

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.



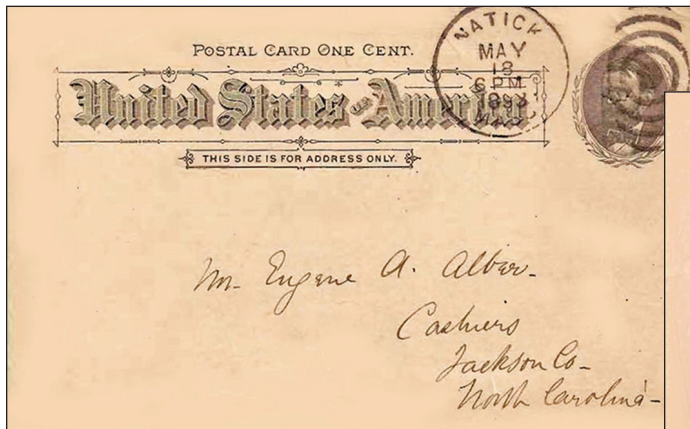
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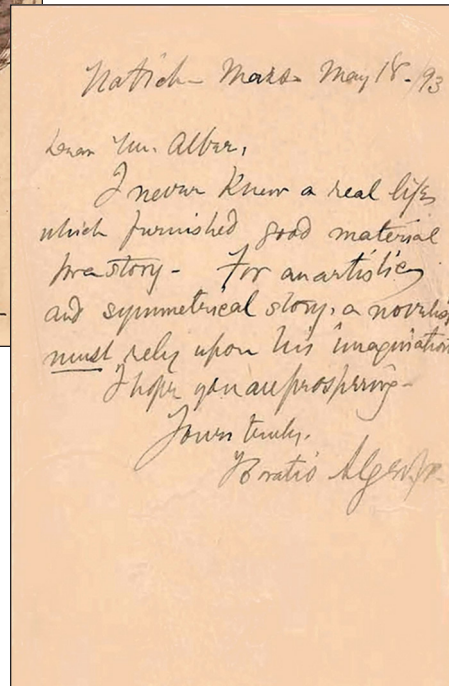
NUMBER 5

Letters from Horatio – Part 3;

or, Alger pads his resumé



An 1893 postcard note from Horatio Alger, Jr., to Eugene A. Alber, of Cashiers, North Carolina.



-- See Page 3

The spooky spirits of Fredericksburg

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Remembrances of former H.A.S. president Mike Morley and researcher / Dime Novel Round-Up editor Randy Cox

-- See Pages 12-14

President's column

The long, hot days of summer are finally behind us; a summer gladly consigned to history, with horrific wildfires, storms, floods and landslides. In times like these, nostalgia for the good-old-days enjoys renewed currency.

My father grew up during FDR's New Deal, accompanied by the optimistic "Happy Days are Here Again" and the promise of a new world of modernity from the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. Alger would scarcely have recognized the streamlined, Art Deco world of 30-odd years after his death, so rapid were the social and technological advancements that took place in that short time.

This observation led me to ponder, "What would Alger's stories have looked like, had he lived in the 1930s?" Would he have taken to scouting tales, westerns, historical and military conflicts, school athletics, or the emerging technological developments of the early 20th century and the science-fiction they inspired?

The Mattson/Davis collector's guide gives us a fair overview of the genres and their relative popularity over this time. We see the century starting out with many Algeresque stories, such as rising in life and business, as well as school or college life and athletics, frontier and wilderness adventures, military campaigns and cadet life. Whilst school, sports and adventure became evergreens, rags-to-riches, or rising in life and business stories quickly declined, giving way to stories of new, exciting, but expensive inventions (real or imagined), and the rich boys that could afford to build or buy them. They would then embark on hair-raising adventures, piloting their wonders across the country or globe using their own or daddy's inexhaustible funds. Poor boys needn't apply, especially street waifs from the last century with nothing more exciting than a fiddle in their hand.

The poorhouse and indentured servitude by bond were abolished, but plenty of societal injustice and exploitation of child labor remained as grist for Alger's brand of writing. Migration to cities was greater than in Alger's day, but the Great Depression would have made his stories of street scruff to businessman all the more fanciful. Still, his core themes of the poor but honest and industrious boy winning out against the lazy, jealous, deceitful antagonist would still ring true

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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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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.

Letters from Horatio – Part 3; or, Alger pads his resumé

By Robert E. Kasper (PF-327)

It has been estimated that Horatio Alger, Jr. wrote approximately 30 letters every week during his literary career, although fewer than 200 are known today.¹ For the most part, Alger's letters fall neatly into two categories: responding to young readers for an autograph or pleading with his publishers for a royalty advance. There are, however, a few extant letters (and notes) where Alger actually discusses literary matters. This article will focus on three of them.

* * *

In letters to various recipients, Horatio Alger, Jr. would occasionally dole out literary advice or provide publish-

ing information about his books. In one such note, to Eugene A. Alber, residing in Cashiers, North Carolina, Alger writes, "I never knew a real life which furnished good material for a story. For an artistic and symmetrical story, a novelist must rely upon his imagination." (The front and rear of this postcard are reproduced on the front cover).

In one letter, addressed to Ellis H. Robb, dated January 12, 1894, Alger enumerates his works, noting that his "first story" was *Helen Ford*, now issued by Porter & Coates, and that his "first series of juvenile books was the **Campaign Series**" (see Example 1, below, for a full transcription). Alger adds that his earlier books were published by A. K. Loring, of Boston, "but they passed

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223 West 34th St, New York
Jan 12, 1894.

Mr. Ellis H. Robb,

Thank you for your kind words - I am gratified to learn that my books are regarded with favor by yourself and the boys of Eldora. I am sure I should have pleasure in meeting them.

