



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 – 1899

A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

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NUMBER 2

Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

Young heroines of Horatio Alger and Edward Stratemeyer

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"GI' ME TWO."

Tattered Tom; or, The Story of a Street Arab. Frontispiece.

*Nellie Ray's
New York*

**ABE's
10th birthday**

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President's column

The 2006 Horatio Alger Society convention in Omaha, Nebraska, is now history. The convention will be covered in full in the May-June *Newsboy*, so I'll just say for now that Bart Nyberg is home, recovering slowly from his pneumonia-caused surgery. And a special thanks to Mary Ann for keeping the convention running smoothly in spite of Bart's untimely illness.

I hope to see Bart, Mary Ann — and all of you — at Bob and Wendy Sipes' convention at Shelbyville, Indiana in 2007. Please see the Horatio Alger Society's Web site (www.ihot.com/~has/), as well as upcoming issues of *Newsboy*, for 2007 convention updates.

You probably know that the Horatio Alger Society is incorporated as a 501 (c)3 non-profit entity. This means that your contributions to the Horatio Alger Society's **Strive and Succeed Award** are tax-deductible. Moreover, if you work for a large corporation, the chances are good that they have a matching charitable grant program.

The H.A.S. has presented \$1,000 **Strive and Succeed Award** checks the last two years (one award each year), and I hope we can match or better this figure in the future. As Art Young pointed out to me years ago, the **Strive and Succeed Award** is the one area where the HAS gives something back to the community. We want to look good — higher education costs have been climbing fast in recent years — and I, for one, want the amount of the **Strive and Succeed Award** to be generous enough to be taken seriously.

Janice and I officially finish our move from California to Gardnerville, Nevada, on June 1 — a tenant for our Fremont house has signed a lease, so we have a hard deadline to keep us moving. I doubt that I will ever get tired of the view from Gardnerville — Sierra Nevada and Pine Nut mountain ranges front and back, and a beautiful clear night sky. If any of you happen to be in our area (near Reno and Lake Tahoe), please come by for a visit. Lots of Alger books for sale, and great fishing two miles from my front door. What's not to like?

Your Partic'lar Friend,
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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes — youngsters whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and inspired hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans for generations to come.

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Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to **Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255**.

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. You are invited to visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.ihot.com/~has/

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send ads or "Letters to the Editor" to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

By John T. Dizer (PF-511)

In the late 1800's, many writers described the boys who lived in the slums of our large cities. The boys' efforts simply to survive, their lives, struggles and adventures were featured in countless articles, story papers and juvenile books. We find boys selling newspapers, carrying baggage, sweeping street crossings and begging; anything to keep body and soul together.

Stories about these "Street Arabs" usually have as a hero a 15- or 16-year-old boy. We generally assume that the boys who sold newspapers on the streets of our big cities needed to show a considerable amount of initiative, enterprise, physical strength and aggressive behavior if they were to be successful. The newspaper-selling field, in fact, was dominated by boys. It was believed that girls were simply not suited for this kind of work. In truth, while we know that many girls lived in the slums, we find few examples in print of girls who succeeded in the same kind of "strive and succeed" situations as did boys.

It is interesting to note that two of the leading juvenile writers of the period, Horatio Alger, Jr., and Edward Stratemeyer, both wrote stories with a young newsgirl as the heroine. Alger's *Tattered Tom* is familiar to members of the Horatio Alger Society and to students of early American juvenile literature. Stratemeyer's *Nellie Ray* is a much more obscure heroine who deserves to be better known. Both heroines were young, about twelve years old, several years younger than the usual age of Alger's and Stratemeyer's heroes. Both exhibited qualities of spunk, enterprise and valor in the usual tradition of youthful heroism, and both were aided during their trials and tribulations by rather remarkable good fortune. In this article I will discuss the two heroines as pictured by Alger and Stratemeyer and examine their characters as portrayed by these writers.

Let us look first at Alger's youthful heroine. *Tattered Tom*; or, *The Adventures of a Street Arab* was written by Horatio Alger, Jr., and published by A.K. Loring in 1871. Just what is a "Street Arab?" Dictionaries define a Street Arab variously as a "Homeless vagabond in the streets of a city, particularly an outcast boy or girl; a gamin," and also as a waif. A waif is further defined as a stray homeless person, especially a forsaken or orphaned child.

At the start of the Alger story we find that Tom definitely qualifies as a street Arab. To our surprise we also find that Tom is a girl. Alger's stories were generally written about (and for) boys. *Tattered Tom* is similar in approach and action to his boys' stories and would



appeal, it seems to me, to both boys and girls. The only significant difference is that his hero is a heroine. I might add she wishes she was a boy for much of the book and is quite vocal about it. She has been nicknamed Tom and is generally called Tom.

With the recent attention to Alger's sexual orientation we could well question why Alger, at this point in his writing career, picked a twelve-year-old girl as his principal character. After all, since *Tattered Tom* is a book which is essentially very similar to his books about boys and for boys, a sixteen-year-old boy hero could easily be substituted for Tom with little adjustment to the plot. Most of the Alger biographies ignore the question. I find no reference to Tom's gender in Alger biographies by Gruber, Mayes, Tebbel, Scharnhorst and Bales, or in

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Editor's notebook

Time certainly does fly. It hardly seems a decade has passed since the book-collecting hobby changed forever with the emergence of the Internet.

We've talked a lot about eBay in this space over the years, but this time I want to discuss the other major online source of collectible books, the Advanced Book Exchange, now simply known as Abebooks.com, or in the vernacular among collectors, "A.B.E." or simply "Abe" (as in "Honest Abe" Lincoln).

This spring, Abebooks.com is celebrating its 10th anniversary, and the May 29 issue of *AntiqueWeek* carried a cover story about how the site came about and how it has evolved over the years.

Below are a few of my own background comments, followed by highlights from the *AntiqueWeek* article, authored by Judy Penz Sheluk.

Before the invention of the Internet, if you collected books you had a couple choices. Most commonly, you walked into a used-book store, examined the stock and see if the proprietor had any titles of interest in your field. Let's say you were an Alger collector. You could leave the proprietor your "want list," and he could (1) look out for your desired title(s) by checking his or her incoming stock; or (2) he could hire a book scout to try to find a copy in the hinterlands — at auctions, yard sales, antique stores, or from collectors or other sources.

The search for used books became easier with the creation in 1948 of *Antiquarian Bookman*, a periodical trade journal, also known as *AB Bookman's Weekly*, by which subscribing dealers (and dealers only) could advertise their wants to thousands of other dealers, along with books for sale (which private collectors were free to buy on a first-come basis).

As a collector, I subscribed to *AB Bookman's Weekly* (published out of New Jersey), and although I could not advertise my wants, the magazine gave me an idea of where dealers were located, and which ones dealt in old series books. Then, I could contact those dealers with my wants, and they could seek those books through this publication or by other means.

Looking back at it, this was a very primitive way of doing business. In order for *AB Bookman's Weekly* to be worth the effort, you had to subscribe by first-class mail rather than the cheaper bulk rate, because the advertisements in the publication were time-sensitive. First-class postage cost the dealers a lot of money, and to

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President's column

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P.S.: from Janice Morley: Thanks so much to all the 2006 Convention attendees for being so gracious about Holly, our hurricane rescue dog. For those who didn't attend, Mike and I have adopted a Hurricane Rita rescue dog from our local veterinarian. Holly is a sweet little black Labrador, and really appreciated all the attention from her Partic'lar pals at Omaha. More on Holly will be coming in the May-June convention issue — and hopefully, with photos.

MEMBERSHIP

New member

Lyle A. Stohlmann (PF-1093)
713 Hazel, Box 518
Louisville, NE 68037 (402) 234-2487

Lyle learned about the Horatio Alger Society from Bart and Mary Ann Nyberg of Friendly Used Books in Omaha. He is a pilot, and in addition to collecting and reading Alger's books, he also enjoys woodworking.

New address

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Boys' Group Honors Alger, Jr., Tho None Buys Books Today

Horatio Stuff Out of Date, It Can't Be Passed Off on
Boys Now, Says Publisher

NEW YORK, Jan. 13. (AP)—In celebration of the 103rd birthday anniversary of Horatio Alger, Jr., whose apple-cheeked fiction heroes of an older day always started out poor but honest and wound up possessors of riches and honor, 75 underprivileged boys gave a party tonight.

The boys, wards of the Children's Aid society, invited as many New York newsboys into the society's memorial newsboys' house for food and entertainment.

They remembered the writer—but few else did.

