea, his combat experience in Korea, his being shot down, and his survival, successful evasion of capture, and ultimate rescue and return to the United States forces. Kirk also meets an attractive, blond Air Force girl from Kansas, Ginnie Gordon, whose company he enjoys, and they are planning to marry by story's end.

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<sup>115</sup>John Steinbeck, *Bombs Away: the Story of a Bomber Team*, (New York: Viking Press, 1942).

Historically, there is an inconsistency in Kirk's rush to enlist in the Air Force to beat the draft. The story starts in June, and within two days he has enlisted, with his parents' requisite permission. The draft board has him on its list for next month (July), but he won't be 18 till August; eligibility for the draft began at age eighteen. Apparently the draft board plans to draft Kirk earlier than they are allowed to. This is an example of Meader's interest in boys younger than draft age being enticed into the military, as he would address in a Civil War context with the pre-draft age hero of *The Muddy Road to Glory* (1963) who enlists in the Union Army. As a Quaker, Meader struggled with his conscience on this issue when as an advertising person he was "asked to bring pre-draft age boys into the recruiting offices in 1940-41" (Margolis and Silverstein 38).

*Book Review Digest* for 1956 called *Sabre Pilot* "a vocational novel for boys . . . about the training of U.S. Air Force recruits" (page 630) and the *Kirkus* review there digested cites "its thin story" and calls it "more of a manual than a novel." Cecile Magaliff, in her chapter on Meader, asserts: "*Sabre Pilot* is about the weakest of the Meader books. It reads more like a recruiting circular for the United States Air Force than a typical Meader adventure story" (43), unsurprising, given that Meader wrote it with the cooperation of the United States Air Force and at their request. It contains detailed information on Air Force training and life, from the first visit to the recruiting station through basic training, mechanic's training, pilot's training, and aerial combat. Meader organizes his plot so that his protagonist goes through both mechanic's and pilot's training in order to provide information on two major Air Force career paths. The reader is there for the first Air Force meal, the first haircut, the first \$10 of spending

money (28-29).

Kirk becomes an Air Force mechanic, but he really wants to fly. He has had almost two years of college before his father's heart attack. Encouraged by the same sergeant who recruited him into the Air Force, Kirk does make-up work to finish the two courses required to complete his second year of college. The general consensus of his superiors is that he should give the Air Force some time as a mechanic before trying to transfer to aviation cadet school.

Then one of Kirk's superiors, Lt. Peabody, a pilot whose aircraft he helps maintain, crash lands. Kirk is first on the scene, and pulls Peabody to safety (70-71). After being criticized for rescuing the pilot without orders to do so, Kirk finds that his application to become an air cadet can now be processed. Thus Meader is able to portray the training and development both of Air Force mechanics, and of pilots, through the experience of his protagonist.

After pilot training, Kirk arrives in Korea and is assigned to a fighter-interceptor wing as an F-86 fighter pilot. The commanding major's introduction to the job is sobering. He says the pilots must be tigers with "the killer instinct. You've got to hate those Reds for what they are and for what they're trying to do to you, your family, your country, and everything you believe in. You've got to accept the fact that it's kill or be killed—get that MIG first or he'll get you" (126). Kirk struggles with his conscience that night. He considers "Thou shalt not kill" of the Ten Commandments, and then David who protected his people from slavery by killing Goliath. Kirk ends with the thought: "When your freedom and the people you love are threatened, you've got to fight." He

ends with a silent prayer and feels better (129). This seems to be unusual reasoning coming from the pen of a Quaker, but may possibly be explained by Meader's experiences in World War II. His sons served as military pilots in that war, and he served as a coastal spotter and wrote recruiting advertising for the Army. According to Robert Lawrence Smith, "more than half the draft-eligible Quaker men in the United States served in World War II, inspired by the clear moral choices of this conflict" (77) as they followed their individual consciences. Apparently, after all these experiences, and following his own conscience, Meader was able to continue his support for the United States military by lending his writing talents to the recruiting efforts of the Air Force in the 1950s.

After a number of exciting combat missions, Kirk's plane is shot down and he has to bail out, and breaks his arm as he lands. He survives behind enemy lines for a couple of days, finally tying himself to an oil drum and riding it down a river. He almost drowns but is found by friendly personnel who get him to the American forces. Kirk is rather banged up but is happy to find that his ambulance driver is a friend from his first training Flight.

Courage is the most obvious value displayed by Kirk Owen. Throughout the story, from his rush to a burning airplane to rescue the pilot to his bravery in combat to his resolve during his time behind enemy lines, Kirk is clearly courageous. Loyalty and belonging are also important to Kirk as he is processed and trained to become a member of the United States Air Force.

Formulaic techniques in *Sabre Pilot* include Kirk's experience behind enemy

lines which can be considered an ordeal, and his romance with Ginnie Gordon. Meader also uses the spoiled rich boy who turns himself around in the character of Grant Boyd Castleman. Castleman is a wealthy lad who starts out with an entitled, spoiled, self-centered attitude; during the course of the story he turns into a cooperative Air Force member. As Grant starts the story, he doesn't think that Air Force regulations apply to him, even threatening legal action to exempt himself from the military haircut that all recruits receive (29-30). Something about the military training and routine starts to sink in with Grant though, and when Kirk travels by Air Force transport airplane to his next duty station, he finds Grant on the same flight and notices "a surprising change in the boy . . . Grant had turned into a pretty good recruit" (47-48).

The work of sociologist Elizabeth Long in *The American Dream and the Popular Novel* (1985) can be related to *Sabre Pilot*. Long argues that in the decade after World War II, the ideas in adult popular novels were hearkening back to individual success within an entrepreneurial framework even as "white-collar bureaucracies were proliferating, and when the educational credentials attesting to specialized competence were becoming increasingly important determinants of social mobility" (64). With *Sabre Pilot* Meader was writing of a protagonist who was learning to be a part of a bureaucracy, and who had to complete his educational credentials with two more college courses to satisfy bureaucratic requirements before he could train to become a pilot. Meader would write one final entrepreneurial adventure, *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, in 1961, but with *Sabre Pilot* he seems to be responding to the societal changes that Long describes.

John Meader, son of Stephen Meader, contributed to *Sabre Pilot* in several important ways. John Meader states: “after completing an accelerated course and early graduation from college, I joined my brother as a pilot in the US Army Air Corps” during World War II.<sup>116</sup> John Meader used his experience as a military pilot to help his father with *Sabre Pilot*. The Air Force offered Stephen Meader the opportunity to fly in one of their jets so that he could write more knowledgeably about the experience. Meader felt that flying in a military jet was a little more strenuous than he wanted to attempt, but suggested that his son John fly in his stead. John reported his impressions to his father for use in the writing of the story.<sup>117</sup> Meader dedicated the book “To my flying sons: Stephen Warren Meader, Jr. and John Hoyt Meader.”

For the final book of the period from 1946 to 1957, *Everglades Adventure* (1957), Meader again turned to history to set the story in 1870s south Florida near the Everglades.<sup>118</sup> The protagonist is Toby Morgan whose father is a doctor who served in the Civil War. Toby works with Professor Evans, a naturalist and pioneer photographer, and his daughter Sue, who come to south Florida to study and photograph nature. Sue becomes a sidekick for Toby as well as a romantic interest. Meader thus deals with nature photography in this book as in several others, but it is his only historical novel to address the subject. Environmental concerns are also evident here, especially concerns

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<sup>116</sup>John H. Meader, letter to the author, 15 January 2003, Moorestown, NJ.

<sup>117</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, 11 April 1996, Moorestown, NJ.

<sup>118</sup>*Everglades Adventure* was translated into German in both hardback and paperback editions.

about the damage “plume-hunters” are doing to some species of birds as they collect feathers for women’s hats. The values of courage, ambition, and of loyalty and friendship are important in this book. Toby makes friends with Miki-loko, son of the chief of the Caloosa Indians; Miki-loko also functions as a sidekick for Toby from time to time.

Nature study and photography, and the Caloosa Indians, are the main points of interest in this book. As Toby explores the Everglades, by himself, and then as a guide to his naturalist friends, they find both interesting wildlife, and the Caloosa Indians. Miki-loko finds Toby when he has been injured by an alligator and lost his boat and takes him home to his village where his wound is treated, after which he returns Toby to his home the next day. When Toby asks Sue if her father ““takes pictures of wild things”” she agrees, saying ““It’s a new idea of his.”” She says it’s an improvement on old naturalists like Audubon, who had to kill and then draw, and that the camera only weighs 30 pounds with the tripod. Sue tells Toby that her father worked with Matthew Brady in the Civil War (64-65).

Meader emphasizes environmental issues, particularly concerning the wanton slaughter of wildlife, both as expressed by Toby and sometimes from the point of view of Professor Evans. Toby has little use for the plume hunters he encounters in the Everglades. He considers them a sinister lot “who slaughtered egrets by the hundreds to get the snowy feathers grown by the male birds. In New York and Paris there was a demand for those feathers to decorate ladies’ hats” (17) but the egrets aren’t seen much because “the constant gunning of plume hunters had driven most of them into the farther reaches of the great swamp” (45). “But the whole business of plume-hunting was

revolting to the boy. Just because fashionable women wanted feathers on their hats was no excuse for shooting down the most beautiful birds in the Everglades” (48). Evans agrees with Toby’s point of view, asserting: ““In a dozen years there won’t be an egret left in Florida,”” and vows to talk to friends at the Smithsonian about what can be done to save the egrets (156).<sup>119</sup> Toby doesn’t always have environmentally correct instincts though. After Professor Evans takes the first pictures of an American crocodile, Toby offers to shoot the crocodile. Evans is shocked and explains that the crocodile is in danger of being exterminated (74-75).<sup>120</sup>

The Caloosa Indians (also Calusa) were actual inhabitants of Florida though most sources say that Smallpox decimated the tribe and that most of them left Florida when the Spaniards left in 1763.<sup>121</sup> Meader creates this story on the premise that some of them

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<sup>119</sup>Jean Dorst in *Before Nature Dies* discusses plume hunting worldwide and the slaughter of egrets in the southeastern United States that led to the establishment of the Audubon Society (70).

<sup>120</sup>Durward L. Allen stated in 1974 in *Our Wildlife Legacy* that “practically the entire population of American crocodiles are protected in Everglades Park” (330). Charles C. Mann and Mark L. Plummer state in *Noah’s Choice: The Future of Endangered Species* (1995) that “the American crocodile, subject of a long-running conservationists’ campaign” was added to the endangered species list by the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1975 (163). Mann and Plummer also date “the roots of the political effort to protect biodiversity” to October 1956 when that agency called a meeting to discuss the future of the endangered whooping crane (149). Word of that effort may have reached Meader and could explain his interest in these environmental concerns in this book from 1957.

Further information on these issues, including the Endangered Species Act of 1973, is available in *Fate of the Wild: The Endangered Species Act and the Future of Biodiversity* by Bonnie B. Burgess.

<sup>121</sup>For example, “The Calusa: ‘The Shell Indians,’” retrieved 6 July 2004 from <http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/calusa/calusa1.htm>

stayed on hidden deep in the Everglades. The tribe in this story experiences an outbreak of smallpox but Toby, armed with a letter from his father, is able to get smallpox vaccine from the Army's Fort Taylor. The officer in charge there remembers Dr. Morgan's actions in saving some of his men in the Wilderness and cuts through the Army's red tape to get the medicine (137).

