



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 – 1899

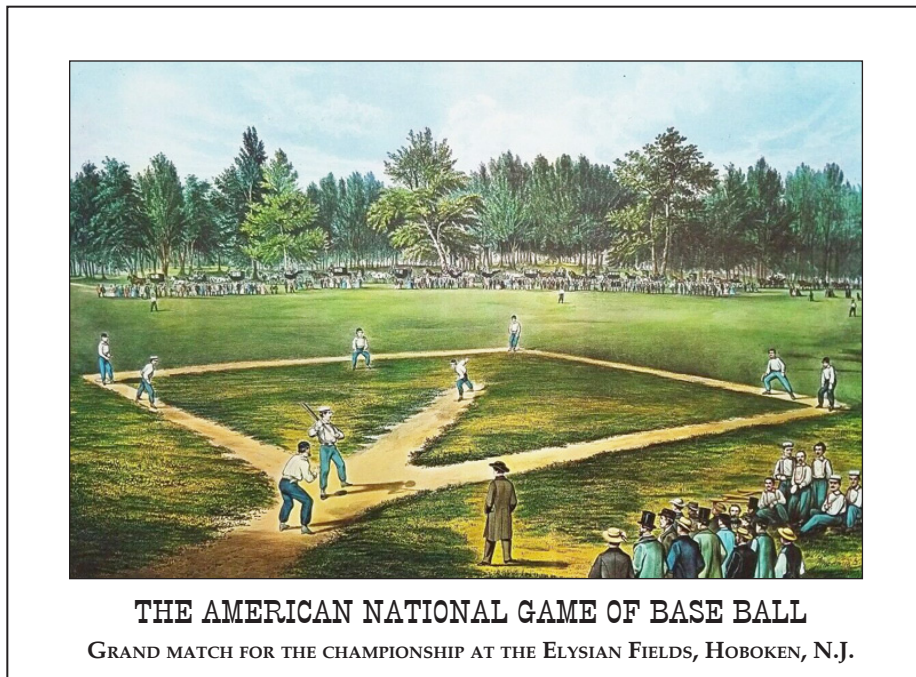
A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

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NUMBER 4

Alger and base ball *or, The Mystery of the Red Dead-Ball*



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The Helping Hand — An early short story by Horatio Alger, Jr.

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President's column

Welcome from Fort Lauderdale:

As the long, hot summer draws to a close, I've been reflecting on Horatio Alger's legacy.

As arguably the most popular children's author of the 19th century, he certainly fired the imaginations of countless boys and girls in his lifetime and instilled in them values of honesty, persistence and hard work. His popularity continued unabated into the 20th century through libraries and reprint publishers. Inevitably, his influence waned as boys turned to adventure books concerned with modern inventions, such as the aeroplane, and new pursuits, such as organized scouting. As a boy of the 1930's, my father read Alger, as did many others in a day when only the radio and picture show competed for an evening's entertainment.

With the milieu of the Gilded Age fading from memory and pointed criticism coming from librarians and other gatekeepers of children's literature, Alger's readership waned after World War I, went into sharpest decline after World War II and is scarcely read by the youth of today. What, then, is to distinguish him from so many other authors whom time and tide have left behind?

We of the proud but humble Horatio Alger Society know that his stories are as good a read as they have always been and with his numerous short stories and poetry, he was so much more than the man lambasted as having written the same book a hundred times.

Alger achieved fame for writing what are now considered archetypal "rags-to-riches" stories. Whilst his heroes more commonly rose from poverty to middle class respectability, the attribution stuck. These stories tied in nicely with America's global reputation as a country where "opportunity knocks" and anyone could achieve the "American Dream" of success and upward mobility in a near utopian meritocracy.

That the truth did not mirror the myth mattered not. It was inspirational, and so said many a captain of industry who credited Alger with forming his moral character and temperament in childhood. That many of these men came from humble beginnings only fueled the myth ... but that was long ago.

Why, then, is Alger still inextricably tied to the American Myth over a hundred years after his death and generations since he was commonly read? The successful

(Continued on Page 4)

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive & Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes. Our members conduct research and provide scholarship on the life of Horatio Alger, Jr., his works and influence on the culture of America. The Horatio Alger Society embraces collectors and enthusiasts of all juvenile literature, including boys' and girls' series books, pulps and dime novels.

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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," to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047.

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 those free "Alger for sale" ads to the editor at the above address, where you can also send "Letters to the Editor" by regular mail or by e-mail to hasnewsboy@aol.com.

Alger and base ball

or, *The Mystery of the Red Dead-Ball*

By Keith H. Thompson (PF-035)

*"Where'd you get it?" asked Tom Temple, tossing a ball up and down that he has intercepted by vaulting over a wall and interrupting a game of catch. "Red dead-ball, isn't it? Good ball, this." James Davenport and his cousin are furious. James exclaims, "let go that ball you vagabond" and attempts to retrieve the ball by force. Tom eludes his pursuers for a time, but when finally cornered he "gathers his strength and sends the ball whirling into a neighboring corn-field." Fisticuffs ensue. Tom defends his arrogant behavior by saying, "I didn't steal it. I took it because you were too boorish to let me play with you. If you can't find it, I'll pay you for it."*¹

* * *

Horatio Alger references the game of baseball in so many of his stories, whether on a school diamond or just playing toss in the back yard with such remarkable insight that I feel he had to have been an enthusiastic fan and "crank" most of his life. I can find no reference that Alger himself participated in school team sports, but several of his fictional heroes do have roles, usually as an elected captain and star performer, and are invariably

portrayed with manly levels of sportsmanship and skills that perhaps Alger envied and admired. Jack Drummond (*Wait and Win*) may well reflect Alger's personal feelings. Jack is traveling on foot to his uncle's home, and ...

On his way Jack passed a common where a dozen boys were playing base-ball. It was a game of which he was very fond, and he could not resist the temptation of sitting on the fence and watching the game. His face flushed when he saw a good hit made, or a home run and he wished he were acquainted with the players so that he might participate in the sport. (p. 24)

Alger's novels with boy heroes begin with *Frank's Campaign*, published in 1864.² It can be speculated that Alger's friend and correspondent Joseph Dean may have conveyed accounts of soldiers playing baseball in war time camps, but the principal exposure to the game in Alger's youth would have been the Massachusetts version of "town ball."

That Alger was familiar with such play is evidenced

(Continued on Page 9)

An early update on the 2022 convention

By Jack Bales, (PF-258)

As I look back on the 2021 Horatio Alger Society convention, I have to admit that the stars certainly were in alignment for us. Although the pandemic wreaked havoc on the hospitality industry, we suffered relatively few inconveniences. With 55.84 per cent of its population now — as of August 18 — fully vaccinated against COVID-19, Virginia is ranked 14th among U.S. states. Downtown stores that were closed a month ago are now open and fully operating. There is much to explore and see in this part of Virginia, and I hope that convention attendees next year can take advantage of all that the Old Dominion has to offer.

I recall Bob Petitto telling me at the convention that he made a special trip to Riverby Books in downtown Fredericksburg, only to be told there was limited access and no browsing. Well, the store's Facebook page says it is wide open now, and I am hoping that he and others can stroll the downtown-area streets, pore over museum

exhibits (such as the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center, where we met up — but outside only — for our Saturday afternoon tour), and wander through historic homes. I wrote about many of the things to see and do in my **Newsboy** convention articles, and I will revisit some of these — and add new ones — in future issues.