With one voice publishers and distributors of books consigned him to the dusty past—to the "he was good while he had it" era. They said his books in their time had sold several million copies; they were so widely cast upon the reading public that no authority would attempt a more specific estimate.

But, the survey showed, the youngsters of 1937 will have none of Alger's stories about airplanes and the other implements of this mechanized world long since having taken their eye.

Alger, with his simple success for-

mula that has given rise to a modern phrase for dismissing an incredible rise to eminence—"Horatio Alger stuff"—is as out of date as Phil the fiddler.

Harold Williams, an official of a distributing company that in its day passed out many an Alger book—Ragged Dick, Phil the Fiddler and all the rest—sighed with a half-chuckle as he summed it up:

"You couldn't pass off one of those things on the kid of today. They really haven't sold to amount to anything for 10 years."

Diligent search in the public library gave corroborative evidence: "In the whole pile of books in that huge establishment only 15 Alger volumes were found—and they were in the reference department.

An executive of a firm that used to publish the books in paper back, joining other sources in declining to estimate how many encountered millions of the hansom and victoria age had read the stuff, said a book like Ragged Dick alone must have sold above 1,000,000,000 copies.

JAN. 14. 1937.

Changing times — or not?

This faded newspaper clipping was found pasted onto the front free endpaper of an A.L. Burt fez edition copy of Alger's *The Errand Boy*, recently purchased by Larry Rice (PF-757).

Of course, if the date hand-written at the bottom of the clipping is accurate, it was the 105th anniversary of Alger's birth, not the 103rd as stated in the article. But that aside, what of the book distributor's quote that "you couldn't pass one of those things on the kid of today?"

Even though mass production of inexpensive Alger reprints had just about dried up when the Great Depression arrived in 1929, evidence seems the opposite as far as young readers' interest in the stories is concerned. The founding members of the Horatio Alger Society, Kenneth Butler and Forrest Campbell, read Alger books avidly as children and kept reading him as adults. The same held true with the generation of H.A.S. members born in the 1920s such as Ralph Gardner, who was a teen-ager when this article appeared.

Yes, air travel, radio and other new advances in the 1920s and '30s intrigued new young readers, but Alger's stories have never completely fallen out of fashion. The "Strive and Succeed" spirit still exists in today's world of popular culture. A closing note: popular as it was, sales of *Ragged Dick* did NOT reach one billion copies!

Editor's notebook

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a private collector such as myself, the sales ads were worthless because by the time the publication arrived in my mailbox (no first-class rate for me), the listed books were long gone.

In the early 1990s, Cathy Waters, who lived in Victoria, Vancouver, British Columbia, was operating Timeless Books, a traditional used-book shop. Because the nearest large city, Seattle, was 100 miles away, she needed more than walk-in trade to survive, so she placed a half-page ad in *AB Bookman's Weekly*, soliciting to other booksellers a list of 100 books she wanted to buy for her customers.

"Unfortunately, the ad created a nightmare," she told *AntiqueWeek*. "Every day I got a five-inch-thick pile of mail from dealers across America."

Fortunately, Cathy's husband, Keith, was a computer consultant and systems designer, and he decided to find a way to utilize the new Internet technology to create an easy-to-search on-line database for book dealers and collectors.

The Waters joined forces with longtime friends Rick and Vivian Pura, and in 1995, the two men began working on the project in their spare time.

By May 1996, the Advanced Book Exchange officially went on line.

"We didn't think enough people knew what 'antiquarian' meant, so we didn't go for Antiquarian Book Exchange," Cathy said. "We didn't want to be the paper-back exchange. It gradually became ABE, and we always liked the idea of 'Honest Abe' and everything it stood for."

The Waters drained their personal bank account to launch their Web site, and it sputtered along for a while. Cathy described their first office as having one desk, two computers and a single telephone line.

Cathy and Keith spread the word about ABE by attending antiquarian book fairs and personally meeting the dealers (their potential subscribers). "We definitely didn't want to be a faceless entity," Cathy said. "It was imperative that we showed booksellers we were real people, and people who loved books and bookselling."

Cathy added that ABE started out as "... booksellers buying off other booksellers, so we put a little ad in the *New York Times Book Review* for \$1,700. Then, we placed ads in book magazines to increase awareness among buyers. By August 1997 we had reached 1,000 booksellers."

We won't go into every detail, but over the years

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Coming in the May-June issue: Annual H.A.S. convention issue, with photos, annual awards, complete auction results and more!

Editor's notebook

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Advanced Book Exchange has grown exponentially, buying up competing on-line book sites, expanding overseas and becoming the dominant force in the field. Interloc evolved into Alibris, BiblioFind was absorbed into Amazon.com — and meanwhile, ABE has gone onward and upward.

Cathy and Keith Waters sold their stake in the company in 1999, and the other co-founders left in the years to follow, just wanting to get back to normal family-oriented lifestyles.

"We were all proud of what we'd accomplished, but that aside, each of us knew that it was time to move on," she said.

In 2004, Hannes Blum, co-founder of the German bookselling site Justbooks.com, one of ABE's acquisitions, became president and CEO, and he continues to expand the business worldwide.

Today, Abebooks.com holds a database of more than 80 million books, with an average 200,000 new listings each day. In 2005, sales of books from the site totaled some \$150 million. More than 13,500 booksellers worldwide are affiliated with ABE.

Where is *AB Bookman's Weekly*? Made irrelevant by the real-time availability of books on ABE and eBay, it quietly folded in early 2000. However, the trade publication will not be forgotten by the postwar generation of booksellers who used it as a key resource.

By the way, Cathy Waters has not left the used-book trade. She opened another traditional store in Victoria, the Grafton Bookshop, and if you don't happen to be vacationing in Vancouver, you can access her inventory by visiting Grafton Bookshop at www.abebooks.com

Also, if you want to subscribe to *AntiqueWeek*, write:

AntiqueWeek, P.O. Box 90, 27 N. Jefferson St., Knightstown, IN 46148-1242. Or you can subscribe by phone at 1-800-876-5133 weekdays 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; or visit www.antiqueweek.com. Subscriptions are \$41 per year and \$75 for two years. I have been a subscriber for more than 30 years, way back to the days the publication was called the *Tri-State Trader*.

A memorable time in Atlanta

The annual joint conference of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association took



Members of the Popular Culture Association's Dime Novels, Pulp and Series Books panels pose in front of Gladys Knight & Ron Winan's Chicken & Waffles on Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia, during the annual PCA conference earlier this spring. From left: Lydia C. Schurman, Deidre A. Johnson (PF-596), Pamela Bedore, Frank W. Quillen (PF-1035), area chair Marlena Bremseth, James D. Keeline (PF-898), Henri Achee (PF-922), Bill Gowen (PF-706) and Alan Pickrell (PF-965).

Photo by Kimberlee Keeline

place on April 12-15 in Atlanta, Georgia.

This event includes our field of interest — Dime Novels, Pulp and Series Books — along with a host of other areas of interest, including Film, Television-radio, Literature & Politics, Women's Studies, World Wars I and II, Sports, Media Studies, and so forth.

This year our Dime Novels, Pulp and Series Books panels presented some 20 papers over three days. In the next issue's *Editor's Notebook* I will list them all. A couple of the presentations are earmarked for future issues of *Newsboy*. About a third of this year's presenters are longtime members of the Horatio Alger Society. Several are shown by PF-number in the above photo.

The Atlanta conference also was an opportunity for old friends to get together, with the group's traditional evening meals held at several of the most friendly local restaurants.

Next spring's joint PCA/ACA meeting will be held April 4-7, 2007 at the Boston Marriott at Copley Place.

Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

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Scharnhorst's *Horatio Alger, Jr.* Gardner, in his biography, notes that Alger spent July and August of 1870 tutoring the Seligman children. According to Gardner, "Horatio created [Tom] upon the insistence of Isabella Seligman, who complained bitterly that her tutor wrote only about boys." (*Horatio Alger, or the American Hero Era*, p. 205).

The same explanation is found in Bales (*A Literary Odyssey: In Quest of the Real Horatio Alger*, p. 35) and also in Hoyt, (*Horatio's Boys*, p. 109). On the other hand, none of the other biographies which discuss Alger's tutoring of the Seligman children even mention an Isabella, though they (particularly Scharnhorst) go into detail on the names and careers of the Seligman boys. Scharnhorst also notes, "In the title volume [*Tattered Tom*] (1871), as if to betray his own sexual insecurity, Alger allowed that, "It was not quite easy to determine" whether his protagonist "was a boy or a girl." All we know for sure is that Tattered Tom is a girl and that Alger uses her as the heroine of a successful juvenile book.

