

# Who Wrote Nancy Drew ?

## Secrets from the Syndicate Files Revealed

by **James D. Keeline**

Although complete contract records from the Stratemeyer Syndicate have not yet been seen, some information about the authorship of the three principal series produced by the Syndicate can be revealed. Since the 1980 lawsuit of Grosset & Dunlap vs. the Stratemeyer Syndicate and Simon & Schuster, it became clear that Harriet S. Adams did not write all of the Nancy Drew volumes since her father's death in 1930. During that trial, Mildred A. Wirt's name first became widely known by collectors. Because of the nature of the creation of these volumes, outlines filled in by ghostwriters, it has become generally accepted that Harriet S. Adams wrote few of the volumes and merely supervised the series. The reality is found to be somewhere in between these two extremes. While ghostwriters were frequently used, with some of the best writing appearing while Mildred Wirt was writing, Harriet S. Adams also personally wrote many volumes. For those volumes that Harriet did not write, she or her sister, Edna C. Squier supplied outlines to the ghostwriters. Edna's role has been largely overlooked by Syndicate historians who thought she left very shortly after 1930. However, she remained an active partner until 1942, twelve years after Stratemeyer's death and she supplied a large number of plot outlines during that time. However, relatively few other names connected with this series were known. Syndicate partner, Nancy Axelrad prepared a list of the Bobbsey Twins, Hardy Boys, and Nancy Drew series in her effort to compile a history of the Stratemeyer Syndicate. This and many other papers were donated to the Beinecke Manuscript Collection at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Although the files from the Syndicate are scheduled to be donated to the New York Public Library, cataloging requirements will not permit access to this information for nearly three years. Once available to researchers, this information may be confirmed and we may be able to learn the names and identities of all Syndicate series large and small. Several of the names revealed below are new and worth our collective investigative time.

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| <b>1 The Secret of the Old Clock</b> | <b>1930</b> |
| <b>2 The Hidden Staircase</b>        | <b>1930</b> |
| <b>3 The Bungalow Mystery</b>        | <b>1930</b> |

Mildred A. Wirt (1905-) wrote these volumes based upon outlines supplied by Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930). Although Stratemeyer did not like the characterization of Nancy Drew in the first manuscript supplied by Wirt, Grosset & Dunlap did and asked for two more by the same author. Stratemeyer edited these three volumes. They were published shortly before his death in May of 1930.

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| <b>4 The Mystery at Lilac Inn</b>    | <b>1930</b> |
| <b>5 The Secret at Shadow Ranch</b>  | <b>1931</b> |
| <b>6 The Secret of Red Gate Farm</b> | <b>1932</b> |
| <b>7 The Clue in the Diary</b>       | <b>1932</b> |

Mildred Wirt wrote the manuscripts to these stories based upon outlines from Harriet S. Adams (1892-1982) for volumes 4 and 5 and from Edna Squier(1895-1974) for volumes 6 and 7. In each of the above four volumes, Harriet S. Adams edited while for volumes 6 and 7 she is described as having rewritten the manuscripts.

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| <b>8 Nancy's Mysterious Letter</b>       | <b>1932</b> |
| <b>9 The Sign of the Twisted Candles</b> | <b>1933</b> |
| <b>10 The Password to Larkspur Lane</b>  | <b>1933</b> |

Walter Karig wrote these manuscripts based upon outlines by Edna Squier for volume 8 and Harriet S. Adams for volumes 9 and 10. Harriet S. Adams edited the three volumes and significantly rewrote volume 9.

