



Trixie Belden

“Schoolgirl Shamus”

by James D. and Kimberlee Keeline



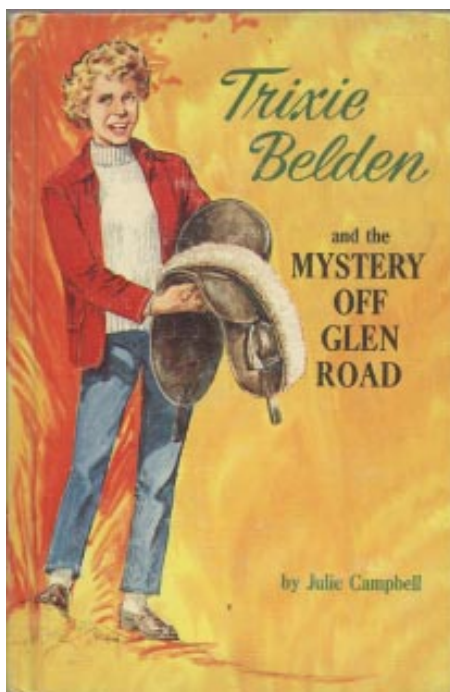
“I have so got an ambition,” Trixie told him with a toss of her head. “It’s all settled. Honey and I are going to be private detectives; aren’t we, Honey?”

Jim hooted with laughter. “And call your agency Schoolgirl Shamuses, Incorporated, I suppose. I can just see your business cards,” he went on gaily. “When the FBI gives up, we take over,” printed in red.”

Honey and Trixie couldn’t help laughing, too. When they subsided, Trixie said, “You’ve got to admit that we were pretty smart about finding you, Jim Frayne.”

“That you were,” he admitted. “Are you two really serious about being detectives?”

(Trixie Belden and the Gatehouse Mystery, 1951)



Deluxe Format Book

The **Trixie Belden** series (1948-1986) was one of the most-successful non-Syndicate series of juvenile mystery stories. Although the series did not have the sales of the queen of juvenile detection, **Nancy Drew**, it did and does have a dedicated following of fans who like to point out how they liked character and stories better.

The series was created by Julie Campbell Tatham (1908-), an author who had a small literary agency in New York City in the 1940s around the time that the Junior Achievement program was being established. She had already written an outline and three sample chapters for a story called “The Swap Shop Mystery” when representatives from Western Publishing called all of the literary agents to a meeting with an appeal for manuscripts which were “fast-moving, well-written mystery and adventure books” which could be produced and mass marketed at a price children could buy themselves. These books would be published under the Whitman imprint of Western Publishing. One rationale offered was an effort to lure children from comic books which had become a concern of late. Curiously, Whitman was one of the larger publishers of comic books and the similarly-illustrated Big Little Books, a format which they founded in 1932.

Tatham made a proposal including two series which she would write and two series written by two of her authors. The editors were thrilled and gave her and her two authors the entire assignment. The **Walton Boys** series (1948-1952) was written by Hal Burton (1908-1992) and the **Tom Stetson** series (1948-1951) was written by John Henry Cutler (1910-). Both series had three volumes each.

Tatham wrote two series which were published under her maiden name, “Julie Campbell,” even though she had married Charles Tatham in 1933. The manuscript

for “The Swap Shop Mystery” featured a feisty heroine named Ginny Gordon and the book was published as *Ginny Gordon and the Mystery of the Disappearing Candlesticks* (1948), the first book in the series. This book was followed by four more in the **Ginny Gordon** series (1948-1956). She wrote six volumes in the **Trixie Belden** series (1948-1958) before moving on to other writing interests.

Shortly after her agreement with Western Publishing, she was contacted by her agent, Helen Wells (1910-1986), who created the **Cherry Ames** series (1943-1968) about a young nurse and the **Vicki Barr** series (1947-1962) about a mystery-loving stewardess for Federal Airlines, had decided to stop writing these popular series and begin work in radio and television. Tatham was called in to write *Cherry Ames, Cruise Nurse* (1948) which she did in three weeks. The book was published under Helen Wells’



Julie Campbell Tatham

name because the artwork for the covers had already been ordered and the books largely pre-sold. Once again, her editors were pleased with the quality and promptness of her work. Helen Wells, perhaps realizing her mistake, later returned to writing these two series. In that time, however, Julie Tatham had written eight **Cherry Ames** volumes and four **Vicki Barr** books.

Tatham's books were different from the Wells' ones in that the main characters did not pair up with any particular love interest. Instead, each had several admirers. In response to a question about this she replied, "My philosophy is to play the field. I couldn't tolerate this going steady stuff."

Characters

While the series is often compared with **Nancy Drew** and there are some similarities, the differences are more pronounced.

The most obvious difference is the age of the protagonists. While Nancy is 16 in the early original text volumes, Trixie is 13 at the outset of the series and celebrates her 14th birthday on May 1 at the end of *The Marshland Mystery* (1961). Nancy's age is not often mentioned in the series except in an introduction once each book.

By the time of the revised text stories in the 1950s, Nancy's age is fixed at 18, which would allow her to drive her car in any state. Trixie's age also became fixed at 14 despite the fact that the first 16 books are in a rough sequence of months, seasons, and school breaks. This editorial decision was

made to preserve the dynamic of the ensemble cast of characters which form Trixie's group of friends. They formed a semi-secret society, **The Bob-Whites of the Glen**, which performed public service for individuals and large charities.

Trixie's best friend is Honey Wheeler whose family is very wealthy as evidenced from the fact that her father has his own jet plane. He is characterized as a "millionaire" in *The Mystery in Arizona* (1958). While Trixie could best be described as a "tomboy," Honey is more feminine in appearance and action and the series makes repeated references to how she likes to sew. Trixie and Honey plan to open The Belden-Wheeler Detective Agency when they become adults.

Trixie has three brothers, Mart who is "exactly eleven months older," Brian who is 15 at the beginning of the series but whose age freezes at 17, and six-year-old Bobby Belden. Bobby is the typical younger brother who uses childish vocabulary and who can't keep a secret. If something of his is lost or damaged, he retaliates in kind. As the eldest of the group, many of the **BWGs** look up to him and listen when he speaks. Mart looks remarkably similar to Trixie, so much so that in the early books he wears his hair in a crew cut to avoid having curls like Trixie. He is fond of using long words and complex sentences, particularly when he is teasing Trixie.

Other characters which make up the **Bob-Whites of the Glen** include Jim Frayne,



Julie Tatham's Room at "Wolf Hollow" where she wrote the Trixie books

Diana Lynch, and Dan Managan. These characters were added in later books, some of which were not written by Julie Tatham. At various times there is a glimmer of love interest between these characters, mostly inferred by the reader, but for the most part, the editors have decided to adopt Julie's philosophy on their interaction.

The cast of characters is rounded out by numerous adults with whom the teens interact including parents, neighbors, business people and the police. For example, as in the **Nancy Drew** books, the police aren't thrilled with an amateur detective in the neighborhood. Sergeant Molinson often scolds Trixie on her procedure but usually has to admit that she was successful and adds his congratulations.

Horses play an important role in most **Trixie Belden** stories. In the later volumes, one of the distinguishing characteristics of different ghostwriters is their knowledge of horses, horsemanship, and the equipment used to groom and care for them. There are several horses in the series, each with unique personalities, whom are ridden by the various characters.