Tattered Tom's young age is another question. Alger had an extensive knowledge of life in the slums of New York. He was aware that many girls who lived on the streets were prostitutes by age fifteen or sixteen, or earlier. He may have felt that in order to infer purity and innocence, twelve was a more appropriate age for a girl street gamin. It is also possible Alger made his heroine the approximate age of Isabella Seligman.

Tom first appears as a sweeper of street corners. Alger says, "The street-sweeper was apparently about twelve years of age. It was not quite easy to determine whether it was a boy or girl. The head was surrounded by a boy's cap, the hair was cut short, it wore a boy's jacket, but underneath was a girl's dress." (p. 10).

Later in the book, Tom states definitely that she is twelve years old. Tom is dressed in rags. Her face is grimy, which apparently goes along with the rest of her appearance. When asked by a passer-by if she were a boy or a girl, she answers,

"I'm a girl, but I wish I was a boy."

"What for?"

"Cause boys are stronger than girls, and can fight better."

"Do you ever fight?"

"Sometimes."

"Whom do you fight with?"

"Sometimes I fight with the boys, and sometimes with granny."

"What makes you fight with your granny?"

"She gets drunk and fires things at my head; then I pitch into her." (pp. 16-17)

This sets the picture of Tom and her background. Tom lives in a slum with an old woman who claims to be her grandmother but is actually no relation. "Granny" takes all of Tom's earnings and frequently beats her.

Tom's real name is either Jane or Jenny Lindsay. Ralph Gardner, in his biography, and later Alvin Funderburg in his synopsis of the book both note that, "On page 47 Tom recalls that her real name is Jane. However, due to a lapse on the author's part, her name (when it next appears on Page 97) is incorrectly given as Jenny." It is certainly true that Alger was forgetful, but in this case a cursory check of the book shows him calling the girl Jane on 19 occasions and Jenny on 11. Quoting Webster's, Jenny is "the familiar form of Jane," and Alger seemingly used whichever name came to mind.

Alger has other variations in details, however, which show a lack of editing. Tom's short haircut on page 10 becomes "a mop of hair, tangled it is true, but of a beautiful brown shade" on page 79. Although Tom is twelve, she remembers nothing of her early life, though her mother wants "to make up to her the care of which she has so cruelly been deprived for six long years!" (p. 239).

Since Tom was apparently abducted at age six, she certainly should have had some early childhood memories. None of the discrepancies, however, really interfere with the story.

In the early chapters, Tom is not portrayed as a thing of beauty and a joy forever, but she shows many redeeming qualities. She has spunk, aggressiveness and a sense of humor. Under the grime and rags she is apparently a pretty girl. As we would say today, she is obviously a survivor.

The story moves along quickly. After successfully cadging coins for her street sweeping, Tom decides to buy a square meal. Normally, she would have returned home, given the money from her work to her granny and eaten dry bread or a cold sausage for her meal. Alger notes granny is a "vicious old woman with a pretty vigorous arm." (p. 19). Unfortunately, granny catches Tom in the restaurant, hauls her home and prepares to beat her. Tom outwits the old woman, climbs out the window, and by means of a rope crawls down several stories to the ground and runs away. That is the last she sees of granny for many pages.

Tom has enough money left to buy 10 copies of the "Express" and turns to selling newspapers, which the book says "was not a new trade to her ..." (p. 51). She fights a boy who disputes her claim for a street corner, beats him and sells her papers successfully. She finds a cheap lodging house for the night but unfortunately is robbed of her money so can't buy more papers.

She next turns to "baggage-smashing," which requires no capital. She approaches a sea captain to carry

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Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

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his carpet bag. In a typical Alger plot twist, the captain is intrigued by Tom's enterprise and street mannerisms. He buys her breakfast and listens to her prattle and decides she is a very dirty and unpolished diamond in the rough. He becomes more and more impressed with what he feels is Tom's potential. Captain Barnes "...wondered what would be her fate. She was quick, sharp, pretty, but withal an untamed Arab of the streets. The chances seemed very much against her in the warfare of life."

"I'll make an effort to save her," he thought." (p. 82). His motives are apparently completely altruistic, and he makes a valiant effort to help Tom. He takes the girl to

the boarding house of his sister, a Mrs. Merton, pays her room and board for an extended period and makes arrangements for Tom to go to school. As he tells his sister, "You know I have no child of my own, and am well off, so far as this world's goods are concerned. I have long thought I should like to train up a child in whom I could take an interest, and who would

be a comfort to me when I am older." When his sister remonstrates he adds, "I don't want a tame child. She wouldn't interest me. This girl has spirit." (pp. 94-95).

Mrs. Merton somewhat reluctantly agrees, Tom moves in and Captain Barnes shortly goes back to sea. Mrs. Merton makes Tom take a bath and outfits her with some of her own daughter's clothes "and was astonished by the improvement it made in the appearance of the little waif." (p. 101).

When she looks in a mirror Tom is also amazed.

"I dunno," said Tom, doubtfully. "It looks too much like a girl"

"But you are a girl, you know."

"I wish I wasn't."

"Why?"

"Boys have more fun; besides, they are stronger, and can fight better." (p. 102).

Tom continues in this vein, and it is obvious she is not

a tame child. Things go along fairly well for three months. Tom does well in school and is in the process of becoming semi-civilized when Mary Merton, the landlady's daughter, yields to temptation, steals some money and Tom is blamed. The truth is discovered but not until after Tom is forced to leave the boarding house. She returns briefly to her old haunts.

Earlier, Tom's mother's lawyer has tracked down granny and is paying her well to locate Tom. Tom's mother comes to New York to meet with her lawyer. Tom's uncle, who had granny abduct Tom in the first place, learns of this, also comes to New York and, in an Alger coincidence, runs into granny on the street.

He offers granny more money to find Tom than the lawyer has offered, with the understanding granny would spirit Tom out of New York. Granny agrees, and

after capturing Tom forces her to leave New York by train. Tom outwits granny and goes back to the city. On the train back, Tom befriends a timid lady and guides her to the boarding house where she is to stay. Incredible as it might seem to anyone but Alger, as Tom is escorting her friend into the boarding house, her mother is coming out, recognizes her long-

lost daughter and the two have a tearful reunion:

Mrs. Lindsay opened her arms.

"Found at last!" she exclaimed. "My dear, dear child!" (pp. 269, 270).

One thing leads to another as so often happens with Alger. Tom, (Jane or Jenny — her mother calls her both) moves to Philadelphia with her wealthy mother and apparently will live a dull life of indolence and affluence. We do not know if she still wants to be a boy, but she seems resigned to her lot in life.

Capt. Barnes returns from his voyage and goes to his sister's establishment to find Tom. "I have no child. I probably shall never have one," he said to himself. "If Jenny has become such a girl as I hope I will formally adopt her, and when I have become too old to go to sea, we will make a pleasant and cosey [sic] little home together, and she shall cheer my declining years." (p.276).

Alas for his hopes. Tom is gone, and no one knows



"It's MY GRANDCHILD, SIR!"

Tattered Tom, Page 225.

where. In another exciting coincidence, Mrs. Lindsay and Tom are visiting friends in New York at this time, and Tom wants to "call at the house where she had learned her first lessons in civilization." (p. 273). So they do and meet the captain:

"Mother," said Jane, cordially grasping the hand of the captain, "this is the kind gentleman who first found me in the street, and provided me with a home."

"Accept a mother's gratitude," said Mrs. Lindsay simply, but with deep feeling." (p. 281).

Although the captain's hopes for an adopted daughter are dashed, Mrs. Lindsay invites him to visit them in Philadelphia and he "henceforth never arrived in port without visiting his former protégé, where he always found welcome." (p. 282).

According to Alger, Tom never, however, lost "that fresh and buoyant spirit, and sturdy independence, which had enabled her to fight her way when she was compelled to do so. (p. 274).