My first story was

Helen Ford, which is included in the Alta edition of novels issued by Porter & Coates -

My first series of juvenile books was the Campaign Series, now issued by Porter & Coates, my regular publishers -

My earlier books, including these were published by A. K. Loring, of Boston, but they passed into the hands of Porter & Coates in 1881.

Yours truly,
Horatio Alger, Jr.

Example 1: Mr. Ellis H. Robb: Thank you for your kind words. I am grateful to learn that my books are regarded with favor by yourself and the boys of Eldora. I am sure I shall have pleasure in meeting them. My first story was *Helen Ford*, which is included in the *Alta* edition of novels issued by Porter & Coates. My first series of juvenile books was the **Campaign Series**, now issued by Porter & Coates, my regular publishers. My earlier books, including these were published by A. K. Loring, of Boston, but they passed into the hands of Porter & Coates in 1881.

Editor's notebook

Being nostalgic has been an ongoing trend this year while writing these notebooks, because as I said last issue, we have lost several close Partic'lar Friends in 2021. This time, our tributes (pages 12-14) are to former H.A.S. president Mike Morley and longtime **Dime Novel Round-Up** editor J. Randolph (Randy) Cox.

Carol Nackenoff (PF-921) offers her remembrance of Mike over their years as colleagues in the Horatio Alger Society, while James Keeline (PF-898) does the same in his tribute to Cox, a longtime fellow member of the Popular Culture Association and its annual conferences, in addition to their years in the H.A.S.

I want to pass along an interesting story of one of the last times I was able to share a common experience with Cox (PF-598) and his longtime fellow researcher, Jack Dizer (PF-511). In 2007, the PCA conference was held in Boston, at the Marriott Hotel just off Copley Square. Dizer was presenting a paper on an early, little-known Edward Stratemeyer story, while Cox did not make a presentation that year. The reason he came to Boston was to join Jack for a Saturday afternoon visit to Eddie LeBlanc, Cox's long-time predecessor as **Dime Novel Round-Up** editor. LeBlanc was in failing health, and the short drive down to Fall River, Mass., was planned as a "good-bye," though neither Jack nor Randy would think of using that term.

When I learned that Randy was traveling to Boston, I suggested to him and Jack that I arrange for tickets to the Friday afternoon Boston Symphony Orchestra concert, since both greatly enjoyed listening to classical music. Jack had been to Boston's Symphony Hall many times during the early post-World War II years, but this was to be Randy's first trip to America's most revered concert hall.

We enjoyed the concert, which included Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. I had suggested we take a cab, but Jack insisted that we walk the eight-plus blocks down Huntington Avenue and back. Heading out, Randy and I walked at a steady pace, while Jack pulled way out ahead. "Slow down!" we called out, and Jack stopped, admonishing us for being slowpokes! Remember, Jack was almost 86 at the time, 15 years older than Randy and more than 20 years senior to me.

We laughed about it back at the hotel, and it was a great sign of the kind of camaraderie we enjoyed while attending these conferences over the years.

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

and perhaps speak to poor boys of the Depression in a more meaningful way than ever could the ephemeral escapism of Tom Swift or Don Sturdy.

I'll leave you to imagine what form his stories would have taken, but I believe that his heart would have guided him to the same themes of injustice and exploitation that served him so well in the Gilded Age.

It seems these days that hardly a season passes without news of some member's passing, and in this issue we are doubly bereaved.

Michael Morley and J. Randolph Cox were both esteemed and valuable members of this organization and the antiquarian juvenile book and dime novel collecting communities generally. They were also treasured friends and colleagues of many of us.

Whilst I never had the pleasure of meeting Randy Cox, I feel I've gained some insight into his dedication and devotion from reading some of his numerous articles for **Dime Novel Round-Up**. The publication became a life-long passion for him and his substantial contributions constitute a trove of scholarship the likes of which we may never see again. Randy was a prolific writer and an unparalleled dime novel authority, and his loss to that community is immeasurable.

I recall Mike Morley fondly from the conventions of 2014 and 2017. A both knowledgeable and personable guy, he was kind enough to sell me a first edition of *The Western Boy*, one of my earliest "scarce" Alger acquisitions, and one which nurtured in me the thought that others might not be beyond my reach. I was also fortunate to be able to purchase from Mike by mail order through his Carson City book shop, Morley's Books, a resource which I'm certain many of us found invaluable.

Both Randy and Mike leave behind admirable legacies of devotion and service to their community of bibliophiles and within these pages you will find retrospective articles penned by two of our own, detailing their lives and contributions, with memories and reflections on their impact and influence.

Enjoy this issue and allow me to wish you and yours a festive Thanksgiving and forthcoming winter holiday season!

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

2022 convention preview

*Boo!**Ghosts, hauntings, and the spooky spirits of Fredericksburg*

By Jack Bales, (PF-258)

Many of the details are set for "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg," next year's Horatio Alger Society convention in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Between now and June 2022, I will write a convention preview article for each issue of *Newsboy*, just like I did prior to the 2021 Fredericksburg convention.

As days grow shorter, evenings turn cooler, and children start to think about Halloween, I thought that for this issue I would combine history with hauntings and contribute a light, amusing article on some of the ghosts of Fredericksburg.

Although Fredericksburg is not one of America's most haunted cities, longtime residents are familiar with the eerie stories associated with the area's historic homes. Ever since I moved to Fredericksburg in 1980, I have always liked visiting Chatham Manor, the Georgian mansion built in 1771 and named for Great Britain's Sir William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham. Located in Stafford County, right across the Rappahannock River and Fredericksburg, Chatham was a colonial plantation and served as a Union hospital during the Civil War. In fact, visitors looking across the river now can see buildings in Fredericksburg, present when Clara Barton attended to wounded soldiers at Chatham.