I read that pandemic-weary persons were eager to hit the road — and fill up hotels and motels — so early on I started looking for a suitable venue for the 2022 convention. I was extremely pleased with the Hampton Inn, where we met last June, but I still wanted to consider my options. I emailed and visited quite a few motels and hotels in the area, but discarded all of them (mostly for cost reasons, but location also was a factor).

I am pleased to say that we will be returning to the Hampton Inn for "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg," to be held from Thursday, June 23, to Sunday, June 26. Registration information and additional details will appear in upcoming issues of **Newsboy**.

Editor's notebook

It seems an issue of **Newsboy** doesn't appear these days in which we report that "one of our own" has passed on.

Jim Thorp (PF-574) lost his battle with Alzheimer's Disease earlier this month while living at the family home of his wife, Carole, in Michigan. About a year ago, he moved from his longtime home in Nashua, New Hampshire, as his health worsened.

Jim was one of the first members of the Horatio Alger Society I got to know in person, since he and his family hosted my second convention, "Nostalgia in Nashua," in May 1984. Brad Chase was the first "Partic'lar Friend" to formally introduce himself to this Alger "greenie" in 1983 in Columbus, Ohio. Soon, Brad introduced me to the following year's host, and because in 1984 I was visiting my mother (who lived in Newington, just outside Hartford), Brad and I drove together from his Enfield home to Nashua.

"Nostalgia in Nashua" was quite a convention, with 44 members in attendance. Being in used-book nirvana New England had much to do with it. Also, the auction of the first-edition collection of the late Dick Seddon (PF-324) was another huge enticement to attend. The auction grossed more than \$12,000, with the Society receiving 15 per cent. Subsequent consignment auctions in **Newsboy** containing Seddon's hardcover reprints, paper-covered Algers, serializations and other paper items realized additional revenue for the Society.

That convention also gave us an opportunity to meet Dr. Max Goldberg (our third president), driven from Natick, Mass., to Nashua by Jerry Friedland.

Jim and his family couldn't have been more gracious hosts, and I visited them several times in the years to follow, including book-hunting with his son, Dan, a family bowling outing and great food and camaraderie. I should mention that about two decades ago, Jim lost his first wife, Mary Jane, to a heart attack in her sleep.

At the 1999 convention in DeKalb, Illinois, after Friday's dinner at Kishwaukee Country Club, as we entered the parking lot Jim started his vintage Cadillac DeVille by remote control — I had never seen that before! Of course, it's a common option on many cars today.

Geographic distance kept me from getting to Nashua more often, but Brad Chase, Jim's New England neighbor, had many great experiences book-hunting with his friend, which he recounts in his tribute letter on Page 7.

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

business leaders of our time no longer quote Alger. Most Americans cannot name any Alger story, including his most famous one. Only a few of his books remain in print, and those largely for academic consumption. It seems inexplicable that the myth of the American Dream is still personified by this Gilded Age author, often derided as a hack. Mark Twain should be so lucky. Our society bears the candle, but who bears the torch for Alger today?

Unquestionably, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is largely to be credited with promulgating Alger's legacy in our 21st century world of digital technology and space travel. To them we owe a debt of gratitude for keeping Alger relevant in modern times.

Since its inception, the Horatio Alger Association has sought to inspire Americans to achieve their full potential through the principles espoused by Alger of forthright morality, industry, and perseverance in the face of adversity. To this end, they created the Horatio Alger Award to honor outstanding Americans who overcame obstacles and achieved success in America. Those so honored include businessmen, entertainers and Presidents Hoover, Eisenhower, Ford and Reagan, to name but a few.

The Horatio Alger Association (H.A.A.), later developed needs-based scholarship programs and awards at both the state and national level, becoming one of the largest such privately-funded providers in the United States. There is even a post-graduate award open to alumni. More recently, the association established the Horatio Alger Association of Canada, to further its core principles and goals for the benefit of Canadians.

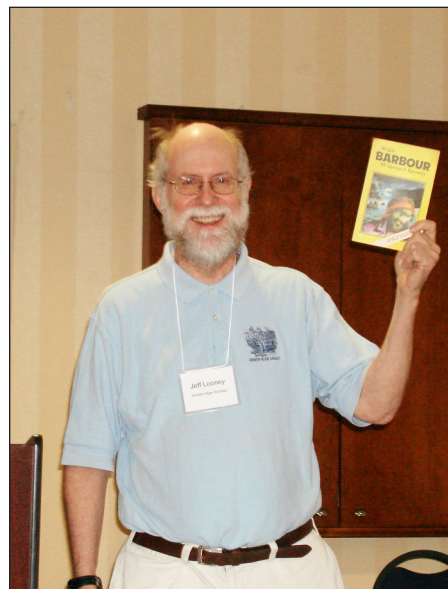
Our two organizations are technically unrelated, but not without close associations. The H.A.A. was instrumental in securing the issuance in 1982 of a Horatio Alger, Jr. stamp in our name from the U.S. Postal Service. Some of our prominent members, past and present, have enjoyed close relationships with those who maintain leadership roles in the Association. Just this year, a few of our distinguished members assisted the Association in revising its biography of Horatio Alger, Jr.

In recognition of those services, the Horatio Alger Association made a magnanimous contribution to our society for which we are eternally grateful, as noted in Rob Kasper's Letter to the Editor on Page 6.

We applaud the tremendous success of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans and the invaluable service they provide the aspiring youth of today. We are truly appreciative of all they do to keep our mutual namesake in the national vernacular and we



Auctioneer Bob Huber, assisted by Bob Eastlack, during the annual consignment and donation auction in Fredericksburg. Photo by James King



Jeff Looney makes his presentation on "My Book Collection: Origins and Outcomes." Photo by Bill Gowen



Retired National Park Service historian Don Pfanz directs the special H.A.S. tour of the Fredericksburg battlefield. Photo by Jack Bales

Memories of the 2021 convention

welcome any future opportunity to be of assistance to them in the furtherance of their goals.

You are encouraged to visit the official H.A.A. website at www.horatioalger.org. They are one of the finest philanthropic organizations serving in the United States and a significant part of the reason that Alger remains a fixture in the American consciousness of today.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
 James King (PF-1126)
 711 East Plantation Circle
 Plantation, Fla. 33324
 (954) 473-6927
 E-mail: jamesreed9@gmx.com



Liane Houghtalin (PF-699) presents new member Melissa Givey (PF-1151, at right) with a gift basket, which Houghtalin created for a drawing held during the annual H.A.S. banquet. Photo by Bill Gowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill:

As the Horatio Alger Society winds up its 60th anniversary this year, our sister organization, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., located in Alexandria, Virginia, is eagerly preparing for its 75th anniversary in 2022.

The Association was founded in 1947 by Dr. Kenneth J. Beebe. Growing up reading Alger's stories, he felt a strong need to inspire young people and honor fellow Americans who had achieved success, especially after surviving the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II during the 1940s. He wanted to remind Americans that opportunities still existed in our country's free enterprise system and democratic government.

In 1947, Beebe was working for his brother, Vernon, who had founded the American Schools and Colleges Association, in its New York City branch. That year, Beebe presented the first Horatio Alger

Awards to four successful businessmen. In 1951, Beebe incorporated in New York as the "Horatio Alger Awards Committee" of the American Schools and Colleges Association.

Later, as the committee grew, it was decided, in 1976, to separate the two organizations and rename the committee as "Horatio Alger Awards Committee, Inc." In 1981, the board officially renamed the committee the "Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc." In 1988, the association moved its headquarters from Rockefeller Center in New York City to the suburbs of Washington, D.C.

