

# JOSEPH L. FRENCH, AUTHOR, DEAD AT 78

With 27 Books to His Credit,  
He Wrote in 1927 That  
He Was Starving.

HAD FOUNDED MAGAZINES

Penned Sea, Adventure and  
Ghost Stories—Was Journalist  
in Many Cities.

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ORANGEBURG, N. Y., Dec. 14.—Joseph Lewis French, novelist, editor, poet and former newspaper man, who nine years ago wrote that he was starving although he was listed in Who's Who as the author of twenty-seven books, died yesterday of pneumonia at Rockland State Hospital here. He was 78 years old.

Born in New York, the son of Creighton Brewer and Caroline Baldwin French, Mr. French attended public schools here and Geneva College, West Geneva, Ohio. In 1887 he founded The New West, a monthly magazine, at Kansas City. Three years later he was one of the founders of The Wave, a weekly in San Francisco.

He began newspaper work at Rochester, N. Y., and later worked in Colorado, Chicago, Kansas City and San Francisco, returning East in 1894. Since 1895 he contributed feature stories to newspapers and articles and poems to magazines.

In 1899 he began writing books, mostly sea, adventure and ghost stories. His last volume, "Ghost Story Omnibus," was published in 1933.

With twenty-seven volumes to his credit, but with threadbare clothes, empty pockets and an out-of-season straw hat. Mr. French walked into the offices of the old New York Graphic in October, 1927, looking for a job.

He was set to work—writing his own life story, which the editors headed: "I'm Starving—Yet I'm in Who's Who as the Author of 27 Famous Books."

Mr. French insisted that the actual rewards of authorship were few.

"You may have read of Ben Jonson and the men of the 'Merry-maid' Tavern," he wrote, "all great wits, poets and dramatists of Elizabeth's and King James's time, none of whom, except Shakespeare, achieved a steady, comfortable living, to say nothing of a competence for his old age. Most of them, indeed, died young."

From the twenty-seven volumes he had published up to 1927, Mr. French explained that he made an average of about \$300 each, clear of expenses. He blamed his bad fortune on his oversight in making contracts with publishers.

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