Bill Regan cares for the horses and helps Miss Trask run the Wheeler estate. He is a source of encouragement to the BWGs but is particularly strict if they try to rush the grooming of the horses after a ride. However, if he senses that they have something very important to do, usually in connection



"Wolf Hollow" in the Hudson River Valley of New York (aka Crabapple Farm)

with a mystery, he will sometimes offer to groom the horses or do some of the teens' chores.

Each of the characters has a different and believable attitude about work around the house. For the most part they are not thrilled but do their part. Nancy Drew only seems to do work when she wants to demonstrate her affection towards Hannah Gruen or when she wants to host a special function.

Locales

In the fall of 1940, Julie and her husband purchased a home in the Hudson River Valley called "Wolf Hollow" on Glendale Road near Ossining, in Westchester County, New York. This home became the model for Crabapple Farm and the surrounding area became the fictional setting of Sleepyside-on-the-Hudson. From an upstairs room in this two-story white frame Colonial house, Julie wrote books for the **Trixie Belden** and other series.

On either side of Crabapple Farm are the homes of Diana Lynch and Honey Wheeler. The Manor House, where the Wheeler family lives is a "huge estate that sits high on a hill surrounded by sloping lawns and a 300-acre, wooded game preserve ... and a boathouse and pier on the lake."

The general area of Sleepyside-on-the-Hudson in the books is described as the area made famous by Washington Irving and his stories about Sleepy Hollow. In fact, the



Glendale Road (aka Glen Road)



The model for the Wheeler Estate near "Wolf Hollow"

town of Tarrytown was recently renamed Sleepy Hollow in a successful effort to improve tourism in the area. Irving's home, between Tarrytown and Irvington has been restored by the Rockefeller Foundation, according to the "Trixie Lore" pages. Additionally, prospective writers using this series "bible" were urged to consult the available maps and pamphlets from the Ossining Chamber of Commerce which were kept on file in the editorial offices.

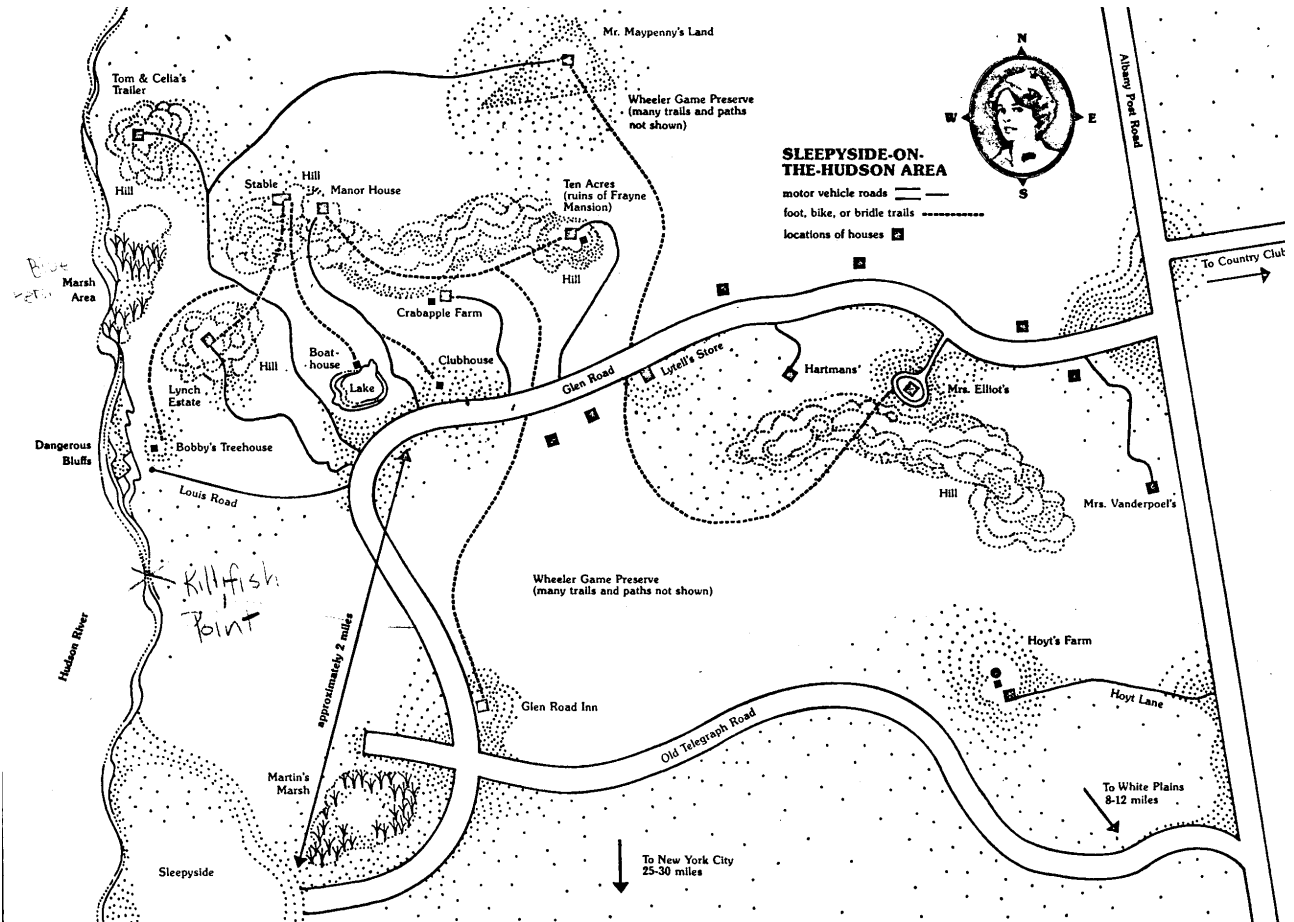
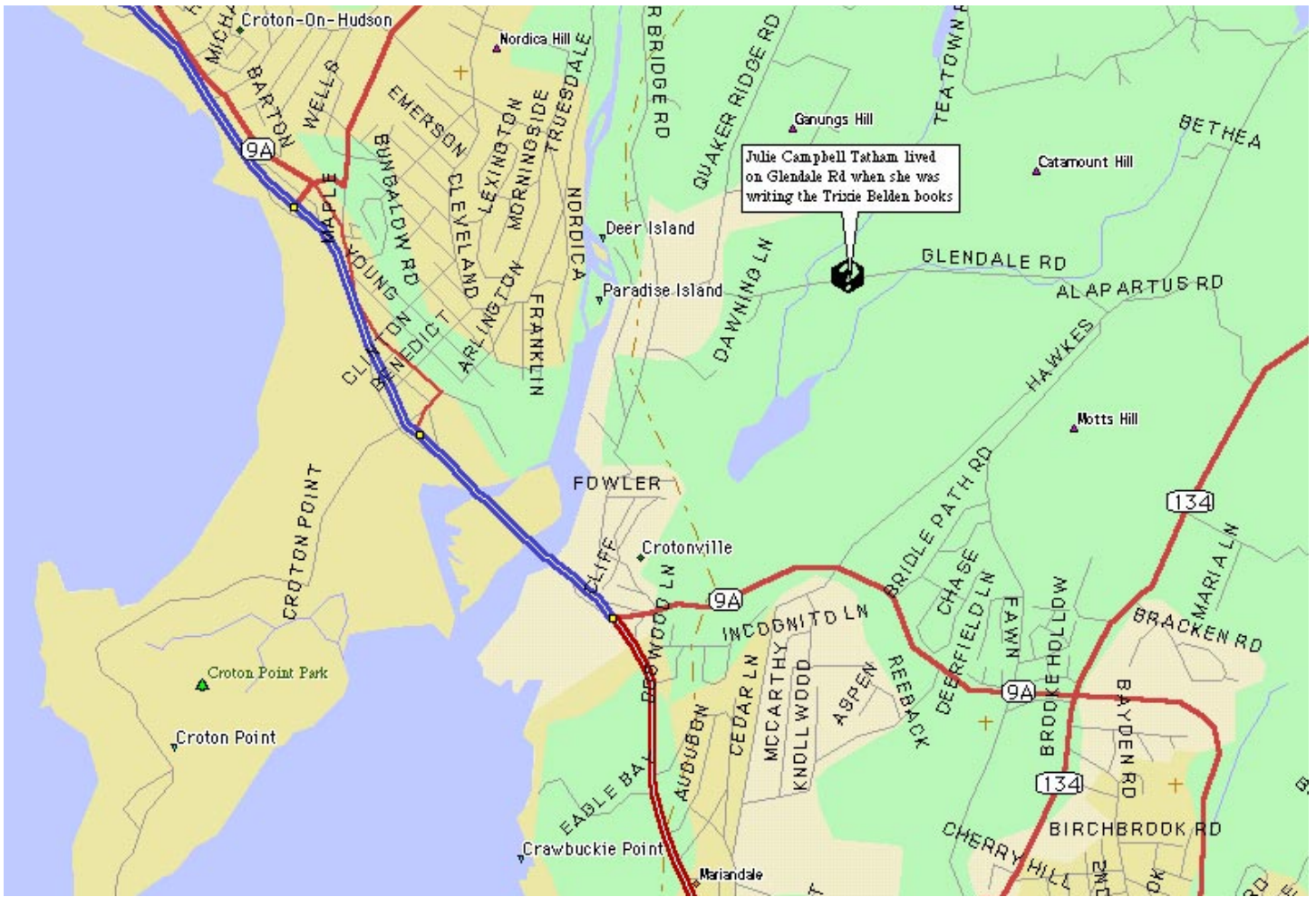
Sleepyside, like all series book communities, has grown in detail as new books were written. Its specific location was intentionally vague but was certainly described to connote the region near Ossining and Crotonville. The nearest large city is White Plains, New York, some 8 to 12 miles south-east of Sleepyside. The town sports a newspaper, *The Sleepyside Sun*; a hospital, where Trixie and Honey work as candy strippers; a bank, the First National on Main Street, where Trixie's father, Peter Belden, works; Wimpy's, a hamburger parlor which looks like a train's dining car; Sleepyside Junior-Senior High School, and the Glen Road Inn.

