

HUNGRY RATS

by Connor Coyne

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

as of May 12, 2011

Hungry Rats is a work of fiction, and as a result, sources are not cited in text as they would be in a nonfiction work. Nevertheless, given the historical breadth and depth of the content, as well as the niche genre of *Hungry Rats*, some readers have requested a bibliography of my research, and I think this will also be useful to me for future reference.

This list is not intended to be all-encompassing; it would be impossible to recall everything that has served as an inspiration or a resource in the writing of *Hungry Rats*. However, this list is intended to be detailed. Two categories of source are listed here: **content** and **composition**. **Content** relates to the actual subject matter of the novel, and includes sources regarding: **Michigan's lumber era; Flint, Michigan; and Serial Homicide**. **Composition** relates to the actual prose style and includes: **Noir and Other Sources**.

One last note: This bibliography is structured *very loosely* according to the Chicago Manual of Style. The purpose here is informal enough (that is, providing a bit more information on the subjects of *Hungry Rats*) that I am far more concerned with providing an interesting account of the sources I've used than with the precision expected of a critical academic work.

CONTENT

MICHIGAN'S LUMBER ERA

Powers, Tom. *Michigan Rogues, Desperados, Cut-Throats*. Davison, MI: Friede Publications, 2002.

Powers draws upon primary and secondary sources to write accounts of sixteen Michigan villains of the 19th century. This provided the account of Jim and Maggie Carr that got the ball rolling on the lumberjack section of *Hungry Rats*. Other profiles include P.K. Small, “the Ogre of Seney” who was known to eat anything from horse manure to live snakes; Stephen Simmons, whose melodramatic execution led to Michigan's unprecedented abolishment of the death penalty; and Dan Seavey, a notorious pirate on Lake Michigan. The prose is over-the-top but nevertheless detail-oriented, and paints a vivid picture of 19th century Michigan as a lawless Old West-type place, with lumberjacks taking the place of cowboys.

Gross, Stuart. *Frankie and the Barons*. Okemos, MI: Wilderness Adventure Books, 1991.

Harrison, Michigan, historian Tom Sellers tipped me off to Stuart Gross, and most of Powers' information on the Carrs appears to have come from *Frankie and the Barons* (in fact, a few sentences seem to have slipped into Powers' book unchanged and unattributed). Gross wrote an extended melodrama called “The Saga of Frankie Howe,” and eleven shorter stories on other characters, including the Carrs. Gross represented the ultimate historical peril in my research. While I was able to track almost all of his account of the Carrs to earlier, primary sources (see “Additional Lumber Sources” below), Gross' lurid prose style and typical lack of any citation whatsoever made it extremely difficult to interpret the work. Most intriguing among these were the published pictures of Jim and Maggie Carr. Provided without any source, there is no way to know if these photos *really* represent the Carrs, and since Mr. Gross is deceased, I was unable to confirm their identity. In fact, the photo of Maggie Carr with her unblemished nose conflicts with popular accounts that it had been bitten off by one of their vicious dogs. I ultimately chose to accept the photos as legitimate for the purposes of the novel, and since a fair amount of the Carr's history was hearsay, I took liberties where the story demanded, always taking care to stay firmly within the bounds of established facts. At any rate, this book is an endangered species, but as of May 2011, there are still a couple copies available on Amazon.

Crowe, William S. *Lumberjack: Inside an Era in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan*. Skandia, MI: North Country Publishing, 2002.

William Crowe was a primary source, meaning that unlike Gross and Powers, he actually participated in the events he describes. As an employee of the Chicago Lumbering Company of Michigan, Crowe participated in the lumber industry during its waning days of the 1890s in Manistique, Michigan. *Lumberjack* was initially published in 1952 as a compilation of newspaper columns, largely refuting writers in the spirit of Gross and Powers. Crowe felt that the lumber industry, and in particular lumberjacks and lumber barons, was unfairly

maligned by sensationalist accounts of frontier depredation. Unlike Gross and Powers, Crowe attempted to build a comprehensive argument in favor of the lumber industry supported by historical evidence; in this, his account was a powerful counterweight to the more anecdotal and sensational perspective of other sources. That said, Crowe was writing with a self-admitted agenda: reinstating the dignity of the lumbermen. I ultimately came to the conclusion that Crowe's experience represented the lumber industry at its best, while Carr and Duncan represented it at its worst. Significantly, Crowe was writing about his experiences over a decade after the Carrs' power peaked. During that time Michigan's population had grown, rail networks expanded, and the rule of law was generally consolidated. My 2007 correspondence with Crowe's daughters, Lynn McGlothlin Emerick and Ann McGlothlin Weller, was particularly helpful. They edited the 2002 edition of *Lumberjack*, which I consulted for *Hungry Rats*.