As previously noted in *Newsboy*, the name of the Association incorrectly included the term "Famous" Americans, instead of "Distinguished" Americans. Although many of the members of the Association are, indeed, famous, that is not a prerequisite for receiving

one of its annual awards.

Despite our two organizations' divergent mission statements, there has been a long and fruitful cooperation between them, especially during 1982 when the 20-cent Horatio Alger commemorative stamp was issued. For many years, the Association and Society had lobbied the United States Postal Service for a stamp honoring Horatio Alger and, in 1982, the sesquicentennial of Alger's birth, it was finally issued.

At that time, Helen M. Gray, the executive director of the Association and Horatio Alger Society members Brad Chase (PF-412) and Bob Williman (PF-569) were instrumental in working closely with the Stamp

Advisory Committee to get the Alger stamp issued. Without the collective efforts of these three individuals, the Alger stamp would likely have never been issued.

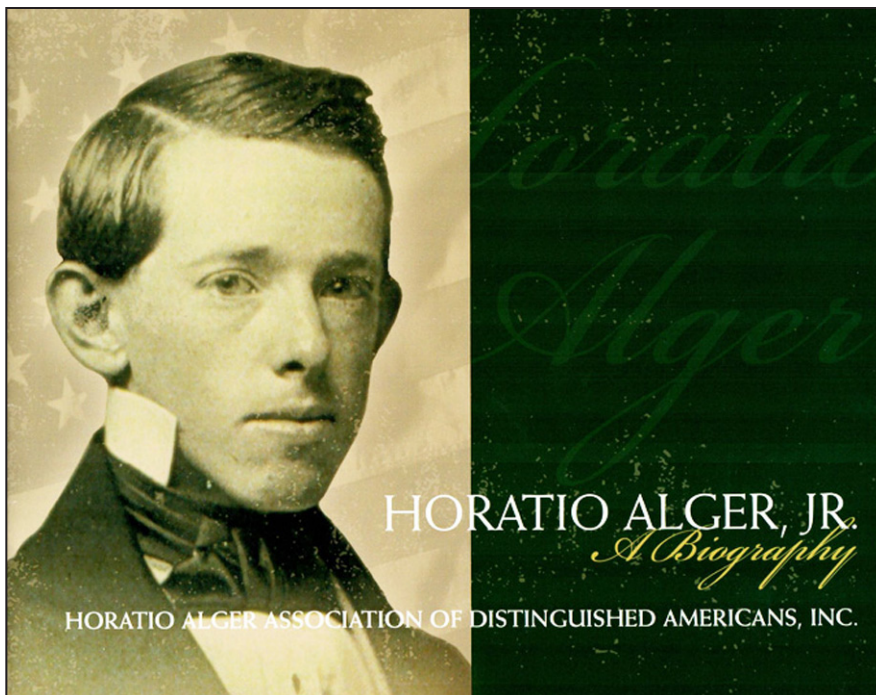
In anticipation of its 75th anniversary next year, the Association's current executive director, Terrence J. Giroux, reached out to me for assistance in updating its existing Horatio Alger biography (see cover illustration).

I immediately contacted Brad and Jack Bales (PF-258) who gladly (and promptly) provided input and corrections based upon their combined 100 years of Alger research and experience.

After many hours of challenging work, we presented our findings to the Association for incorporating into its revised and enhanced biography. In return, the Association made a very generous donation of \$5,000 to the Horatio Alger Society for our efforts.

We salute the Horatio Alger Association's endeavors to promulgate the virtues and values of our common namesake and celebrate our shared 135 years of existence.

Yours truly,
Rob Kasper (PF-327)
4940 Old Main St., Unit 402
Henrico, VA 23231



August 14, 2021

Dear Bill,

About 10 days ago the phone rang; it was Carole Thorp telling me Jim had died a few days previously. After the call I sat down and wrote the following, in one sitting, trying to capture my thoughts of the many good times Jim and I had together. Here they are, sincere and heartfelt; feelings about a guy I really liked.

Did you ever know someone who just did and said things the right way — person who never had a bad word to say about anyone — a person who everybody enjoyed being with and said good things about — a really nice guy who was pleasant to talk to and knowledgeable about many things, including books?

Well, I did; it was Jim Thorp. Now, my times including many book trips with him have become fond, happy, and precious memories that I wish to share.

Jim was an absolute delight making our book trips together so pleasant. One thing he was known for in the tiny Alger World was his collection of small Hurst Alger books. He loved them and had a bunch that he'd found over the years. His was one of only a few collections that featured little Hurst Alger books. That part of his collection was a major contribution to making my book on those Alger editions more complete. I thanked him then, and I thank him again, now.

Jim always owned a four- or five-year-old Cadillac. He was known for this, not because he was aloof or stuffy; he just liked the quality and elegance of the design, machinery and inside furnishings. He roamed with it mostly around Concord, New Hampshire, and into northern New England where Alger and other old children's books could readily be found. He told me once that he didn't necessarily like to collect alone; going with friends was his passion and I know he looked forward to our trips.

Over the years he and his family (in the Cadillac which really impressed our neighbors) would visit our Connecticut home for my annual book swap with other collectors. He'd bring a few gems he'd found which he'd exchange for books he needed. He hated to, and absolutely wouldn't, haggle; fairness was the rule and he was always more than fair.

Over the years we probably took 10 to 15 trips together visiting New England book dealers, very often with others. Sometimes we found very little; other times a bunch of gems. Didn't matter much because he was always a joy to be with and his sparkle filled endless hours of conversation. Some of our longer trips would take 10 or more hours just tinkering with dealers and stopping for snacks now and then. When one spends that much time together in a really comfortable car (he always insisted on driving), one gets to know another person really well. You often find yourself sharing family tidbits or recalling



Brad Chase and Jim Thorp at the 2010 convention.

one's early collecting successes, and Jim certainly could tell some amazing stories. No matter who was with us, the season of the year, or the length of the trip, Jim always made our time together more than pleasant.

Jim has gone now. Carole told me he died under Hospice care, comfortable to the last. I knew he had survived a big heart attack a few decades ago about the time I first met him. He often said how much he valued the additional time he had been granted. I think he made the most of it. He considered every day a brand-new day for him to do the things he enjoyed and to be the kind of person he wanted to be. He certainly succeeded.

I've missed him and our travels together these past few years as we both have battled health problems. There has also been a declining number of dealers to visit. A large part of our trips was the expectation of what the next place had to offer; the thrill of the search as we'd both get excited with the anticipation of what we might find. Unfortunately, visiting dealers has been severely dampened by eBay, Etsy and other computer sites. All one needs today is money and computer smarts to build an imposing collection in no time. Jim wouldn't like that; I don't either.

Jim Thorp was truly a good guy. He and I and others peaked in our book collecting just as the computer revolution got underway some 25-plus years ago when a world used-book market became easily accessible. I'm so thankful for knowing Jim and experiencing our shared time together and with others. I'm definitely a better person for knowing him. His whole collection was recently auctioned by the Society and I was fortunate to get a few choice items. From time to time as I finger those specific gems, I think of Jim because they were meaningful to him; now they are meaningful to me.