Curiously, the real area also includes one of the more notorious state penitentiaries, Sing Sing Prison. Despite this, none of the Trixie Belden books mention the prison or have escaped convicts in their plots. It was probably a case of reality being too close to home.

Authorship

After more than ten years writing series

books, Julie Tatham decided to stop. Naturally, like the situation with Helen Wells earlier, her editors were not pleased. The **Trixie Belden** series had proven more popular than the **Ginny Gordon** books and Western Publishing wanted to continue the series. Tatham had been paid a flat fee for each volume but she had to remind them that if they wanted to continue the series they would have to pay her a royalty since while they owned the books, she owned the



characters. This is one case where her experience as a literary agent paid off. She received payment for many years on the next six books in the series but the way the contract was written, she had effectively relinquished the originator rights which allowed her to make this agreement.

Western Publishing decided to continue the series and use a publisher-owned pseudonym for the books. Until recently, information on the identity of “Kathryn Kenny” has been rather sketchy. Today, much more has been learned and much can be interpolated. Unfortunately, the editors and writers have rather dim memories of these details and Western Publishing has not been forthcoming with this kind of information.

Some of the characteristics of Julie Campbell Tatham’s books include a thorough knowledge of horses, no doubt connected with the fact that she was one of the first women polo players in the U.S.; detailed information about travel trailers, descriptions of food preparation, and history of Arizona. The first book contains many incidents of personal danger which is toned down in later volumes, possibly at the suggestion of her editors.

Nicolette Meredith Stack

The first writer to tackle the series was Nicolette Meredith Stack (1896-1978?), an author who was born in Des Moines, Iowa but lived in Webster Groves in St. Louis, Missouri for most of her adult life. She attended the University of Colorado for one year and then went on a six-month around-the-world trip aboard the *H.M.S. Franconia* Floating University. She was the daughter of Frances Lynch McGuire, who was also an author, and her sister, Gertrude Williamson, was an illustrator.

According to biographical sources, she wrote the **Robin Kane** series (1966-1971) under the “Eileen Hill” pseudonym, which was described by the *Girls’ Series Companion* as a west coast **Trixie Belden**, and between five and eight books in the **Trixie Belden** series between 1961 and 1971. Until now, the identity of these books has been unknown. However, an examination of the books she wrote which were published under her own name revealed some clues to which Trixies were hers. Her first book, *Two to Get Ready* (Caxton, 1953) included a stick figure alphabetic code called the

Trixie Belden Series

Julie Campbell titles:

		Author	Year
1	<i>The Secret Mansion</i>	Campbell	1948
2	<i>The Red Trailer Mystery</i>	Campbell	1950
3	<i>The Gatehouse Mystery</i>	Campbell	1951
4	<i>The Mysterious Visitor</i>	Campbell	1954
5	<i>The Mystery Off Glen Road</i>	Campbell	1956
6	<i>The Mystery in Arizona</i>	Campbell	1958

Kathryn Kenny (pseud.) titles:

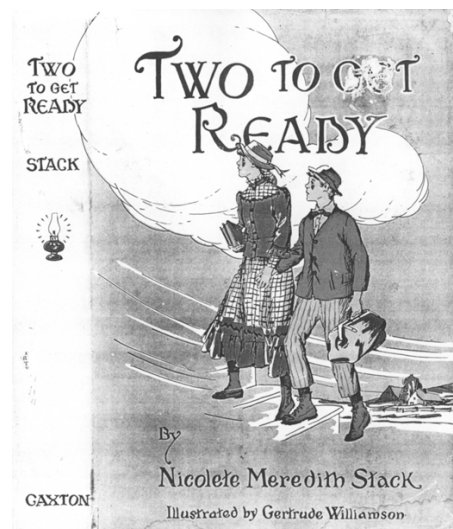
		Ghostwriter	Year
7	<i>The Mysterious Code</i>	[Stack]	1961
8	<i>The Black Jacket Mystery</i>	[C]	1961
9	<i>The Happy Valley Mystery</i>	[Stack]	1962
10	<i>The Marshland Mystery</i>	[D]	1962
11	<i>The Mystery at Bob-White Cave</i>	[D?]	1963
12	<i>The Mystery of the Blinking Eye</i>	[D]	1963
13	<i>The Mystery on Cobbett’s Island</i>	[McDonnell ?]	1964
14	<i>The Mystery of the Emeralds</i>	[McDonnell ?]	1965
15	<i>The Mystery on the Mississippi</i>	[D]	1965
16	<i>The Mystery of the Missing Heiress</i>	[Stack]	1970
17	<i>The Mystery of the Uninvited Guest</i>	[Bond]	1977
18	<i>The Mystery of the Phantom Grasshopper</i>	[G]	1977
19	<i>The Secret of the Unseen Treasure</i>	[Rathjen]	1977
20	<i>The Mystery off Old Telegraph Road</i>	[French]	1978
21	<i>The Mystery of the Castaway Children</i>	[Bond]	1978
22	<i>The Mystery on Mead’s Mountain</i>	[McDonnell ?]	1978
23	<i>The Mystery of the Queen’s Necklace</i>	[Sanderlin]	1979
24	<i>The Mystery at Saratoga</i>	[French]	1979
25	<i>The Sasquatch Mystery</i>	[Bond]	1979
26	<i>The Mystery of the Headless Horseman</i>	[Bowden]	1979
27	<i>The Mystery of the Ghostly Galleon</i>	[Bowden]	1979
28	<i>The Hudson River Mystery</i>	[Krull]	1979
29	<i>The Mystery of the Velvet Gown</i>	[Bowden]	1980
30	<i>The Mystery of the Midnight Marauder</i>	[Bowden]	1980
31	<i>The Mystery at Maypenny’s</i>	[Bowden]	1980
32	<i>The Mystery of the Whispering Witch</i>	[Bowden]	1980
33	<i>The Mystery of the Vanishing Victim</i>	[French]	1980
34	<i>The Mystery of the Missing Millionaire</i>	[French]	1980
35	<i>The Mystery of the Memorial Day Fire</i>	[French]	1984
36	<i>The Mystery of the Antique Doll</i>	[L]	1984
37	<i>The Pet Show Mystery</i>	[French]	1985
38	<i>The Indian Burial Ground Mystery</i>	[L]	1985
39	<i>The Mystery of the Galloping Ghost</i>	[French]	1986



Nicolette Meredith Stack

“acrobatic alphabet.” According to the story, this “code” was copied from an old issue of *St. Nicholas Magazine*. A survey of the index to this magazine and many bound volumes has not revealed this, however. The same code was used in volume seven of the series, *Trixie Belden and the Mysterious Code* (1961). The codes used in the Stack title and the Trixie book bear some resemblance to the alphabet used in “The Adventure of the Dancing Men” in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, first published in *The Strand Magazine* (Dec. 1903). However, an examination of the two reveals that the Arthur Conan Doyle code is radically different.

With one book reasonably confirmed as the work of Stack, the next step was to iden-



Nicolette Stack’s first book (1953) contains the same code as *The Mysterious Code*

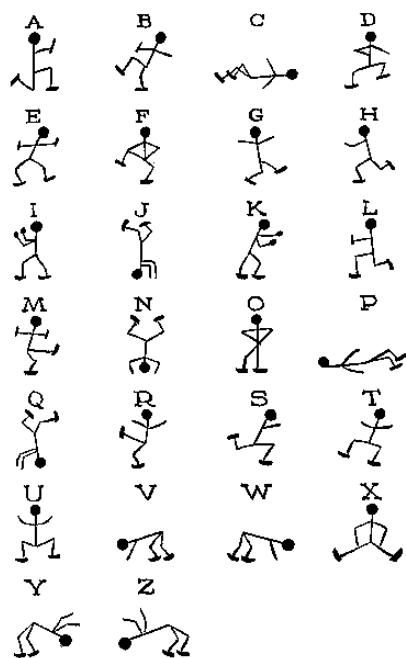
tify unique characteristics to distinguish her books from those by other Trixie Belden ghostwriters.

In Stack's books, we see less specific information about horses, a familiarity with antiques and Dutch history, very brief background information. Stack grew up on a farm and was thus familiar with the function and names of the parts of a barn and sheep ranching. Rather than allow Trixie to remain a tomboy, she introduces a new more feminine side to her character and tries to enhance the romance between Trixie and Jim. Her portrayal of Japanese characters in *The Mysterious Code* is very stereotypical. Volume 9, *The Happy Valley Mystery*, is set in Iowa where Stack was born.

With this in mind, it is reasonable to assign volumes 7, 9, 16 to her and possibly the books attributed to author "D" which have several similarities to the Stack titles but also some differences.

Author "D"

The characteristics seen in volumes by author "D" include a stereotypical Spanish-language poem which rhymes in English(!); swarthy South American villains with slicked-back hair; detailed knowledge about caves and spelunking; several examples of superstition and seemingly supernatural events. Author "D" is very knowledgeable about New York City



The acrobatic alphabet

From *Two To Get Ready* (Caxton, 1953)



"HOLMES HELD UP THE PAPER."

I looked with amazement at the absurd hieroglyphics upon the paper.

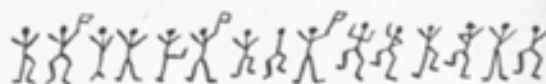
"Why, Holmes, it is a child's drawing," I cried.

"Oh, that's your idea!"

"What else should it be?"

"That is what Mr. Hilton Cubitt, of Riding Thorpe Manor, Norfolk, is very anxious to know. This little conundrum came by the first post, and he was to follow by the next train. There's a ring at the bell, Watson. I should not be very much surprised if this were he."

A heavy step was heard upon the stairs, and an instant later there entered a tall, ruddy, clean-shaven gentleman, whose clear eyes and florid cheeks told of a life led far from the fogs of Baker Street. He seemed to bring a whiff of his strong, fresh, bracing, east-coast air with him as he entered. Having shaken hands with each of us, he was about to sit down when his eye rested upon the paper with the curious markings,



Holmes examined it for some time, and then, folding it carefully up, he placed it in his pocket-book.

"This promises to be a most interesting and unusual case," said he. "You gave me a few particulars in your letter, Mr. Hilton Cubitt, but I should be very much obliged if you would kindly go over it all again for the benefit of my friend, Dr. Watson."

"I'm not much of a story-teller," said our

which I had just examined and left upon the table.

"Well, Mr. Holmes, what do you make of these?" he cried. "They told me that you were fond of queer mysteries, and I don't think you can find a queerer one than that. I sent the paper on ahead so that you might have time to study it before I came."

"It is certainly rather a curious production," said Holmes. "At first sight it would appear to be some childish prank. It consists of a number of absurd little figures dancing across the paper upon which they are drawn. Why should you attribute any importance to so grotesque an object?"

"I never should, Mr. Holmes. But my wife does. It is frightening her to death. She says nothing, but I can see terror in her eyes. That's why I want to sift the matter to the bottom."