Fitzmaurice, John W. *The Shanty Boy, or Life in a Lumber Camp*. Berrien Springs, MI: Hardscrabble Books, 1979.

Originally published in 1889, *The Shanty Boy* was far-and-away the most thorough and, ironically, perhaps the most objective source of information on the life of the typical Michigan lumberjack. Sent to work in the lumber camps for health reasons – ah, the wonders of 19th century medicine! – Fitzmaurice wrote 245 pages on his experience, documenting the mundane (the wanigan food cooked on giant river rafts), the extraordinary (the perils of breaking up a log jam), the sentimental (lumberjack funeral songs), and the fantastic (a Rip Van Winkle-type story of a drunk lumberjack who wakes up in a highly-technological late-20th century where rapid transit is accomplished by means of mechanical “velocipedes”). Although *Hungry Rats* was more concerned with saloon- and town-life than the deep-woods camps, this remarkable and highly entertaining book gave me an indispensable perspective on day-to-day living in Michigan of the 1880s. Jim Carr makes a brief appearance here, as well!

Beck, E.C. *They Knew Paul Bunyan*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1956.

I pillaged Beck extensively for the poetry and song in the second part of *Hungry Rats*. Published in 1956, *They Knew Paul Bunyan* is a massive compilation of lumberjack folklore based on numerous interviews Beck conducted. Many songs are provided with music sheets so you can sing or play along if you like!

Meek, Forrest. *Michigan's Timber Battleground*. N.p.: Edgewood Press, 1991.

In terms of researching the Carrs, this is where the rubber met the road. Tom Sellers of Harrison represented Meek as a legitimate historian, and while I wasn't able to obtain a copy of his seminal *Michigan's Timber Battleground*, I did obtain a copy of “Meredith Days,” the chapter which dealt with the Carrs. In 23 pages with tiny print, Meek talks about the source and inspiration of northern Michigan's bagnios in Bay City's “Catacombs,” which were redolent of the Five Points depicted in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*. From Bay City, Meek tracks the career of the Carrs, including a detailed account with dates and testimony of their various charges and trials. It is worth noting that Meek, too,

confirms many of the Carr's more outrageous adventures, including their ill-fated attempt to relocate their brothel across county lines by sliding it on skids. I used a lot of his primary source documentation for dialogue in the novel. I have justified fanciful speculation by sticking to the facts and testimony whenever they have been well established.

Additional Lumber Sources: While the sources above were some of the most evocative accounts of 19th century Michigan, they only gave limited and rather informal accounts of the characters in *Hungry Rats*. Most of the remaining details were filled in by a look at the various Harrison and Clare newspapers, maintained on microfilm in the Library of Michigan in Lansing. While many records were lost over the years to fire and flood, the remnants give the most direct and contemporary accounts of the crimes of Jim and Maggie Carr, often played out with breathless editorializing. In 19th century Michigan, there was no pretense of journalistic objectivity; newspapers were acknowledged organs of propaganda. The powerful last words of the Carrs in *Hungry Rats*, in which they repent and call out to heaven for assistance, are taken directly from the obituary published in *The Clare Democrat and Press*. It is worth noting that the Democrats were Carr's lifelong enemies, and that the quoted words are necessarily speculative, as there was no witness to their being spoken. Other newspapers took other positions, and one, *The Cleaver*, actively supported Carr in his travails. A quick check of court records at the Clare County District Court helped to confirm court dates, which lent credence to Meek and other sources.