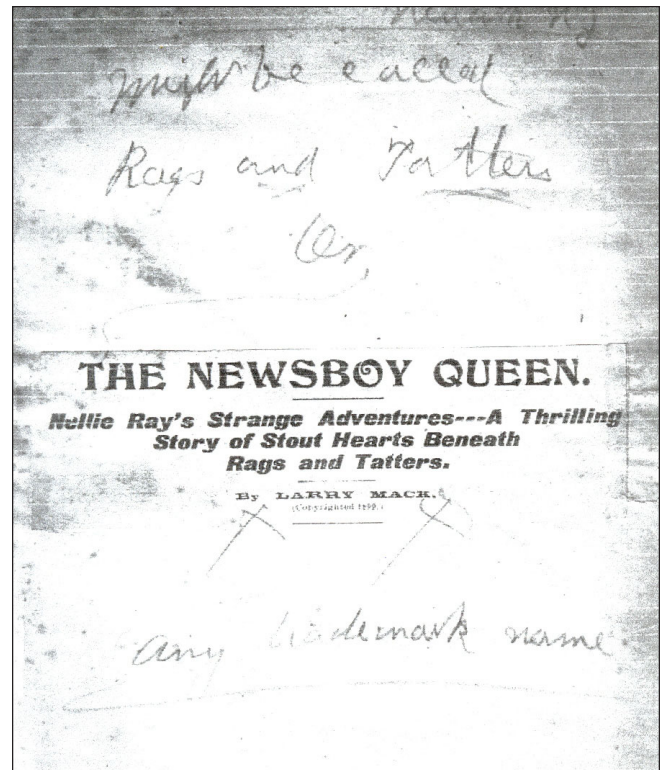
So all's well that ends well. There were many girls like Tom in New York City. This is a story of a twelve-year-old street urchin and her struggles to survive. It shows the problems of life on the streets and Tom's courage, resilience and enterprise. We can ponder the fortunate coincidences in Tom's career. She has not just one, but two saviors, to lead her from her life of poverty and degradation.

What would have been Tom's fate if she hadn't run away from her drunken "granny," if she hadn't been befriended by a kindly sea captain and hadn't, by a remarkable chain of events, found her wealthy mother? There would certainly have been a different ending. I would expect Isabella Seligman preferred this one.

We have examined Horatio Alger's literary treatment of *Tattered Tom*, his twelve-year-old heroine. Let us now see how Edward Stratemeyer described the adventures of *Nellie Ray*, another twelve-year-old heroine, and also a newsgirl in New York City. Since Stratemeyer's story has apparently not been examined in over 100 years and is essentially unknown, some background may be helpful.

Tattered Tom appeared in 1871 and *Nellie Ray* in 1895, some 24 years later. *Nellie Ray, Queen of the Newsboys; or, Stout Hearts Beneath Rags and Tatters*, to use the full title, first appeared in *Young Sports of America* with the author given as "Larry Mack, Ex Newsboy." It ran as a serial from Aug. 10, 1895 to Sept. 14, 1895, according to the Guinon bibliography.

In Edward Stratemeyer's account book for 1895, he noted that he had written the story. "Larry Mack" is a Stratemeyer pen-name, and there is no question of the Stratemeyer authorship. Until recently, there has been no known copy of either the original story or the magazine. Stratemeyer had been editor of *Good News*, had left that position, and had become the editor of *Young*



Sports of America. He wrote a number of serials for the magazine, some of which were reprinted in *Bright Days*, Stratemeyer's own magazine, and several of which were later published by Mershon as hard-cover books. As far as we know, *Nellie Ray* was never published in book form. Whether it was republished as a serial is uncertain.

The existing copy of the story is in the possession of the Stratemeyer family. On a visit to the family, James Keeline received permission to examine and copy it. This copy apparently came from a periodical of some sort, although whether it was from *Young Sports of America* or a later magazine or newspaper is uncertain.

A cover sheet (shown above) is attached to the printed newsprint manuscript, and it is certain that the cover sheet is from a later date than the serial. The evidence seems quite conclusive that this serial is the 1895 serial that was written by Edward Stratemeyer and published in *Young Sports of America*.

The cover sheet, together with the story, appears to be a prospectus to be sent to potential publishers. The cover sheet reads: THE NEWSBOY QUEEN. Nellie Ray's Strange Adventures — A Thrilling Story of Stout Hearts Beneath Rags and Tatters. By Larry Mack.

Under the author's name is printed "Copyrighted 1899." Written at the top of the page (not visible in the above scan) are the words "From Stratemeyer Syndicate Newark N.J." and below it, "Might be called Rags and Tatters Or "THE NEWSBOY QUEEN." Under "By

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Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

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Larry Mack" is written "Any trademark name."

What does this tell us about the cover sheet?

The 1899 copyright date means that the cover is at least four years later than the story. The cover also has written in "From Stratemeyer Syndicate," and as far as we know, the Stratemeyer Syndicate dates from 1905, or 1904 at the earliest.

The 1899 date is printed on the cover, so this date should be accurate, but "From Stratemeyer Syndicate" could have been written in at any time. My considered opinion is that about 1899 Stratemeyer packaged the story and attempted to sell it to various newspapers or magazines. It was apparently not sold, and after a period of several years the word "Syndicate" was written in. The important thing is that for the first time in a great many years we have access to an early and previously unknown serial actually written by Edward Stratemeyer and with a twelve-year-old girl as the heroine.

Like Alger, Stratemeyer seldom featured a girl as the major character in his juvenile stories. When he did, also like Alger, Stratemeyer also made his heroine twelve years old, considerably younger than male heroes.

One last point of interest is Stratemeyer's choice of Nellie Ray as his heroine's name. It is quite possible that Nellie Ray got her name via Nellie Bly, who was a famous pioneer woman investigative journalist. Nellie Bly was born Elizabeth Jane Cochrane, but her editor took her pen name from the Stephen Foster song, "Nelly [sic] Bly."

Such similarity to real names was common in juvenile writings of the period. As authors of some of the serials in *Young Sports/People of America* we can note "P.T. Barnum Jr.," "Ravell Pinkerton" and "Theodore Edison."

In an effort to gain employment at Joseph Pulitzer's *World* newspaper, Nellie Bly arranged to be admitted to the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island in 1887 and wrote an exposé for the newspaper and a book. Nellie Bly gained further world fame in 1889-1890, when she traveled around the world in less than 80 days, beating the record of Jules Verne's hero. She was a prominent writer on women's rights issues and social reform, and her name was widely known. Anyway, our heroine was named Nellie Ray.

And now to the story:

Chapter 1 opens with the heading, "Nellie Ray's Clever Work." We find that Nellie "was a girl scarcely twelve years old, with big blue eyes and fluffy golden hair. Her dress was in tatters, and her shoes were so full of holes that her feet were about half bare."

She was an energetic and successful newsgirl who had a steady base of regular customers. She was also apparently a mentor to the newsboys of the area. At

least, when a customer asked a newsboy who the girl was, the newsboy replied:

"Dat? Don't yer know her, boss? Dat's der Queen of der Newsboys."

"Queen of the Newsboys, eh? And what is her name?"

"Nellie Ray."

The man started back. "Nellie Ray!" he exclaimed. "Dat's her handle, boss. Purty, ain't it?"

"Nellie Ray," mused the man to himself, "I wonder if she can be — but no, it is impossible. Dora died too many years ago." And Mr. Raymond Ford, mine owner and speculator from Montana, proceeded down Broadway on his way to Wall street.

So, on the first page, we learn that Nellie Ray is Queen of the Newsboys, and we have an inkling of an important influence in her future life.

Nellie will not accept tips ("I'm in business, and I'm not looking for charity"), but she is not above selling papers to a "hayseed" under false pretenses, pretending "a great fire, double murder and suicide" happened in his home town. On the other hand, Nellie spots a pick-pocket and saves the countryman, identified as Josiah Hayley, from being robbed. Josiah is most grateful and gives Nellie a dollar. The two are destined to meet again.

It is a little hard to determine just why Nellie Ray is so popular or why she is continually referred to as the Queen of the Newsboys, both by the author and by the newsboys, but she is. She seems to be an amiable child, pretty, friendly and helpful to the newsboys. It is true that she is an aggressive, successful and not overly ethical salesgirl. She does sell the papers of a young crippled boy who cannot sell them himself but, unlike Tattered Tom, she never wins a fight on her own. It is her newsboy friend, Jim Stout, who licks the bully and saves Nellie from an assortment of perils. Nellie has a very busy life, but it seems to have little to do with being Queen of the Newsboys. Unlike Tattered Tom, Nellie apparently doesn't wish to be a boy.

Nellie Ray lives in the Cherry Hill section of New York City, not far from the East River. She lives with an old woman known as Mother Bott, who is a drunkard and confirmed reprobate. She claims to be a relative of Nellie Ray but, like Tattered Tom's "granny," is actually no relation. Nellie has a hard life. Mother Bott takes all her earnings and beats her with a strap. Like Tom, Nellie tries to escape her sordid dwelling but while Tom had to climb down a rope to safety, in Nellie's case Billy the Imp, a newsboy friend, shoots Mother Bott in the face with a big squirt gun full of dirty dish water, and Nellie makes her escape down the stairs.