Sue is a female sidekick for the hero and ultimately a romantic interest. Sue has assisted her father previously with his camera work, and when Professor Evans engages Toby to guide his photographic expeditions, he and Sue begin to spend a fair amount of time together. One afternoon, the two young people go fishing, and when the fish don't bite, they go swimming on an island, and don't notice an approaching storm until too late. They undergo an overnight ordeal, trapped on the island during a hurricane, huddled under their boat, which offers protection during the first part of the storm. A tree crashes onto the boat and holds it in place during the first onslaught of the storm. As the eye passes over, Toby and Sue are able to take nourishment from some coconuts. They realize that the wind in the second part of the storm will be coming in the opposite direction from the first, and thus their boat will no longer provide shelter. They huddle in a mangrove thicket, under a mat they have made of from palmetto fronds. In the morning, they are fine, but their boat is no longer seaworthy, and they wait for their worried fathers to rescue them (109-20).

The values of loyalty, friendship, and helping other people are strong in this book. Toby and Sue become quite good friends, and their friendship may grow further. Ultimately Sue will return to the Boston, and Toby changes his college plans from

Pennsylvania to Harvard to be near her. Miki-loko helps Toby when he is injured; Toby and his father, as well as Sue and her father, help out the Caloosa in various ways, especially during the smallpox outbreak. The black Bahamian ship captain who agrees to take Toby to Fort Taylor for the medicine sums it up: ““We have to help one another—white people, black people, and Indians. I’ll do my best to make a fast trip”” (135). Toby and Sue become fast and loyal friends, and do Toby and Miki-loko.

Through his association with Professor Evans, Toby decides he wants to be a naturalist, and sells a story to a nature journal by the end of the book. Toby realizes it will be hard work but states: ““I guess I don’t mind hard work, if it’s the kind of work I like”” (158). Professor Evans tells him that he will succeed in the free and growing United States as long as he doesn’t get discouraged (159). This aspect of Toby’s development illustrates the value of ambition and hard work. Toby demonstrates that same value as he steers the Evans boat through the night on the trip to the Caloosa village with smallpox vaccine. His muscles ache but he makes no complaint because of the life and death nature of their mission (141).

Courage, as so often with Meader, is another important value in *Everglades Adventure*. As Professor Evans takes pictures of a panther, Toby keeps him covered, and then shoots the panther after an agonizing wait while the professor packs up the cumbersome photographic equipment.<sup>122</sup> Sue later tells Toby’s sister Betsy “with some heat” that Toby is both a good shot and is brave (91). In another example of his courage, Toby bravely and somewhat foolishly takes on two plume hunters, Mose and Red, who

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<sup>122</sup>The Florida panther is now an endangered species.

have stolen his dugout canoe. Mail carrier Abel Harris intervenes and saves Toby a beating, and he gets his boat back (95-99). Throughout the story, Toby bravely encounters dangerous wild animals. Both Toby's encounters with the Indians, and Miki-loko's with Toby and his family, require courage. Miki-loko and his father Mikko, the Caloosa chief, are brave in the face of smallpox as well as in their embrace of the strange "white man's" medicine, and their encouragement of the other villagers to take the medicine.

*Everglades Adventure* was Meader's last book published in the period between World War II and Meader's retirement from advertising. Also of interest from this era are two short stories, "Between the Dunes and the Sea" (August 1951) and "Pinky on the Beach" (July 1952) both published in *Jack and Jill*. As Meader had sought new audiences for his short stories of older readers than his usual early in his career, he looked in the other direction to very young children with these stories, which demonstrate both his broad range of appeal to juvenile readers and his wide-ranging pursuit of markets for his work.

As he had before, Meader wrote contemporary and historical children's novels during this period, including the contemporary entrepreneurial, *Bulldozer*, two books drawing on his New Hampshire childhood similar to those he had written at the beginning of his career, and the historical *Jonathan Goes West* similar to his *Boy With a Pack*. Meader also wrote additional historical novels, including *Whaler 'Round the Horn*, which he called his boys' *Moby Dick*. Two more contemporary books of the period were his first book concentrating on sports, *Sparkplug of the Hornets*, about basketball, and

*Sabre Pilot*, unique in his career in that the U.S. Air Force commissioned it. Meader also expanded his audience with two stories for younger children in *Jack and Jill*. Most of this work stimulated favorable critical comment although there were a few unfavorable reviews, and in some ways he was starting to repeat ideas, themes, and settings. As he moved into his final period of writing some of these issues would become more problematic for him, although in general he continued to be a successful writer.

## Chapter VI

### Final Published Books (1958 to 1969) and Unpublished Works

In 1957 Stephen Meader retired from his day job in advertising, but he continued to write books for young people, and to emphasize familiar themes, including the environment and entrepreneurialism, and the values that he had developed throughout his writing career: courage, self-reliance, hard work, friendship, belonging and community. He published thirteen more books in this final period, alternating between contemporary novels and historical, with the exception of the back-to-back Civil War stories during the centennial of that conflict, for a total of seven historical and six contemporary books. Six of the thirteen, both historical and contemporary, were set along the Atlantic coast. Meader published his final contemporary entrepreneurial novel, *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961), in this period, but some of his characters were more interested in earning spending money than in starting a business, as entrepreneurialism seemed to be diminishing in importance in the 1960s. Meader employed the convention of the ordeal less often, and his characters sometimes achieved their goals with little enough personal struggle to elicit comment from reviewers. Although Meader emphasized the same values, less struggle and ordeal provided his characters with fewer chances to demonstrate those values. Meader also started to receive some negative reviews, and it appears that he may have started to lose touch with the young people who had always constituted his core audience, at the same time as children's literature was changing

greatly, especially in terms of dealing with societal problems in children's books rather than excluding them. Ultimately, after forty-four published books, Meader's submission in 1969 of the "The Hawley House Mystery" to Harcourt, Brace, his regular publisher, resulted in a rejection letter. He wrote and submitted at least one more typescript, responding to editorial comments and suggestions, but no more of his books were published in his lifetime.

During this final period of his writing, Meader returned to environmental themes. He had first demonstrated his concern with the environment when he had Abe direct Allen Gentry not to shoot passenger pigeons in *Longshanks* (1928), but his *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964) shows influence from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), and Meader's reprise of the environmental theme would be joined by others who were reacting to Carson's arguments, especially those concerning the pesticide DDT. Meader would write directly about DDT, wetlands, pollution, and unwise coastal development in the typescript "The Fight for the Marsh," clearly written in response to his editor's comment that he needed to be relevant—Meader submitted it to at least two publishers in 1972, but it was rejected.

Meader's treatment of the value of community took the form of belonging as a theme—belonging to a 4-H club in *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964), to a Boy Scout troop in *Wild Pony Island* (1959), and to a high school football team in *Lonesome End* (1968). In these books, as Meader again emphasized the value of community, he broadened that idea to include belonging to organizations such as 4-H and the Boy Scouts, in addition to belonging the general community. In *Wild Pony Island*, community and youth

organization intersect as the hero joins both the island village of Ocracoke and its wild-pony-mounted Boy Scout troop.

During this period, Meader introduced a variant of the old lost and recovered treasure formula, but in these stories the protagonist discovers *not* family property or money as in *Red Horse Hill* (1930) and *Down the Big River* (1924), but finds lost historical artifacts: the ship's wheel from the *Monitor*, United States Civil War ship in *Wild Pony Island* (1959), and the figurehead from a ship lost in the blizzard of 1888 (*Topsail Island Treasure* [1966]). And in the first book of the period, *The Commodore's Cup* (1958), the protagonist finds and salvages not historical artifacts, but an entire modern boat sunk and lost in a storm, in a similar find to that of the Caterpillar tractor sunk in a pond that the protagonist of *Bulldozer* (1951) discovers and salvages.

Meader's first book of his retirement period, *The Commodore's Cup* (1958), features protagonist Luke Cramer, age almost seventeen, a year round resident of Man-o'-War Island off the New Jersey coast. Luke begins the story as a sailboat racing enthusiast who is crew on a Comet Class racing sailboat<sup>123</sup> in the big Labor Day race. The skipper is Bruce Canning, a successful real estate broker. Working for Canning, Luke is also learning the real estate business as he contemplates a career in that field. Luke finds a Comet Class sailboat that has blown away in a storm and sunk. That boat had originally belonged to a rich boy, Mert Holliger, who has already ordered a new, "faster" boat. Luke obtains the salvage rights inexpensively, and recovers and restores the boat during

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<sup>123</sup>The Comet Class of racing sailboat is a sixteen foot sailboat designed for racing with a two person crew.

the winter, racing the boat very successfully in the spring. As in *Bulldozer* (1951), the hero finds, salvages, and restores something perceived to be of little value, and makes profitable use of it. Luke ultimately wins “The Commodore’s Cup,” beating out his sailing teacher and real estate boss, Bruce Canning, and beating Mert Holliger with his old boat as well. The winner of the final races of the season, on Labor Day Weekend, wins the cup, has his name engraved on it as that year’s champion, and serves as Commodore of the club for the upcoming season. There is an ongoing romantic subplot, in which Luke wins the wealthy Marilyn March away from the attentions of Mert Holliger.

As first sailing coach and then real estate boss to Luke, Bruce Canning is an all-around mentor and role model. One sailing day there is so much real estate work to do—so many seasonal beach rentals to show—that both boss and employee must miss the race because of work. Work comes before play, and the boss does not go to the race leaving his employee do all the work, nor does he release Luke. *The Commodore's Cup* is another Meader story in which the hero wins the girl from the spoiled rich boy. In his capacity as all-around general assistant to Bruce Canning, Luke opens up the summer beach house that the March family has rented, which is clear evidence of the difference in status between him and Marilyn March. The maid and uniformed chauffeur with whom the Marches arrive confirm that difference (106). The Cramers are not poor—Luke’s father owns a hardware store—but neither are they in the same class as the Marches. Marilyn’s father works for Mert Holliger’s father, and Marilyn must keep relations civil and spend some time with Mert. Nonetheless Luke has won her from Mert

at the tale's conclusion. Mert is angry that Luke is seeing Marilyn, and one night as Luke leaves her house, Mert uses his father's Cadillac to force Luke and his bicycle off the road, and starts a fist fight. Luke gets the better of Mert in the fight, and then gallantly protects him from the policeman who arrives and asks if Holliger ran the bike off the road (142-46).

Just before the final big race of his first season of racing his own boat, Luke's regular crew injures himself in a fishing accident. It takes Luke some time to realize that Marilyn would be the ideal crew, and she eagerly accepts once he asks her. Marilyn is a last minute substitution, as are Bud in *Red Horse Hill* (1930), when he rides "Cedar" in the big race, and Shad Davis, who rides "Cedar's Boy" in that climatic race (1949). All three assume these roles because of last minute incapacitation of the persons they replace, and are thus afforded these unexpected opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. Meader handles the racing scenes of *The Commodore's Cup* with the skill and suspense that he used to describe horse races and football and basketball games.

Some reviews mention Meader's use of sailing jargon, but other concerns of more import were on the minds of the reviewers, as *The Commodore's Cup* elicited negative comments such as: "Some of Stephen Meader's dialogue may sound a little archaic to today's teenagers" and "The story is only moderately interesting, due to Luke's almost unqualified success in every aspect of his life—sailing, job, girl friend, overcoming a rival; the latter three subplots contribute little by way of action or characterization." A review assigning a marginal rating stated that the protagonist does not emerge "as a distinctive personality." Meader's characters do seem to struggle more in his earlier

books. Though there is a fight with the rival, there is no ordeal in this book. Another review mentioned “stock characters and situations.”<sup>124</sup> Meader still captured the excitement of a race but seemed to be losing touch with reviewers. His next book again concerned sailing, but of historic and much larger ships, the clipper ships of the 1850s.

In *The Voyage of the Javelin* (1959), Meader launches protagonist Bob Wingate on his sailing career in 1854 by having Bob save a foolish dog from being run over by the clipper ship *Javelin* as it is launched.<sup>125</sup> The dog belongs to the wife of one of the ship’s owners; Bob is rewarded with the offer of a berth as ship’s boy, in training to be an officer. Meader repeats the rescue motif later in the book, as Bob rescues a half-drowned Chinese man, Wing Lee, who has swum to the *Javelin* to escape ruffians who attacked him on the shore. Wing Lee turns out to be a fine cook and excellent addition to the crew.

