

150 Years After Tom Sawyer, Adam Nelson's "Huckleberry Jim" Launches Where Twain's America Began

Nelson's debut novel arrives at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum during Banned Books Week, as America marks its 250th year

HANNIBAL, MO, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One hundred fifty years after "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" introduced the world to the children, river, humor, and contradictions of Mark Twain's Hannibal, author Adam Nelson will launch his debut novel and Publishers

Weekly BookLife Editor's Pick, "[Huckleberry Jim](#)," at the [Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum](#) located at 120 Main St, Hannibal, Missouri on Saturday, October 10, 2026 at 5pm.



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The Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum is proud to welcome Adam Nelson to Hannibal & our historic campus. 'Huckleberry Jim' demonstrates the continued relevance of Twain's stories throughout history.”

Mark Schneider, Dev. & Marketing Manager, Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

The event takes place during a convergence that will not come again. Inspired by real events, "Huckleberry Jim" publishes on October 6, 2026—during Banned Books Week, in the year of America's Semiquincentennial and the 150th anniversary of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." It also lands on Columbus Day weekend, placing a novel about the stories America tells itself inside another contested account of American beginnings.

Samuel Clemens, the real man behind the Twain pen name, carried Hannibal with him for the rest of his life. Its Mississippi riverbanks provided the source of his boyhood adventures and imagination. His childhood friends became Huck, Tom, and Becky. Hannibal's humor, violence, freedom, cruelty, and contradictions influenced his literary

classics that followed. The Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum preserves the physical

grounds from which “The Father of American Literature” emerged.

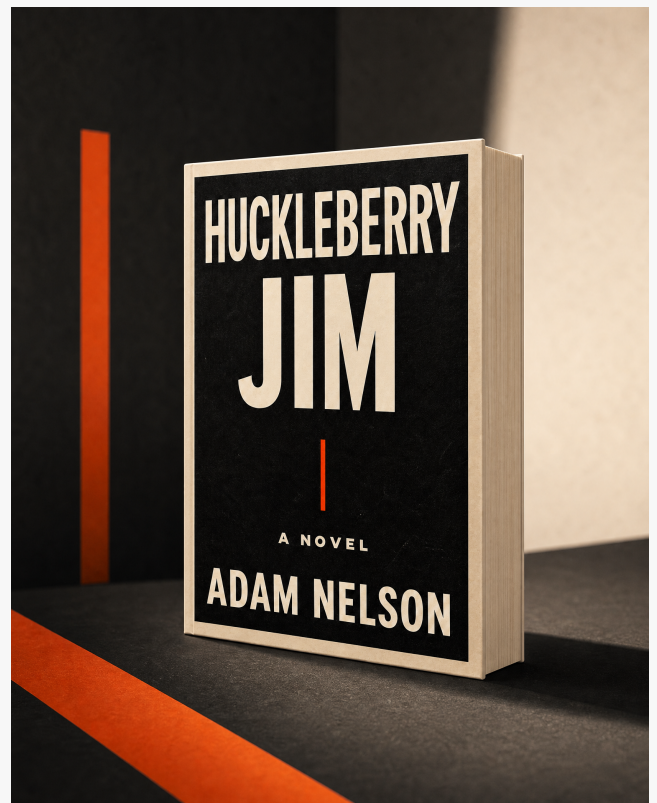
Now a new American novel enters that unfinished conversation in the place where Twain first encountered it.

Set in 1991, "Huckleberry Jim" follows two actors—Axel Emerson, a twenty-two-year-old white actor fresh out of conservatory, and Moses Morton, a fifty-five-year-old Black actor with a lifetime of stages behind him—on a children’s tour of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" through upstate New York and Appalachia. As the two-man company drives from one school gymnasium to another, performing Twain’s text to American children in the year of Anita Hill, Rodney King’s arrest, and the height of the culture wars, the road between them becomes a confrontation with performance, fatherhood, inherited history, and what it costs to play another man’s part.

"Huckleberry Jim" is a reckoning with race and the bedtime stories America tells itself to sleep at night.

Publishers Weekly BookLife Editor’s Pick: “Adam Nelson’s incisive, provocative, and robustly American debut... honors the fathoms-deep American divisions that Twain marked and urges us to look closer rather than away. For readers of Percival Everett’s 'James' and Paul Beatty’s 'The Sellout.'”

"The Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum is proud to welcome Adam Nelson to Hannibal and our historic campus. Mr. Nelson's 'Huckleberry Jim' demonstrates the continued relevance of Twain's stories throughout history. We are honored that Mr. Nelson chose this American cultural landmark as a launch spot for his debut literary novel." — Mark Schneider, Development and Marketing Manager, Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum



"To launch 'Huckleberry Jim' in Hannibal is to bring the novel to the ground from which its questions first rose," said Nelson. "This is where Twain encountered the river, voices, children, and contradictions that became his America. One hundred fifty years later, we are still arguing over who these books belong to, what they ask of us, and whether children should be allowed to read them. 'Huckleberry Jim' was written inside that argument. There is no more meaningful place for its public life to begin."

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." — Mark Twain, "Innocents Abroad"

Nelson will read from the novel and join a public conversation about Twain, the true 1991 tour behind the fiction, the demands of performing an American classic, and what changes—and what refuses to change—when that classic passes from one generation to the next. The program will include audience questions and a book signing.

EVENT INFORMATION

Saturday, October 10, 2026 @ 5 PM

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum · 120 North Main Street · Hannibal, Missouri

Free with reservations. Seating is limited.

FORMATS AND AVAILABILITY

Hardcover · \$28.00 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-3-8

Trade Paperback · \$18.99 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-0-7

Ebook (EPUB) · \$11.99 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-1-4

Audiobook, unabridged · Blackstone Publishing

The audiobook is narrated by Leon Nixon under senior audio producer Grover Gardner, with an introduction recorded by Adam Nelson.

ADAM NELSON

Adam Nelson has lived at the intersection of performance and American storytelling for more than three decades—as an actor, filmmaker, communications executive, and educator. Founder of Workhouse, the New York public relations agency he has run since 1999, Nelson is also a professor at the New Jersey Film Academy, a merit winner of the Writer's Digest International Screenplay Competition, and co-founder of "Socko! Magazine." His award-winning film work includes "Food for Thought," directed by Gary Hanna. "Huckleberry Jim" draws on his own 1991 tour performing a two-man "Huckleberry Finn" for schools across the Northeast.

THE MARK TWAIN BOYHOOD HOME & MUSEUM

The Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum in Hannibal, Missouri, preserves and interprets the places that shaped one of America's most influential writers. Operated by the nonprofit Mark

Twain Home Foundation, the Museum maintains eight historic buildings and related sites connected to Mark Twain's life, family, and literary imagination. The Mark Twain Boyhood Home has been open to the public since 1912, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is designated a National Historic Landmark. The Foundation's mission is to promote awareness and appreciation of the life and works of Mark Twain and to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his stories and ideas to citizens of the world. Learn more at marktwainmuseum.org.

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