The so-called "Lady in White" was an English girl whom her father brought to the mansion in the late 18th century in hopes of breaking off her romance with a British drysalter (a dealer in dried and salted meats and other products). The young man, though, had plans of his own and followed her to Fredericksburg, where they secretly made plans to elope. Late one night, the girl climbed from her window — not into her lover's arms, unfortunately, but those of George Washington, who was visiting at the



The ghost of "The Lady in White" purportedly walks every seven years on June 21 near her former residence, stately Chatham Manor, located in Stafford County, just across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Va.

time and was told of the planned elopement by a servant. The young man was arrested, and the girl's father took her back to England, where he made her marry someone he deemed more socially prominent than a mere drysalter.

She never forgot her lover, however, and vowed to return to Chatham on the anniversary of her death. She died on June 21, 1790, and has supposedly visited Chatham on June 21 every seven years since then. People have reported seeing her wearing a long white gown walking along the Rappahannock River on her way to the spot where she was supposed to have met her young man. That path is now known as the "Ghost Walk."

Speaking of George Washington, the building on Caroline Street now known as the Rising Sun Tavern was built as a residence by his brother, Charles, in 1760. It became a tavern in 1792 and also served as a post office and stagecoach stop. Tavern keeper John Frazier died in the 1790s, and the mischievous spirits of him and his wife are said to inhabit the tavern. Doors open and close by

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Convention preview

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themselves. Docents dressed in colonial garb report their dresses tugged and their caps pulled off their heads. One hostess said that she was once walking down the stairs when she felt as if the hem of her long dress was caught on something. Seeing nothing wrong, she called out, "All right, John, let go!" Immediately she felt her dress break free.

We catch up with George Washington again by walking a few blocks over to Washington Avenue, on which is situated the stately mansion Kenmore, built for Washington's sister, Betty, and her husband, Fielding Lewis. Lewis contributed much of his wealth toward supporting the American Revolution, and he was therefore constantly worried about money. He died in December 1781, two

months after British General Charles Cornwallis surrendered his troops at Yorktown. Although Lewis's family did not suffer financially, the man's ghost is purportedly seen in an upstairs room at Kenmore, seated at his desk and moodily poring over his account books. Heavy footsteps are often heard treading back and forth

across the room, and door knobs turn all by themselves.

These and other spectral spirits are featured in the "Fredericksburg Hauntings Ghost Tours," held during September and October every year. Chatham, the Rising Sun Tavern, and Kenmore are open to the public and are well-known tourist destinations.

I hope those attending "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg" can take advantage of the shopping and sightseeing that bring thousands

of visitors to the city annually. I look forward to seeing Horatio Alger Society members at our convention, held from Thursday, June 23, to Sunday, June 26, 2022.



The ghost of an early tavern-keeper is said to play practical jokes on visitors to Fredericksburg's Rising Sun Tavern.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill:

Like all dime novel and juvenile series books fans, I was surprised and saddened to hear of the death of Randy Cox. Randy was one of the most dedicated and productive of scholars. I especially appreciated his support and kindnesses to others just coming into these areas. When he took over as editor of the **Dime Novel Round-Up**, he continued to support my publication efforts with the same spirit of generosity as his predecessor, Eddie LeBlanc. I never saw him in a bad mood. I prize my signed copies of his *Dime Novel Companion* and *Man of Magic and Mystery: A Guide to the Work of Walter B. Gibson*.

I will miss seeing him in his Wild West apparel at Popular Culture Conferences, and I am sure that Eddie LeBlanc and Jack Dizer are welcoming him to the big Popular Culture Conference in the sky!

Sincerely,
David Kirk Vaughan (PF-831)
378 Sittre Drive
Castroville, TX 78009

MEMBERSHIP

Change of address

Kyoko Amano (PF-1049)
4801 NW Zac Lentz Pkwy.
Apt. 2403
Victoria, TX 77904

Kyoko has accepted a dean position at the University of Houston-Victoria.

Are you moving?

Send all address, phone and email updates to:

Horatio Alger Society
1004 School St.
Shelbyville, IN 46176

223 West 34th St. New York
 Feb 6, 1895 -
 Charles E. Hasbrooth, Esq.,
 My dear Sir,
 In reply to your note
 of inquiry as to my plans for
 the coming year, let me say that
 I shall contribute chiefly to the
 Argosy magazine, published by
 Frank A. Munsey, Porter
 and Coates, my regular publishers

will bring out two juvenile books,
 the titles not yet decided upon.
 I have under consideration a propo-
 sal to write a novel to appear in the
 fall. In addition to my juvenile
 books I ~~am~~ am the author of two
 novels, one published anonymously,
 each of which sold over 10,000
 copies - This encourages me to
 think of another -
 Yours very truly,
 Horatio Alger, Jr.

Example 2: Charles E. Hasbrook, Esq., My dear Sir: In reply to your note of inquiry as to my plans for the coming year, let me say that I shall contribute chiefly to the Argosy magazine, published by Frank A. Munsey. Porter and Coates, my regular publishers, will bring out two juvenile books, the titles not yet decided upon. I have under consideration a proposal to write a novel to appear in the Fall. In addition to my juvenile books I am the author of two novels, one published anonymously, each of which sold over 10,000 copies. This encourages me to think of another.

Letters from Horatio – Part 3; or, Alger pads his resumé

(Continued from Page 3)

into the hands of Porter & Coates in 1881.” The Eldora mentioned in the letter is likely the Boys’ Industrial School at Eldora, Iowa, relocating there permanently in 1872. The school is still in existence.