Meader used *The Voyage of the Javelin* to describe clipper ship life as well as the California gold fields; the hero and his companions find an ample supply of gold, in an area which has already been panned for several years, while they are on leave from their ship before it continues its voyage to China. One of the companions in the mining,

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<sup>124</sup>Reviews of *The Commodore's Cup*, by Stephen W. Meader: John M. Connole, “Summer Sailor,” *The New York Times Book Review*, 14 September 1958, 32; *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* 12 (March 1959): 117-18; *Booklist* 55 (1 November 1958): 136.

<sup>125</sup>Meader’s rescue of the dog may rework a motif used by Horatio Alger, who often had his heroes rescue a child from drowning toward the end of a book. The child invariably had a rich father who rewarded Alger’s hero with a clerking job in his counting house. Meader improves the device by putting it at the beginning of the story where it gives the hero a chance to prove himself by using the opportunity.

joining Bob and his two shipmates, is the young writer Bret Harte, portrayed positively by Meader as a pleasant young man learning about the West. Bob finishes the voyage as a fourth mate.

Meader brings entrepreneurial aspects into this book as the grateful Wing Lee tells Bob of riches to be made by obtaining sea otter furs inexpensively from Pacific coast Indians, and trading those furs in China, where the *Javelin* is going for a cargo of tea. Bob takes the idea to Captain Sprague, who shows interest—the ship’s owners ““like fresh ideas for making money”” (119). Sprague compliments Bob on his ambition and allows him to invest his own gold dust (panned in California during leave) in the venture. This entrepreneurial idea, the view of clipper ship life and Gold Rush California, the portrayal of an historical figure, Bret Harte, are the most interesting aspects of this book. The ocean would be important to Meader’s next book, a contemporary story set along the coast of North Carolina on Ocracoke Island.

Rick Landon is the protagonist of *Wild Pony Island* (1959); his mother is a widow. Rick is fourteen and has a nine-year-old brother. Their father had been in the Coast Guard and died a hero’s death. As the story begins, the family lives in Brooklyn where Rick frequently skips school and is starting to get into gang-related trouble. This is unusual behavior for one of Meader’s protagonists, but like Meader’s other heroes Rick is generally pleasant and polite, and he doesn’t seem to be a good fit in the gang. When he is pressured into coming to a rumble with another gang, he is scared, and the only weapon he can come up with is a sock with gravel in it, which seems a little silly next to the switchblade knives and tire chains that the other gang members carry, especially

when a hole in the sock leaks most of the gravel (26). When Rick is stabbed in this gang street fight, he tells the judge that he did not want to be in the fight, but that his gang “the Owls is the only outfit I could belong to. If I hadn’t gone with ’em, they’d have called me ‘chicken’” (30).<sup>126</sup> Rick’s mother has already decided to move the family to Ocracoke, the island on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where she grew up, and where she met their father, who had been stationed there by the Coast Guard; the judge agrees to this plan and within a month, Rick, his brother, and mother are bound for Ocracoke.

The value of community is key as Rick joins the Boy Scouts—the right sort of gang—and quickly becomes a member of the island village of Ocracoke by making friends, a girl friend, and an equine friend, Dandelion, one of the wild ponies which he trains. He no longer has a truancy problem, and finds that he is developing skill as a writer. In all these ways Rick experiences the value of belonging to this productive and positive community, with clear and strong contrasts to his earlier belonging to the negative community of the gang in New York City that landed him in the hospital and juvenile court. His new community does not even have, or need, a policeman. One reviewer commented specifically and positively on the idea of belonging, citing “the grand friendship with Jed, who initiated him into island life and taught him the wonder of ‘belonging.’”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Rick is becoming a juvenile delinquent although Meader does not use the term. James Gilbert discusses the American concern with juvenile delinquency during this decade in *A Cycle of Outrage: America’s Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, Oxford University Press: New York and Oxford, 1986.

<sup>127</sup>Review of *Wild Pony Island* by Stephen W. Meader, *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, “R.F.,” 1 November 1959, sec. 2, page 36.

Rick learns quickly for someone who initially knows so little of the local culture. When they arrive in Ocracoke, Rick's Uncle Dan tells him he will need to get firewood for his mother and asks if he has learned to use an ax and bucksaw, but "as far as he knew he had never even seen such tools" (41). Rick is thus much like Tad Hopkins, the hero of Meader's earlier *Longshanks* (1928), who does not know how to chop wood—Tad because his family is wealthy, Rick because he is a poor city boy. Neither has had to learn the skill until necessity requires it.

The Boy Scout troop that Rick joins is organized around the wild horses of Ocracoke. Rick's entrance into and acceptance by both communities, the village of Ocracoke and the Boy Scout troop, intersect when Rick proves his courage by breaking and training a young stallion. Rick has not even formally joined the Scouts when he volunteers to break the young stallion. He is certain he is about to die, and almost gives up trying to stay on the bucking horse, but the horse gives up first, Rick is accepted into the Scouts, and his courage and accomplishment cannot escape notice by almost all the residents of the village as Rick becomes a true member of both the village and the Scout troop. He very much enjoys the Boy Scout program and friendships he develops there. When his old teacher from Brooklyn comes to visit, he tells her: "I'd never have amounted to much if I'd stayed there. A guy wants to *be* somebody. He thinks he has to belong. I suppose I might have found a boys' club, or a Y.M.C.A., or even a Scout troop to belong to." (191). His Brooklyn teacher has come to honeymoon with her new husband, the policeman who arrested Rick in New York after the rumble. The two had met in court during his case, fallen in love, married—and come to visit him at Ocracoke.

There is romance for Rick as well, with Judy Ann, sister of one of his new buddies.

In *Wild Pony Island*, Meader introduces the idea of lost and recovered historical artifacts, which he would repeat in *Topsail Island Treasure* (1966). After a storm tears deep gullies in the sand on the beach, Rick finds the ship's wheel from the *U. S. S. Monitor* (156-57), and a museum authenticates it and pays him \$100 for it (176-77).<sup>128</sup>

Rick finds ways to make spending money in his new home as well: "several times he got jobs baby-sitting at the Sound-front beach, while tourist parents were out fishing. The going rate was fifty cents an hour . . . Most of his other jobs were harder and dirtier—hauling sand for instance" (106). As with Peewee in *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953) with his newspaper delivery route, Meader's protagonist is making spending money but not trying to support a family. This is in line with James Gilbert's observation: "By the mid-1950s about half the high-school-age population joined the labor force at some time during the year" (20). Rick and most of the teenagers in the labor market were there to earn spending money, and two years later, Meader would write his last entrepreneurial story featuring a protagonist who starts a business to support a family, *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961).

Rick's developing interests in writing and in the birds and fish of the area are encouraged by the writings and visit of Rebecca Hamilton, a writer and marine biologist who seems to be modeled on Rachel Carson. Both are marine biologists, both are writers and birders, the names and subjects of their books are similar; even their names are not

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<sup>128</sup>This is a reworking of another Algerian device, lost and recovered fortunes, reemerging as lost and recovered historical artifacts. In *Topsail Island Treasure* (1966) Meader repeats the pattern as the hero finds a ship's figurehead from 1888.

dissimilar. The titles of their books are almost identical: Rebecca Hamilton's is "Between the Dunes and the Sea" (72, 169); Rachel Carson's is *The Edge of the Sea* (1955).<sup>129</sup> Both books discuss the Outer Banks. Since Meader fairly often used historical figures with their actual names, it is likely that he made these changes in this character since Carson was still living.

After the contemporary *Wild Pony Island*, where the protagonist joins the tightly-knit community of Ocracoke Island, Meader covers another historical era, the 1820s in the American mountain West. In *Buffalo and Beaver* (1960) the hero joins the tightly-knit community of the American mountain men of the frontier West. Protagonist Jeff Barlow, age sixteen, and his father John spend a season hunting and trapping for fur, a lucrative business at the time (93). John is a widower and former teacher, and takes Jeff west, telling him he wants to teach him self-reliance and introduce him to the wilderness of the West before it's spoiled (113). Meader explicitly emphasizes the importance of self-reliance as a value in this book, and further develops the idea by having Jeff's father cite relevant ideas from the American wilderness experience, such as keep your powder dry (40) and never wander the wilderness with an unloaded gun (94). During the long winter, Jeff develops an artistic talent, and makes red and black drawings on deerskin of the people, animals, and mountains of the West, using "'trade vermilion an' charcoal . . . I had handy'" (183). He ends the story studying art in St. Louis, and would show up prominently in Meader's *Keep 'Em Rolling* (1967).

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<sup>129</sup>Meader had already used the title "Between the Dunes and the Sea" for his 1951 short story in *Jack and Jill*.

As he continued to alternate between historical novels and contemporary, Meader next wrote *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961), a contemporary tale and his last entrepreneurial novel. In this book Meader returns to the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania where he had set *Blueberry Mountain* (1941). In 1933, in his short story “Skis and Doughnuts” (considered in Chapter 2), Meader first presented the basic idea that he developed into the book *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961) almost thirty years later. *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* is in many ways a sequel to *Blueberry Mountain*.<sup>130</sup> The geographical setting, the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, is the same, as are many of the characters. Mark Wilkins, almost seventeen years old as the story starts, is the protagonist; he was a much younger Buddy Wilkins (age ten) in *Blueberry Mountain*. Buck Evans, protagonist of *Blueberry Mountain*, is an important character in *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, in which he marries Mark’s sister Bess. As the story begins, Mark regards as worthless the 400 acres of cutover mountain land that his late father had purchased and which has no practical use except as a winter playground for him and his siblings (20). Ultimately, Mark turns the property into a profit-making downhill ski area. As Buck Evans did in *Blueberry Mountain* in finding a way to make use of the local steep mountain property to grow blueberries, Mark discovers a way to make money from those slopes from skiers.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>*A Collector’s Guide to Hardcover Boys’ Series Books* by E. (Ed) Mattson and Thomas (Tom) B. Davis lists the two as the *Blueberry Mountain Series*, the only books by Meader listed in that guide.

<sup>131</sup>Downhill skiing became popular in the Poconos in the 1940s with the opening in 1946 of Big Boulder, the first commercial ski area in Pennsylvania, which also employed the first commercial snowmaking in the United States.

The entrepreneurial story of *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* is probably the most important aspect of this last book by Meader with that theme. To be sure, Meader also touches on the value of community as he did in *Blueberry Mountain*, and emphasizes some aspects of hunting as he had in many prior books. In addition, Mark finds romance as the poor protagonist pursues and wins a rich girl who shares his interest in skiing.

Nevertheless, the major interest in the book is the development of the ski area, which involves much hard work as is typical for Meader's heroes. Entrepreneurial adventures in the mountainous Poconos seem to involve pulling out old tree stumps—as Buck had removed stumps from his future blueberry plantation in *Blueberry Mountain*, Mark is removing stumps from his future ski runs. *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* tells the story of the operation of the ski area over two years. After his first year of operation, Mark decides to make a rope tow with a little help from his relatives. Should Mark's homemade rope ski tow seem farfetched, a *Popular Science* article from a few years later seems much more so: “Portable Ski Tow Easy to Make, Fun to use,” which suggests finding a handy snow-covered slope, and then rigging a long rope to one's jacked-up car drive wheel to make a tow, and “incidentally, the car provides a convenient warming shelter.”<sup>132</sup>

Mark finds that the challenges confronting the operator of a ski area can be numerous. Just knowing how much food to order presents a quandary—too much food can

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[Http://www.academybb.com/academybb/History.html](http://www.academybb.com/academybb/History.html) (accessed 3 February 2005).