Holmes held up the paper so that the sunlight shone full upon it. It was a page torn from a note-book. The markings were done in pencil, and ran in this way:—

From *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* in *The Strand Magazine* (Dec. 1903)

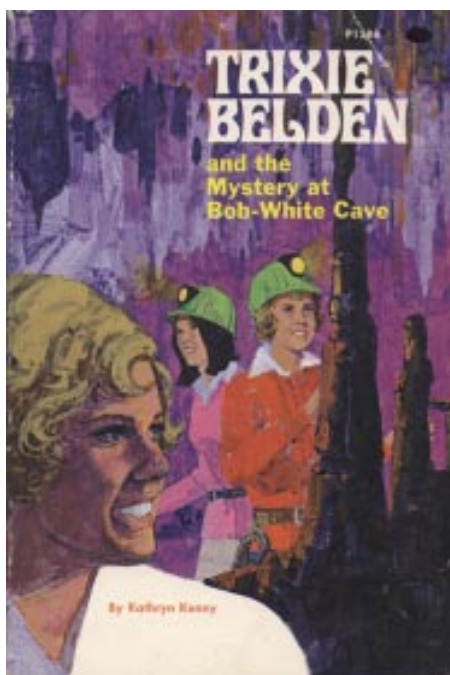
and its history and the stories contain more examples of large-scale imminent danger. These titles contain almost no examples of horseback riding because of their locales and the characters from volume 9, *The Happy Valley Mystery*, are present in volume 12, *The Mystery of the Blinking Eye*.

Both the Stack titles and the author "D" titles contain strong support for large, organized charities, like UNICEF. The UN itself is portrayed favorably in volume 12.

Additionally, the BWGs eat in restaurants in the Stack and author "D" books to a large degree.

Author "C"

Volume 8, *The Black Jacket Mystery* (1961) is different from other books in this period, so I have attributed it to author "C" who remains unknown. Some of the characteristics of this volume include specific details about food preparation (i.e. using parsley



Short paperback format, circa 1970

to decorate dishes); and little or no specific knowledge about horses, save mention of “currycombs” and “tack.”

This book introduces Dan Managan, a nephew to Bill Regan, and a former member of a New York City gang, “The Cowhands.” The “Trixie Lore” material recommends avoiding repeating the name of the gang since “it’s pretty dumb.” Because of his background, Dan is sometimes held under suspicion during several of the mysteries. The editors noticed this and urged restraint against this particular plot device.

Virginia McDonnell

Another Western Publishing series book author was Virginia Bleacher McDonnell (1917-) who was a registered nurse and attended Russell Sage College in Troy, New York. She and her husband were avid skiers and many of their books featured nursing or skiing, including *Your Future in Nursing* (Richards Rosen Press, 1963), *Trouble at Mercy Hospital* (Doubleday, 1968) and *Ski Patrol* (Doubleday, 1965).

For Whitman, Virginia McDonnell wrote the **Nurses Three** series (1963-1965) as “Jean Kirby” and the **Kim Aldrich** series (1972) as “Jinny McDonnell” about an insurance investigator who finds mysteries at every turn. *The Girls’ Series Companion* does not indicate the common authorship of these two series but they do have similar comments about them.

The portrayal of nursing in this series is not sugar-coated. Patients die, often in graphically described, bloody accidents. The Scott sisters are not perfect nurses. They make mistakes, get in trouble and complain about the hard work. Of the several nurse series for girls, **Nurses Three** is probably the most realistic in showing the day-to-day challenges of the average nurse.

Although the books are not graphic in their description of murder, they are not sweetened for palatability either. The author vividly describes Kim’s ordeals: being buried in an avalanche, running from a murderer through rough wilderness, etc. As a sleuth, Kim falls short of the perfect prototype; she gets into jams of her own making and is sometimes clumsy.

Three Trixie titles may be ascribed to Virginia McDonnell, *The Mystery of Cobbett’s Island* (1964) and *The Mystery of the Emeralds* (1965), and possibly *The Mystery on Mead’s Mountain* (1978). These books contain accidents and specific descriptions of first aid or other medical knowledge at a much higher level than seen in other books. For example, in *The Mystery on Cobbett’s Island* describes in detail how the BWGs help someone with a broken leg and how they are praised by the doctors. McDonnell’s training as a registered nurse makes her a prime candidate for these books. These books also carry a large amount of explicit foreshadowing. McDonnell’s interest in skiing is seen in one of the **Kim Aldrich** volumes, *Miscalculated Risk* (1972), in an avalanche scene and in the **Trixie Belden** volume, *The Mys-*



Gladys Baker Bond

tery on Mead’s Mountain (1978).

Gladys Baker Bond

Gladys Baker Bond (1912-) was born in Berryville, Arkansas and grew up in the Ozarks. Her adult life was spent in Clarkston, Washington and summer vacations in Hayden Lake, Idaho. Her entries in biographical dictionaries explicitly mention that she wrote volumes 17, 21 and 25 in the **Trixie Belden** series in addition to the **Meg** series (1967-1972) as “Holly Beth Walker” and many of the **Tuckers** series (1962-1965) as “Jo Mendel” for Whitman.

The Trixie titles have either characters who come from Idaho or even stories set in the Gem State. Bond seemed fond of the name “Hal” or “Hallie”; one single title, *The Adventures of Hal* (Whitman, 1965) and two series contain characters with this name, including Hallie Belden and Uncle Hal in the **Meg** series.

Carl Henry Rathjen

Another ghostwriter which hails from the Gem State is Carl Henry Rathjen (1909-1984). Thus far, he is the only man known to have written **Trixie Belden** stories. He was born in Jersey City, New Jersey and wanted to become a mechanical engineer. When this didn’t work out he tried several jobs and eventually began writing. For Whitman, he wrote the second volume in the **Waltons** series, *The Puzzle* (1975), based upon the characters in the television show.

Linda Tracy who interviewed his second wife after his death indicated that he wrote



Carl Henry Rathjen

two **Trixie Belden** books, *The Secret of the Unseen Treasure* (1977) and *The Mystery of the Vanishing Victim* (1980). The first of these contains a detailed description of a pump being repaired, reflecting his life-long desire to work with mechanical things. The other volume was claimed by another author, Laura French (1949-), who wrote several volumes in the series. For several reasons, her case is more credible.

In addition to an affinity for mechanical devices, Rathjen knew horses well; mentioned the use of a “fancy camera;” has a plot featuring the theft of Social Security Checks; and knows the names of flowers, including some information about marijuana. His books feature unusually long chapters in the same number of pages as other ghostwriters, 11 or 12 compared with 17-21 for 210 pages.

Author “G”

Another author who remains unknown shall be designated author “G” who is associated with *The Phantom Grasshopper* (1977). Kathleen Krull (1952-), who worked as an editor for Western Publishing for this series and others from 1974 to 1980, did not recall the author’s name but indicated that he or she was not asked to write any more books for them.

The Phantom Grasshopper story features the theft of “Hoppy” a special weathervane above the Sleepyside Town Hall. Mention is made in the story of a similar theft recently in Boston. The story features rare coins and shows reasonable knowledge of numismatics.



Owenita Sanderlin

Owenita Harrah Sanderlin

Owenita Sanderlin (1916-1995) was born in Los Angeles and lived most of her life in El Cajon, California. Both she and her children were accomplished tennis players. She is best known for her book, *Johnny* (A.S. Barnes, 1968) which tells about her son’s battle with Leukemia and his death in 1963.

Sanderlin wrote one Trixie Belden volume, *The Mystery of the Queen’s Necklace* (1979) which takes place mostly in London and Stratford-upon-Avon. The story demonstrates knowledge of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period. Several famous sites are visited and described in detail. The ironic thing about this is that another Trixie ghostwriter, Joan Chase Bowden (1925-) was born in London.