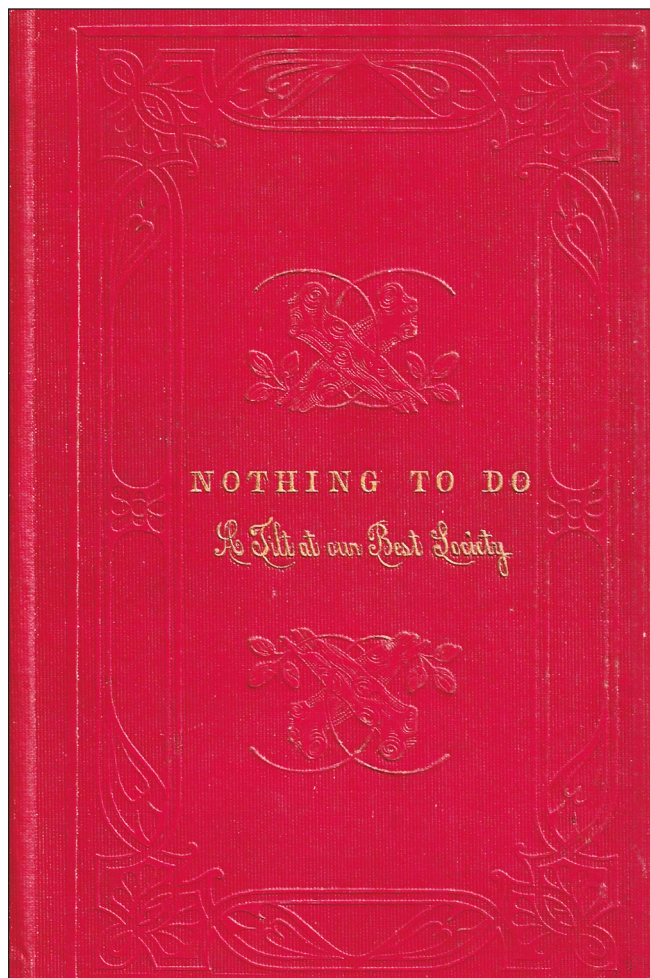
I imagine that Alger received many letters like this, either praising his works or requesting free copies of his books. In the latter case, Alger would invariably direct the writer to a local book dealer or, if Alger personally knew the youngster, would, on occasion, request his publisher to send books on his account.

The recipient of another letter, Colonel Charles E. Hasbrook (1847-1920), was the editor and manager of the **Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch** at the time of his death (see Example 2, above, for transcription).

Except for several years serving as Collector of Internal Revenue in Missouri, his primary vocation was journalism, with assignments in Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, Boston and New York at various newspapers as editor, manager and, in some cases, part owner. His title of Colonel was honorary, having it bestowed upon him by the Governor of Missouri for recognition of Hasbrook’s work with the National Guard, hence Alger’s reference to him as “Esquire” in his salutation.

Hasbrook asking a popular author about his literary plans seems typical for a newspaperman at the time (1895), but it’s even more relevant when Hasbrook’s avocation is revealed. In his obituary from the **Richmond Times-Dispatch**, dated August 19, 1920, it notes,

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Example 3: *Nothing to Do: A Tilt At Our Best Society*, published by James French & Company of Boston in 1857, with the book's frontispiece at right. There was only one printing by James French; at least seven binding colors have been noted.

Letters from Horatio – Part 3; or, Alger pads his resumé

(Continued from Page 7)

"He was a confirmed bibliophile, and his library, the result of discriminating selection, extending over a half-century contains some of the rarest books in the South. His *Virginiana*, made up of literature dealing with the foundation and development of the Old Dominion, gave evidence of his love for the State, which was his home during the later years of an active, useful life."²

In Alger's letter, he refers to his regular publishers, Porter & Coates, bringing out two [unnamed] juvenile books, most likely *Adrift in the City* and either *Frank Hunter's Peril* or *The Young Salesman*. Porter & Coates went out of business in 1895 and only issued a small printing of *Adrift in the City*. That book — and 11 subsequent first-edition titles — were issued by Henry T. Coates & Co., successor to Porter & Coates, between 1896 and 1903.

In the second paragraph, Alger mentions a "proposal to write a novel to appear in the Fall." This is, no doubt, *The Disagreeable Woman*, published by G. W. Dillingham in 1895. There was only one printing of this rare book by Dillingham and the only one to use Alger's pseudonym "Julian Starr."

The next sentence — "I am the author of two novels, one published anonymously, each of which sold over 10,000 copies" — is perplexing. One of the two novels is most certainly *From Canal Boy to President; or, The Boyhood and Manhood of James A. Garfield*, which Alger estimated sold 20,000 copies within a few months of publication.³ It was the first account of President Garfield to appear after his death in 1881 from an assassin's bullet and it enjoyed brisk sales for several months. But Alger's statement that one of his anonymous novels

was a best seller seems implausible, if not impossible.

Alger wrote three books anonymously. The first, *Nothing To Do: A Tilt At Our Best Society*, was issued by James French & Company of Boston in 1857 (see Example 3, page 8). This title was the second of six “Nothing” books all issued in the same year by other publishers and authors. WorldCat locates 32 institutional holdings and most advanced Alger collectors possess this book. *Nothing To Do* is not that difficult to find and there are usually four or five copies available from book dealers at any given time. Even if this book sold well, it is a book of satirical poetry and would not be considered a novel.

The second book, *Timothy Crump's Ward; or, The New Years Loan, and What Came of It*, was published by A. K. Loring in 1866 and is much more difficult to locate. WorldCat locates only three copies, all of them in wraps from Loring's **Railway Companions Series** (see Example 4, at right). I know of four copies in hardcover editions owned by fellow collectors.

The third anonymous book, *The New Schoolma'am; or, A Summer in North Sparta*, issued by Loring in 1877, is perhaps the most difficult to obtain (see Example 5, page 10). WorldCat lists four copies only and all issued by J. Ross Robertson (Toronto) in wraps in its **Cheap Series** format. Robertson, a notorious literary pirate, may have issued this title before the Loring edition.

I know three collectors who have the Loring book, also in wraps. Two copies examined were bound in aftermarket bindings, indicating that they were likely rebound from the first paper issue in 1877. A second edition in hardcover was announced in 1879, but given no extant copies it's possible that it was never issued.⁴

Given these facts, and the relative scarcity of the afore-

mentioned three titles, Alger's contention that one of his anonymous novels sold more than 10,000 copies is either due to a faulty memory or perhaps a bit of boasting. But a third possibility may exist, however improbable, that a heretofore unknown Alger novel is yet to be discovered.