<sup>132</sup>E. F. Muehlmann, “Portable Ski Tow Easy to Make, Fun to Use,” *Popular Science*, November 1966, 166-68.

spoil, not enough and customers are turned away (118-19). When Mark's customers park on the highway after a deep snow, and a state policeman tells him to get the cars off the road, luckily Buck has a Caterpillar tractor with a bulldozer blade and clears a large parking area (98-101). Mark blocks off a dangerous turn with a barrier of brush to prevent beginning skiers from hurting themselves; some novices remove the barrier and then do crash and injure themselves (100-03). Mark finds it useful to develop an interest in meteorology, and learns from his science teacher how to plot weather information on a map (135-37). Mark has the good fortune to find radio commentator Clyde Roebuck visiting his slope (117-18), and the even better fortune to have Roebuck mention Blueberry Mountain Slope on the air, even complimenting Mark's mother's doughnuts (133-35). Mark realizes that he needs to consider selling skis and boots when he gets enough money ahead to stock these items (116-17), and he starts to give skiing lessons as he goes about systematically expanding his business (141-42).

Mark wants to build a ski lodge at the base of his run, a place for his customers to warm up and buy hot chocolate, coffee, and doughnuts. He draws plans for the structure, gathers supplies, and arranges a time for his family to help him start the project. Meader illustrates the value of community when Mark's mother and brother-in-law Buck surprise him with a lodge-raising, and recruit numerous friends and neighbors to augment the family work crew and help with the project: "In the group standing around the framework of the building Mark recognized high-school friends, neighboring farmers, and even a few of the young businessmen from Crow Ridge." Mark's mother has made and brought ten dozen doughnuts, and she and Bess feed the workers all day. "Most of the men and

boys had brought their own tools, and all of them knew how to saw a line and drive a nail straight.” Mark becomes manager and tells them all what to do; by the end of the day, the ski lodge is essentially finished. Mark invites them all to ski for free the day he opens for business (74-77).

In this mountain community, hunting is important, and it comes up throughout the book, including the first scene where Mark and Buck go deer hunting. Mark is successful and secures his family’s meat for the winter. The villain Mort Tuttle, who filled that role in *Blueberry Mountain* (1941) also, is hiding out in the woods, surviving by eating illicitly obtained meat: he is both stealing livestock and poaching game. He hunts without a license, out of season, and breaks any other hunting regulation that interferes with his desires. When Tuttle encounters Mark’s sister in the woods, he threatens her at gunpoint, and later uses the gun to rob Mark of an entire weekend’s income for the ski area, \$203. The police are ineffectual. They watch for Tuttle at a spot accessible by police cruiser, but Mark is certain that Tuttle has a back entrance that the police don’t know about, where he comes and goes by snowshoes and jeep. As the patrolman on duty chuckles over the lack of four-wheel drive vehicles available to the police, Mark remembers an incident from years before when he had watched a fox’s hole one long afternoon, later to find the fox long gone from a rear exit. “If he was going to recover his money, he decided, it was up to him to do something himself” (119-24). Mark and Buck go in on snowshoes and catch Tuttle, recover the money, and turn Tuttle over to the police (125-33).

Along with the skiing, the hunting, and the villain, Meader introduces romance as

his hero pursues a rich girl. In *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, Mark Wilkins and Jean Langley share a love for skiing but certainly not a common class. She is from a very well off Philadelphia family; he lives in a mountain shack; but they are together at the end of the story, and she has been quite interested in his ski business from the start. In these ways Jean Langley is very much like Linda Carroll in *T-Model Tommy* (1938) and Betty Barlow in *Bulldozer* (1951)—they are all rich girls interested in a poor young entrepreneur who is struggling to start a business, and they are interested in the details of his business as well. Jean's friends from the city bring in a mild conflict between city people and the year round mountain residents, but it is less pronounced than in *Blueberry Mountain*. Jean's college student friend Bill asks Mark patronizingly if it isn't boring living in such a rural area. As Mark says that he doesn't get bored, there's too much to do, Jean reminds him of the armed robber he caught, and Bill is properly impressed with the potential for excitement in the backwoods (147). As before in *King of the Hills* (1933), the issue of city people not knowing how to comport themselves arises. On Mark's first day of business, as he checks over his ski area, he finds boys and girls he knows and "a few strangers—college men and city people," and it is these city people who pull away Mark's brush barriers that had blocked the unsafe upper part of the trail, and then hurt themselves (100-02).

*Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961) was Meader's fourth entrepreneurial novel with a protagonist who starts a business to support his family, and was the first of these not to be listed in *Book Review Digest*. Were entrepreneurial ideas and novels becoming irrelevant and outmoded by the 1960s? Reviewers of Meader's first three entrepreneurial

novels wrote of rags-to-riches or specifically mentioned Horatio Alger, but the few who reviewed his final such book made no such comment. Perhaps this trend fits in with the phenomenon of the decline of the entrepreneurial adventure that sociologist Elizabeth Long discusses in her *The American Dream and the Popular Novel* concerning adult bestselling novels (previously discussed in Chapter 5 during the consideration of Meader's *Sabre Pilot*). Long argues that bestselling novels at the start of the 1945-1955 decade "celebrate a vision of entrepreneurial success," but at the end of that period with Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), for example, novels are highlighting corporate-suburban compromise. Long states that "the entrepreneurial ideal of success was challenged in bestselling novels" (63, 88-89); possibly such developments were also mirrored in children's literature and were part of the reason for the decline in interest in Meader in *Book Review Digest*. Considering the following period (1956-1968), Long argues that only two of the adult bestsellers she analyzed continued with the idea of "individual entrepreneurial success." Yet with *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* in that same period, Meader seems to be arguing that an entrepreneurial approach to supporting oneself, starting a business, was still as realistic as it had been when his first entrepreneurial novel, *T-Model Tommy*, was published in 1938 during the Great Depression. Yet, as previously noted, in some of his other books such as *Sparkplug of the Hornets* (1953) and *Wild Pony Island* (1959), Meader was already moving in the direction of having his protagonists earn spending money for themselves with newspaper routes and odd jobs, rather than supporting a family with a business that they start.

The two reviews that I was able to find for *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* both

comment on the interest which the development of a commercial ski business provides: “The details of Mark's planning, building, and operation of the ski run are satisfying,” and reader “interest is high because of the reality and the increasing fascination of details of the business,” but the same review also says in the same sentence that “everything happens as the reader hopes and suspense is minimized.” This comment fits a pattern of several of Meader’s later books where everything seems to come rather easily for the protagonist, with a minimum of effort and suspense. The other review states: “The book is weakened by extraneous material, however, in the introduction of a love interest, a thieving ex-prisoner, and several detailed passages describing basketball and football games in which Mark participates.”<sup>133</sup> Although the sports stories are not vital to the narrative, this comment about *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* seems odd since Meader was almost always praised for his writing about sports, and indeed, even Margaret McElderry's rejection letter of “The Hawley House Mystery” in 1969 notes that “the football and basketball parts of the story are good and fast paced and of as much interest today as they ever were.”<sup>134</sup> Were sports becoming of less interest, at least to some reviewers, in the late 1960's? The love interest and villain were also common in Meader’s work; were they also becoming less interesting? Possibly all these aspects—sports, romance, villains—were of less interest to reviewers as societal concerns

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<sup>133</sup>Reviews of *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, by Stephen W. Meader, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* 15 (November 1961): 47; *Horn Book* 38 (February 1962): 56.

<sup>134</sup>Margaret K. McElderry, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, to Stephen W. Meader, Cape May Courthouse NJ, TLS, 25 November 1969, obtained from John Meader, son of Stephen W. Meader.

and problems started to creep into children's literature.

*Snow on Blueberry Mountain* is thus important in Meader's career for several reasons. It is the last of his four contemporary entrepreneurial novels, and by this time seems to be going against the grain of an American society and work culture that was moving away from entrepreneurial adventure to an emphasis on conforming and blending into the culture of the organization for which one works, as opposed to being an independent entrepreneur, and with entrepreneurialism for teenagers often being for spending money, not support of a family. Reviewers of this book felt that the hero succeeded too easily, and that the sports and romantic portions of the story weakened it. After decades of success as a writer, Meader was apparently losing touch with what some reviewers, and possibly readers, were looking for.

After *Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, Meader turned to two historical novels in a row. Continuing with his goal of presenting different historical periods and geographical regions, he took advantage of the publicity surrounding the Centennial of the Civil War to write a novel from the point of view of each side in the conflict. The first was *Phantom of the Blockade* (1962), whose protagonist Anse O'Neal serves on Southern ships, first the *Sea Sprite* and then the *Gray Witch*, that run the Union blockade during the Civil War. Anse has a romantic interest in Lucy Harcom. Meader presents a sympathetic portrait of the South, and continues the story past the end of the war far enough to have Anse and Lucy engaged, with Anse having a job as first mate on his old blockade runner, now reborn as a passenger ship. His prospects are good to obtain his own command soon of a ship in a new packet line that his former skipper is developing.

Anse is proving true remarks that he had made to Lucy earlier in the story: “But there’s a chance for young people to do things—to grow as big as it’s in ’em to grow. In North Carolina there’s no limit to how far a boy can go if he’s got the right stuff” (93). Meader continued to write favorably about a success ideal, hard work, and ambition, in this case set in the past. Meader’s next book would deal more directly with the Civil War itself, from the point of view of the other side, that of an infantryman in the Union Army.

In the Foreword to *The Muddy Road to Glory* (1963), Meader cites indebtedness to “a good friend, John J. Pullen” and his book *The Twentieth Maine*.<sup>135</sup> Pullen worked with Meader at the N. W. Ayer and Son advertising agency.<sup>136</sup> As with *Guns For the Saratoga* (1955), Meader drew on a standard history of a wartime unit, created a character, and built his fictional character into the historical story. In *The Muddy Road to Glory*, sixteen-year-old protagonist Ben Everett serves in the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Regiment of the Union Army. Ben’s father is dead; his twenty-one-year-old brother Abner is the head of the household and wants to keep Ben out of the Army until he turns draft age, twenty-years-old. In early 1863, Ben hears that an Army recruiter is nearby, and he runs away and joins the Army. Ben sees combat in important battles from Gettysburg to the Wilderness, until he is captured and sent to the Belle Isle Confederate prisoner camp near Richmond, in a formulaic ordeal. Ben eventually escapes from Belle Isle, and continues

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<sup>135</sup>Meader also cites the works of Bruce Catton and McKinlay Kantor as background material that he consulted.

<sup>136</sup>According to the *Civil War News*, Pullen was head of Ayer’s creative department and resigned in 1965 to write full time, [http://www.civilwarnews.com/archive/articles/20th\\_me.htm](http://www.civilwarnews.com/archive/articles/20th_me.htm), (accessed 13 December 2004).

his ordeal as he travels through the hostile South, where he experiences several close calls as he perseveres successfully to return to his unit, and then continues to serve until the war is over. The value of courage is vital in this book, both in the combat situations that Ben experiences, and in his imprisonment, escape, and return to the 20th Maine.