Life goes on as Nellie sells her papers and Jim Stout

fighters Simon Crabby, the bully who tries to take Nellie's "regular spot over in City Hall Park."

"What's it all about?"

"Jim's fighting for Nellie Ray, de Queen!"

"Good for him! Hope he does Crabby up!"

"So do I!"

It was plain to see the newsboys favored Nellie Ray's champion. Jim beats Crabby thoroughly, and Crabby is captured by the police.

It is interesting to note throughout the book that Stratemeyer has a thorough knowledge of New York City and also of newsboy slang. For some reason, Nellie generally uses proper English, although she has lived with Mother Bott most of her young life.

When Nellie returns to Cherry Hill, she finds Mother Bott has gotten into a row with a stranger (who turns out to be an Anderson Leroy of whom more later) and has been sent to Blackwell's Island. It turns out the row had been about custody of Nellie, and the plot thickens. That night Nellie is attacked by "Leander Gamp, pickpocket and all-around rascal" and Anderson Leroy and is chloroformed.

Once again Billy the Imp saves her, this time by shooting the villain with his blow gun and giving the alarm. Jim Stout shows up as usual and,

"Oh, Jim, save me!" cried the girl.

And she almost threw herself in the big newsboy's arms.

He saves Nellie, but the villains escape down the fire escape. After a poor night's sleep at a neighbor's Nellie returns home and discovers a letter which shows that Mother Bott is being paid to keep Nellie Ray. While Nellie is puzzling this out, she is propositioned for a kiss by a fat Dutch boy:

"...he was about as ugly as a fat boy could well be. He was dead stuck on Nellie, and thought she wanted to be his sweetheart."

When we remember that Nellie is scarcely twelve, we can wonder about this whole episode. Hans tries to foist his attentions on Nellie, and once again Jim comes to the rescue and throws Hans down the stairs.

The next episode involves a little lost girl standing near some burning paper in the gutter:

The little one's dress of flimsy material was a mass of flames. Nellie Ray turned white, but her presence of mind did not desert her. A gaudy blanket was hanging on an awning bar close at hand. She pulled the blanket down and rushed toward the sufferer. In a twinkle she had the little girl wrapped in the blanket, and then she rolled the girl and covering in the street. By this means the flames were quickly extinguished.

The girl's father appears and is properly appreciative. Nellie won't take a reward but accepts "an entire outfit from hat to shoes."

She surveyed herself in the glass of a dark show-window. What a transformation!

"What will the boys say now?" she murmured to herself.

"She's a dandy," cried the boys. "She is our queen and no mistake."

Only Jim Stout is upset. "I was thinking' maybe you'd get too proud to recognize me soon," he stammered.

"Never, Jim, never. If I get to be worth a-a-a million, I'll always count you my-my best friend," said Nellie earnestly.

And after that Jim's heart felt as light as a feather.

The action continues when Simon Crabby lures Nellie to a press room, where he attempts to murder her by throwing her into the moving machinery. Jim Stout and a friend appear and are "spellbound in the doorway" and "speechless with horror" but still manage to save Nellie, even though she faints. The story doesn't say how her new finery makes out.

Later that day, a small newsboy, "...a manly little chap, although scarcely 8 years old," comes to Nellie for help with his sick sister. Nellie goes after a doctor and runs into a bunch of "mashers from the east side." One of the mashers makes a determined effort to kiss Nellie. The action is strenuous but Nellie is saved by the fortuitous arrival of the doctor in his buggy with his buggy whip, and the doctor handles the situation nicely. Nellie stays overnight with the sick girl, who is well on the road to recovery when Nellie leaves to sell her papers.

Once again she meets Josiah Hayley, the countryman, and once again she saves him from being swindled. In gratitude he takes Nellie to dinner at the Astor House. We can assume both Nellie and Josiah looked quite presentable to be allowed into the Astor. Nellie orders extravagantly, and they enjoy the food though the cost astonishes Josiah. Again, Nellie has to fend off the attentions of a dude and fop who happens to be wearing a pair of white pants. When he gets up, she slips a piece of huckleberry. pie onto his chair as he is about to sit down:

The cold and wet pie disturbed him.

"My gwacious!" was his comment.

Nellie continues the even tenor of her ways, selling newspapers and getting in and out of many assorted troubles. One of her developing problems is our hero Jim:

Jim's greatest ambition was to have a big newsstand of

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Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray

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his own — one that would bring him in \$15 to \$25 a week. He thought he might get married on that amount, and when he thought this he always thought of Nellie, too.

Her next immediate problem is another altercation with Leander Gamp and Anderson Leroy, who again attempt to chloroform her on her way to a party in Brooklyn. Once again, Jim and Billy the Imp come to the rescue and again the villains escape. Nellie and Jim apparently enjoy the party, and Nellie proves to be quite a dancer for a twelve-year-old:

She danced a waltz and a quadrille and then did a breakdown that made old Mother Murphy, a stout Irish lady, laugh with joy.

"Tis yourself kin step it, Nellie," she said. "Tis a foine foot yez have."

The party broke up at 3 o'clock in the morning.

On the walk back to the ferry, Jim and Nellie interrupt two footpads and rescue the intended victim, Raymond Ford. Mr. Ford recognizes them, notes their addresses and promises to see them again. Nellie has been thinking about her childhood and comments that she has seen Mr. Ford long ago.

Nellie's next adventure is with another dude and masher who attempts to talk Nellie into going with him to Coney Island. Nellie dampens his ardor by pushing him into a box of soft tar.

Either there is a plethora of mashers in New York City or Nellie is an unusually attractive child. The same day, Nellie has her pocket picked by Grumpy Call, a former crony of Simon Crabby and of similar ilk. The newsboys catch him and kick and maul him unmercifully. Jim Stout dumps him headfirst into a large can of ice cream. Nellie also gets her money back. Jim tells Nellie that he has talked with Mr. Raymond Ford and says "maybe he knows something about where yer come from an' who yer are," Mr. Ford plans to visit Blackwell's Island to have a talk with old Mother Bott, and wishes to talk with Nellie about her early memories.

Nellie and Mr. Ford meet, and as Nellie tells her memories of the home of her childhood,

Raymond Ford sprang up and began to pace up and down nervously.

"It must be! It must be!" he murmured to himself. "And she looks like my Dora, too!"

Raymond Ford dashes off to learn the truth from Mother

Bott while Nellie "... went upstairs, her mind in a whirl. How was it all going to end?"

The next chapter heading is "News and an Abduction." The news has been exciting, but the abduction is brutal. This time, Anderson Leroy and Leander Gamp successfully chloroform Nellie, gag and bind her, put her into a coach and drive her miles out into rural Long Island. They have prepared an old stone cottage for her captivity and hired an old hag named Mary Martins to prepare food and to control Nellie. Nellie was released, fed, and taken to a bedroom where she eventually "sank into a troubled sleep."

The next morning, the details of the murky machinations became clearer when Anderson Leroy comes in to Nellie:

"Now I will tell you why I brought you here," he said.

"I want you to marry me."

"I'll never do that!" burst from Nellie's lips.

After some discussion Nellie cries, "I am not of age." She could think of nothing else to say.

"That makes no difference. I have made Gamp your guardian, and he will give you away." [How this was possible is not explained].

"You want to get money that is coming to me," she said, struck by a sudden idea." Leroy was dumfounded. Nellie had struck the truth.

"Who told you that?" he thundered.

"Never mind; that is your plan — I see it all now."

"I will never marry you — never!" shrieked Nellie, and she ran past him toward the hall.

He tried to stop her, but before he could do so she was downstairs. Here he caught her by the throat.

"Not so fast, my little lady!" he hissed into her ear.

"You shall be mine. I have sworn it."

And now the action begins in earnest.

The next chapter is titled "Josiah Hayley to the Rescue." It seems Mary Martins has been stealing chickens; the chickens belong to Josiah Hayley, whom Nellie has succored twice before in the city, and he has come to confront the old hag. Nellie Ray screams for help, and Josiah attacks Leroy and Gamp, but Gamp hits Josiah over the head with a club:

The onslaught was so fierce that it was a wonder the old farmer was not killed. But now Nellie threw the old woman to one side. Then she rushed at Leroy. She caught him by the ear and dragged him over on his back.

Nellie and the old farmer were winning until Leroy drew a pistol.