While there are few rigorous analyses of Jim and Maggie Carr extant today, the peculiar lumber situation in Mid-Michigan is discussed in a variety of sources. The lack of deep waterways – lumber was typically transported via river – resulted in an accelerated and intensified lumber boom when rail access was established to this region. For towns like Meredith, the race from rags to riches to threads happened seemingly overnight. As a result, there are a number of books on Michigan ghost-towns that mention Meredith, and a 1972 edition of *Michigan History* magazine did a very nice piece on the Carrs, reinforcing a lot of Meek's work. Sometimes the repeated mention of a small details drew my attention to meaningful events. For example, the fact that an all-but-abandoned Meredith burned down in a fire a few years after Carr's death struck me as especially significant in light of the pervasive threat of an existential fire throughout *Hungry Rats*. Other bizarre and fascinating details did not make it into the novel. For example the scraps of the abandoned town were bought up by a bank and broken down into thousands of square-foot parcels with deeds attached to new accounts as a gimmick. The legal and financial confusion can only be imagined. Even today, Meredith is a strange little town, with a general store and maybe a couple dozen houses on the west side of the Clare-Gladwin County line. Due to the village's pseudo-incorporated status, zoning restrictions and building regulations are not enforced there; it is one of the only places in Michigan where this is the case. Overall, the place looks ramshackle, yet oddly lush and lovely.

For anyone with a serious interest in Michigan's lumber industry, there truly is no substitute for a visit to the region. Hartwick Pines State Park in Grayling is a superb resource, with a lumberjack museum and many miles of trails through the only virgin forestland left in the Lower Peninsula. More remote, the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in Ontonagon of the Upper Peninsula is a much larger and more untamed virgin forest, once considered for inclusion in the National Park System. However, its legacy is more associated with mining than lumber. Most significant towns throughout the Northern Lower Peninsula have a few lumber-based attractions. The massive Manistee National Forest is just a short drive from the White Pine Days in Ludington. White Pine Days is a sprawling, if often disorganized, collection of lumber-era antiques and

architecture, and is especially inspirational after a read of Fitzmaurice's *The Shanty Boy*. Finally, while the wealth of the lumber barons is not prominent in *Hungry Rats*, the Hume and Hadley Homes in Muskegon display the opulent lifestyles and power of the men who orchestrated Michigan's lumber industry. On the eastern side of the state, Saginaw was the oldest and seediest of lumber towns. In Bay City, the infamous Catacombs have been demolished. If you go to Harrison, you can climb the hill to the site where Jim and Maggie's stockade once stood. Today, a water tower stands on the site.

FLINT, MICHIGAN

The Flint Journal. *Picture History of Flint*. N.p.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.

This is not the most detailed history of Flint, but it is extremely wide-ranging, reaching back to Native American habitation and Alexis de Tocqueville's travels in the 1830s. Packed with beautiful black-and-white photos and illustrations, this history gives due attention to Flint's origins as a trade and transport site, and from there its strategic importance as a lumber center. This era led to the city's dominance in the carriage making industry, which itself set the stage for the automotive industry. The *Picture History of Flint* is the best way to get a quick, but thorough, understanding of what Flint was. It cuts out right before Flint's decline accelerated in the 1980s and 90s.

Lethbridge, Alice. *Halfway to Yesterday*. Flint: The Flint Journal, 1974.
———. *Well Do I Remember*. N.p.: Berwyn-London Publishers, 1976.

Alice Lethbridge was an early settler in Flint, and her writings are a contemporary account of original settlement. As with Fitzmaurice's writings of the lumberjacks, Lethbridge provides an evocative account of the nuts-and-bolts of Flint's early days.

Additional Flint Sources: Literally dozens of books and media feature Flint prominently, and as I have relied upon these for much of my writing, it is impossible to list them all here. The films of Michael Moore are certainly the best known, but while they pack a political punch, they do not (nor do they intend to) document the city's course in all of its economic and cultural complexity. To understand the love-hate relationship between Flint and General Motors (and by extension, the whole auto industry), a better bet would be *Rivthead*, by Ben Hamper (himself a member of the Moore clique).

Many books on the history and development of the American auto industry talk at length about Flint, and especially the pivotal Flint Sit Down strike of 1936-1937. At 25 years old, David Halberstam's breathtaking epic *The Reckoning* is still the best, even though it focuses more on Ford and Detroit. Other books, such as Steven Dandaneau's *A Town Abandoned: Flint, Michigan Confronts Deindustrialization*, treat Flint's decay, although such texts are typically very dry and academic. A welcome break from the auto obsession is *Bronze Pillars: An Oral History of African-Americans in Flint* by Rhonda Sanders. Although published after *Hungry Rats* was finished, Gary Flinn's fine book *Remembering Flint, Michigan: Stories from the Vehicle City* deals with specific

regional institutions and events in more detail than the Flint Journal's history. I would have used it, had it been available.