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| <b>11 The Clue of the Broken Locket</b>           | <b>1934</b> |
| <b>12 The Message in the Hollow Oak</b>           | <b>1935</b> |
| <b>13 The Mystery of the Ivory Charm</b>          | <b>1936</b> |
| <b>14 The Whispering Statue</b>                   | <b>1937</b> |
| <b>15 The Haunted Bridge</b>                      | <b>1937</b> |
| <b>16 The Clue of the Tapping Heels</b>           | <b>1939</b> |
| <b>17 The Mystery of the Brass Bound Trunk</b>    | <b>1940</b> |
| <b>18 The Mystery at the Moss-Covered Mansion</b> | <b>1941</b> |
| <b>19 The Quest of the Missing Map</b>            | <b>1942</b> |
| <b>20 The Clue in the Jewel Box</b>               | <b>1943</b> |
| <b>21 The Secret in the Old Attic</b>             | <b>1944</b> |
| <b>22 The Clue in the Crumbling Wall</b>          | <b>1945</b> |
| <b>23 The Mystery of the Tolling Bell</b>         | <b>1946</b> |
| <b>24 The Clue in the Old Album</b>               | <b>1947</b> |
| <b>25 The Ghost of Blackwood Hall</b>             | <b>1948</b> |

Mildred Wirt wrote the manuscripts for these volumes based upon outlines by Edna Squier for volumes 11-14, 16, and 18 while Harriet S. Adam supplied the outlines for the other volumes and edited all of the above volumes.

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| <b>26 The Clue of the Leaning Chimney</b> | <b>1949</b> |
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George Waller Jr wrote a manuscript based upon an outline by Harriet S. Adams that was rejected. Harriet S. Adams revised the manuscript.

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| <b>27 The Secret of the Wooden Lady</b> | <b>1950</b> |
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Margaret Scherf wrote this volume based upon an outline by Harriet S. Adams who also edited. Although Scherf's name was known for several years, it was associated with volumes 36 and/or 37. Margaret Scherf (1908-1979) wrote three other juvenile mysteries for Franklin Watts: *the Mystery of the Velvet Box*, 1963; *the Mystery of the Shaky Staircase*, 1965; and *the Mystery of the Empty Trunk*. The first two of these volumes features a character named Harriet who solves mysteries.

- 28 The Clue of the Black Keys** **1951**  
 Wilhelmina Rankin wrote the manuscript for this volume based upon an outline by Harriet S. Adams who edited and rewrote the manuscript.
- 29 The Mystery at the Ski Jump** **1952**  
 Alma Sasse wrote the manuscript based upon an outline by Harriet S. Adams who also edited. Alma Benecke Sasse wrote two mysteries under her own name. The first was *Mystery of the Chinese Box* published in 1939 by Crowell, a library publisher. The second was called *Terry Carvel's Theater Caravan* in 1943 published by Doubleday, Doran.
- 30 The Clue of the Velvet Mask** **1953**  
 Mildred Benson (Wirt) returned to write this one volume based upon an outline by Andrew E. Svenson (1910-1975). Harriet S. Adams edited and rewrote the manuscript.
- 31 The Ringmaster's Secret** **1953**  
 Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript.
- 32 The Scarlet Slipper Mystery** **1954**  
 Charles Strong wrote this volume based upon an outline by Harriet S. Adams who also edited. Charles Stanley Strong (1906-1962) wrote Hardy Boys volume 34 in the same year along with several dog stories and nonfiction for a variety of publishers and a 1956 volume for Grosset & Dunlap: *We Were There with Byrd at the South Pole* that was illustrated by Tom Swift Jr. illustrator Graham Kaye.
- 33 The Witch Tree Symbol** **1955**  
 Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript.
- 34 The Hidden Window Mystery** **1956**  
 Patricia Doll wrote the synopsis to this story. Harriet S. Adams revised the synopsis, wrote the outline and manuscript.
- 35 The Haunted Showboat** **1957**
- 36 The Secret of the Golden Pavilion** **1959**  
 Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript; June Dunn edited. Jane Sanderson cut down the manuscript.
- 37 The Clue in the Old Stagecoach** **1960**
- 38 The Mystery of the Fire Dragon** **1961**
- 39 The Clue of the Dancing Puppet** **1962**
- 40 The Moonstone Castle Mystery** **1963**
- 41 The Clue of the Whistling Bagpipes** **1964**
- 42 The Phantom of Pine Hill** **1965**
- 43 The Mystery of the 99 Steps** **1966**
- 44 The Clue in the Crossword Cipher** **1967**
- 45 The Spider Sapphire Mystery** **1968**
- 46 The Invisible Intruder** **1969**