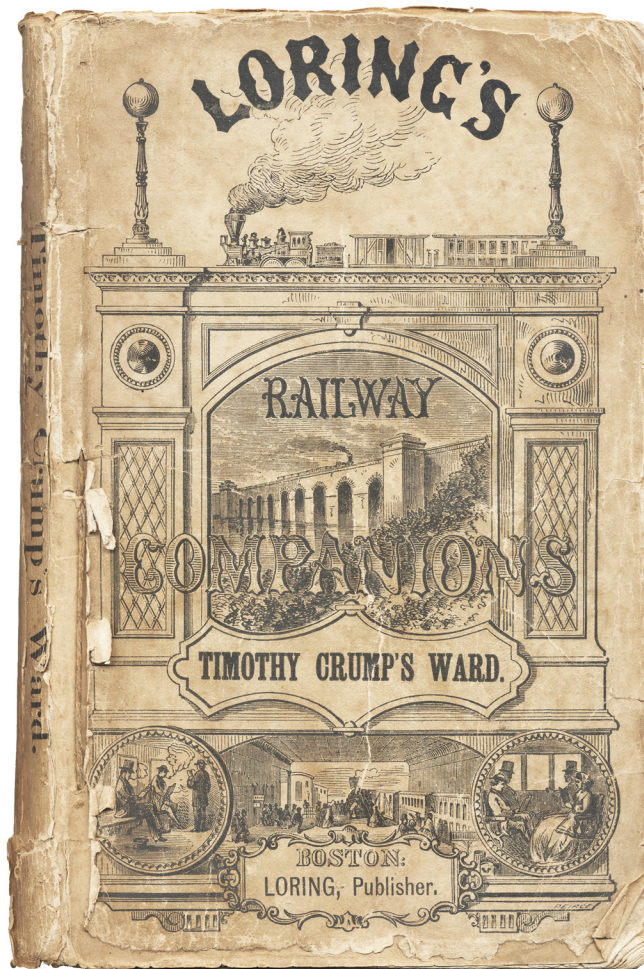
One possible candidate could be *How We Saved the Old Farm and How it Became a New Farm*, issued by Loring in 1879 in wraps (see Example 6, page 11). The author is listed as “A Young Farmer.” Alger researchers and biographers Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales posit that “there is extremely fragile, circumstantial evidence that Horatio Alger wrote the unsigned novel *How We Saved the Old Farm*, issued by Loring early in 1879. This book was deposited for copyright on 15 Feb. 1879, the same day as *Grand'ther Baldwin*, and it recapitulates a genealogical history similar to the Alger family history.”⁵

The story revolves around the widow Helen Reynolds and her three children: Clarence (age 16), Ned (age 14) and Alice (age 13). Her late husband, William, a farmer, had “been found dead upon the road, having apparently fallen beneath the wheels of the wagon in such a way that the wheels has passed over his neck and broken it instantly. What caused the fall none knew.”

In the opening chapter, the Reynolds family faces

a dilemma whether to sell the property and pay off the mortgage (held by Squire Grey in the nearby village of Brookfield) or remain on the farm and attempt to make a living. The oldest son, Clarence, after consulting with his mother and uncle, decides to stay on the family homestead and continue farming. He is described as

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Example 4: *Timothy Crump's Ward*, issued by Loring in 1866. Horatio Alger biographer Ralph Gardner states that the hardcover and softcover editions were probably issued simultaneously. Bob Bennett claims that the softcover edition was issued several months later. The subtitle of the paper edition was changed to *A Story of American Life*, giving credence to a separate (and later) printing. (Courtesy of NIU Repository.)

Letters from Horatio – Part 3; *or, Alger pads his resumé*

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“broad-shouldered and well-made, with an earnest look upon his face that showed that he would not be hindered in carrying out his plan.”

With the help of his younger brother, they commence improving the farm, building a new hennery and planting corn, potatoes, onions, beets and turnips. They raise cows, pigs, chickens and goats and sell the eggs, butter and meat. In addition to farming and livestock, Helen accepts boarders to supplement their income.

After the first year, the farm generated almost \$1,300 in profit, enough to pay off the \$500 mortgage with \$800 left. After three years, the farm ledger showed a net profit of \$6,500.

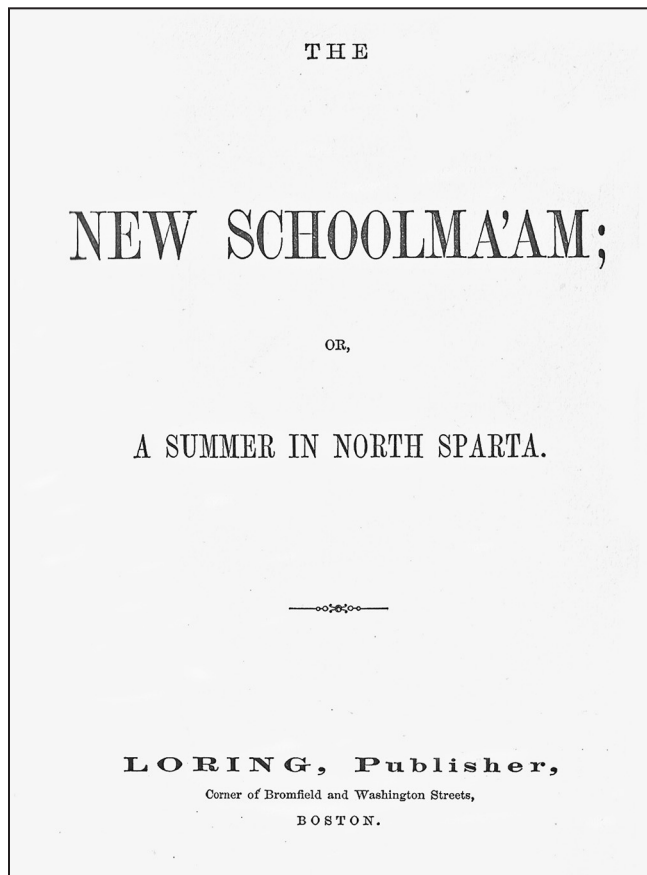
Although the plot is heavily dependent on farming techniques and animal husbandry, Alger could have easily gleaned this information from his father, who was forced to augment his mediocre ministerial salary by cultivating a hundred-acre tract near Chelsea, Massachusetts, for several years starting in 1840. Perhaps young Horatio even assisted his father with some of the chores.