After the two historical Civil War books in a row, Meader next wrote a contemporary story set in Pennsylvania, *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964). Protagonist Skip Rollins is a photography and wildlife enthusiast who joins the local 4-H Club with a project of photographing the wildlife of his county in Pennsylvania. Skip learns about being a writer as well, from both his Uncle Andy and the local newspaper editor, Eldon Baker, father of Penny Baker, who provides romantic interest for Skip. As Skip pursues his 4-H project, he solves a mystery in the mountainous region near his home involving a hermit and some illegal trapping of wildlife. *Stranger on Big Hickory* thus hearkens back to the wildlife photography and poaching of *King of the Hills* (1933). Meader also uses this book to introduce 4-H to his readers, even including the 4-H pledge (43), and makes the important point that city children can participate along with the rural youngsters usually associated with the organization.<sup>137</sup>

Meader also uses this work to educate his readers concerning writing techniques. Skip's Uncle Andy is "doing well in advertising in Philadelphia" but in his earlier days had "never held a job very long. . . When he was hard up for money, he would sell a story

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<sup>137</sup>For further information on 4-H and its history see *4-H: An American Idea, 1900-1980: A History of 4-H*, Thomas Wessel and Marilyn Wessel, published by the National 4-H Council in Chevy Chase, MD, in 1982, and [http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/4-h\\_history.htm](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/4-h_history.htm) (accessed 5 January 2005).

to one of the pulp magazines” (15). In some ways this character sounds very much like Meader himself. Editor Eldon Baker shows Skip how to edit wordy descriptive prose about wildlife down to the essentials. Skip is writing a story to go with his wildlife photographs; Mr. Baker suggests that Skip pretend that he is writing a caption for each photo, and delete the information about roads and weather. Skip works at it and learns “to be ruthless with the words . . . to say only the essential things, keeping the story brief but colorful” (157), lessons that Meader himself had learned in writing both advertising copy and adventure fiction. At the end of the book, Skip’s article about the local wildlife is accepted for publication, and his photograph of a hawk capturing a weasel with a mouse in its mouth will be the cover picture for the same issue.

Skip discovers that there is a hermit living deep in the woods. At first Skip thinks this person is the one doing illegal trapping, but the hermit turns out to be a defender of wildlife, an eccentric academic, Jared Rickson, who lives by himself among the animals in the most remote part of Skip’s countryside. Rickson, a former college professor, hates to see wildlife killed and had been arrested for interfering with hunters. He is an early environmental activist and protestor for animal rights. The “villain” who is trapping and shooting wildlife turns out to be Dutch Krouse, a 4-H member who has been rather bad-tempered and ill-behaved throughout the book.

In this book from 1964, just two years after Rachel Carson sounded her environmental alarm with *Silent Spring* (1962), Skip learns about the balance of nature as he studies the wildlife of his county. “Going over his list, he realized that every wild creature he had photographed had its place in maintaining the balance of nature” (88).

Skip thinks that a few of the native animals are not worth much, especially those that destroy crops and kill domesticated animals, such as groundhogs and weasels, and he believes that some animals must be controlled, by predators or by allowing hunting, or they will overrun the countryside—the game laws allowing a short autumn hunting season for white-tailed deer “kept the animals from multiplying too fast and dying of starvation” (88). Skip also believes that bobcats keep the countryside from being overrun with rabbits, but accepts as normal the game warden’s shooting of a mountain lion,<sup>138</sup> and running a bear out of the area at a farmer’s request; however, the warden confides that he was shooting in the air over the bear and enjoys bears as comical creatures that only bother humans if hurt or protecting young. Both Skip and the warden agree that bear should be protected except for a short hunting season (88-89). Meader uses his story in *Stranger on Big Hickory* to present ideas about the working of an ecosystem to his juvenile readers through the project and thoughts of his protagonist, soon after Rachel Carson’s influential *Silent Spring* brought such ideas to the forefront of American consciousness. After this contemporary story, Meader turned again to historical adventure, again in Cape May County, New Jersey, with *A Blow for Liberty* (1965).

Jed Starbuck is the sixteen-year-old protagonist of *A Blow for Liberty*. He was

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<sup>138</sup>Encountering a mountain lion in Pennsylvania in the 1960s was possible but highly unlikely. The Pennsylvania Game Commission states “Pennsylvania’s last known wild eastern mountain lion was killed in Berks County in 1874 . . . But over the years mountain lion sightings have been reported throughout the state.” <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/view.asp?A=11&Q=156971> (accessed 21 March 2005). *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* states that wild mountain lions persisted in the Appalachians until the early 1900s and that an adult female killed in Crawford county in 1967 showed signs of living in captivity, <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04151/324253.stm> (accessed 21 March 2005).

originally from Nantucket, but has ended up shipwrecked and orphaned in Cape May County, when his father, Captain Elijah Starbuck, went down with his ship, and the local authorities arranged to have Jed indentured to the Quaker farmer Amos Townsend. Jed has been raised as a Quaker, and one aspect of the story is his trying to stay true to his Quaker values in the face of coming of age during the American Revolution in 1778.

Much of the book concerns the voyages of the ship *True Patriot*, a schooner built locally which sees service as a privateer. Jed serves in the crew of the ship with distinction, and ultimately earns enough money to purchase the remainder of his indenture and thus his freedom from Mr. Townsend. Mr. Townsend becomes part owner of the ship, but stipulates to Captain Hand, the other owner, that as a Quaker, he doesn't "want any of my money used for guns or other instruments of death. Thee pay for those. My half will take care of the building of the ship" (83). Townsend thus avoids a problem that Robert Lawrence Smith argues often kept Quakers from: "trading by ship" since that "involved using guns for the protection of goods" so "they rarely became exporters or importers."<sup>139</sup> Townsend's partner, Captain Hand, suggests that Townsend may have problems accepting his share of any profits but Townsend assures him otherwise.

The war as viewed by Quakers has already come up in the story when Jed and Mr. Townsend attend Friends' Meeting at Seaville (the same Meeting that Meader attended in his retirement years in Cape May County ([Gallagher 13])). Meader describes his protagonist's experience of Friends' Meeting for Worship in enough detail to acquaint a

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<sup>139</sup>Robert Lawrence Smith, *A Quaker Book of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Simplicity, Service, and Common Sense* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1998), 125.

non-Quaker with the service. After almost an hour of “deep silence” in the meeting while the Friends are “waiting for the voice of the Spirit to speak in their hearts,” a woman speaks for peace hoping both sides will cease the fighting and bloodshed.” Jed is “too staunch a Quaker not to know it [meeting] did him good,” but after taking time during meeting to consider the question of the Revolution and the war and killing, concludes that “the American patriots were right, the British and Tories wrong” (34-36).

As was happening more often to Meader during this last period of his published writing, reviewers had negative comments about *A Blow for Liberty*. One reviewer thought that Meader had overdone the hero a little, stating that though the protagonist “seems at times to have superhuman powers, he is real enough to emerge a hero.” Another reviewer cited Meader's “compulsion to shovel in too many characters for any author to keep alive, notably a lone Indian, the last of the Kechemeches,<sup>140</sup> who appears at unexpected moments, for no apparent reason, to bury arrows and hatchets in Tory hides.” A third reviewer pointed out discrepancies in the behavior and belief of both Mr. Townsend and Jed: “The Quaker contributes money to the Revolutionary cause, but stipulates that it shall be used to pay only for a ship and not for ammunition while the boy, who wishes to avoid killing for moral reasons, does so, but only because someone else kills for him. Thus they live up to the letter, but not the spirit of their religious

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<sup>140</sup>Kechemeches were a tribe on the Jersey Cape, who had mostly left the Cape by 1735, which is consistent with having a surviving last local member in 1778. [http://members.tripod.com/scott\\_mcgonigle/history.htm](http://members.tripod.com/scott_mcgonigle/history.htm) (accessed 15 December 2004).

belief.”<sup>141</sup>

The aspects of Quakerism are of interest in *A Blow for Liberty* because they are the most detailed description Meader makes in any of his books of the process of Friends’ Meeting for Worship. Jed’s wrestling with his conscience about the war harkens back to Kirk Owen’s similar struggle before his first combat mission in Korea in *Sabre Pilot* (1956), and would have been relevant to readers who were considering the escalating war in Vietnam at the time *A Blow for Liberty* was published in 1965. The service of the protagonist on a privateer in the American Revolution was similar to that of the hero of *Guns for the Saratoga* (1955), as well as that to come in *The Cape May Packet* (1969), where the protagonist serves in the crew of an American privateer in the War of 1812. Meader’s next book would also be set in coastal New Jersey but in modern time.

In *Topsail Island Treasure* (1966), Meader reprises the environmental theme of “collecting” different species, bird varieties along the New Jersey coast this time—it was the wildlife in a county in *A Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964). The protagonist of *Topsail Island Treasure* is Don Douglas, who had polio as a child and still has a limp. Don’s father is superintendent of Topsail Island State Park. Don is attempting to catch sight of all the species of birds that come to Topsail Island, and eventually cooperates with the State Department of Conservation in publishing a pamphlet, “Beach and Marsh Birds of

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<sup>141</sup>Shirley McKeon, review of *A Blow for Liberty*, by Stephen W. Meader, *English Journal* 55 (January 1966): 105; Thomas J. Fleming, review of *A Blow for Liberty*, by Stephen W. Meader, *The New York Times Book Review*, 7 November 1965, 35; Agnes Krarup, review of *A Blow for Liberty*, by Stephen W. Meader, *Library Journal*, 15 September 1965, 3807.

Topsail Island,” that includes some of his pen and ink drawings of the birds. Meader returns to other familiar scenarios as poachers are tempted by the ducks and geese in the park (72), and Don’s unlikeable classmate, Digger Jimson, may be poaching ducks (87).

Meader adds to the quest for bird species a rather far-fetched buried treasure story in which criminals from the city are creating a false pirate treasure site. Their scheme is to sell treasure maps for big money to greedy suckers. When Don is too successful with his investigation of the treasure, the villains hit him on the head, and take him to a shack where they tie him up and leave him. Don is able to cut his bonds with some broken glass and escape this short ordeal (132-140).

There is also a romantic subplot concerning two adults who meet because of the hero as in Meader’s story *Wild Pony Island* (1959). In *Topsail Island Treasure*, Don meets Alec Cameron, a Professor of Biology at Princeton University, because of their mutual interest in birds (an interest shared with the hero of *Wild Pony Island*). Alec Cameron soon meets Don’s teacher, Amanda Carter. Don impresses them both when he finds a lost historical artifact, the figurehead of the ship *Clara May*, sunk in the Blizzard of 1888 carrying a load of ice (63).<sup>142</sup> Meader contrasts this historically valuable artifact to the villains’ fraudulent pirate treasure.

In correspondence with his editor during the writing of *Topsail Island Treasure*, Meader showed that he could respond to his critics. Protagonist Don Douglas has a sister, Susie, who has little impact on the story. Margaret K. McElderry, Meader’s editor at

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<sup>142</sup>I have not been able to find any evidence that the *Clara May* was a real ship, but the Blizzard of 1888 was real.

Harcourt, Brace, questioned the inclusion of the sister, saying that Susie doesn't add anything. Meader responded with a penciled remark on her letter that says he put her in "because I've been accused of having too many 'only child' heroes."<sup>143</sup> Reviewers had more substantive complaints, however, when the work appeared. Carolyn C. Leopold stated: "The plot is pat and dialogue wooden. Values are positive and the hero emerges almost real," arguing that Meader made neither story nor character very interesting or believable. Leopold also notes that "the details of birdwatching . . . are not well blended into the story."<sup>144</sup> Another reviewer said the story was weaker than Meader's usual excellence with "a series of not very convincing, not very suspenseful events" performed by "unlikely personalities," and additionally complained that "it takes an extra push to be able to interest readers in the fifty odd species of birds that Don observes."<sup>145</sup> For his next novel, Meader returned to an historical setting, but negative comments from reviewers persisted.

As the contemporary *Topsail Island Treasure* repeated some ideas from *Wild Pony Island* (1959) and *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964), the historical *Keep 'Em Rolling* (1967), was in some ways a sequel to *Buffalo and Beaver* (1960). Dave March, sixteen years old, makes the trip to Oregon in the 1840s with his family. Jeff Barlow, scout and

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<sup>143</sup>Margaret K. McElderry, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, to Stephen W. Meader, Cape May Courthouse NJ, TLS, 19 January 1966, with penciled responses by Stephen W. Meader. Obtained from John H. Meader, son of Stephen Meader.