The farmer is knocked out and Nellie is recaptured. The action continues through the last chapter, "Jim on Hand — Conclusion" and the story is finally resolved:

Gamp and Leroy carried her [Nellie] back to the old stone house. They took her upstairs, and despite her efforts to control herself the tears trickled down her pretty cheeks.

Just when things are at their darkest, the sound of carriage wheels is heard, together with a peculiar whistle. "It was the newsboys call, and the whistler was Jim."

Nellie screams for help, and help arrives in the form of Jim Stout, Raymond Ford and the driver of the carriage "All three were armed with pistols." Raymond Ford shoots Anderson Leroy in the leg, Jim knocks down Gamp and Josiah Hawley recovers and captures the old hag, Martin. Jim dashes up to the room in which where Nellie has been locked.

He threw his whole shoulder against the barrier and down it went with a crash — and then Nellie actually jumped into Jim's arms, she was so glad to see him.

"Oh Jim, I am so glad you came!" cried Nellie.

"So am I," blushed Jim, with a broad smile on his honest face."

"How did you know I was here?"

"Didn't know it exactly. We tracked the coach to the turnpike and then we drove along and I whistled. I thought if you was anywhere around you would know that call." "It was a splendid idea."

Jim and Nellie go down to the yard where the prisoners have been disarmed and bound. Jim tells Nellie that Raymond Ford is her uncle.

"He's yer mother's brother. He says there's a lot o' money coming to yer, too."

Raymond Ford ran up to her and caught her in his arms. "You can't understand it, can you? Never mind, Nellie; it is true, and I will explain all when these evil persons are safe in jail."

Jim took Nellie to New York, where Raymond Ford soon joined them. The rich mine owner's story was a long one. It appeared that Nellie's mother had died when the girl was very young, and her father had died shortly afterwards. The father had been in Europe at the time, and a certain man by the name of Fenwick Rolf had had Nellie's mother's estate in charge. He had turned Nellie over to old Mother Bott and was trying to keep the money Nellie's mother had left. Raymond Ford had been among the mines of Montana at this time and knew nothing of his sister's marriage or the fact that she had a daughter. It was a long time before he got to the bottom

of the facts. Then he started out to find Nellie.

In the meantime Leroy, who had once been Rolf's tool, fell out with the swindler. Leroy then undertook to get Nellie in his power. This done, he intended to marry the girl and then claim the estate due her. How the villain's plans miscarried was already known. Nellie learned with surprise that the money coming to her would foot up to more than one hundred thousand dollars.

Things are looking up for Nellie Ray, but Jim is concerned about his own future. Nellie tells Jim,

"I mean that you're going to college and get an education, just like I'm going to have, and then I'm going to set you up in business."

"Gee!"

"Don't say 'gee,' Jim; remember, you must drop all the street slang now."

Jim seems perfectly happy with her nagging. It is also interesting that Jim seems perfectly happy to have Nellie finance his new life and education:

What wouldn't Jim try for her sake? He did try. He left the street and studied hard and two years later was admitted to Columbia College.

All this happened several years ago.

Leroy, Gamp, Mary Martins and Fenwick Rolf and now in [prison for various terms of years].

Old Mother Bott died from burns she received by her dress catching fire from her pipe when she was drunk.

Simon Crabby is also dead, having been shot through the head by one of the Cherry Hill gang during a barroom brawl.

Jim Stout has passed through college and is now in the real-estate business in New York. One of his most trusted clerks is the boy who in his street days was called Billy the Imp, no longer an imp, but a well-educated and smart young man."

Raymond Ford has returned west, to look up several mines in which both he and Nellie have an interest.

And Nellie herself? Take a stroll up Fifth Avenue some day with me and I will show you a fine brown stone mansion, in which lives the happiest young woman in the city, Mrs. James Stout, once known as the Queen of the Newsboys.

The End.

The End comes a little too soon to answer all our questions. Did Nellie ever get an education? Did she spend the ensuing years just nagging Jim, reforming Jim and finally marrying him? Did Nellie finance Billy the Imp's transformation? Who was Nellie's guardian? Who

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mentored Nellie in her formative years from 12 to 18 or so? Where did she live and who handled her finances? Who protected her from the nefarious machinations of the ubiquitous New York City villains?

This is a major problem with the plots of both *Tattered Tom* and *Nellie Ray*. What do you do with a twelve-year-old heroine, after the heroics?

Alger solved it by uniting the girl with her mother and living a more or less normal life growing up in Philadelphia. Stratemeyer apparently can't find a mother or other relative except a generally absent uncle so introduces a love interest to the young heroine and actually marries her off at the end of the book. She is apparently a child bride. It does seem that Stratemeyer could have come up with a better denouement.

"Nellie Ray, Queen of the Newsboys," to use the full title from *Young Sports of America*, is a most interesting example of Edward Stratemeyer's early writing. It is his version of the adventures of a twelve-year-old newsgirl in 1895 New York City. How do the stories of Alger's Jane Lindsay (*Tattered Tom*) and Nellie Ray (*Queen of the Newsboys*) compare?

We know from many sources that Stratemeyer was familiar with Alger's writings. We cannot be positive as to how much he knew about *Tattered Tom* but it is interesting to compare the books. Both Horatio Alger and Edward Stratemeyer were thoroughly familiar with New York City and New York City street gamins and were able to portray both in an accurate and vivid manner. Although there was a difference of 24 years between the two stories the city and its newsboy culture hadn't changed appreciably.

Both books feature twelve year old girls. Alger may have been influenced by Isabella Seligman. Stratemeyer may have wished to attract more girl readers for *Young Sports of America* or may have liked Alger's plot.

It may be significant that both girls are the same young age, just twelve years old. There are a number of other similarities in the stories. Both girls are in the custody of old women who claim to be relatives but who abuse and mistreat their charges, force them to sell papers or do menial work, and take all their earnings. Both old women drink excessively, both smoke pipes, and both burn themselves to death.

Jane's "Granny" "...lay down with her lighted pipe in her mouth. Falling asleep, the pipe fell upon the bed, setting on fire the bedclothes, and next the clothing...."

Nellie's "Old Mother Bott died from burns she received by her dress catching fire from her pipe when she was drunk." Both girls have been defrauded of their rightful

inheritance by the machinations of relatives or trusted legal advisors. Although both girls had left their homes at about age six, Nellie Ray remembers the details of her home while Jane remembers very little.

Jane speaks newsboy slang while Nellie generally speaks good English. At the beginning of both books the girls are dirty and unkempt and dressed in rags and tatters, but as time goes on they acquire better clothing and "clean up well" as the expression used to be.

Both girls show independence and spunk as, indeed, they have to, to survive. In character, they seem quite different. Jane wishes she were a boy and even at the end of the book she has never lost "that fresh and buoyant spirit, and sturdy independence, which had enabled her to fight her way when she was compelled to do so." She fights other newsboys, sticks up for herself and generally wins her battles. She is a very competent free spirit.

Nellie has a good attitude but is much less physical. The newsboys, especially Jim Stout, fight her battles for her. Judging from the number of mashers in the book Nellie makes a mature and attractive appearance. It may be significant that in both books our heroines are the only girls mentioned as selling newspapers.

Edward Stratemeyer's "Nellie Ray" is more of a novelette than a full-size book. When Stratemeyer wished to publish such a serial in book form he would usually do one of three things. He would expand the story with other material, (as in *Rival Bicyclists*), he would combine two serials into one book (as in *Bound to be an Electrician*), or he would include two serials in the same book (as in *Boys of Spring Hill*).

"Nellie Ray" was apparently never published as a book, so we cannot know how Stratemeyer would have handled it. Judging from other Stratemeyer serials such as those in *Argosy*, Stratemeyer, with a little work and editing could have revised the ending to be more realistic and expanded "Nellie" into a very satisfactory full-length book.

We can make other observations. It appears that Stratemeyer dashed off "Nellie." There is considerable evidence of hurried writing and lack of editing. This is also found in other Stratemeyer serials of the period. This is often noted near the end of the stories where action tends to be rushed or questionable.

The love interest between a twelve-year-old street gamin and a newsboy, which culminates at the end of the book with marriage, seems unrealistic and unsatisfactory. The incident in which the Dutch boy tries to kiss Nellie Ray seems completely unnecessary and out of place.

We know that Stratemeyer was doing an incredible amount of writing at this period and the obvious haste in some of his writing is understandable. On the other

hand the story is vivid and exciting, more or less believable and certainly interesting. It has a good flow and lots of action and would undoubtedly appeal, I believe, to young people.

