

## Roy J. Snell is Author of 76 Mystery Stories For Boys

By Lowell Saunders  
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"I've seen a might good day in my time, and I've got out of life exactly what I wanted." Minister, missionary, adventurer, lecturer and author of 76 books, Roy J. Snell, 705 Wheaton, means exactly what he says.

Born in Ladonia, Mo. In 1878, Snell moved to the Sycamore area and learned his father's trade of erecting windmills. He entered Wheaton academy after his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, graduated, and then worked his way through Wheaton College, finishing with the class of 1906.

The death of a brother caused him to enter the ministry and he accepted the pastorate of a small church in rural Southern Illinois. After one year he became principal of church-supported school in the Cumberland Mountains of Kentucky. "A person could just as likely get shot as not there," Snell recalls. "It was a constant struggle to see who would take over the school—the big boys or me." Snell won and gained the respect of his students and their parents.

After two semesters' graduate study at Harvard, he went as a Congregationalist missionary to Alaska, and rode herd on 350 Eskimos and 2,500 reindeer. He returned to this area the following year, earned his B.D. degree at Chicago Seminary and his master's degree from the University of Chicago.

But more important to Snell than his academic achievements was his first success as a writer. He sold his first story "for the great sum of \$6.24" In 1916, his first book, "Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends," came from the press.

World War I service in France with the Y.M.C.A. briefly interrupted his new-found career, but back in the United States once again he began to write in earnest. A dozen books later—most of them on adventure and mystery themes for children—Snell found his way to the lecture platform and for the next 30 years gave illustrated talks about his travels.

In 1941, Snell wrote the network serial, "Jack Armstrong—The All American Boy." At the special request of his publisher, he wrote eight war novels for children.

Today Snell considers himself retired, although he admits to a hankering to write an autobiography. He spends his summers at his northern hide-a-way, Isle Royale, Mich.

Looking back over his long career as a successful author, Snell says that his power of concentration was his great literary asset. For brief periods he would write at a 2,000-word an hour clip and seldom took time to make a formal outline.

"You have to develop a second personality to write," Snell declares. "It's a hard thing to do. Oftentimes I felt like giving up the whole business." More than one and one-half million copies of his books testify that he did not give up.

"I had all the luck on my side," Snell explains. "If I were a young man today, I'd hesitate going into a writing career. Wouldn't know where to start. Kids don't read as much today with TV and movies.

"No," he says with a satisfied smile on his face, "I've had my day and I got out of it just what I wanted."