<sup>144</sup>Carolyn C. Leopold, review of *Topsail Island Treasure*, *Library Journal* 15 September 1966, Vol. 91, 4356.

<sup>145</sup> Review of *Topsail Island Treasure*, *Kirkus*, 15 June 1966.

artist, who grew up in *Buffalo and Beaver*, travels with the March family's wagon train.

Towards the end of the story, Dave and several others separate from the main group to drive cattle to Oregon. Most travelers sell their cattle before the trip and travel on by water, but Mr. Beeman has ““a special strain o' good milk cows an' wants to start a dairy on the Willamette. He'd like to send a couple of his youngsters along with you [protagonist Dave March] to herd 'em”” (151). Dave expects to have as his company Larry Beeman and his younger brother, but instead gets Larry and his sister Lucy, because she is a better rider .

In a quite negative comment in *Library Journal*, Jean C. Thomson stated: “The journey is long and fatiguing, and so is the book,” and the book is “the product of a frayed imagination” although Thomson didn't develop the criticism further. She argued that protagonist Dave March has the older, more experienced Jeff Barlow “always ready with expert advice and aid,” and that “the hero is barely more than his name.”<sup>146</sup> Dave March, in other words, has little real challenge because Jeff Barlow can always help him. Barlow's adult presence in fact makes the overland journey with the cattle not a formulaic ordeal. Barlow's frequent help makes March as hero struggle less and have fewer chances to test himself and prove his abilities. Barlow shows up for March at convenient times the way the Indian Wagamissi appears frequently to help Jed Starbuck in *A Blow for Freedom*, published two of years earlier.

After the historical *Keep 'Em Rolling*, Meader headed west again, this time to

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<sup>146</sup>Jean C. Thomson, Review of *Keep 'Em Rolling*, *Library Journal* 15 September 1967 volume 92, page 3202.

Kansas, for the contemporary *Lonesome End* (1968). Tod Ross, the hero, is a sixteen-year-old junior in high school in western Kansas, who lives on a cattle ranch. He has never played organized football or been very involved with the activities of school, primarily because he has so many duties on his father's ranch. Tod has some natural athletic ability, however, and is persuaded to try out for his high school football team. By the end of the book, he has become his team's star offensive end, has helped lead the team to a championship, has organized a large fund-raising dinner for football equipment for the team, and has been elected team captain for the next season. On the way to one of the games, Tod and his friend Mike Hoban catch cattle rustlers who have stolen Tod's father's cattle. Mike and Tod still get to the football game in time to play (117-22). Tod has also persuaded his father, who had little use for football at the start of the story, that football is a worthy endeavor; in fact, Tod's father has become the team's greatest fan. Other than a few comments on Kansas ranch life, there is no vocational motif in this book, but clearly Tod has done a lot of growing up by the end of the story. *Lonesome End* and his earlier *Sparkplug of the Hornets* are Meader's only books concentrating exclusively on team sports, and reflecting that emphasis in their titles, but as usual with Meader's stories, sports are put into the context of the boy's growth to manhood. Tod obtains a girl friend during the story, cheerleader and 4-H member Mary Ann Foster. Mary Ann cheers for Tod's exploits on the football field, and asks Tod to church suppers and for advice on her calf, her 4-H project. Thus Meader includes 4-H again just a few years after it played an important role in *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964). After setting *Lonesome End* in modern Kansas, Meader turned again to historical Cape May, New

Jersey, for what turned out to be his final published book.

Will Hand is the hero of *The Cape May Packet* (1969). Meader describes him as “half farmer, half sailor, and all clear Yankee grit” (8). Will is the son of Ezra Hand, who owns the sloop *Fair Molly*. Ezra had been a pilot and the *Fair Molly* a pilot boat, but with the War of 1812 ongoing, the British have blockaded the Delaware and no large merchant ships go in or out. Ezra takes cargoes and passengers between Cape May and Philadelphia, vegetables to Philadelphia, and passengers back to Cape May, especially those who wish to bathe in the sea. Will develops a romantic interest in Kate Perry from the city, when she and her family take the *Fair Molly* to Cape May. There is not enough business in tourists and vegetables with the British blockade, however, so Ezra outfits the *Fair Molly* as a privateer and Will serves courageously in her crew. He undergoes a short ordeal when he is captured by traitorous father and son innkeepers who have been using bonfires to signal the British fleet from the shore. Will is imprisoned on a British warship, but escapes and swims safely to shore, and is instrumental in the capture and successful trial of the treasonous pair. *The Cape May Packet* is a competent historical novel emphasizing the values of bravery and loyalty; Meader did not know that it would be his last published book when he wrote it.

After *The Cape May Packet*, Meader submitted a typescript for a contemporary novel to Harcourt, Brace & World on his usual schedule. This work was entitled “The Hawley House Mystery.”<sup>147</sup> On November 25, 1969, Margaret K. McElderry, Meader’s

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<sup>147</sup>I obtained a copy of “The Hawley House Mystery” in TMs form from John Meader, son of the author. There are a total of four unpublished typescripts for novels; I obtained a copy of each from John Meader.

editor, wrote to him, the author of forty-four published children's books (forty-three by Harcourt, Brace), as follows: "Dear Steve, You've been wonderfully patient in waiting to hear from me about your manuscript . . . For the first time in our many years together as author and editor we are in trouble I fear, with this manuscript and I know of no way to soften that statement."<sup>148</sup> McElderry described several problems with the narrative and suggested that he might want to work on something else for a while. The major problem that McElderry noted was in Meader's setting the stage for story: Jonas Hawley stole money from the bank where he worked (ultimately to be found by characters in the story), but some of his actions and the reasons Meader gives for them are inconsistent, and despite good opportunities to return the money, Hawley doesn't do so. McElderry also questions whether high school seniors would be playing the game hide and seek, but the major problems are an unrealistic story and Hawley's theft of the bank's money without his ever returning it or apparently feeling remorse. Probably neither writer nor editor realized at the time of the letter that Meader had published his final book.

McElderry's rejection letter praises aspects of the manuscript: "the football and basketball parts of the story are good and fast paced and of as much interest today as they ever were,"<sup>149</sup> but goes on to explain some of the changes that were occurring in the 1960s in children's literature: "As you know, in this strange day and age the sort of story that used to be successful and acceptable to youngsters and their elders has to a

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<sup>148</sup>Margaret K. McElderry, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, to Stephen W. Meader, Cape May Courthouse NJ, TLS, 25 November 1969, obtained from John Meader, son of Stephen W. Meader.

<sup>149</sup>McElderry to Meader, TLS, 25 November 1969.

considerable degree gone by the board. Now the whole emphasis is on realism - the 'tell it as it is' idea. . . . The details about Jonas Hawley and his making off with the bank's funds do not really seem plausible and in this day and age when youngsters are used to seeing so much on television as well as reading it in things like the James Bond books, this would I think seem somewhat naive."<sup>150</sup>

In her chapter "The Transformation of Childhood in Twentieth-Century Children's Literature" in *American Childhood*, Anne MacLeod dates a major change in American children's literature to the 1964 publication of *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh, which was "a major breach in the protective wall around childhood." In her "Epilogue" to *American Childhood*, MacLeod states: "The social revolutions of the 1970s transformed children's literature. Old taboos fell, subjects excluded from children's books for years appeared everywhere. Death, divorce, alcohol and drugs, racism and sexism as identified social evils, and, eventually, sexuality became commonplace in literature for the young."<sup>151</sup> Meader was doubtless becoming irrelevant to teenagers as he continued in his normal writing patterns and didn't address these formerly excluded subjects.

Meader reacted to the rejection of "The Hawley House Mystery" by writing "The Fight for the Marsh," which he submitted to Harcourt in January, 1972. In his submission

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<sup>150</sup>McElderry to Meader, TLS, 25 November 1969.

<sup>151</sup>MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 199, 210.

letter, Meader argued that it was “relevant to modern problems” in terms of ecology.<sup>152</sup> An environmental theme was not new for Meader; he had been expressing concerns for the environment since *Longshanks* (1928), and had devoted much of the story line to environmental concerns in books such as *King of the Hills* (1933), *Everglades Adventure* (1957), and *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964). Meader tried to make “The Fight for the Marsh” more relevant by inserting an anti-drug theme through the death of an accomplished football player, who had turned to drug use and dealing. But even though Meader dealt with relevant themes and included previously taboo subjects, Harcourt rejected “The Fight for the Marsh.” Dodd, Mead also rejected the manuscript, with their Director of Children’s Books justifying the decision by stating that the market for fiction was uncertain, that several nonfiction books had been published on ecology, and expressing doubt “that we could find a really wide audience for” the book.<sup>153</sup> The letter mentions that *Trap-Lines North* (1936) is still on Dodd, Mead’s list and encourages Meader to try some other publishers, but makes no suggestions as to which publishers to try, and I have found no evidence that Meader pursued it further.

Protagonist Tony Blake of “The Fight for the Marsh” plays football in high school where he is a junior. Chuck Cashman, a senior, is a talented football player, but is very spoiled, and gets mixed up in drugs including selling, and ultimately dies following a car

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<sup>152</sup>Meader, Stephen W., Cape May Courthouse NJ, to Miss Anna Bier, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, TLS (carbon copy), 24 January 1972. Margaret McElderry had left Harcourt by 1972.

<sup>153</sup>Joe Ann Daly, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, to Stephen W. Meader, Cape May Courthouse NJ, TLS, 12 June 1972.

crash. Chuck's father is Rudy Cashman, a rich developer who builds houses on the marsh. Jerry Blake, Tony's cousin, is an ecologist for the state of New Jersey (19), and is working on a wetlands bill that will allow the state "to regulate dredging and filling on any area of tidal meadow or marshland, as well as to control pollution of estuaries and tide creeks through dumping, sewage disposal or industrial wastes" (35-36). Judy Lander, an attractive red-headed fellow student of Tony's and 4-H member, wants to save the marsh and works with Tony on projects to do that, with hints of possible romance. Tony is friends with Luke Leaming, an old man who lives in the marsh and knows it very well, and shares his knowledge with Tony.

Developers such as Rudy Cashman cut down trees and level dunes so that natural protection is weakened, houses flood, and too much sand and salt water pour into the marsh (10-11). Tony's cousin Jerry describes how *Spartina* grass helps hold the mud and peat together in a hurricane, and "can stand getting wet by salt water twice a day" (21-22). Many of the small seaside cottages use cess pools that can flood in extra high tides and cause problems (23), so that there is talk of a county wide sewer system (40). Both Tony's cousin Jerry, the ecologist for the state, and Luke Leaming talk about the problems that the recently banned DDT had caused with fish hawks and other wildlife (13, 39-40).

Tony and Judy work with their local 4-H club to support the wetlands bill. Tony receives a phone call from a state Senator to verify that Tony's local 4-H club supports the bill (56-57). When the bill goes to the Governor for his signature, Tony and Judy attend the ceremony because of Jerry's position (102-03). With the wetlands bill signed,

Tony and his 4-H group go to work on the drug problem, and help the police catch a local drug dealer (123), but it is too late for Chuck Cashman, who is fatally injured in a car crash.

As with many of Meader's later heroes, the protagonist moves easily and somewhat unbelievably through life and its problems—Tony is getting calls from a state Senator and is meeting the Governor. He suffers few personal setbacks, there is no ordeal or physical fight—the closest to that is the football action in the book. There is conflict as Chuck Cashman becomes an enemy because Tony's concern for the marsh goes against the senior Cashman's activities, and sorrow when Chuck dies, but they weren't close friends. Drugs in the town are too easily eliminated to be true or to last, but the message is true to Meader's values. Meader is also trying to update his language to appeal to young readers: he uses the now dated but then popular word "groovy" several times in his characters' dialogue (12) (47) (78).