"Tom" is typical Alger except for the gender of the heroine. It reads well and was popular for many years. Both books contain a remarkable number of coincidences. I suspect that without these coincidences both girls would still be selling papers in New York City. We expect and need coincidences in such stories, within reason, but both stories overdo them.

So there we have it, two stories, each featuring a twelve-year-old newsgirl as a heroine, and written by two of the most prominent authors of boys books of the period. The stories, though published 24 years apart, both are about news vendor life in New York City.

Alger's story has been read for 135 years. Stratemeier's appeared 111 years ago but has been lost for most of that time. We have seen the differences in the way the two authors treated life among the poor in the big city, and reading the two stories gives interesting glimpses into the attitudes of the two authors.

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Nellie Ray's New York

By James D. Keeline (PF-898)

When I read Jack Dizer's article "Tattered Tom and Nellie Ray," one statement really struck me: "Edward Stratemeyer had a detailed knowledge of Manhattan."

I wanted to find out for myself, so I started taking notes from *The Newsboy Queen: Nellie Ray's Strange Adventures* on all of the locations which were mentioned in this rare story. Then, I sought out maps on the computer, both modern and vintage, to see how well the locations fit together.

A vintage map of the portion of lower Manhattan encompassing City Hall Park and Newspaper Row is reproduced at the right. [Editor's note: These locales also were used by Alger. The decorative title page for the first edition of *Ragged Dick* shows the title character standing with his shoe-blacking box in City Hall Park].

Following are selected geographic references from the text of *Nellie Ray, Queen of the Newsboys*, in the order they appeared in the story. I then offer comments about the streets and other locations, many of which can be checked out on the map.

CHAPTER I

He stopped short, for the girl was gone, having rushed across Broadway to sell more papers.

And Mr. Raymond Ford, mine owner and speculator from Montana, proceeded down Broadway on his way to Wall street.

She started to go back to Park Row, there to wait for the first edition of the afternoon papers.

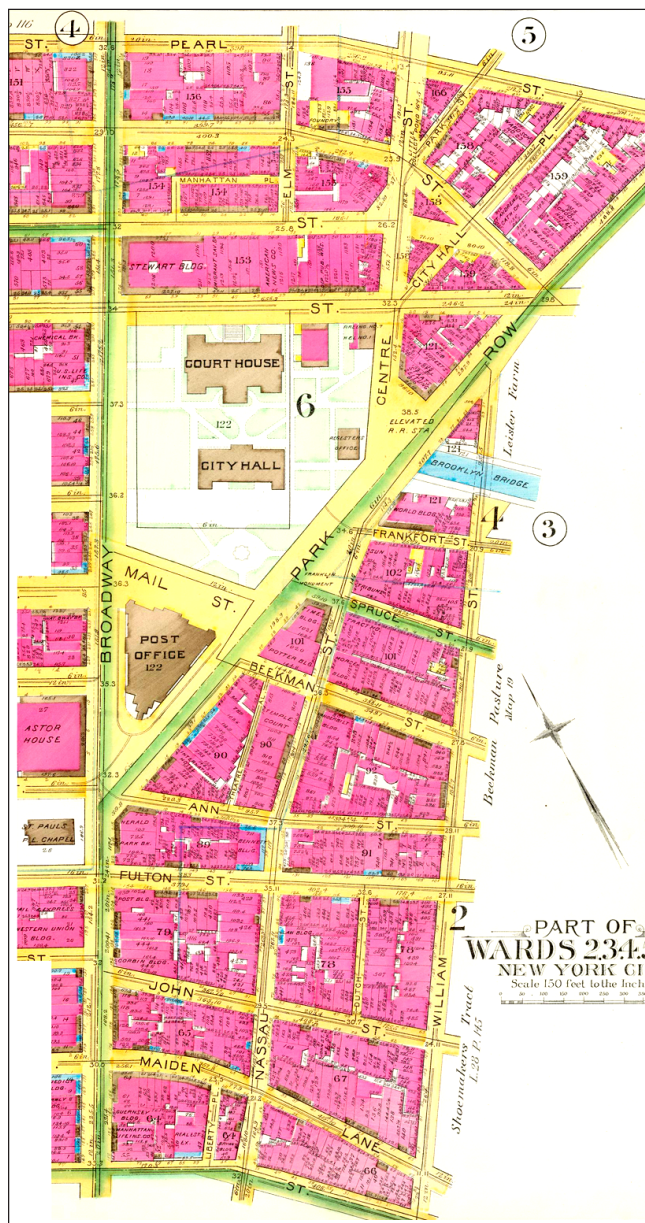
The would-be pickpocket, whose name was Leander Gamp, followed the countryman down Broadway to the corner of Fulton street.

He had it in his possession, and was about to dart down Fulton street, when Nellie Ray caught his arm.

CHAPTER II

To those who do not know Cherry Hill, let me say it is a very poor section of New York, located not far from the East River.

After selling Charley's papers for him, Nellie went over to Park Row. In front of The World building, she met a dozen of the newsboys.



New York's City Hall Park and vicinity, the locale for many of Horatio Alger's stories, as well as Edward Stratemeyer's *Nellie Ray, Queen of the Newsboys*.

CHAPTER III

The two walked over to a cheap restaurant on the Bowery.

Then Nellie walked down to Newspaper Row again.

Nellie had a regular spot over in City Hall Park where she sold evening papers.

As she crossed the street in front of the World building she slipped and went down.

CHAPTER IV

He caught up with Nellie around the waist with one hand, and with the other hand grabbed the front end of the cable car.

Then she went back to Cherry Hill.

It was not the first time Mother Bott had been sent up to Blackwell's Island.

CHAPTER VI

Reaching the street he hurried for the corner and did not stop running until the neighborhood of Cherry Hill was left far behind.

Nellie hated life in Cherry Hill.

CHAPTER VIII

She walked down into Newspaper Row.

The next day, early in the morning, while Nellie was selling papers in the park near Broadway, a dirty little chap came up to her and gave her a note.

The Boxley Press establishment was located down in William street, a few blocks south of the bridge.

CHAPTER IX

Meg was a cash girl in Ridley's great department store.

CHAPTER X

Then the two got into the buggy and drove to the tenement in which the Fairs resided.

A hasty breakfast was had, and then Nellie went off to Park row. Half an hour later she was in the City Hall park crying her papers.

CHAPTER XI

"Let's dine at the Astor House," suggested Nellie, promptly. It had always been the desire of her life to see how the big hotel looked inside.

Josiah was willing, and to the Astor House, just across Broadway, they went.

CHAPTER XII

Nellie tried to catch sight of the men, but suddenly they vanished down Nassau street.

She walked from her home straight down to the ferry.

CHAPTER XIII

Nellie Ray had escaped by a brave leap on the departing ferry boat. Soon the ferry slip faded from view.

When Brooklyn was reached she ran ashore and onto the other boat, which was just about to start for New York.

The trip, which lasted but a few minutes, seemed an age to her.

At last the ship bumped into the slip and was chained up.

Nellie ran ashore and to the adjoining bridge.

CHAPTER XIV

"I sell papers for a living."

"Over in New York, near the city hall?"

CHAPTER XV

By 7 o'clock the next morning Nellie was at her old stand in the city hall park.

"Quick, over to the Fall River pier!" cried Leroy.

She had lost her taste for cream and had wandered along until she got up into the east side dry goods district.

Here the display of dresses made her forget her troubles for a time.

She wondered if she would ever be able to buy such fine dresses as were displayed in the various shop windows.

"When did you get out of your cage at Central park," returned Nellie, sharply.

"I say, how would you like to go to Coney Island with me, my dear?"

CHAPTER XVI

She now thought it about time to return to Park row.

The afternoon papers were just beginning to make their appearance and around the corner of the row and Frankfort street was a perfect mob of kids, all anxious to get their papers.

Nellie went into the crowd at the World building.

(Continued on Page 18)

Nellie Ray's New York

(Continued from Page 17)

The pair ran down Frankfort street, and did not stop until they came to the arch under the Brooklyn bridge.

CHAPTER XVII

As we know, Nellie had been in the Astor House before, and now she led the way to that world-famous hotel.

It took Raymond Ford and Nellie but a few minutes to reach the humble home on Cherry Hill.

CHAPTER VIII

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To a place in the country."

Soon the coach was rattling over the Long Island City pavements. It left the city and took one of the numerous country roads beyond.

CHAPTER XX

He left the street and studied hard, and two years later was admitted to Columbia College.