Gordon Young, a popular writer for *Slate Magazine* is originally from Flint, and his recent writings have talked in detail about the Flint's recent dramas. Many of these articles deal explicitly with Meredith's neighborhood of the Eastside (also known as the State Streets) which is simultaneously one of the most violent and poor yet multicultural of Flint's neighborhoods. A particularly poignant piece is *The Incredible Shrinking American City*, which can be read here: <http://www.slate.com/id/2260473/>

As with Michigan's lumber regions, there is no substitute for a visit to Southeast Michigan to understand the auto industry, and museums and historical locations abound throughout the region, particularly in such cities as Detroit, Flint, Lansing, Port Huron, Saginaw, Pontiac, and others. These historic sites are organized under the umbrella of the congressional-designated MotorCities National Heritage Area. More information is here: <http://www.motorcities.org/>

In Flint itself, the Alfred P. Sloan Museum has a detailed archive of historical information, and their permanent exhibit – *Flint and the American Dream* – is accessible to children but informative to adults. Other publications by writers from the Flint Journal treat specific concerns of local history, while alternative publications, such as the Flint *Broadside* and the now-defunct *Uncommon Sense* offer more strident editorial perspectives. Pages Bookstore at 132 W. 2nd St. has a very detailed “local interest” section which has been helpful to me on a number of occasions.

All of the locations in *Hungry Rats* are real and can be visited. The pavilion where Meredith first sees the rats (beautifully restored today and the site of a neighborhood farmer's market and summer theater productions) is located at Kearsley Park. Meredith also visits the Thompson Library on the campus of U of M Flint, and reads her books at the Atlas Coney Island on Corunna Rd. The Good Beans Cafe is located at 328 N. Grand Traverse St. in historic Carriage Town. Meredith's high school, Central, closed in 2009, but it is still imposing when seen from the street at the corner of Crapo St. and 2nd St.

SERIAL HOMICIDE

Schechter, Harold. *The Serial Killer Files*. New York: Random House, 2003.

After I drafted *Hungry Rats* I knew I would have to learn more about this macabre subject, and so one day I went into a big box bookstore and got the thickest, most text-heavy (and photo-light) book on serial killers I could find. *The Serial Killer Files* is depressing and prurient, and like the lumberjack narratives of Gross and Powers, it is written in a sensational, titillating prose style. However, it takes an unromantic, even scientific approach to the psychology and methodology of serial killers, and as such it was a convenient “foot in the door” to research *Hungry Rats*.

Fisher, Joseph C. *Killer Among Us: Public Reactions to Serial Murder*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997.

For *Hungry Rats*, it was just as important to understand the public reaction to serial homicide as to understand the actual killer. This 1997 text is perhaps too committed to its theory of discrete categories of response – it builds a bit of a tautology for itself – but is well narrated and methodical in its approach. One of the most bizarre effects of familiarity with this text was watching it play out quite accurately for Flint in August 2011, when the “serial stabber” stalked the city (even as *Hungry Rats* was going through its final proof for the printer).

Additional Serial Homicide Sources: This aspect of the project was profoundly mechanical to me. While I pursued an understanding of the lumberjacks and of Flint for their own sakes, I have to admit to having no interest in serial killers independent of this project. That said, it was important to understand the phenomenon sufficiently to write convincingly. Novels like *Silence of the Lambs* and programs like *Dexter* may be artfully produced and occasionally philosophically profound, but they are not an accurate portrayal of the typical serial killer. Indeed, the Rat Man is atypical, though I would like to call him plausible.

The best fictional accounts of serial killers I've read are *The Collector* by John Fowles and *I Was Dora Suarez* by Derek Raymond (see below). The best films have been *Felicia's Journey*, *Summer of Sam*, *Monster*, and *The Young Poisoner's Handbook*. Skip *Maniac*, unless you never want to sleep again. In terms of nonfiction, *Bad Girls' Do It* by Michael Newton is exactly what it professes to be: an encyclopedia of female serial killers. *Michigan Murders* by Edward Keyes is the detailed story of a killer who was as effectively manipulative as the Rat Man.

In short, there's a great abundance of film, text, and other media concerning serial killers, but a researcher's primary task is finding something useful.

COMPOSITION

NOIR

Writing Crime Fiction. Grant-Adamson, Lesley. London: Hodder Headline Limited, 2003.