Meader left behind two other unpublished typescripts for novels, "The Cedar Swamp Witch" and "The Freedom Trail," but without any correspondence with publishers, so it is not clear if Meader ever submitted either for publication. "The Cedar Swamp Witch" is set in 1760 in Cape May County. "The Freedom Trail" starts in contemporary Philadelphia, where the protagonist plays basketball and is thinking about college. He finds an old journal from 1872, and the story alternates between the present and the story from the 1870s.

In this last period of Meader's writing, he published 13 books, historical and contemporary as before, but he seemed to be losing his touch with his reviewers if not his

entire readership. Reviewers started to find fault with his work, sometimes for topics he had written about for many years such as sports and romance, and sometimes for his language, which was starting to sound a little old-fashioned at times. He maintained values that he had espoused throughout his career, such as courage, self-reliance, and community, but his protagonists sometimes seemed to move through life more easily than some of his earlier characters, with less use by Meader of the ordeal for testing his heroes. Meader produced a final entrepreneurial book, and continued environmental themes. When he submitted a novel with a flawed plot, after forty-four published books, Harcourt, Brace, his regular publisher, rejected that effort, and at least one other he produced, "The Fight for the Marsh," even though he seemed to respond to his editor's criticism, and tried to be relevant with both an environmental and an anti-drug message. Meader never had another book published.

## Chapter VII

### Conclusion

In a five-decade writing career, Stephen W. Meader published forty-four juvenile books and various other stories and poems—in his leisure hours, while employed full-time by the advertising firm N. W. Ayer and Son. More than thirty years after he published his final book, what is the lasting importance of Meader’s work, if any? He presented images of American people, of the American landscape, of American historical eras and wars, of the American dream—the American way of life and success. Through his adventure stories for boys, Meader expressed important American ideas and values, including courage, self-reliance, ambition, loyalty, honesty, tolerance, and community. His contemporary entrepreneurial novels presented models for creating businesses and hints for negotiating the economy. Each of Meader’s heroes matures and grows up in some way, often by starting a business or learning about a vocation. His historical fiction provided his young readers with adventure stories in varied American historical settings, and thus supplied lessons in history along with the adventure. Meader’s work during World War II was distinctive because, unlike almost all of his American counterparts, he wrestled with the war as it was happening, giving readers general information about the war effort as well as suggestions for appropriate behavior. In addition, his *Red Horse Hill* (1930) was translated and distributed in Germany after World War II to acquaint the

German people with the American way of life. Meader's treatment of World War II, and his writing about many other American wars, was perhaps out of step with his religious convictions as a Quaker, but he regularly dealt with the tension between those convictions and the various forms of violence that his characters confronted.

Although Meader created new characters in most of his books, and consciously avoided producing series fiction,<sup>154</sup> the characters displayed similar values and often found themselves in formulaic situations. He made frequent use of the ordeal formula, in which a youthful character finds himself in a problematic situation that requires clear and fast thinking when no responsible adult leadership and guidance are available. This formula allowed Meader to put his young protagonists to the test and demonstrate that they could think on their feet and maintain their values under pressure. His work was formulaic to the extent that the hero succeeded and often won rewards, while the villains were foiled and bad behavior punished. Meader had a definite entrepreneurial interest that he expressed in some of his historical novels, and especially in four contemporary novels where he presented approaches to making a living that could have taught budding young businessmen the basics of starting an enterprise. The first two of these, *T-Model Tommy* (1938) and *Blueberry Mountain* (1941), came out as the Great Depression was still a force in the American economy. They emphasized the entrepreneurial approach to making a living as a valid alternative to New Deal support programs or working as an employee for someone else. Meader's later entrepreneurial books came out after the Depression but were still important in reflecting economic trends. *Bulldozer* (1951)

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<sup>154</sup>Conversation with John H. Meader, Moorestown NJ, April 11, 1996.

conveyed the rudiments of the earthmoving profession, dealt with the situation of returning veterans, and showed some of Meader's advertising connections. The Caterpillar Tractor Company was one of Meader's advertising customers—he drove its equipment extensively so that he knew the machines and was able to write effective advertising copy, and passages of fiction, about them. In his final modern novel of business, *Snow on Blueberry Mountain* (1961), Meader's hero creates a family downhill skiing business in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. With postwar changes in the United States in the 1950s, and movement away from entrepreneurship to employment in bureaucratic organizations, Meader may have cherished the entrepreneurial ideal for longer than it thrived at that time in the American economy, although in recent decades interest in entrepreneurialism has returned. Although Meader can arguably be characterized as a latter-day Horatio Alger, he was a better writer with a better story. Alger is often thought to tell a rags to riches story, but a more accurate description of his usual tale is rags to respectability. In contrast, Meader's characters start their own businesses in a pattern of rags, or lower class, to entrepreneurship.

Children enjoyed Meader's work and librarians could recommend it knowing that the writing was skillful, that the values were positive, and that young readers would enjoy it and return for more. With several books available in inexpensive paperback editions<sup>155</sup> and school editions containing study questions available for some volumes, his books

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<sup>155</sup>Harcourt, Brace produced Voyager Edition paperbacks of *Bulldozer*, *Sparkplug of the Hornets*, and *Who Rides in the Dark?* for list prices of 65 and 75 cents in the mid-1960s when hardcover editions were in the \$3.50 range. Scholastic Book Services published a paperback edition of *Down the Big River* as well.

could have been used by teachers in class. Some educational and reading experts recommended the use of Meader's books to interest reluctant and slow readers, especially boys. For example, Dwight L. Burton included Meader's work in a discussion of transition literature designed to entice slow junior high school readers away from comic books to novels.<sup>156</sup> Other efforts to promote reading included radio shows based on literary stories. *Trap-Lines North* (1936) inspired such a show in the radio series "Books Bring Adventure," the goals of which included inspiring children to read good literature.<sup>157</sup> This is the only Meader work known to have inspired reinterpretation in radio or other media. Comic books seemed a great menace to reading in this era from the late 1940s through the 1950s: one article about the radio shows was entitled "Countering the Comics."<sup>158</sup>

Meader's *T-Model Tommy*, *The Black Buccaneer*, and *Bulldozer* were issued with supplementary educational material. The first two came out in Discovery Series editions, with *Bulldozer* appearing in a School Edition. In 1940, two years after its initial publication, *T-Model Tommy* was reissued in this format. In 1942 the Discovery Series

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<sup>156</sup>Dwight L. Burton, *Literature Study in the High Schools* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), 15-19.

<sup>157</sup>According to the *Washington Post* for January 5, 1941, the radio show based on *Trap-Lines North* was scheduled to air on Thursday morning of that week.

<sup>158</sup>Alice Myers, "Countering the Comics: The Wide Horizon," *Christian Science Monitor* 26 July 1948, p. 16. Myers argued that radio shows that "dramatized episodes from various children's books" might "stimulate children's interest in more worth-while reading." See also James Gilbert, Chapter 6, "Crusade Against Mass Culture," 91-108, especially Gilbert's discussion of Fredric Wertham's campaign against comic books. Wertham's concerns began in the 1930s and continued through the 1950s.

edition of *The Black Buccaneer* came out, while the school edition of *Bulldozer* was issued in 1955.<sup>159</sup> The educational material shows how teachers could use Meader's books in this format in the classroom.

In addition to study questions, the Discovery Series edition of *T-Model Tommy* featured an introduction and two glossaries, one generic and the other entitled "For The Motor-Minded," specifically concerning trucks and mechanics. The latter, along with the Edward Shenton illustrations of trucking, might very well have caught the eye of a young boy thumbing through *T-Model Tommy*, even one not much interested in reading, especially if he were mechanically inclined. Trying to interest reluctant readers may be the reason a separate glossary on mechanics was produced. The introduction states that the reader does not need the glossaries to understand the book but recommends them because "it is the boy or girl who knows words and how to use them who gets most of the jobs and promotions."<sup>160</sup> This argument mirrors Meader's story in urging readers to be ambitious like "T-Model Tommy," instead of expecting the WPA or other Government programs to take care of them. The study questions are entitled "Did You Miss Anything?" In addition to the customary checking that a chapter has been read, they further reinforce the positive values that Meader emphasizes in his books. The questions for Chapter I observe that "Tommy is ambitious, thrifty, independent, ingenious" (306).

A few examples illustrate the nature of these study questions. Some push past the

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<sup>159</sup>*The Black Buccaneer* and *Bulldozer* were first published in 1920 and 1951 respectively.

<sup>160</sup> Page x of the Discovery Series edition, introduction by Blanche Jennings Thompson, Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, New York.

basic story into specifics about jobs. For Chapter V, which contains a speech on salesmanship, the questions suggest that the reader try selling himself as a job applicant to “a farmer, grocer, contractor, businessman, employment bureau manager, office manager” (306). The questions for Chapter IX address risks in the trucking business, and for Chapter XI they discuss opportunities for keeping up-to-date in a job or profession. However, for Chapter XIV, which narrates Tommy’s escape from riots in Philadelphia during a truckers’ strike, the questions have nothing to do with the specific chapter but instead ask about the illustrations for this book. The publishers may have wanted to avoid controversial topics such as strikes and unions in questions for students. The questions for Chapter XII all concern banking, the first asking if the reader is keeping track of Tom’s banking activities. His growing bank account is tangible evidence of the gradual success of his business.

Two years after this edition of *T-Model Tommy* came out, a Discovery Series edition of *The Black Buccaneer* was published with similar educational material.<sup>161</sup> Some of the study questions ask about the plot, as suggested by the title of the supplemental material: “Reading Check.” Others require some synthesis and personal response by the student: “What would you have done in Jeremy’s place?” and “What qualities must a man have to be a pirate captain? Does Bonnet exhibit any of these qualities?” (283-85). This question almost seems to be suggesting a career as a pirate to the readers.

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<sup>161</sup>In addition to study questions, this edition (1942) has a six-page introduction by Will Scarlet of Benjamin Franklin High School, New York City, and bibliographies of pirate and sea poems and other pirate books.

The School Edition of *Bulldozer* was published in 1955, four years after the trade edition.<sup>162</sup> The study questions are longer and more detailed than in the educational editions of *T-Model Tommy* and *The Black Buccaneer*, and often suggest rather complicated projects for students. Some questions extend beyond the plot of the story, concerning for example the difference between right and wrong (244), and getting the right job, one that “gives a person a sense of pleasure and satisfaction first, and a sense of earning a living secondly” (246). Further questions deal with the characteristics, abilities, and values of various characters in the book, such as one concerning Chapter 4: “If there is such a thing as a common trait among Americans, it is probably ingenuity, which some people define as ‘make-do,’ the talent of working successfully with whatever is at hand. Point out examples of ingenuity in this chapter and preceding ones” (245). Most of Meader’s protagonists are ingenious, good at making do with whatever is handy, or clever in similar ways such as thinking quickly on their feet. One example of ingenuity in *Bulldozer* is the complicated procedure that Bill and Ducky devise to pull the tractor out of the lake. One study question concerning this accomplishment, citing the importance of being able to follow written directions, asks the student “to diagram on paper just how the boys raised the tractor from the lake bottom” (244). More broadly, the notion of taking something which is apparently useless, such as a tractor or sailboat sunk in water (as in *The Commodore’s Cup*) and returning it to productive use shows the ingenuity and resourcefulness that Meader’s heroes display, as does the conversion of unprepossessing

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<sup>162</sup>Edited by Geraldine Murphy, contains “An Introduction for Teachers,” pages v-vii; “An Introduction for Students,” page viii, and detailed study and vocabulary questions concerning each chapter, “For Better Reading,” pages 241-61.

mountain property to blueberry cultivation (*Blueberry Mountain*) and downhill skiing (*Snow on Blueberry Mountain*).