Cordially,
Brad Chase (PF-412)
10 Knollwood Circle
Enfield, CT 06082

THE ARGOSY

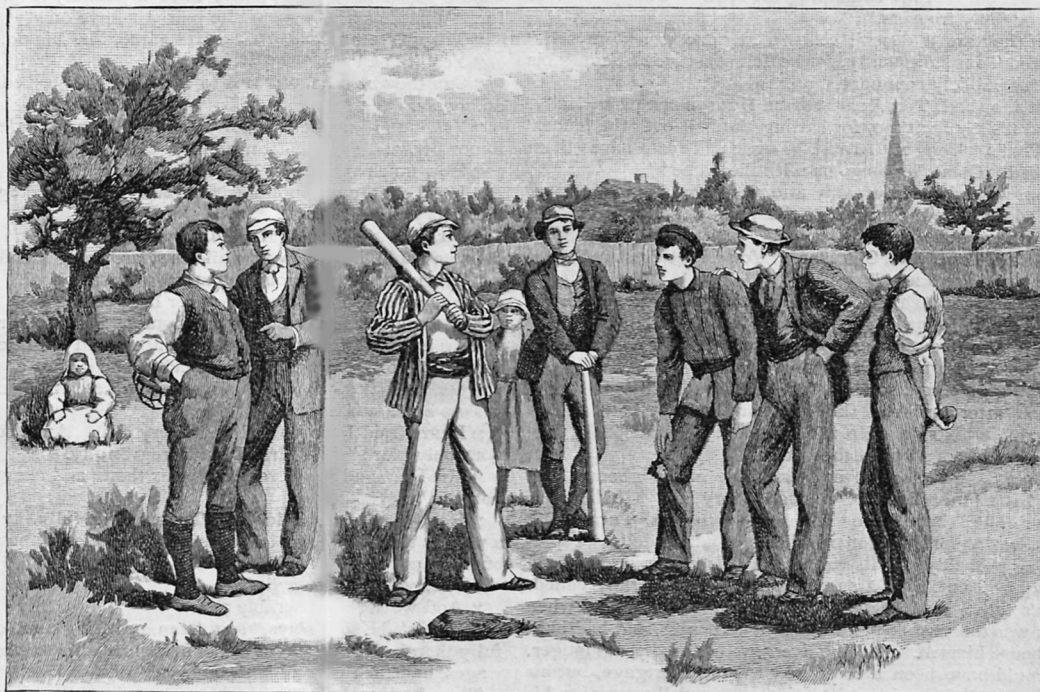
Vol. X, No. I.

SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1890.

WHOLE No. 391.

TOM TURNER'S LEGACY.

By HORATIO ALGER, Jr.



"NOW YOU'VE GONE AND DONE IT, TOM TURNER. I SUPPOSE THOSE ARE YOUR ONLY TROUSERS."

CHAPTER I.

TOM TURNER'S MISHA.

"I WISH I hadn't played ball this afternoon," soliloquized Tom Turner, as he eyed ruefully a large rent in the knee of his only pair of trousers. "It isn't as if I had half a dozen suits like Clarence Kent. His father would buy him a new pair every month if he wanted them, while I think myself lucky to get a pair once a year."

This was the way it happened. The ball had been batted

over the fence by Alfred Hudson, who was a powerful batter, and a cry went up "Lost ball!" The game was suspended while Tom Turner, who was one of the fielders, jumped over the fence and recovered it. Tom was a good gymnast, and undertook to vault the fence on his return. How it came about he could not explain, but he failed to accomplish the feat satisfactorily, and managed to tear an ugly rent in the knee of his pantaloons. He bruised the knee itself a little also, but this he did not mind so much. The injury to his

Alger and base ball

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in a chapter of *Only an Irish Boy*. Playing by “town rules” with six players to a side and two outs for each team in an inning, the schoolboys of Crampton “choose up” for a game at recess. Andy Burke is selected as catcher for one team, and Godfrey Preston is pitcher for the other. Andy’s team is victorious, largely due to his batting and brilliant fielding, and Alger describes nearly every pitch and nuance of play.

Alger fled to New York in 1866 to pursue literary opportunities as well as to escape the wrath of the Brewster deacons, and he may have been attracted to baseball games among the 16 amateur clubs then operating in the Five Boroughs and New Jersey. These clubs were loosely organized in 1857 as the *National Association of Base Ball Players*.

Baseball popularity had spread throughout the nation following the War and was publicized further by the Currier & Ives lithograph depicting the “first game of the 1865 base ball championship series between the Atlantic and Mutual clubs, played at the famed Elysian Field in Hoboken” [reproduced on Page 1]. In 1871, the *National Association of Professional Base Ball Players* was founded, and consensus Rules of Play and schedules began to evolve.

The earliest reference to a baseball game in the Alger stories that I read occurs in *Rough and Ready*. Rufus Rushton “comes across Tim Graves, a fellow newsboy, carrying in his hand a bat” and asks him, “Where’d you get that bat?” Tim replies, “I was up to the Park to see a *base-ball* match, and picked it up.” Then as now, Central Park provided diamonds for baseball play, and Alger may have drawn this episode from real life. My research found no reference of paid attendance at a League Park by any of the Alger street boys. Presumably they preferred to budget their pennies for oysters at Tony Pastor’s or thriller theater at The Old Bowery.

The Cash Boy first appeared in serialized form in Street & Smith’s **New York Weekly** in 1875. The story opens with “a group of boys assembled in an open field west of the public school house ... most of them held bats in their hands, while two, stationed sixty feet distant from each other, were having a catch ... it was easy to see that a common interest in the national game of *base-ball* had drawn them together to spend the holiday in playing their favorite sport.” Tom Pinkerton has just returned from a visit to Brooklyn, and reports that while there he had witnessed a match game between two professional

clubs. He proposes that the boys establish a local club in emulation of the “big clubs they have in Brooklyn and New York” to be known as the “Excelsior Club of Crawford.”

The boys are enthusiastic. Resolutions are passed, and Frank Fowler is elected captain with “powers to assign members to their different positions.” Tom, who had proposed the Club in anticipation of the position of chief officer for himself, threatens to resign and is mortified when his offer is promptly accepted. One of the clubs that Tom could have seen in Brooklyn at that time was the *Brooklyn Excelsiors*, and Alger’s fictional reference may have been inspired through personal attendance.

Alger further reveals his intimate knowledge of the game with a chapter in *Victor Vane* describing a “match game of ball” between a school club and an amateur team. Deacon Vane has unjustly accused his son of theft, and acting on principles of integrity as well as impulse, Victor decides to leave home and seek employment in the factories in Norcross Mills. On the train, Victor falls in with a young boy, David Fisher, who asks:

“By the way, do you play *baseball*?”

“I have been captain of the Vernon Baseball Club.”

“Can you pitch?”

“That is my favorite position.”

“I’ll tell you why I ask. Our club — that is, the Institute Club — is to meet the Excelsiors of Grafton to-morrow afternoon, and our pitcher is sick.”

Victor auditions and pitches the Institute Club to a ten to four victory, taking some pride in setting down the opposing pitcher, “one - two - three and out! with a movement so quick and the curve so difficult to understand that Towne was bewildered.” Victor also sizes up Towne as “rather too heavy, and that overweight is apt to interfere with quickness and activity.”

he game is attended by “about two hundred spectators, including about all of the students of the Institute and three of the professors, who, being young men, were equally zealous for the glory of the Institute and scarcely less interested in the game than their pupils.” The principal, Dr. Mullins, invites Victor and David to tea and tells them, “I approve of manly exercises, and I naturally want our Institute to win in any match with outsiders. In my boyhood I played *roundball* in a very unscientific manner, but I think *baseball* is a superior game.”