<b>47 The Mysterious Mannequin</b>	<b>1970</b>
<b>48 The Crooked Bannister</b>	<b>1971</b>
<b>49 The Secret of Mirror Bay</b>	<b>1972</b>
<b>50 The Double Jinx Mystery</b>	<b>1973</b>
<b>51 The Mystery of the Glowing Eye</b>	<b>1974</b>
<b>52 The Secret of the Forgotten City</b>	<b>1975</b>
<b>53 The Sky Phantom</b>	<b>1976</b>
<b>54 Strange Message in the Parchment</b>	<b>1977</b>
<b>55 Mystery of Crocodile Island</b>	<b>1978</b>
<b>56 The Thirteenth Pearl</b>	<b>1979</b>

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outlines and manuscripts for these volumes.

<b>A Nancy Drew Cookbook: Clues to Good Cooking</b>	<b>1973</b>
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The recipes for this book were sold to the Syndicate for one dollar from Patsy Bogle.

<b>B Nancy Drew Sleuth Book</b>	<b>1979</b>
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# Who Rewrote Nancy Drew?

As times changed, stories became outdated in subject matter and social content. It became necessary to revise the stories to make them acceptable to a new generation of readers. Beginning in 1959, the stories in the series were revised and in many cases, substantially rewritten.

**1 The Secret of the Old Clock** **1959**

**2 The Hidden Staircase** **1959**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outlines and manuscripts for these stories based upon the original stories from 1930.

**3 The Bungalow Mystery** **1960**

**4 The Mystery at Lilac Inn** **1961**

Patricia Doll revised the original story. Harriet S. Adams rewrote the manuscript.

**5 The Secret at Shadow Ranch** **1965**

Grace Grote wrote the outline and manuscript; Harriet S. Adams edited.

**6 The Secret of Red Gate Farm** **1961**

Lynn Ealer condensed the original story. Harriet S. Adams edited and rewrote the manuscript.

**7 The Clue in the Diary** **1962**

**8 Nancy's Mysterious Letter** **1968**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outlines and manuscripts for these stories. Harriet S. Adams edited volume 8. For volume 7, Jocelyn Starzyk edited.

**9 The Sign of the Twisted Candles** **1968**

Patricia Doll cut down the original story; Harriet S. Adams edited and rewrote.

**10 The Password to Larkspur Lane** **1966**

Patricia Doll cut down the original story; June Dunn edited. Grace Grote revised the story; Harriet S. Adams edited and rewrote the manuscript.

**11 The Clue of the Broken Locket** **1965**

Harriet S. Adams and Grace Grote wrote the outline. Harriet S. Adams wrote the manuscript; Jocelyn Starzyk edited.

**12 The Message in the Hollow Oak** **1972**

Grace Grote wrote the outline and manuscript; Harriet S. Adams revised.

**13 The Mystery of the Ivory Charm** **1974**

Priscilla Baker-Carr cut down the original story. Harriet S. Adams revised the manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**14 The Whispering Statue** **1970**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**15 The Haunted Bridge** **1972**

Priscilla Baker-Carr cut down the original story. Harriet S. Adams revised the manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**16 The Clue of the Tapping Heels** **1969**

**17 The Mystery of the Brass Bound Trunk** **1976**

**18 The Mystery at the Moss-Covered Mansion** **1971**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**19 The Quest of the Missing Map** **1969**