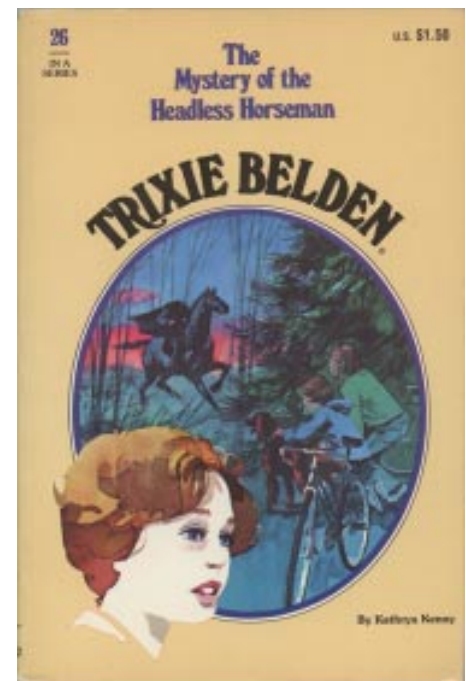
Laura French

Laura French (1949-) was an editor at Western Publishing under Bill Larson and she claims credit for compiling the “Trixie Lore” material which was used by writers in the 1970s and 1980s. She did not begin writing **Trixie Belden** books until after she left Western to begin work as a free lance writer. French grew up in Moorhead, Minnesota. In an article in a Minnesota newspaper, she claims volumes 20, 33, 34, 35, 37, and 39. The last of these is set in nearby Dilworth, Minnesota. Characters from volume 20 reappear in volume 33, giving her a stronger claim to this title than Carl Rathjen.

Her stories exhibit knowledge of paper money, counterfeiting, and how to silk



Laura French



Cream-colored paperback format

screen. The BWGs plan a bike-a-thon for charity in one volume, similar to the walk-a-thon in *The Phantom Grasshopper* (1977) to replace “Hoppy.” However, the article about her explicitly states that her first **Trixie Belden** book was *The Mystery off Old Telegraph Road* (1978).

Joan Chase Bowden

Joan Chase Bowden (1925-) was born in London and came to the U.S. in 1953 and was naturalized in 1960. She lives in San Diego, California. Bowden has written numerous books under her own name as well as under the names “Joan Chase Bacon” (derived from her parent’s last names),



Joan Chase Bowden

“Jane Godfrey,” and “Charlotte Graham.”

Biographical sources for her specifically mention **Trixie Belden** volumes 26, 27, 30, and 32 but she may have also been involved in volumes 29, 31, 33, and 34. Her Trixie stories all have alliterative titles and show a deep understanding of teenagers and their anxieties which are realistically portrayed in these volumes. Additionally, several of her stories feature someone imitating a ghost to attract or detract from tourism or development.

Kathleen Krull

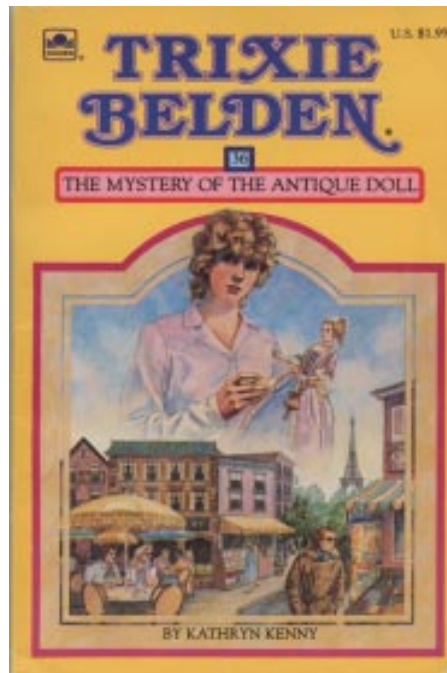
Kathleen Krull (1952-) was born in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and was an editor at Western Publishing from 1974-1980. During that period, she edited the Trixie Belden series, sometimes extensively, and wrote one volume, *The Hudson River Mystery* (1979). She was going to write volume 40, to be set in San Diego where she currently resides, when the series was discontinued in 1986. Kathleen has also been instrumental in the realization of this paper through the generous loan of her “Trixie Lore” materials and answers to scores of questions I placed before her.

When asked about the variations in writing style from ghostwriter to ghostwriter, she replied that “the style of the books was not supposed to vary and it was my job to make it as consistent as possible.” In one of those inexplicable coincidences, the letters I received from Julie Campbell Tatham and Kathleen Krull both used the same return address labels with the motto “Teach Tolerance.”

As with Laura French, editing the Trixie Belden books was instrumental in encouraging Krull to write on her own after leaving Western Publishing which she has done with success and acclaim. In fact,



Kathleen Krull



Gold-colored paperback format

both she and Joan Chase Bowden have received the **Boston Globe-Horn Book Award** for their respective books.

Author “L.”

It is not known at this point who wrote *The Mystery of the Antique Doll* (1984) or *The Indian Burial Ground Mystery* (1985). For identification, these shall be designated the work of author “L.”

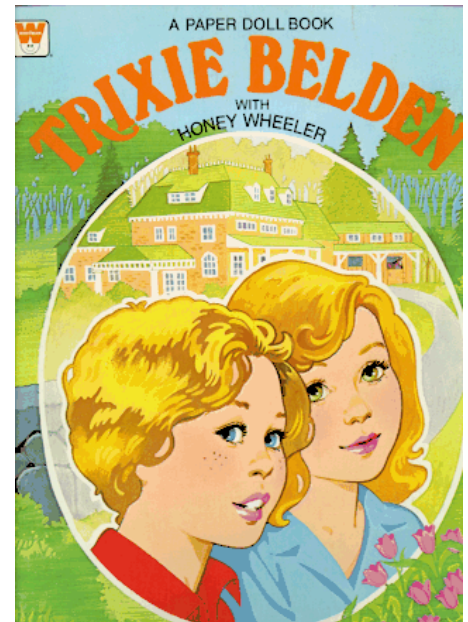
Related Books and Media

In addition to the 39 published books, Western Publishing produced two quiz books and at least two sets of Trixie and Honey paper dolls and a T-Shirt. In 1978, over 13,191 young people and adults were members of the **Trixie Belden Fan Club**.

The series has inspired fans to write “underground” Trixie novels and to create websites on the Internet. Inquiries have been made from time to time about optioning the **Trixie Belden** characters for a television series.

Values Presented in the Series

Part of the lasting interest in the **Trixie Belden** series comes from the memorable characters, realistically portrayed, who are closer in age and temperament to the readers than other series heroes. While Nancy Drew rarely makes mistakes, Trixie and the **BWGs** often jump to the wrong conclusions in the course of solving a mystery. When asked about the difference between her stories and the **Nancy Drew**-type of



Trixie Belden Paper Dolls (1970s)

story, Julie Campbell Tatham replied, “The first rule should be that the kids get themselves into scrapes and get themselves out without the assistance of adults.”

