The nineteenth-century dime novel was a significant component of adolescent culture. Dime novel Westerns prefigured emerging ideas of adolescence to inform cultural constructions of American boyhood. These texts articulated and responded to prevailing notions of proper and improper boyhood by imagining the frontier as a space of and for youth. Scholars have addressed many subversive elements of the dime novel, while largely ignoring how this literature interrogated hierarchies and categories of age. The present analysis explores that gap, highlighting the Western dime novel as a critical site for negotiating ideas of American boyhood in the late nineteenth century.
The Nineteenth-Century Dime Western, Boyhood, and Empowered Adolescence. The nineteenth-century dime novel was a significant component of adolescent culture. Dime novel Westerns prefigured emerging ideas of adolescence to inform cultural constructions of American boyhood. These texts articulated and responded more. The nineteenth-century dime novel was a significant component of adolescent culture. Dime novel Westerns prefigured emerging ideas of adolescence to inform cultural constructions of American boyhood. These texts articulated and responded to prevailing notions of proper and improper. During the late eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century, biologists and physicians undertook more formal study of adolescent phenomena. European scientists researched aspects of physical growth such as the onset of MENARCHE in females and seminal emission among males. These works provided scientific and philosophical background when, in the 1890s, psychologists began investigating the abilities, behaviors, and attitudes of young people between the onset of PUBERTY and marriage.