The match prize of 20 dollars is much needed and welcomed by the Institute Club, and in gratitude for Victor’s contribution to the victory they award him the Club’s half share of the gate receipts amounting to 10 dollars and a half. Dr. Mullins further provides Victor

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with a letter of recommendation for the position of private secretary to Eben Crocker, an old Institute classmate and congressman-elect, a major step in Victor's career. The fact that Victor is a "ringer" and not a student at Norcross Institute is accepted by both teams. David tells Victor, "Our rules are not strict."

Outsiders and even professionals on school and amateur teams were commonly employed in Alger's day. Alger makes no mention of betting, but it was a very large focus of fan attraction. Local pride led to massive wagering when a hated rival came to town, and when the game was played away, "only the dogs and a few watchmen stayed behind." The fans often returned with empty pockets. The cash-flow economy of a rural village for months to come could be entirely dependent upon the outcome of the game.

Dean Dunham has employment playing the harmonica with a traveling show. In Chicago, the son of a local promoter asks him, "Do you like to play baseball?" Dean replies, "I only wish I had a chance." "Do you?" said Gus Gunnison, brightening up. "Well, our club is going to play the Resolutes from the next town this afternoon. We are one man short. . . . Can you catch?" Dean does not disappoint and plays with such "unusual skill" that the local Active Club is victorious by the score of 18 to 8.

In several Alger stories, the hero is called upon to prevent a bully from punishing a younger boy for refusing to obey a command or to recover a ball that the bully has appropriated for himself. In some cases the quality of the ball is the focus:

- **Lester's Luck:** "Give me back that ball. It's mine." "I don't care if it is yours, Bill Miller. I'm going to keep it and use it." Bill retorts, "you're awful mean! My uncle gave me that ball for my birthday present. It's a regular *League Ball*."

- **Frank and Fearless:** The ball had been knocked to a distance by the batter and it was the duty of Nicholas Thorne, one of the oldest boys, to run after it, but he thought of an easier way. "Cameron, run for that ball!" "I ain't in the game, why should I get the ball?" "Because I say so. I'll give you the worst flogging you ever had if you don't obey me."

- **Hector's Inheritance:** The boy at the bat had struck a ball to the extreme boundary of the field. The fielder at that point didn't go so fast as Jim, who was pitcher,

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DEAN DUNHAM.

"Well, our club is going to play the Resolutes from the next town this afternoon. We are one man short. Will you take his place?"

"Yes, I shall be glad to."

"What place do you prefer?"

"I'll take any you choose to give me."

"Can you catch?"

"I like it better than anything else."

"Then that's settled. Come over and I'll show you the ground, and introduce you to some of the fellows."

When the members of the Carterville club learned that the famous young musician, Dean Dunham, had agreed to play on their side, they were very much elated. There was, however, a slight uneasiness lest he should not prove a skillful player, as they were eager to beat their visitors. A little practice playing, however, showed them that Dean was quite equal to any one in their club, and they became eager for the fray.

Dean did not disappoint them. He entered into the game with enthusiasm, and played with unusual skill, so that the Resolutes were beaten by a score of 18 to 8, and the victory was largely attributed to the good playing of the new catcher, who proved equally good in batting.

Excerpt from a baseball scene described in Alger's *Dean Dunham*, Chapter XXV — "An Unexpected Meeting."

thought satisfactory, and he called out in a rough, brutal tone: "If you don't go quicker, Archer, I'll kick you all around the field."

Other Alger references to baseball are more curious and incidental to the story line:

- **The Five Hundred Dollar Check:** Jacob Marlow asks, "How do you live?" Bert Barton replies, "Mother covers baseballs for a firm in the next town, and I am working in the big shoe shop." When Bert loses his job, Mary says despondently, "I earn so little sewing balls."

- **Tom Turner's Legacy:** "I wish I hadn't played ball this afternoon," soliloquized Tom Turner, as he eyed ruefully a large rent in the knee of his only pair of trousers. "It isn't as if I had half a dozen suits like Clarence Kent. His father would buy him a new pair every month if he wanted them, while I think myself lucky to get a pair once a year." The ball had been batted over the fence by Alfred Hudson, who was a powerful batter, and the cry went up, "Lost ball!" Tom responded, but a clumsy vault over the fence upon his

return produced a bruise to his knee and misfortune to his trousers.

[See engraving from *The Argosy* on Page 8]

Alger uses the incident to define the social position of the hero of the story. "Now you've gone and done it, Tom Turner," said Clarence. "I suppose those are your only trousers." "If they are it doesn't concern any one except myself," returned Tom indignantly, for he felt sensitive at having his poverty publicly commented upon. The game continues, and soon afterward Tom skillfully caught a fly ball, and so brought in his side. Alger tells us, "He felt the more satisfaction in this, because Clarence was at the bat."

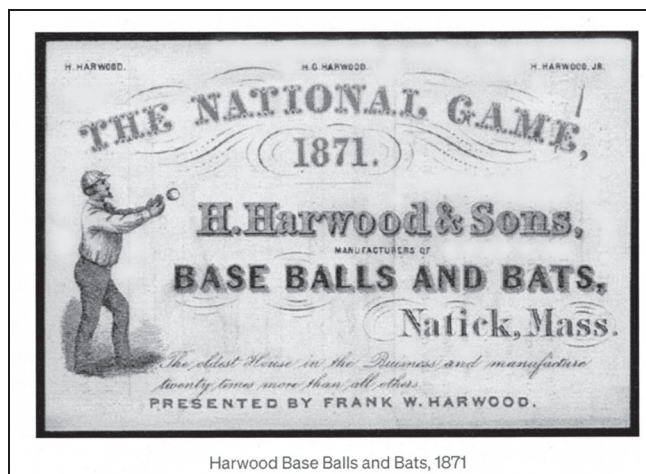
- *The Young Musician*: "Frank belonged to a baseball club, and had a capital aim. He threw up the ball and struck Mr. Tucker fairly in the nose."

- *Julius the Street Boy*: "Mr. Fairbanks used to go out at recess and play ball with us sometimes." "Could he play well?" asked Julius "I bet he could. He knocked a ball over that tree over there."

- *Helping Himself*: Grant Thornton and nine year old Herbert Reynolds are walking to Central Park for exercise when they come to a vacant lot where some boys are playing ball. "Now, if we only had a ball," said Grant, "we might have a little amusement." Herbert produces a ball from his pocket, which proved to be an expensive one, better than Grant had ever owned, and the boys have a game of catch. "I never knew there was so much fun in playing ball," says Herbert. "I never liked it before." "We shall have to try it every day," said Grant. "Are boys allowed to play ball in the Park?" "Two afternoons in the week, I believe, but I never played there." Arriving home, his father asks, "What have you been doing to make you so hungry, Herbert?" "I took a walk with Grant, and we had a fine game of ball." "I am glad to hear it. If you want to become stout and strong like Grant, that is the best thing for you to do."

