

NewSouth

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NewSouth Books to publish the Alabama Big Read edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Montgomery, Alabama—It doesn't happen often, according to Molly Thomas-Hicks at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), that a regionally based publishing house is selected to publish a work for its Big Read program. So NewSouth Books was especially honored to learn that it had been named to publish an Alabama edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain for the NEA's 2010 Big Read. Thanks go to the NEA and to many folks in Alabama for identifying NewSouth as the publisher of choice, including Patty A. Pilkerton at UAB's Mervyn H. Sterne Library; Jay Lamar, director of the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities at Pebble Hill; and to all nine Alabama Big Read regional coordinators.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is Mark Twain's enduring paean to the joys of childhood in a small town prior to the Civil War. In this novel Twain discovered the literary potential of his early days in Hannibal and created a pair of young characters, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, who would earn him lasting fame.

NewSouth's edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is unabridged and annotated. It features a letter from Alabama Governor Bob Riley, foreword by local Twain scholar Dr. Alan Gribben, and includes the NEA Reader's Guide. The book will be available for purchase in trade cloth and paperback on September 1, 2009.

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services designed to revitalize the role of literature in American culture and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of its citizens.

According to Pat Ryan, Executive Director of the Jefferson County Library Cooperative and member of the Statewide Big Read Committee, this is Alabama's first statewide Big Read.

Adds Jay Lamar, director of the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities at Auburn University: "The Big Read in Alabama is a unique and wonderful opportunity for the state to be a model for the nation. The production of an Alabama edition of *Tom Sawyer*, complete with AUM professor and Twain expert Alan Gribben's contextualizing essay and the reader's guide materials, commemorates the project. NewSouth Books, an Alabama-based company that has long contributed significantly to our state's arts and letters, has done a great service to all the participants

in Alabama's Big Read by producing this unique and beautiful volume and by making it available to all Big Read participants."

NewSouth Books is a leading independent publisher based in Alabama. It publishes regional books of national merit. Recent award-winning titles include *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement* by Bob Zellner with Constance Curry, winner of the 2009 Lillian Smith Book Award, and *A Yellow Watermelon* by Ted Dunagan, winner of the Georgia Author of the Year Award for young adult fiction. Other recent noteworthy titles include *Nobody But the People*, an authorized biography of former Governor John Patterson by Warren Trest, and *Spit, Scarey Ann and Sweat Bees: One Thing Leads to Another* by celebrated storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham. Forthcoming shortly: a memoir called *Teddy's Child: Growing Up In the Anxious Southern Gentry Between the Great Wars*, by Virginia Van Der Veer Hamilton.

For more information about the Alabama Big Read edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or NewSouth Books, call 334-834-3556 or go to the NewSouth website at www.newsouthbooks.com. *Tom Sawyer* will be available to libraries, schools, and by retail to the general public.