A self-described “ardent feminist,” Tatham “managed to entertain young readers and, at the same time, convince them that women could have successful careers without excluding men from their lives.” According to Tatham, she tried to tell readers that “You just had to stop thinking that you had to behave like a dummy to get a man.” Her books contained many readers’ “first lessons in emancipation and equality.” (SATA 80)

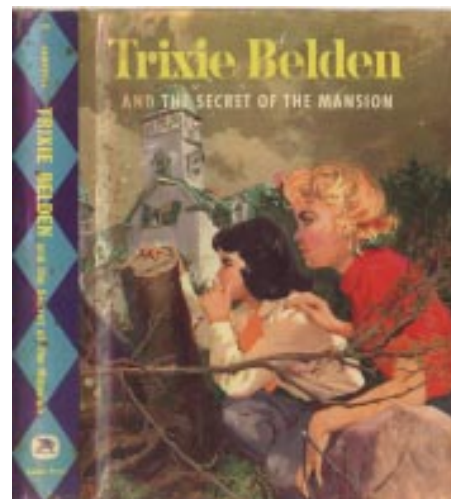
Although most of Trixie’s friends come from very wealthy families, there are frequent references in early books to the problems that the wealthy have because they are often detached from their own families. Di Lynch can’t play with her twin siblings because they are watched over by nursemaids and Honey Wheeler’s parents are often out of town, causing her to wonder if they love her. Being poor is no solace either, as seen in the plight of the family who “borrows” the Lynch travel trailer in search of employment.

The work ethic is strong in these books. Initially, the **BWG**s raise money to fix up the Gatehouse where they meet. The club has a firm rule that any money going to the

club must be earned through work. In the later Tatham books, the **BWG**s help people in their immediate area. As other writers entered the scene, the **BWG**s focused on large organized charities, like UNICEF. This emphasis fades away in many of the 1970s books, as they go back to helping families and individuals, but it returns briefly at the end of the series.

On the whole, the books are well-written, containing vivid dimensional characters with realistic interaction and picturesque scenery. Continuity errors which exist in the series are largely due to multiple authorship over nearly 40 years.

For the adolescent readers, the books have



much to offer in characteristics with which they can identify. Most readers had experienced being teased by a brother or sister as Trixie does. The **BWG**s and the readers likely shared the same feelings towards housework and school, yet each of the characters is career-minded and worthy of admiration by the reader.

In addition, the stories contained several elements which brought readers back, book after book, including a close circle of friends, a secret club, mystery and adventure, and horses.

Acknowledgements

This paper would not have been possible without the enthusiastic and generous assistance of Julie Campbell Tatham, who created the series, wrote the early books and answered my letters; Kathleen Krull, who shared the “Trixie Lore” material and answered countless questions; Melanie Knight, one of the leading experts on **Trixie Belden** who gave me many valuable insights into authorship questions; Phyllis Butters, who visited the “real” Sleepyside-on-the-Hudson area and loaned me more than a dozen photos of the area and Julie’s house; Mike DeBaptiste, who first told me about Phyllis’ photos, and my wife, Kim, who read the entire series and answered my many questions about details which led to authorship analysis.

Who's Who in Creating the Trixie Belden series

Besunder, Marvin. Illustrator for some of the interior volumes in the Deluxe format. In addition, Besunder illustrated *Treasures of Lin Li-Ti* (Hawthorn, 1969) by Cora Cheyney and *Memories of Home* (C.R. Gibson, 1970) edited by Caesar Johnson.

Bond, Gladys Baker (7 May 1912 - ??). Author of volumes 17, 21, 25 (1977-79). Bond was born in Berryville, Arkansas (72616). She married Floyd James Bond on 2 Sep 1934 and they have one son, Nicholas Peter Bond.

She grew up in the Arkansas Ozarks and spent her adult life in Idaho and Washington. In 1978 she was living in Clarkston, Washington (99403) and reportedly vacationed in Hayden Lake, Idaho (83835).

In addition to her work on the **Trixie Belden** series, Bond wrote under her own name and several publisher-owned pseudonyms, including "Jo Mendel" for the **Tuckers** series (1962-65) and "Holly Beth Walker" for the **Meg** series (1967-72).

References:

Contemporary Authors, vol 5-8, revised
Contemporary Authors, vol 2, new revision series
Foremost Women in Communications
Something About the Author, vol 14
Who's Who Among American Women 1974, 1975, 1977
Who's Who in the Pacific Northwest
Who's Who in the West 1974, 1976, 1978

Bowden, Joan Chase (1 May 1925 -). Author of volumes 26, 27, 30, 32 (1979-80) and possibly volumes 29, 31, 33, 34. Bowden was born in London, England and came to the U.S. in 1953 and was naturalized in 1960. She lives in San Diego, California.

Bowden has written numerous books of fiction and nonfiction under her own name and "Joan Chase Bacon" (a combination of her father's and mother's names), "Jane Godfrey," and "Charlotte Graham."

References:

Contemporary Authors, vol 89-92
Something About the Author, vols 38, 51

Campbell, Julie (1 Jun 1908 -). *see Julie Tatham*

Carey, Mary Virginia (19 May 1925 - May 1994). Contributor to the *Trixie Belden Mystery Quiz Books*. In the series book world, Carey is best-known for her work on **The Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators** series, published by Ran-

dom House. She has lived in Studio City, California (91604), Westlake Village, California (91361), and Ventura, California (93003).

References:

Contemporary Authors, vol 81-84
Contemporary Authors, vols 17, 38, new revision series
Something About the Author, vols 39, 44

Daly, Eileen. Contributor to the *Trixie Belden Mystery Quiz Books*.

Frame, Paul (4 May 1913 - 8 Nov 1994). Illustrator for the **Trixie Belden** series in the Deluxe format (circa 1965) including covers for vols 1-15 and interior illustrations for vols 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14. He based his illustrations of Trixie and Honey on his two daughters. He also illustrated some of the **Nancy Drew** books published by Wanderer in the 1980s along with more than 100 other titles. Frame was born in Riderwood, Maryland and lived in New York City (10009).

References:

Biography Index, vol 8
Contemporary Authors, vol 111
Illustrators of Books for Young People (1975)
Illustrators for Children's Books, 1957-1967, 1967-1977
Something About the Author, vol 33
Knight, Melanie. "Meet the Artist: Paul Frame" *The Whispered Watchword*, Oct 1993. Reprinted in *The Authorized Edition*, June 1997.

Frederick, Larry. Illustrator for the short "ugly" format, circa 1970.

French, Laura (1949 -). Editor at Western Publishing (Golden Press) and freelance author of vols. 20, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39. She grew up in Moorhead, Minnesota (56560). According to an interview, she was instrumental in creating the "lore" materials used by writers in the series.

References:

Zalser, Catherine. "'Trixie Belden' author is a Moorhead Native" *Forum of Fargo-Moorhead* [MN].

Gave, Marc. Editor at Western Publishing (Golden Press) who succeeded Marilyn Salomon in 1987.

Hanrahan, Mariellen. Assistant editor to Bill Larson in the 1970s for the **Trixie Belden** series and an author of several books under her own name.

Herda, D.J. Contributor to the *Trixie Belden Mystery-Quiz Books*.

Kenny, Kathryn (pseud.). A collective pseudonym used by authors hired by Western Publishing (Whitman, Golden Press) for volumes 7-39 in the **Trixie Belden** series (1961-1986).

Krull, Kathleen (29 Jul 1952 -). Editor at Western Publishing (Golden Press) from 1974 to 1980 and author of vol. 28. Krull also planned to write volume 40 in the series, to be set in San Diego, California, before it was cancelled. She was born in Fort Leonard, Missouri and currently lives in San Diego, California (92122).