Alger would also have had opportunities to see street boys at play. An 1871 article in *The New York Times*³ describes a typical scene:

They are all somewhat dingy as to hands and faces: some are news boys, others evidently belonging to one of the numerous printing-houses which grace that classic neighborhood. Just watch that little fellow over there, in the paper cap. He has but one hand disengaged, the other holds a huge wedge of pie — all his play is done with one hand. Here comes the ball, spinning along, as high as the third stories. Who threw it, you can't see. He spies it, however, coming along over the tops of the wagons and carriages, and, utterly regardless of that four-horse brewer's team coming toward him, or the



An 1871 advertising card for H. Harwood & Sons, of Natick, Mass., believed the largest manufacturer of baseballs during the early years of the sport.

swifter coupe which threatens his rear, with one clever bound he makes a catch in midair, picking up the ball almost between the horse's ears. Now, like a monkey, he just clears that lumbering dust-cart, managing as he stoops to take a big bite of pie right under the wheels, and, before you know it, appearing on the other side, he returns the ball by a clever toss to his unknown playmate somewhere down the street.

The whole fun of the game to them consists in the bother they give the drivers, and the excitement is to catch the ball at the imminent risk of being crushed to atoms. Run over them? Not the least chance of it. They have the agility of cats, and as many lives. The crowded street is their play-ground. A clear open field would be tame to them, and only fit for what they would designate as muffs. From the number of balls we see in our youngsters' hands; from the numerous signs hung in the shops, with the inscriptions of "white dead balls" and "dead red balls," we have come to the conclusion that we must be essentially a ball-playing community. As Nassau-street is the grand emporium of base-ball ... we found that no less than sixteen kinds of balls were in use, from the regulation ball to the children's or fancy ball, and that prices varied from \$18 to 85 cents a dozen.

Some half dozen regular manufactories of base-ball alone exist in the City, the largest producing just now seventy-five dozen base-balls per diem. The town of Natick, however, in Massachusetts, is the greatest ball manufactory perhaps in the world, many hundreds of people being employed in this line of business to order from thence 6,000 balls at a time. Their manufacture entails nothing of very special interest, the inside being

(Continued on Page 12)

Alger and base ball

or, *The Mystery of the Red Dead-Ball*

(Continued from Page 11)

of wound rubber, and the wrapping of woolen yarn, save that the winding of the yarn around the ball is principally done by men ... the cover of horse-hide is put on entirely by women who use a saddler's needle and saddler's thread.

Alger was presumably aware of the Natick baseball industry and may have used this knowledge in the reference to Mary Barton (*The Five Hundred Dollar Check*), who "earns so little sewing balls."

The alert reader may have gleaned from the above article the answer to this essay's sub-title. That is, a *dead red ball* and a *white dead ball* apparently earn their descriptions from the color of the cover.

Also, early scribes used the term *Base Ball* as two words. Quoting from Alger's books throughout this article, I have tried very carefully to quote the text verbatim when he writes about the game of baseball in any way. The hyphenated form *base-ball* would appear to be his early favorite, and he evolved to *baseball* in his usage as did the general public. [Ed. note: The italics used in this article are the author's, in pointing out to readers Alger's various spellings of baseball over the years].

* * *

Incentive for this essay originated with the author's lifelong interest of 19th century National League baseball and the career of my great uncle, Samuel L. Thompson, who played right field with distinction for the Detroit Wolverines, Philadelphia Quakers and the Detroit Tigers. (Detroit 1885-1888, Philadelphia 1889-1898, Detroit 1906).

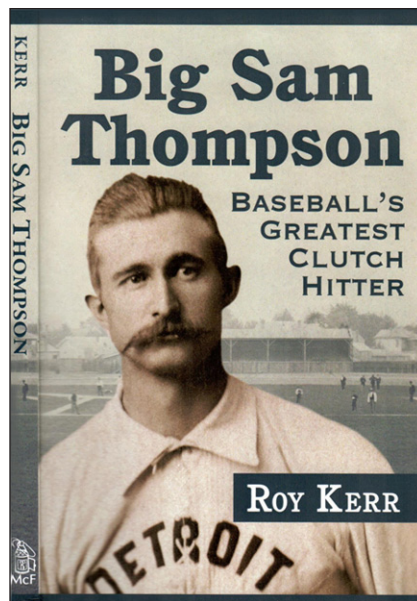
"Uncle Sam," and his five brothers (including my grandfather, Nathan) and three sisters, my father and myself were all born in Danville, Indiana. During his playing career and in retirement, Sam and his wife made their home on Trumbull Avenue in Detroit very near "The Corner" at Michigan and Trumbull, the site of Bennett Park, where Detroit baseball games had been played since 1896.

As a very young boy, I can remember calling at Ida's home on Trumbull Avenue, usually after a Tigers game. Ida may have thought that little children should not only not be heard, but also not seen, for my brother and I were never allowed in the house and had to sit in the car.

Throughout his life, Sam would pay visits to his Hendricks County kin. "Big Sam" had earned a reputation as

a gentleman, both on the field and off, and his visits were always welcome although his sister has been quoted, "he had to stoop to go through the doorways."

Sam was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974 based on his lifetime statistics as a premier hitter, slugger and fielder.⁴ His RBI per game ratio, 0.923, is the highest of any man who ever played the game. His 126 career home runs rank second among hitters of his



era, and among all outfielders that played more than 1,000 games in any era, his assist per game ratio (one every 4.9 games) is the highest. His 283 outfield assists rank 12th all time, and among all outfielders that played more than 1,000 games whose career concluded before the 20th century, his fielding average is the highest.

Detroit's schedule in 1888 included away games with the New York Giants at the original Polo Grounds located just north of Central Park. Alger could have been in the stands on June 15th and have witnessed Sam and the 1887 "World Champion First winners of the Dauvray Cup" defeat the Giants 3-2. A week earlier on June 8th, he may perhaps have even accompanied the newsboy players in a carriage parade "through Park row to the Bowery, as far as One Hundred and Tenth Street" to see the *Evening Worlds*, New York's entry in the Newsboys League, lose to the *Detroit Journals* 16-9.⁵

NOTES:

1. Horatio Alger, Jr. *Tom Temple's Career*. 1888. New York: A. L. Burt Company.
2. Scharnhorst, Gary with Jack Bales. *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* 1985. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
3. "Bats, Balls and Mallets." *The New York Times*, April 10, 1871.
4. Kerr, Roy. *Big Sam Thompson, Baseball's Greatest Clutch Hitter*. 2015. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.
5. "Newsies Play Ball." *The New York Evening World*, June 8, 1888.

BOOK REVIEW

The Chicago Cub Shot for Love: A Showgirl's Crime of Passion and the 1932 World Series. © 2021 by Jack Bales, with Foreword by Tim Wiles. (Charleston, South Carolina): The History Press, 143 pp. ISBN 978-1-4671-4848-1. Softcover (\$21.95). To purchase, visit www.historypress.com; also available from www.amazon.com for the above price or in a Kindle digital edition for \$14.99.

Looking back at a shot for love

Reviewed by Drew Gallagher

Baseball fans, rejoice!