Technically a “how-to-write-mysteries” book, this was my introduction to the noir genre, and it helped me to immediately identify *Hungry Rats* with its literary family. Even if you're not interested in writing fiction, Grant-Adamson offers a compelling description of crime genres with daunting reading lists.

Polito, Robert, ed. *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1930 and 40s.* New York: The Library of America, 1997.

———, ed. *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1950s.* New York: The Library of America, 1997.

I knew Dr. Polito as the head of my MFA writing program, and as luck would have it, he has edited these two fine editions of noir classics. Many Americans confuse the genres of noir and hard-boiled fiction, and indeed, they are related. However, while the hard-boiled story focuses on a private-eye protagonist trying to salvage some scrap of a decent world, the noir assumes the identity of a criminal or victim who has already given up. These splendid stories by luminaries like Patricia Highsmith, Cornell Woolrich, and James Cain make a powerful case for the relevance and importance of “the black novel.”

Duncan, Paul. *Noir Fiction: Dark Highways.* Harpenden, UK: Pocket Essentials, 2003.

Feverish and excessive, Duncan's dissection of the noir genre is as hallucinatory as some of the novels themselves. The prose certainly comes across as maudlin at times, but this book is choc-full of biographies ranging from the proto-noir of Dostoevsky and Joseph Conrad to the excess of James Ellroy and Derek Raymond. And speaking of which...

Raymond, Derek. *I Was Dora Suarez.* London: The Alison Press / Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, 1990.

This is a book that supposedly caused Raymond's editor to vomit all over the manuscript. Although *Hungry Rats* was in its final revisions when I read *Dora Suarez*, it was nevertheless important because it reinforced my faith in the balance between gratuitous brutality and explicit lyricism. Raymond's writing is simultaneously the ugliest writing you'll ever read and some of the most beautiful. It is both an assertion of the vivid potential of the genre as well as the barriers separating it from mainstream acceptance.

Additional Noir: Due to the first and third sections of *Hungry Rats*, the novel fittingly belongs in a subgenre of noir called “teen noir.” The premise of teen noir is that many noir conventions (social alienation, a predatory baseline to social behavior, and an overtly malignant world) are all just as home in teenage lives as with detectives or criminals. While definitions abound, fictional examples are scarce; the

two most famous examples of teen noir are in film and television. One is the film *Brick*, in which a high-school student tries to avenge the death of his girlfriend. The other is the television series *Veronica Mars*, featuring the sleuthing daughter of a California private-eye. Both are excellent (although *Veronica Mars* sinks somewhat after the second of its three seasons). Although *Twin Peaks* is seldom described as “teen noir,” it satisfies most definitions and was certainly an inspiration for the more surreal moments of *Hungry Rats*.

More generally, there is a lot of quality noir to choose from, both past and present. Denise Mina's novel *Garnethill* is a fine example of “Tartan Noir,” and in addition to Derek Raymond, John Fowles' *The Collector* is not only a noir novel, but a (frighteningly plausible) serial killer novel. I enjoyed the books of Thomas Harris, but I didn't find them particularly useful to writing *Hungry Rats* or its characters. Finally, the series of anthologies including *Chicago Noir* and *Detroit Noir*, are beautifully local, although quality varies a lot from one story to the next.

OTHER SOURCES

Orenstein, Catherine. *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked: Sex, Morality, and the Evolution of a Fairy Tale*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

There's a lot of literature in *Hungry Rats*, and the 2003 draft included many references to the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. I was lucky to read Orenstein's work of remarkable analysis while there was still time to incorporate her insights into the novel. This is one of the most profound and meticulously constructed pieces of literary criticism I have ever encountered. Not only does it deconstruct the origins and implications of the Little Red Riding Hood story, but it identifies its likely original source as a cautionary tale about serial killers. (!!!)

Additional Sources: The poetry of Heinrich Heine and the criticism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge are very significant to the plot of *Hungry Rats*, and both are quoted and the subjects of allusion on numerous occasions.

In many ways, I assigned a default structure to the novel according to the Radiohead albums *Kid A*, *Amnesiac*, and *Hail to the Thief*. I still feel that the mood evoked by these albums express something basic in the novel, and without their influence the book would have turned out very differently. On the other hand, the Outkast album *ATLiens* powerfully evoked for me the spirit of living on the Eastside in 2003, and was even the inspiration for *Hungry Rats*' working title, *Adrift on the Mainstream*.