As mentioned by Scharnhorst and Bales, there are similarities between Alger’s family history and the fictional one depicted in the book. In the narrative, Clarence recounts the story of his paternal grandfather, Thomas Reynolds, who “had owned a large tract of land, from which he had given my Uncle Thomas, his oldest son, the land which was now his farm upon which he lived.”

Alger’s paternal grandfather, James Alger (1770-1844), “owned and lived on a farm in that part of Bridgewater [Massachusetts] called Scotland.”⁶ His oldest son, Adin Alger (1791-1874) — Alger’s uncle — “was a farmer, and lived in that part of Bridgewater called Scotland, where he d[ied] July, 1874, in his 83rd year.”⁷

In the book, Thomas Reynolds’ second son, James, after receiving \$500 from his father, “first settled in Western New York, then moved to Ohio, and, when last heard from, had sold out there and was going to... California.” This parallels the exploits of Horatio Alger Sr.’s second son, James (1836-1884), Alger’s younger brother. Described by Scharnhorst and Bales as having “a case of acute wanderlust,” he traveled to Peru on business and later lived in Colorado and California.⁸

Thomas Alger, Horatio’s distant ancestor, settled in Taunton, Massachusetts, sometime in the vicinity of 1655. He later moved to Bridgewater, Massachusetts.⁹ In the story, Clarence describes that his paternal grandfather “was



Example 5: *The New Schoolma'am*, issued by Loring in 1877. Despite an announcement of a hardcover edition in 1879, none have surfaced to date. This story was later featured in *Munsey's Magazine* in March 1892 with the new title, “A Fancy of Hers.”

descended from one of the early settlers of Brookfield.”

Although Alger’s boy hero is present, in the form of protagonist Clarence, the story closely follows earlier adult morality tales composed by Alger, whereupon virtuous and hardworking characters raise their station to middle class, not accumulate great wealth. The reckoning of income, expenses and profit from selling livestock and crops is tediously detailed and exacting throughout the story, a pecuniary trait found in many of Alger’s works, including his juvenile tales.

Another factor to consider is Alger’s long-held (and well documented) desire to write adult fiction. With sales slipping from his overused plots from his juvenile stories, it appears that Alger made a concerted effort to transition to write for adults in the mid-1870s.

He collaborated with his cousin, Rev. William Roundseville Alger, on the *Life of Edwin Forrest, The American Tragedian*, issued by J. B. Lippincott & Co. in 1877.¹⁰ Later that year, Loring (and J. Ross Robertson) published *The*

New Schoolma'am and, in 1878, Alger completed another adult novel, *Mabel Parker; or, The Hidden Treasure*. The book was never published during Alger's life as the manuscript was rejected by Street and Smith and, presumably, Loring also.¹¹ Then, in 1879, Loring published *How We Saved the Old Farm*, another unsigned adult melodrama. This story fits the pattern of Alger trying to make the transition but, once again, falling short.

If Alger, or any of his publishers, maintained records of income or sales, they are long lost to history. His publishers surely kept some kind of records of book sales as that was how they calculated royalty payments to Alger and other authors.

The Lancaster County (Pennsylvania) Historical Society has in its archives several contracts between Alger and A. K. Loring (Boston) and also Porter & Coates (Philadelphia). The first contract with Loring, executed sometime in 1869, called for a royalty payment to Alger of "Twelve and one half cents on each and every volume sold." A later contract, executed in mid 1870, reduced his royalty payments to "Ten cents on each and every volume sold." Both contracts stated that "copies given to the newspapers [are] exempt from copyright."

In 1882, a contract between Alger and his new publisher, Porter & Coates, reduced his royalty payments even further to "eight (8) cents per copy" starting with its initial title, *Ben's Nugget*.

Not surprisingly, none of these contracts contain aggregate sales of titles or royalty amounts paid to Alger. If they did, it might provide some indication of sales volume(s), possibly corroborating Alger's claim of one of his anonymous books selling more than 10,000 copies.

If future research establishes that *How We Saved the Old Farm* was, in fact, penned by another author, and Alger's assertion that one of his anonymous books was a best seller is accurate, then perhaps this book is still out there, waiting to be unearthed.

Next: Letters from Horatio – Part 4; or, Alger calls the doctor.