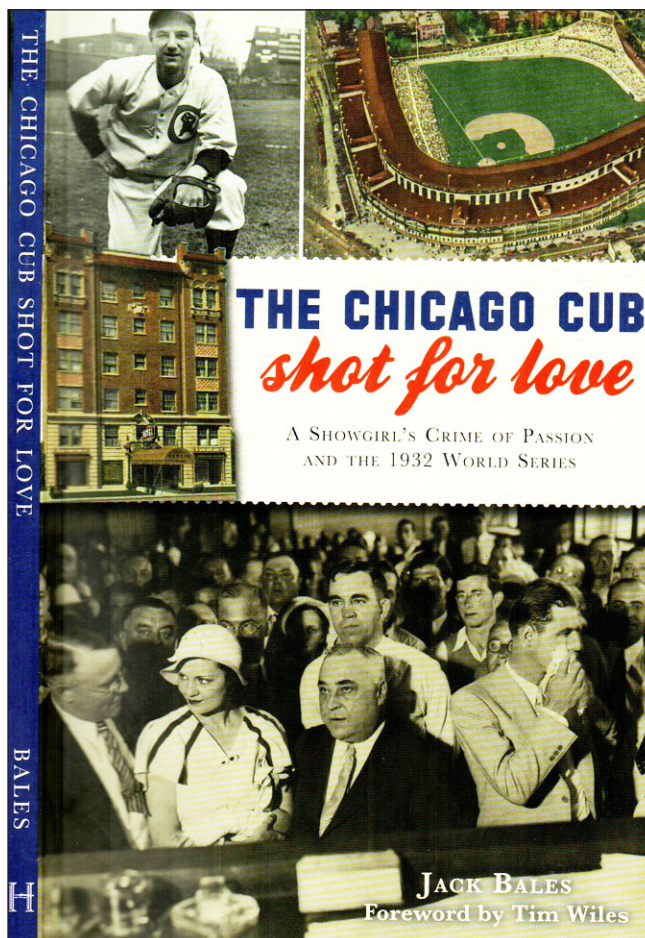
In *The Chicago Cub Shot for Love*, Jack Bales unearths a story that may have been the impetus for one of the most celebrated and debated moments in baseball history — Babe Ruth's called home run in the 1932 World Series.

With the research of a librarian (Bales was a librarian at the University of Mary Washington for 40 years) and the storytelling of a Hemingway, Bales unfurls the story of Chicago Cubs' shortstop Billy Jurgens and showgirl Violet Popovich and their doomed relationship that almost led to Jurgens' murder in summer 1932.

The Cubs were in the middle of a magical season as Jurgens began to assert himself as one of the best defensive shortstops in the game, and his team was playing some of the best baseball in its history. Jurgens, perhaps sensing the special season unfolding, told Popovich that he did not want to see her anymore so he could focus on baseball and not be distracted by their relationship.

To say that Popovich did not take the news well would be an understatement. Soon after the breakup, Popovich showed up at Jurgens' hotel room in Chicago with a pistol and shot him. The wound was not life-threatening, but it resulted in the Cubs getting infielder Mark Koenig to replace Jurgens while he recovered.

Koenig was instrumental in leading the Cubs to the pennant, but some of his teammates (including Jurgens) did not vote him a full share of the money players receive for playing in the World Series because he had not played the entire regular season with them. When the shares were publicized prior to the Cubs' showdown with the New York Yankees, the Yankees (Koenig's former club) called the Cubs cheapskates and thought Koenig deserved a full share.



That animosity spilled onto the playing field, and some say the barbs escalated to the point where Babe Ruth, in answer to the bench jockeys in the Cubs' dugout, pointed out to center-field bleachers and predicted where the next pitch would land.

Movies have been made about that "called shot" from the Sultan of Swat and Bales argues convincingly that if not for Jurgens getting shot by the jilted showgirl, then none of those subsequent events would have occurred.

The Chicago Cub Shot for Love: A Showgirl's Crime of Passion and the 1932 World Series can stand alone as a superb and vibrant book on a brief moment in baseball time. But when that brief moment is a falling domino that leads to what may be the most famous home run by the most famous player to ever play the game, the book becomes magic.

This review appeared in the July 25, 2021 edition of the Fredericksburg, Virginia Free Lance-Star.

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THE HELPING HAND. A TEMPERANCE SKETCH.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

“Come, rouse up. I want to go to bed,” said a harsh voice.
[SEE ENGRAVING].

The speaker shook roughly the man whom he addressed.

The latter half raised himself from the settle on which he had been lying, and inquired stupidly, “What’s the matter?”

“The matter is, that it’s twelve o’clock, and I can’t have you here any longer.”

“Whjere shall I go?” asked the drunkard, vacantly.

“Go home, of course — and be quick about it.”

The unhappy victim of intemperance, aided by the bar-keeper, managed with difficulty to raise himself up and stand on his feet. Then with an uncertain motion he moved towards the door, and out into the night air. This partly revived him, and he walked on with a little steadier step.

But he had drank too much to recover at once from the effects of his potations. His house, where even now his wife was anxiously awaiting his return, was three-quarters of a mile distant.. He had scarcely accomplished one third the distance before his limbs failed him, and he sank in drunken insensibility by the roadside. While he is lying unconscious, we will take a rapid glance at his history.

Five years before, James Perkins was a sober, industrious workman, supporting his wife and two little children in comfort. But on one occasion, at a political demonstration, he had been persuaded to drink a glass of liquor. Not until then was he made aware that he had a strong taste for this dangerous beverage. Unhappily he did not take warning, and shun temptation, but from time to time indulged his appetite. The result was only what might have been anticipated. The craving for liquor grew stronger with each indulgence, until at last he became what would once have filled him with horror and disgust, a common drunkard.

The small stock of money which his industry had enabled him to lay by melted imperceptibly, until it was all gone. He became more irregular and less reliable as a workman, so that his wages were diminished by at least one third, and



of these a large share went for drink.

The result was privation and misery at home. His wife lost her bright look, and became pale and worn, while an expression of grief and discouragement fell upon her once comely features. She was obliged by her own industry to strive to make up for the large deficit in her husband’s earnings created by his large expenditures for drink. In addition to this it was sad to see her see him so surely sinking in the respect and good opinion of his neighbors. She had remonstrated again and again, but without permanent effect. Her husband had more than once promised permanent amendment, but his promise had invariably been broken, and his habits had become as bad as before.

We now return to James Perkins, by the roadside. Fortunately for him it was in the early summer. At a more inclement season he might have been frozen to death.

It was so late that no one would be likely to pass till morning. Therefore he lay unseen and undisturbed

At six o’clock a boy, named Frank Reynolds, in passing through the lane, for it was an unfrequented road, was the first to espy him. He was a thoughtful and kind-hearted boy, well brought up and of excellent principles, and instead of ridiculing or laughing at the unfortunate slave to his appetites, felt a thrill of compassion for him.

He stepped to his side, and as he did so, James Perkins opened his eyes.

“Where am I?” he asked in momentary confusion.

“Have you been here all night, Mr. Perkins?” asked Frank.

“I expect I have,” said Perkins, evidently ashamed at being caught in such a condition.

“How did it happen?”

“Well, to tell the truth, Frank, I drank too much over at the tavern, and couldn’t manage to get home.”

“Don’t you think,” said Frank, hesitating lest he should give offence, “that you are drinking too much for your health?”

“I know I am,” said James Perkins, turning away his head in shame.

“Then,” said Frank, eagerly, “why won’t you give it up? I know I am only a boy, and ought not to advise one much older than I am. But I can see that drinking always brings sorrow and wretchedness with it.”

“That’s very true, my lad,” responded Perkins.

This Alger short story, reprinted in Newsboy for the first time, initially appeared in the August 20, 1864 issue of Gleason’s Literary Companion (Vol. V, No. 34). It subsequently was published in Gleason’s Monthly Companion in March 1873.

"Then won't you try to give it up?" asked Frank.

"I'm afraid I shouldn't succeed," said the other, doubtfully. "You don't know how hard it is to break a habit such as that. I hope you will never have it to do. I have tried more than once and haven't succeeded."

"Think of your wife, Mr. Perkins, how glad she would be."

"Poor Maria, I am afraid she has a hard time of it," said Perkins, remorsefully.

