

# MICHAEL CRICHTON



DRAGON TEETH

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# Introduction

**A**s he appears in an early photograph, William Johnson is a handsome young man with a crooked smile and a naive grin. A study in slouching indifference, he lounges against a Gothic building. He is a tall fellow, but his height appears irrelevant to his presentation of himself. The photograph is dated “New Haven, 1875,” and was apparently taken after he had left home to begin studies as an undergraduate at Yale College.

A later photograph, marked “Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1876,” shows Johnson quite differently. His mouth is framed by a full mustache; his body is harder and enlarged by use; his jaw is set; he stands confidently with shoulders squared and feet wide—and ankle-deep in mud. Clearly visible is a peculiar scar on his upper lip, which in later years he claimed was the result of an Indian attack.

The following story tells what happened between the two pictures.

**F**or the journals and notebooks of William Johnson, I am indebted to the estate of W. J. T. Johnson, and particularly to Johnson’s great-niece, Emily Silliman, who permitted me to quote extensively from the unpublished material. (Much of the factual contents of Johnson’s accounts found their way into print in 1890, during the fierce battles for priority between Cope and Marsh, which finally involved the U.S. government. But the text itself, or even excerpts, was never published, until now.)

Part I  
**The Field Trip West**