* * *

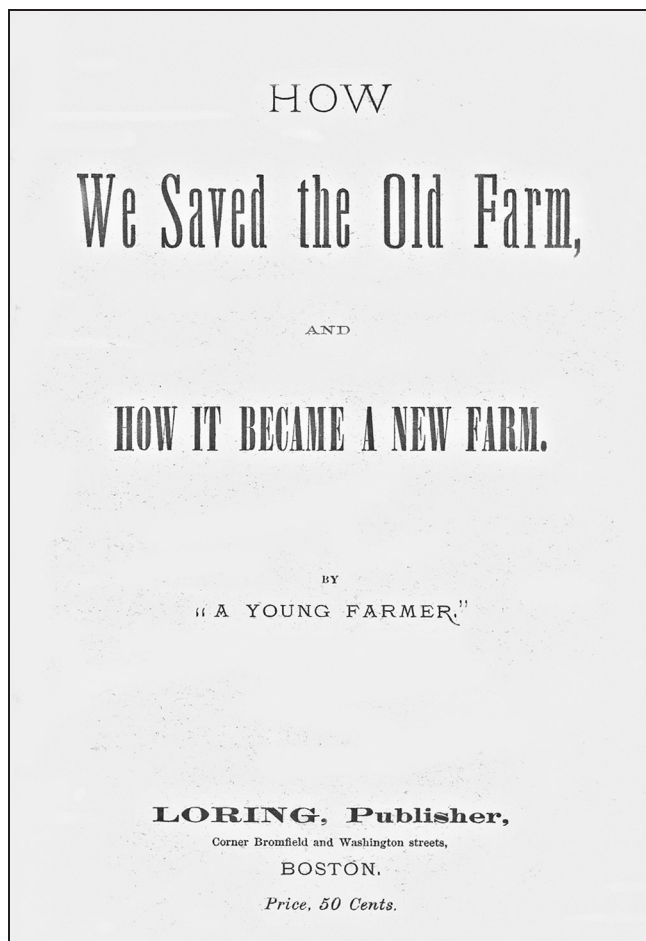
Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Jack Bales (PF-258) for his assistance and input with this article and for his intimate knowledge of WorldCat and other library resources.

NOTES

1. Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales. *Horatio Alger, Jr., An Annotated Bibliography of Comment and Criticism*. 1981. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. p.3.

2. Obituary of Charles E. Hasbrook, **Richmond Times-Dispatch**, Aug. 19, 1920, pages 1 and 3.

3. Gary Scharnhorst, with Jack Bales. *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* 1985. Bloomington, IN: Indiana



Example 6: *How We Saved the Old Farm, and How it Became a New Farm*, issued by Loring in 1879. The front cover replicates the title page, but for the price; the rear cover contains book advertisements. WorldCat locates only two copies in institutions. I know of two collectors who have copies.

University Press, p. 121.

4. **The Publishers' Weekly**, New York, Vol. XVI, No. 1, Whole No. 390, July 5, 1879, p. 4.

5. Scharnhorst, with Bales, p. 181.

6. Arthur M. Alger. *A Genealogical History of That Branch of the Alger Family Which Springs from Thomas Alger of Taunton and Bridgewater, in Massachusetts*. 1876. Boston: Press of David Clapp & Son, p. 15.

7. A. M. Alger, p. 27.

8. Scharnhorst, with Bales, p. 124.

9. A. M. Alger, p. 5.

10. Bob Bennett. *Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. 1980. Mt. Pleasant, MI: Flying Eagle Publishing Co., p. 80.

11. Gary Scharnhorst. *Horatio Alger, Jr.* 1980. Boston: Twayne Publishers, p. 61.

Ex-president Morley remembered

By Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)

Longtime member and former Horatio Alger Society president Michael Morley died on September 16 of liver cancer. When diagnosed in May, Mike's cancer was already advanced. He had gone skiing with his wife, Irena Belenky, in February and was hiking as late as April, at which time he noticed he was feeling unusually tired. Mike's mother, Maggie, was able to visit with him around the beginning of September. The weekend of October 2-3, Michael's ashes were scattered at a beautiful spot he dearly loved, and a celebration of his life took place at Skipolini Restaurant in Reno.

Mike and Irena (who works at NBC in Reno) had been living in Reno for about five years. A number of his friends shared memories and looked at photographs that Mike's mother brought to the event. He served three terms on the Board of Directors (1997-2000, 2013-2016, and 2019-2022), was vice president of H.A.S. from 2004-2006 and president from 2006-2008. He was the first webmaster for H.A.S. and was instrumental in setting up the Society's first website. Mike and his wife of 20 years, Janice, hosted our Carson City convention, "Finding a Fortune in Carson Valley" (Nevada) May 15-18, 2008, shortly before Janice's sudden death in early September of that year.

Michael attended his first Alger conference, hosted by Chris DeHaan, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1994 — it was my first as well (as it was for Bob Kersch). I quickly became friends with Mike and Janice. We almost always made plans to have dinner on Thursday or Friday night at the convention, and sometimes went exploring around the area one morning or afternoon. Then there were the evenings, talking for hours in their room over a drink or two about life, travel, politics; all sorts of things made for interesting discussions there.

At the 2006 Omaha convention, we were joined by the Hurricane Katrina rescue dog they adopted. I felt that something was missing when the Morleys weren't able to attend our conventions.

Bob Petitto vividly remembers how warm and welcoming Mike and Janice were when he attended his first H.A.S. convention in Omaha. Bob recalls that they invited him up to their room for pre-dinner cocktails, just to get acquainted. Mike seemed genuinely interested in Bob's

background and Optic interests. "He was very glad I had joined. This 'reaching out' left quite a positive impression on a newbie like me," he reported.

When I attended professional meetings in San Francisco, I got to see Mike and sometimes Janice over dinner. Over the years, I bought a few first editions from Mike, although some of his volumes were beyond my means. He also gifted me a few handsome volumes. I never got to see his personal collection. I tried not to cross Mike when he was determined to acquire a particular book at the H.A.S. auction — he was intense and looked fierce when he was in the chase! But

because we were friends, we would often negotiate who would, or would not bid on specific items, and that worked well.

Mike was born in Berkeley, California and spent his early years there. He moved to the San Diego area and graduated from La Jolla High School in 1974. Before he went to the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1978, Mike worked for a bit as a circus carney and also worked in a fishery in Alaska. At Santa Cruz, he studied humanities and graduated in 1981.

