

# About huckleberry finn



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Richard Withering Mark Twain's novel Huckleberry Finn struck a deep chord with me. I hunt, fish, boat, hike, camp, am an Eagle Scout, and love the outdoors. Both Heck Finn and Tom Sawyer spent most of their spare time in the outdoors and I could identify with their lifestyles. I especially identified with the part of the story when Heck was living on the raft. Heck Finn and Jim were living off of the land- catching fish, turtles, and anything that they could round up. I experienced something of that sort while I was on a camping trip in Boy Scouts.

When we arrived at our campsite, we had to fish for our food, make shelters out of wood and leaves, etc. Our goal was to utilize all of the natural resources to meet most of our physical needs. While our food was supplied, I could still identify with the experiences that Heck and Jim encountered when gathering their sustenance. I loved the special bond between Heck Finn and Tom Sawyer. They shared a close friendship premised on the same interests and hobbies: being mischievous, adventure seeking, being away from home, spending time outdoors, etc.

Their remarry differences, it seemed, were based on their family relationships and social upbringings. Whereas Heck Finn had no family besides his abusive and alcoholic father, Tom Sawyer had a family that loved him and supported him, even if he was often getting into trouble. The ironic thing, though, is that I think Tom Sawyer secretly wished that he had Husks independence and " freedom" from accountability to family members. I sometimes feel the same way that Tom Sawyer does; however, I don't think that Tom truly realized, like I do, how lucky he was to not have to be in Heck Fin's situation.

Tom Sawyer always had a loving family and a warm cozy bed to go back to whenever he was tired out and wanted to relax. Heck never had that option for more than a couple of weeks when he was being "civilized" with the widowed Mrs.. Douglas. So, in a way, I do not think that Tom was as grateful as he should have been. A particular aspect of the story that really made me see how different times were back then than they are now was how white people talked to and treated African- Americans. African-Americans really were seen as property. They were referred to as " my Niger" or " his Niger" or " our Niger. I find this type of language incredibly offensive. I realize that my offended reaction stems from being raised at a time and in a home where this type of language is not tolerated, because it totally demeans and dishonors another person. Such language comes from an attitude of superiority and inferiority. I am not sure where our country got off track from its bedrock principle that " all men are created equal" and are guaranteed three " inalienable sights": life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; however, it is clear that African- Americans were not viewed as equals, nor did they enjoy these rights during this time period.

For example, in chapter 31 when Jim got picked up as a runaway slave by the Phelps and Heck came back to the raft to look for Jim when he saw the duke and the king there, Heck said, " I wouldn't shake my Niger, would I? - the only Niger I had in the world, and the only property. " The duke responded, "... Fact is, I reckon we'd come to consider him our Niger; yes, we did consider him so... Thankfully, people began to realize how poorly and unconstitutionally the African-American race was being treated, and the civil rights movement was birthed.

Laws and social standards have changed to equalize the opportunities available to all races. At the time of the novel's setting, the African-American race and the white race was so divided that each of them talked in their own type of dialogue or slang. In Huckleberry Finn, the African-American dialogue incorporated a lot of contractions and it was very difficult at times to decipher what they were saying because words could often be slurred or combined as well. In addition, the African-American dialogue was often marked by the use of poor grammar.

By contrast, the white people in the novel used more grammatically correct language. For example, in chapter 41 when Heck went back into town to grab a doctor to check out Tom's shot leg, the doctor only made one grammatical error the whole time that he talked. Mark Twain's use of grammar, dialogue, and slang made it easy for me to distinguish which social group was talking, whether it was the upper class, African-Americans, or even Heck Finn or Tom Sawyer. All in all, Heck Finn, Tom Sawyer, and I have a lot of the same traits.

The part that really separates us from each other, however, is the era in which we have lived. While all three of us love the outdoors and do a lot of the same things in it, they lived in a time period when they were directly dependent on the natural resources to survive. Also, their mindsets towards African-Americans were also very different than mine due to the culture of their time period. In an era when African-Americans were seen as almost a sub-human race, in many ways Heck Finn rose above the typical prejudices.

Specifically, Heck treated Jim nearly as a family member- by going to save him, by their eating the same food, and by their taking the same night-watches on the raft. The relationship depicted between Heck and Jim is one reason why I loved the novel and could connect to it so well. Heck had an extremely strong bond with Jim, just as I do with many people whom I am not directly related with, and yet we all love each other and look out for one another just as family members would.