"Then there's Johnny, too. At school yesterday he cried half the forenoon because somebody called him a drunkard's son."

"Did he?" asked the father, thoughtfully.

"Yes, Sam Trumbull got mad with him for something, and he pointed his finger at him, and called him that."

"Poor Johnny," murmured the father, softly.

"Yes, it must be hard for him to be a drunkard's son."

"Couldn't you break off for their sake, Mr. Perkins?" asked Frank, persuasively. "Then you would soon have a nice, pleasant home, and everybody would come to respect you again."

James Perkins shook his head.

"No, I'm afraid they would never forget what I have been."

"Shall I tell you what my father said yesterday?"

"Yes."

"He said that you were once one of the most promising young mechanics in the place, and but for your unfortunate habits, would now be a prominent citizen. He said it was not yet too late, if you could only be persuaded to leave off drinking."

"Did Squire Reynolds say that?" asked James Perkins eagerly.

"Yes, he said it to Mr. Blunt, the minister."

"Then I'll try," exclaimed the drunkard with sudden energy. "I'll see if I can make good his words."

"You won't enter the tavern?"

"No, I'll steer clear of it with God's help. But frankly, I want you to promise me one thing."

"What is it, Mr. Perkins?"

"Don't tell anybody of my resolution. I want to surprise people by my reformation."

"I won't tell anybody."

"Now I must go home. I hope it will be the last time I have to go in such a plight."

"I hope so too."

"And, I'm much obliged to you, Frank, for your kind wishes and your plain speaking. Give me your hand."

The two joined hands, and a like hope filled the hearts of each.

James Perkins entered his house quietly. His wife's eyes were red from weeping, but she uttered no reproachful word. She quietly busied herself in preparation for breakfast. Little Johnny was quiet, and did not offer to approach his father.

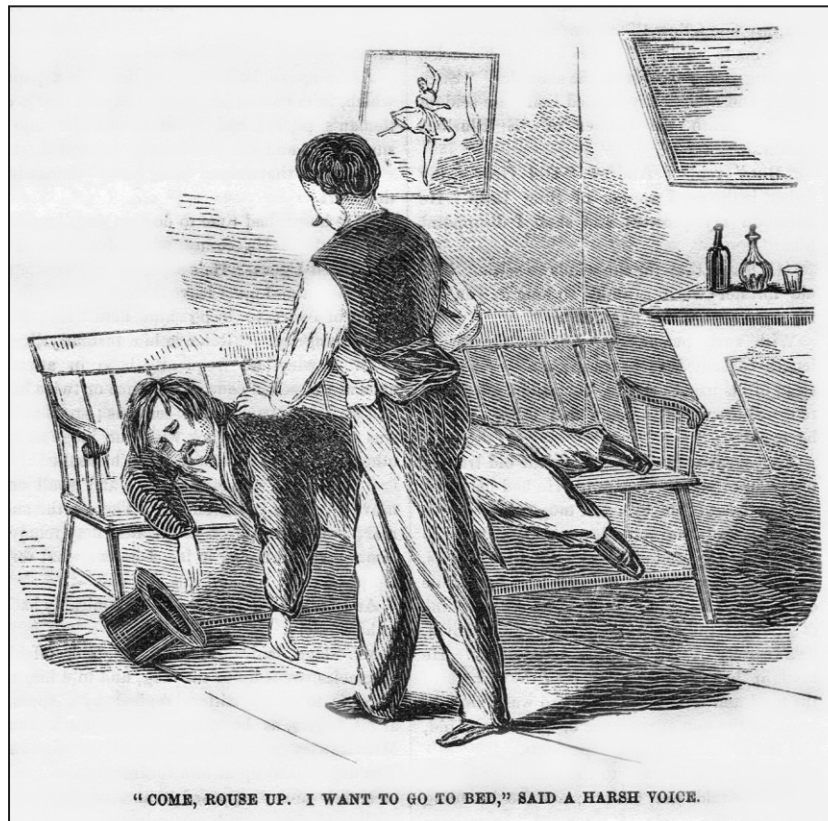
No wonder. His eyes were bloodshot, his hair tangled, and his clothes bore the marks of sleeping out. He had never looked so dissipated. As he

caught his own reflection in the glass, it filled him with deep shame. He went to the sink, washed his face, and combed his hair, and brushing his clothes tried to make himself look as respectable as possible. After breakfast he went out to work.

In the evening he passed resolutely by the tavern. He did not wish to go home, however, for he did not care for the present that his wife should know about his intended reformation. It was Wednesday evening, and he had seen a temperance lecture advertised in the next village. He attended and was confirmed in his good resolution.

At ten o'clock he entered his house. His wife looked up fearfully, expecting him to stagger in. But he showed

(Continued on Page 16)



Virginia H.A.S. members hold their latest mini-convention

By Jack Bales (PF-258)

Jack Bales, Rob Kasper and Jeff Looney got together in Richmond, Virginia, on August 14 for another Horatio Alger Society “mini-convention.” For the last couple of years, a few H.A.S. members in Virginia have met up for book perusing, book buying in local stores, good eating, and, of course, lively conversation.

Richmond resident Rob Kasper was the host this time, and he took us to West End Antiques Mall, which includes 250 dealers in 53,000 square feet. Admittedly, there weren’t as many books as we would have liked, but we certainly enjoyed walking around the many aisles, and both Jeff and I each took home a book (Jeff found a very attractive Joseph C. Lincoln volume). One dealer had a fairly large collection of old Hardy Boys books. I pulled out a yellow-spine book; the price was \$15.

Rob took us to lunch at Conch Republic Rocketts, which offers “casual Key West-inspired seafood.” The restaurant is on the James River, within walking distance of Rob’s home at Rocketts Landing, where we concluded our visit by poring over hundreds of books in Rob’s fine collection.



Jack Bales (PF-258), Rob Kasper (PF-327), and Jeff Looney (PF-903) enjoy lunch along Richmond’s James River during an informal H.A.S. get-together.

THE HELPING HAND. A TEMPERANCE SKETCH.

(Continued from Page 15)

no marks of intoxication. She concluded, however, that he had only drunk a little less than usual, and her heart remained heavy.

The next day he went to work again, and worked steadily the entire day. That evening he spent in calling upon an acquaintance, but still avoided the tavern. He began to find that it was possible to do without drinking.

The third day he met Frank. In answer to the boy’s inquiring look, he said, “I’ve kept my promise so far.”

The boy’s glad smile warmed his heart. “I want to see Johnny smile like this,” he said to himself.

Saturday night came, and thus far he had kept his promise. Ten dollars were placed in his hands as the wages of his week’s labor. He stopped at the store, and invested them all in groceries. Then he walked home, first requesting

them to be sent that night.

Mrs. Perkins was surprised and pleased to see him home at eight. Saturday nights he had usually been late. He sat down, and took up a book. Ten minutes later, a wagon drove up, and a boy came in with some groceries. Bundle after bundle was brought in. Mrs. Perkins looked on in glad amazement. She knew what must have happened.

When the boy had gone, her husband said in a low tone, “With God’s help, Maria, better times are in store. I have not tasted a drop of liquor since Tuesday night.”

“O, father, I’m so glad,” said little Johnny, running and jumping into his father’s lap.

“You shan’t be a drunkard’s son any longer,” said his father, much moved. “With God’s help I will never again taste liquor.”

He has kept his promise. His wife wears again her happy look. Johnny’s merry laugh resounds through the house, and James Perkins blesses in his heart the boy who at a critical time offered him a helping hand.