New York's famous Newspaper Row skyscrapers, located on Park Row across from City Hall Park, ca. late-1890s. From left, the homes of the New York World (Pulitzer Building), built in 1889-90; New York Tribune, 1873-75; and New York Times, 1889. Shortly after the turn of the century, newspapers started to move uptown. Today, Brooklyn Bridge access ramps occupy the World site, and the Times building was razed in 1966 for the Pace University tower.

Here are some points I consider interesting from these excerpts and by studying the map:

- Nellie has her regular spot in City Hall Park.
- The Park Row side of the park was known as Newspaper Row, because it was the location of the New York World, Tribune and Times (see photo, below left).
 - The countryman whom Nellie saves was heading south on Broadway to Fulton Street
 - Of course the Astor House was located by the post office at the south end of the park.
 - Frankfort Street is one block south of the Brooklyn Bridge. There are several blocks to the east of this map.
 - William Street, where the Boxley Press was located, is also shown on the map.
 - Bowery Street is north of this map.
 - There doesn't seem to be a Cherry Hill but there is a Murray Hill neighborhood north of this area between about 30th and 40th Streets on the east side near the East River. It could be the area he had in mind but didn't care to name.

I agree with Jack that Stratemeyer knew this area well, so the question is how. He had numerous occasions to visit the area.

- Stratemeyer was an associate editor for *The Young American* in October 1889, which was located at 29 Park Row (between Beekman and Ann Streets).

- He visited Street & Smith at 25-31 Rose St. (a short street parallel and east of William Street between the Brooklyn Bridge and Chambers Street) in 1893.

By 1898, the the Street & Smith offices were located at 81 Fulton St., (about one block west of Broadway). Later still, the address was 232-238 William St.

- "The Boxley Press establishment was located down in William street, a few blocks south of the bridge." This is about the actual location of the *Young People of America* offices at 177 William St. An interesting coincidence? I think not.

James D. Keeline's paper, "Edward Stratemeyer's New York (and New Jersey)" was presented April 12, 2006, at the 36th annual conference of the Popular Culture Association, in Atlanta, Georgia.

BOOK REVIEW

American Children's Literature, 1890-1940: Heroic Tales that Shaped Adult Lives. John T. Dizer, Jr., Ph. D. Lewiston, New York, 2006: The Edwin Mellen Press. Hardcover, 332 pages. ISBN: 0-7734-6003-9. Price, \$119.95. Limited-time 20% discount for individuals. For information, call (716) 754-2788. To order, write Edwin Mellen Press, Order Fulfillment Dept., P.O. Box 450, Lewiston, NY 14092-0450. Phone orders at the above number; Fax: (716) 754-1880. Customer service e-mail: sales@mellenpress.com.

Reviewed by William R. Gowen (PF-706)

In his introduction, John Dizer describes this book as "both the culmination of my recent work in the field and a summing up of my years of research into popular children's books."

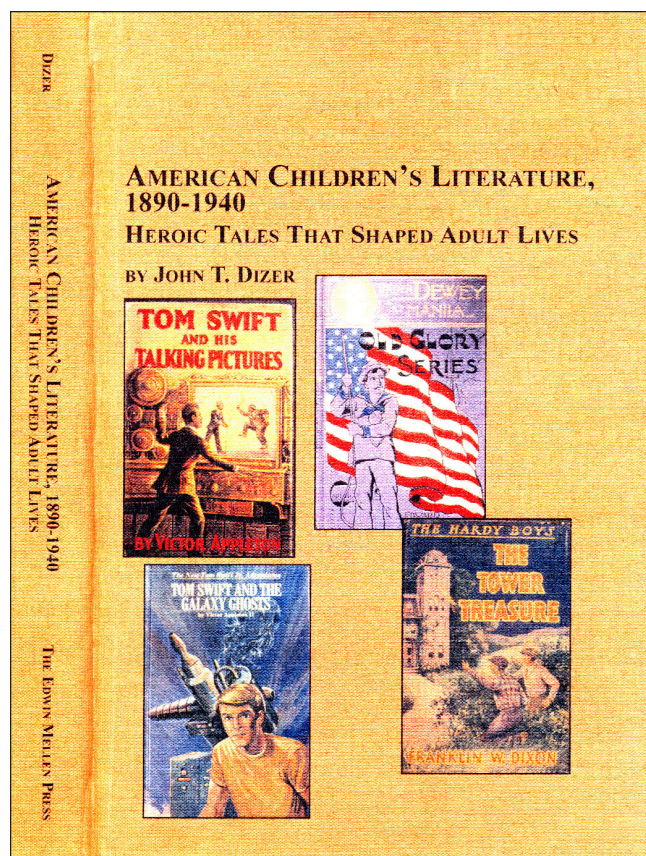
It is that, and more, of course. This is the third book by the author on this subject. The first, *Tom Swift & Company: Boys' Books by Stratemeyer and Others*, was published by McFarland & Co. in 1982 and remains a classic in the field. *Tom Swift, the Bobbsey Twins, and Other Heroes of American Juvenile Literature* (Mellen Press, 1997), reported another 20-plus years of research.

His first two books covered much of the emerging research concerning Edward Stratemeyer and his Syndicate, along with discussions of publication formats of various Syndicate series. Dizer also visited the work of such other renowned authors as Francis Rolt-Wheeler, William O. Stoddard, Clair W. Hayes, Howard R. Garis, Harry Collingwood and Percy K. Fitzhugh.

American Children's Literature, 1890-1940: Heroic Tales that Shaped Adult Lives continues in the same vein. An important chapter on Stratemeyer's early writing and editing activities is titled "Young People of America, Bright Days and Edward Stratemeyer." He also offers a humorous study of Edward Stratemeyer's juvenile villains, along with a companion chapter titled "Howard R. Garis and His Juvenile Villains."

A particularly interesting chapter is devoted to the fiction of Annie Fellows Johnston, best known for her Little Colonel books and one of the most influential authors during Dizer's years while growing up in Vermont. Other chapters discuss farming and motoring as themes for juvenile literature; and there is an important look at the early years of *Boys' Life*.

Other key chapters include two that originally appeared as articles in *Newsboy*: "Merriam, Allison and a Little Alger," and "Malcolm the Waterboy and D.T. Henty." Both are important additions to research in our field. One might easily conclude that *Malcolm the Waterboy*, a story controlled (although not written) by



Stratemeyer, would likely have remained a little-known footnote in the Stratemeyer archives if not for Dizer's dogged interest and research.

The new book's contents are framed by an opening personal reminiscence, "Kids Books I Read as a Kid," and ends with two "encore" chapters from Dizer's first book, "Boys' Books and the American Dream," and "Land of the Heroes," important because they are now available for a new generation of readers.

J. Randolph Cox, editor of *Dime Novel Round-Up*, offers an insightful Foreword, and there follows a "Critical Introduction" by Prof. Karl J. Terryberry, who includes a listing of *Newsboy*, *Dime Novel Round-Up*, *Yellowback Library* and other important publications in the field of popular juvenile literature.

However, it is his list of university library collections of juvenile literature where Professor Terryberry stumbles badly. While mentioning the University of Minnesota, Michigan State University, Ohio University, the University of South Florida and others, he omits Northern Illinois University, host of the Horatio Alger Society repository and NIU's annual Alger research fellowship, its renowned Albert Johannsen dime novel archives, and other important holdings of dime novels and juvenile literature. This is a critical oversight.

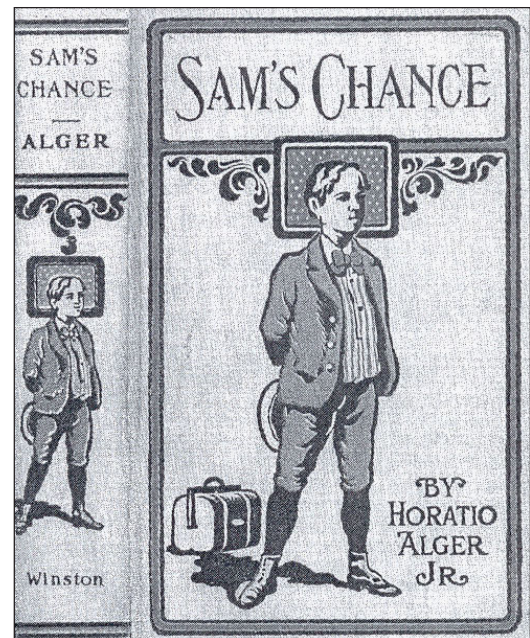
WANTED

Horatio Alger — John C. Winston Company

Standing Boy Series — Front cover shows a boy dressed in a suit with knickers and wearing a bow tie. A suitcase is located behind him.

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