**20 The Clue in the Jewel Box** **1972**

**21 The Secret in the Old Attic** **1970**

**22 The Clue in the Crumbling Wall** **1973**

**23 The Mystery of the Tolling Bell** **1973**

**24 The Clue in the Old Album** **1977**

**25 The Ghost of Blackwood Hall** **1967**

**26 The Clue of the Leaning Chimney** **1967**

**27 The Secret of the Wooden Lady** **1967**

**28 The Clue of the Black Keys** **1968**

Priscilla Baker-Carr cut down the original story. For volume 20, Julie Irish assisted in cutting down the story. Nancy S. Axelrad edited volumes 19, 20, 22, and 23 with Lilo Wuenn assisting on volume 22. Harriet S. Adams edited volumes 19, 21, and 28; she revised volumes 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

**29 The Mystery at the Ski Jump** **1968**

Ann Shultes cut down the original story; June Dunn and Harriet S. Adams edited.

**30 The Clue of the Velvet Mask** **1969**

Priscilla Baker-Carr cut down the original story. Harriet S. Adams and Grace Grote edited the manuscript.

**31 The Ringmaster's Secret** **1974**

June Dunn cut down the original story; Harriet S. Adams edited.

**32 The Scarlet Slipper Mystery** **1974**

**33 The Witch Tree Symbol** **1975**

Ann Shultes cut down the original story; June Dunn and Harriet S. Adams edited.

**34 The Hidden Window Mystery** **1975**

Mary Fisher cut down the original story; June Dunn and Harriet S. Adams edited.

# Who Wrote the Wanderer Nancy Drews?

In 1979, the Stratemeyer Syndicate moved its publishing rights to Simon & Schuster, the company that would later purchase the Syndicate in 1984. These new volumes were published under the Wanderer imprint.

**57 The Triple Hoax** **1979**

**58 The Flying Saucer Mystery** **1980**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outlines and manuscripts. For volume 57, Harriet S. Adams and Lilo Wuenn edited. Nancy Axelrad edited volume 58.

**59 The Secret in the Old Lace** **1980**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline and manuscript. Nancy Axelrad rewrote the manuscript.

**60 The Greek Symbol Mystery** **1981**

Nancy S. Axelrad wrote the manuscript based upon an outline by Axelrad and Harriet S. Adams.

**61 The Swami's Ring** **1981**

Harriet S. Adams wrote the outline. Nancy Axelrad expanded the outline and wrote the manuscript.

**62 The Kachina Doll Mystery** **1981**

Sharon Wagner (1936-) wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**63 The Twin Dilemma** **1981**

Nancy Axelrad wrote the outline and manuscript; Lilo Wuenn edited.

**64 Captive Witness** **1981**

Richard Ballad wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**65 Mystery of the Winged Lion** **1982**

Nancy Axelrad wrote the outline and manuscript; Lilo Wuenn edited.

**66 Race Against Time** **1982**

Sherry Lemmon (a pseudonym for James Duncan Lawrence (1918-1994)) wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**67 The Sinister Omen** **1982**

Richard Ballad wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**68 The Elusive Heiress** **1982**

Sharon Wagner wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

**69 Clue in the Ancient Disguise** **1982**

Sherry Lemmon (a pseudonym for James Duncan Lawrence) wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.

- 70 The Broken Anchor** 1983  
Sharon Wagner wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.
- 71 The Silver Cobweb** 1983  
**72 The Haunted Carousel** 1983  
James Duncan Lawrence (1918-1994) wrote the outline and manuscript; Nancy Axelrad edited.
- 73 Enemy Match** 1984  
**74 The Mysterious Image** 1984  
**75 The Emerald-Eyed Cat Mystery** 1984  
Authorship of these volumes were not recorded in the Beinecke papers.
- 76 The Eskimo's Secret** 1985  
Sharon Wagner wrote the outline and manuscript.
- 77 The Bluebeard Room** 1985  
James D. Lawrence wrote the outline and manuscript.
- 78 The Phantom of Venice** 1985  
James D. Lawrence wrote the outline and manuscript.