Meader's books lent themselves to other educational and informational applications. The United States Government regarded Meader's work as so representative of the American way of life that it distributed *Red Horse Hill* (translated into German) in post-World War II Germany to acquaint its people with American culture and society. The United States Army distributed these books: "American occupation forces selected the title" as representative "from the pens of American authors to give to the German children" (Gallagher 20).<sup>163</sup> While most reprint runs were of 5,000 copies, 100,000 copies of *Red Horse Hill* were printed and rapidly distributed.<sup>164</sup> One wonders why this book, with its lost-will formula, was chosen, rather than one with an entrepreneurial flavor such as *Blueberry Mountain* or *T-Model Tommy*, or the historical *Boy With a Pack*, the Newbery Honor book about an enterprising Yankee peddler. Still, *Red Horse Hill* certainly highlights values Meader and Americans generally are known for: hard work, loyalty, courage, and self-reliance.

Meader contributed to the patriotic effort during World War II with three novels dealing with the home front that came out even as the war was ongoing: *Shadow in the*

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<sup>163</sup>Stephen W. Meader, *Alle Achtung kleiner Bud*. Wiesentheid: Droemersche Verlagsanstalt, 1947. This is a translation into German of *Red Horse Hill*. Publication information states in English: "Published under Military Government Information Control License No. U.S.-E-17, Office of Military Government for Bavaria, Information Control Division, U. S. Army."

<sup>164</sup>Dreyer, H. Peter, "Germany's Presses Turn Again," *The New York Times* 25 January 1948.

*Pines* (1942), *The Sea Snake* (1943), and *The Long Trains Roll* (1944). These books provided some information about the war and home front efforts to readers, as well as hints for wartime behavior, such as “Loose talk costs lives” (*The Long Trains Roll* 10). Meader’s use of interchapters in *The Long Trains Roll* allowed him to expand his narrative reach far beyond the point of view of the protagonist so that he could provide general information on the war and on railroading to readers, information not necessarily available to the hero. The layout of *The Long Trains Roll*, with italicized, illustrated one-paragraph interchapters at the beginning of each chapter, makes the pages look quite similar to contemporary magazines with advertising pictures interspersed with stories—advertisements such as Meader created for Ayer. He was presenting information in an effective format with which he was familiar.

During World War II, the United States Government commissioned John Steinbeck to write *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (1942) to inform the American public about the training program for military personnel on bombers. Similarly, just after the Korean War, the United States Air Force commissioned Meader to write *Sabre Pilot* (1956), to educate the public on Air Force mechanic and pilot training, to attempt to interest young men in military aviation, and ultimately to try to recruit young men into the military.

*Sabre Pilot* is illustrative of an occasional, but long and bumpy, relationship between Meader and the military. Meader was a Quaker. Quakerism influenced his books, yet as an advertising person, one of his clients was the United States Army, for whom he wrote recruiting advertising. He served as a volunteer air spotter during World

War II, for which some fellow Quakers criticized him, and he was quite proud of his “flying sons”<sup>165</sup> who served in the military in that war. Some of his protagonists are Quakers; others encounter Quakers during their adventures. These Quakers often oppose the violence in Meader’s books, yet he wrote frequently about such subjects. In his second book, *Down the Big River* (1924), Meader introduced this conflict between Quaker principles of peace and the violence often found in boys’ adventure books. The hero, the son a Quaker, after bearing several insults, beats a bully in a fist fight. In *A Blow for Liberty* (1965), Meader again explores this tension with a Quaker protagonist who fights on a privateer during the Revolutionary War. A part-owner of that ship is a Quaker who specifies that his non-Quaker partner pay for the guns to arm it. Meader, the Quaker author, also created protagonist Kirk Owens in *Sabre Pilot* who, while not a Quaker, consults his conscience and prays before going into combat in the Korean War.

In addition to his entrepreneurial writing and writing about wars, Stephen Meader stands out as an environmental writer of consequence. His concern with such issues is clear as early as his third book, *Longshanks* (1928), in which the character Abe [Lincoln] deters another character from shooting passenger pigeons. Meader’s environmental interest is prominent in *King of the Hills* (1933), where the protagonist, concerned that deer may become extinct, fights a gang of deer poachers, and tries to photograph the ancient buck deer who is the “King of the Hills,” a hunt that is a challenge both to tracking and to photographic skills. Meader’s environmental concerns suffuse most of his

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<sup>165</sup>Meader dedicated *Sabre Pilot* “To my flying sons STEPHEN W. MEADER, JR and JOHN HOYT MEADER.”

books, but in some they are critically important to the story. For example, in *Stranger on Big Hickory* (1964), the hero compiles a list of wild animals in his county and tries to photograph each one. He discovers that each organism in the ecosystem has its place in the balance of nature.

*Trap-Lines North: A True Story of the Canadian Woods* (1936), the story of the Vanderbeck family of trappers and hunters, also contains environmental themes, and is Meader's only book set in contemporary Canada. In 1993 the remote town of Nakina, Ontario, where the Vanderbecks maintained their warehouse and summer home, secured permission from the Meader family to reprint 2,000 copies of *Trap-Lines North* in paperback as part of a seventieth anniversary celebration of the founding of the town and to raise funds for the library. In recent years the town of Nakina has attempted to capitalize on its Vanderbeck and Meader history by turning the Vanderbeck home and warehouse into a historic site. In addition, a website is now devoted to the book.<sup>166</sup>

Though Meader was a favorite with young readers for years, eventually his popularity diminished, and his last few efforts received rejection slips. His work had to compete with radio, television, and eventually with computer games and other modern entertainment. By the end of the 1980s, he was completely out of print. Meader's very long career had probably left him somewhat out of touch with youth. Some of his language started to seem archaic, and some of his plot ideas were perceived as stale. Reviewers noted that sometimes his heroes seemed to win too easily; he used the ordeal formula less in his later years, and the ordeal was one of the ways that Meader tested his

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<sup>166</sup><http://traplinesnorth.tripod.com/> (accessed 8 February 2005).

protagonists.

Several possible topics for further research into Stephen Meader's career might be fruitful. It would be interesting to examine the process by which the Air Force decided to commission a juvenile novel, ultimately Meader's *Sabre Pilot*, and how they chose him specifically; some records are probably available in Air Force and Defense Department archives and libraries. In addition, delving into how well the book worked for the recruiting of young men into military aviation would probably be helpful to the Air Force today to inform current recruiting efforts. The connections between Meader's work in advertising and his writing for young people would also be likely to provide valuable insights. Did Meader bring writing techniques from his advertising to bear on his production of juvenile novels? Another topic of interest is the illustration of Meader's novels. How did the publisher decide which illustrator to use? Was there any contact between author and illustrator? What other authors and books did Meader's illustrators work on?

Meader's long career as an author of adventure stories for children continues a tradition of children's authors who record connections and synergy between American culture and juvenile literature. From historical stories across the American past to modern entrepreneurial adventures to World War II as it happened, Meader recorded many trends and values in American culture. The descriptions of the concepts and details of starting and running a business in Meader's contemporary entrepreneurial books provide a much more accurate picture of the possibilities for success enjoyed by American youth than Horatio Alger's books that are popularly supposed to depict

accurate American rags-to-riches tales.

Recently there has been a resurgence of interest in Meader. The first reemergence of Meader's work was the reprinting of *Trap-Lines North* in 1993 to benefit the Nakina library. Soon after, in 1995, a German translation of *Red Horse Hill* appeared—apparently the initiative to distribute *Red Horse Hill* in postwar Germany enjoyed some success. In 2000 Southern Skies issued *T-Model Tommy* and in 2001 Bethlehem Books published *Cleared for Action*, a compilation of four of Meader's stories of the sea.<sup>167</sup>

*T-Model Tommy* was the first of Meader's books to come back into print in the United States. This first effort by Southern Skies contains introductory remarks by John Meader, son of the author. Several formats were published: paperback (the first time for *T-Model Tommy*), hardback with dust jacket, and leather bound. Southern Skies, a partnership of three men who enjoyed reading the books as children, arranged with the Meader family to reprint the books—for others who had read them as children and for new generations. Their publication of a leather-bound edition demonstrates their esteem for the book in an era when the binding of books in leather is unusual, and almost always confined to classics.

Stephen Meader told the story of the American way of life and success in his books for children. He emphasized values of courage, honesty, ambition, self-reliance, tolerance, and community. His protagonists display these values as they mature during

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<sup>167</sup>*Cleared for Action* (Bethlehem Books, Bathgate, ND) consists of *Clear for Action* (1940), *Whaler 'Round the Horn* (1950), *The Voyage of the Javelin* (1959), and *Phantom of the Blockade* (1962). At this writing (early 2005), *Cleared for Action* remains in print and SouthernSkies.com has eleven books by Meader back in print.

the stories, whether they start businesses, fight in wars and against villains, win basketball and football games, or head west in the early days of the republic. They generally succeed in finding themselves homes and careers. Meader's work has gone through cycles of popularity, from forty-four published books overflowing library shelves, to being completely out of print, to a resurgence of interest today as two different publishers bring out his books, emphasizing the worthwhile values that Meader imparted. Stephen W. Meader died in 1977.

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Books for Children by Stephen W. Meader

Arranged Chronologically

All are fiction and published by in New York by Harcourt, Brace, with the exception of *Trap Lines North*, published by Dodd, Mead in New York, and essentially non-fiction.

*The Black Buccaneer*, 1920.

*Down the Big River*, 1924.

*Longshanks*, 1928.

*Red Horse Hill*, 1930.

*Away to Sea*, 1931.

*King of the Hills*, 1933.

*Lumberjack*, 1934,

*Trap-Lines North: A True Story of the Canadian Woods*, 1936.

*The Will to Win and Other Stories*, 1936.

*Who Rides in the Dark?*, 1937.

*T-Model Tommy*, 1938.

*Bat: The Story of a Bull Terrier*, 1939.

*Boy With A Pack*, 1939.

*Clear for Action*, 1940.

*Blueberry Mountain*, 1941.

*Shadow in the Pines*, 1942.

*The Sea Snake*, 1943.

*The Long Trains Roll*, 1944.

*Skippy's Family*, 1945.

*Jonathan Goes West*, 1946.

*Behind the Ranges*, 1947.

*River of the Wolves*, 1948.

*Cedar's Boy*, 1949.

*Whaler 'Round the Horn*, 1950.

*Bulldozer*, 1951.

*The Fish Hawk's Nest*, 1952.

*Sparkplug of the Hornets*, 1953.

*The Buckboard Stranger*, 1954.

*Guns for the Saratoga*, 1955.

*Sabre Pilot*, 1956.

*Everglades Adventure*, 1957.

*The Commodore's Cup*, 1958.

*The Voyage of the Javelin*, 1959.

*Wild Pony Island*, 1959.

*Buffalo and Beaver*, 1960.

*Snow on Blueberry Mountain*, 1961.

*Phantom of the Blockade*, 1962.

*The Muddy Road to Glory*, 1963.

*Stranger on Big Hickory*, 1964.

*A Blow for Liberty*, 1965.

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“Ice on the Horse Killer.” *The American Boy*, February 1933, 6.

“The Will to Win.” *The American Boy*, April 1933, 9.

“The Carrabescook Doubles.” *The American Boy*, August 1933, 11.

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Meader, Stephen W. "The Freedom Trail." TMs.

Meader, Stephen W. "The Hawley House Mystery." TMs.

Meader, Stephen W. "A Family Memoir." 1960. TMs (carbon copy).

This is different from the four above in that it was clearly intended for family use and not for general publication.

(I currently have photocopies; these are described as the originals which I examined from John Meader.)

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