References:

Contemporary Authors, vol 106
Something About the Author, vols 39, 52, 80

Larson, Bill (William H.) (3 Jun 1983 -). Head editor for the **Trixie Belden** series in the 1970s below Betty Ren Wright who later worked for TSR, the publishers of the *Dungeons and Dragons* roleplaying games. He had several assistants, including Mariellen Hanrahan, Bob Ottum, Laura French, and Kathleen Krull.

References:

Something About the Author, vol 10

Lee, Jody. Illustrator for the yellow paperback format in 1984-1986.

McDonnell, Virginia Bleacher (1917 -). Author of the **Kim Aldrich** series (1972-1974) as "Jinny McDonnell" and the **Nurses Three** series (1963-1965) as "Jean Kirby" for Western Publishing (Whitman). She wrote one volume in the **Waltons** series (1975) and several single titles about nursing, like *Your Future in Nursing* (Richards Rosen Press, 1963) and *Trouble at Mercy Hospital* (Doubleday, 1968). Her connection with Western and knowledge and use of nursing in her writing makes her a prime candidate for **Trixie Belden** volumes 13, 14, and 22?

References:

DJ flap from *Trouble at Mercy Hospital* says she graduated from Russel Sage College (in Troy, New York), was a newspaper reporter for a time, and is a ski buff as was her husband, Jack McDonnell, who wrote one book, *Ski Patrol* (Doubleday, 1965).

Ottum, Bob. Assistant editor to Bill Larson in the 1970s for the **Trixie Belden** series and an author of books under his own name.

Petie, Haris (26 Jun 1915 -). Professional name used by Roberta Haris Pfafflin Petty who was an illustrator for interior illustrations on some of the Deluxe format volumes 7 and 15. She was born in Boulder Creek, California and attended the Rochester Institute of Technology and studied under Norman Rockwell in Paris. She lived in Tenafly (1968?) and North Bergen (1976), New Jersey.

References:

Biography Index, vol 11

Illustrators of Books for Young People (1975)

Something About the Author, vol 10

Rathjen, Carl Henry (28 Aug 1909 - Dec 1984). Author for volumes 19, 33? (1977-1980), according to his widow. He was born in Jersey City, New Jersey and wanted to be a mechanical engineer. He wrote many short stories, novels, and children's novels under his own name. He wrote one adult novel, *Dark Music* (Lancer, 1972) as "Charlotte Russell." He wrote the second volume in the **Waltons** series (1975), based upon the television series, for Western Publishing (Whitman). He lived in Meridian, Idaho (83647).

References:

Contemporary Authors, vol 5-8, revised
Contemporary Authors, vol 2, new revision series

Something About the Author, vol 11

Salomon, Marilyn. Editor at Western Publishing (Golden Press) in the mid-1980s who was succeeded by Marc Gave in 1987 after the series was discontinued.

Sanderlin, Owenita (Harrah) (2 Jun 1916 - 27 Mar 1995). Author for vol 23 and possibly volumes 22 and 24. She was born in Los Angeles, California and married George William Sanderlin (5 Feb 1915 - ??), who was also a professional writer. She had a love for tennis which figures in volume 23. She is best known for her novel, *Johnny* (A.S. Barnes, 1968) which tells about her son, a ranking tennis player, who died of Leukemia in 1963. She lived in El Cajon, California (92019) at the time of her death.

References:

Biography Index, vol 11

Contemporary Authors, vol 17, revised
Contemporary Authors, vol 7, new revision series

Something About the Author, vol 11

Stack, Nicolette Meredith (McGuire) (22 Feb 1896 or 1899 - ??). Author of "five mystery books in the 'Trixie Belden' series, Whitman, 1961-1971." Her entries in

Who's Who in the Midwest mention eight titles, 1961-1966. Although unspecified in published sources, it is certain that she wrote volume 7 because of her reuse of an "acrobatic alphabet" code which first appeared in her first novel for children, *Two to Get Ready* (Caxton, 1953). Her style is also reflected in volumes 9 and 16 (1962-1970).

She was born in Des Moines, Iowa, attended the University of Colorado for one year and the *H.M.S. Franconia* Floating University on a six-month around-the-world trip in 1930. She wrote several other volumes under her own name and as "Nicolette Meredith." She lived in Webster Groves near St. Louis, Missouri (63119).

References:

Authors of Books for Young People (1971)
Contemporary Authors, vol 13-16, revised
Foremost Women in Communications (1970)

PenNWW A (??)

International Authors and Writers, 1976

Who's Who in the Midwest, 1974

Stevens, Mary E. (9 Sep 1920 - 18 Oct 1966). Illustrator for the dust jacket format and Cameo format. Stevens was born in Bar Harbor, Maine (04609).

References:

Biography Index, vol. 5, 7, 8

Illustrators of Books for Young People (1975)

Illustrators of Children's Books, 1946-1957, 1957-1967

Tatham, Julie Campbell (1 Jun 1908 -). Creator of the **Trixie Belden** series and characters and author of volumes 1-6 (1948-1958). She was born in Flushing, New York. She married Charles Tatham, Jr. on 30 Mar 1933.

At the time she created the **Trixie Belden** and **Ginny Gordon** series, she had a small literary agency. She wrote the first volume in the **Ginny Gordon** series in response to the Junior Achievement program which had just begun. Whitman contacted agents in New York and solicited "fast-moving, well-written mystery and adventure books" to be sold to the mass market within the price range of young children.

In addition to these two series, she arranged for the publication of series by two of her clients, **The Walton Boys** series by Hal Burton and the **Tom Stetson** series by John Henry Cutler. These latter two series only lasted three volumes each. Campbell's series contained six volumes each before she stopped working on them.

When she decided to move on, after ten years, Western publishing was upset, they wanted to continue the **Trixie Belden** series. However, her experience as a literary agent paid off when she pointed out that although she was paid a flat fee for the stories, she had created the characters and they belonged to her. Western agreed to pay a royalty to Julie Campbell Tatham for the next six volumes. In doing so, however, she lost her originator rights and the series and characters became the property of Western.

She also wrote volumes in the **Cherry Ames** series and **Vicki Barr** series when the originator of those series, Helen Wells, decided that she wanted to write for television and radio. When Helen came back, Julie relinquished the series to her. She has also written one book as "Jay Morris." Tatham lives in Alexandria, Virginia (22314)

References:

Something About the Author, vol 80

Pohlars, Judy. "Hunting Towers" May 1979 newspaper article reprinted in *The Whispered Watchword*, Dec 1987.

Knight, Melanie. "Meet the Author: Julie Campbell Tatham, part 2" *The Whispered Watchword*, Jan 1988.

Kelly, Ernie. "Interview with Julie Campbell Tatham" *The Yellowback Library* #43, Jan 1988.

Tauss, Herbert. Illustrator of the dust jacket for the 1959 reprint of *Trixie Belden and the Secret of the Mansion* in the Diamond-spine format.

Wacker, Jack. Illustrator for the cream colored paperback format.

Wagner, Jim. Illustrator for the covers of the *Trixie Belden Mystery Quiz Books*.

Wright, Betty Ren (15 Jun 1927 -). Head editor at Western Publishing (Golden Press) in the 1970s who also contributed stories to the *Trixie Belden Mystery Quiz Books*. She is best known for her novels in the 1980s, like *The Dollhouse Murders* (Holiday House, 1983). She lives in Racine, Wisconsin (53406).

References:

Something About the Author, vols 48, 63