From 1988-2006, he lived in Fremont, California. He spent 25 years in the high-tech field and was senior tools engineer at eBay from 2000-2006, when he decided to



Mike Morley (and friend) enjoy a quiet moment in his antiquarian bookstore in Carson City, Nevada.

retire from the long, grueling hours of work. Mike and Janice moved to Gardnerville, Nevada in 2006 with their horses and dogs. Mike pursued his long-time dream of owning and running a bookstore, first with Carson Valley Books in Gardnerville (2006-2011) and then establishing Morley's Books in Carson City's Historic District (2011-2021), in a spot he had had his eye on for some time. Morley's Books was a block from the Nevada state capitol building, and he lived above the store.

Some years after Janice's death, Mike met Irena Belenky, who was born in Moscow, Russia, and held a degree in electrical engineering with a specialty in TV and movies. Her work was in Reno, and Mike moved to Reno about five years ago, around the time they married. Irena attended the H.A.S. convention that Barry Schoenborn hosted in Sacramento in 2017, where I met her. The three of us visited the state capitol building and went out to lunch. I was pleased to see how happy they were. That convention was the last time I saw Mike, although all three of us were in touch occasionally on Facebook.

The contents of Morley's Books were put up for sale in a going out of business sale on August 13, 2021, owing to Mike's declining health. The inventory included not only the books but furniture, bookcases, and antiques. The building itself, which was erected in the early 1860s and served as the office of the first the governor of Nevada, is for sale (201 W. King Street) as of this writing.

Apart from his passion for collecting, buying and selling antiquarian books, Mike loved to travel, both abroad and in the U.S. He was an outdoor enthusiast who loved to ski, bike, and hike.

I am certain that all of us who knew Mike will greatly miss his presence among us.



Host Mike Morley presents the Richard R. Seddon Award to Carol Nackenoff at the 2008 H.A.S. convention, "Finding a Fortune in Carson Valley," in Carson City, Nevada.

J. Randolph Cox, 1936-2021



J. Randolph Cox (PF-598), at left, poses with his predecessor as editor of **Dime Novel Round-Up**, Edward T. LeBlanc (PF-015), at the 2004 H.A.S. convention in DeKalb, Illinois. The two combined to hold the editorship of the magazine for 61 years.

A true giant in our field

By James D. Keeline (PF-898)

John Randolph Cox was born on October 7, 1936, and grew up in the small town of Albert Lea, Minnesota, where his brother still lives. Although this was well after the dime novel era, it was one of the fields that would dominate Randy's reading, collecting, research and writing. He passed away on September 14 in Northfield, Minn., a little before his 85th birthday.

Among fans of the dime novels, story papers, pulp magazines, and juvenile series books, Randy was known as an expert in these and a long-time editor of the **Dime Novel Round-Up** magazine, succeeding Eddie LeBlanc as the third editor (1994-2012) since the publication began in 1931. On the pages of this publication and behind the scenes through letters, phone calls, and emails, he was frequently asked for information about one line or another of stories. He was unfailingly generous with his time and expertise.

Randy first became a subscriber to the **Round-Up** in October 1964 when he was 28. A letter of his was published in the June 1965 issue. He said he had been collecting dime novels for about ten years and he had learned of them 11 or 12 years before when he was eight or nine years of age. He discovered one of his greatest

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J. Randolph Cox

(Continued from Page 13)

interests, Nick Carter, by listening to the radio shows and longed to read the original stories. Around the same time he learned of Frank Merriwell, again discovering the character on radio. To this letter, editor Eddie LeBlanc remarked that he “probably takes the honors for being the youngest dime novel collector.”

The next issue in July contained his first article, a story of sorts called “Strange Encounter,” which related a time he was waiting in a railroad depot and dozed off. He was approached by a much older man. They debated the merits and flaws of the modern Nick Carter “spy killer” novels. At the end our narrator was given an 1890s-style calling card printed “Nicholas Carter, Investigator.”

By November 1965 he revealed to the readers that he was a librarian at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. He placed an issue of **Tip Top Weekly** in a display case with other football memorabilia for that year’s homecoming game. Of all of the items in the case, the dime novel received the most comment. In April 1967 he mentioned his interest in the “old Shadow and Doc Savage comic strip series.” In the next issue he expressed an interest to read back issues of the **Round-Up** and mentioned another one of his life-long interests, writing an article about Sherlock Holmes for the **Baker Street Journal**.

He also began a subscription to **Collectors’ Digest**, a British publication somewhat similar to the **Round-Up**, but focused on British story papers and characters like Sexton Blake. He wrote in to compliment them on informing him about the publications he was just discovering.

He discovered the Hess Collection of dime novels at the University of Minnesota by January 1969, where he was able to read many of the Nick Carter stories he had not yet managed to collect. In later years he volunteered his time in sorting and organizing the collection, and he recently donated most of his personal collection to the Hess holdings. Randy’s Walter B. Gibson collection was donated to Gibson’s alma mater, Colgate University.

Over the years, Randy authored numerous additional articles for **Dime Novel Round-Up** and other publications. They included several **Round-Up** bibliographical supplements on different phases of the publication of stories about Nick Carter.

Both he and Deidre Johnson had joined the Horatio Alger Society by mid-1980 as members PF-598 and PF-596, respectively. Randy had learned of the Society from Jack Dizer, Jack Bales and Eddie LeBlanc. Randy wrote the introduction to Dizer’s *Tom Swift & Company: Boys’ Books by Stratemeyer and Others* (1982, McFarland).

When Lydia Schurman founded the Popular Culture Association section for dime novels, pulps and series books in 1984, Randy made two presentations. He presented or attended for many years thereafter, serving as area chair to organize the panels starting with 1986-1992. Once he discovered the *Legend* (1995) TV series, he was routinely seen in an off-white beaded suit similar to the one worn by Richard Dean Anderson as Nicodemus Legend and his dime novel-writing alter-ego, Ernest Pratt.

I first met Randy and many other researchers and writers about dime novels and series books at the Hess Symposium in the summer of 1991 at the University of Minnesota. At that meeting, Randy mentioned the need for a “dime novel companion,” a project he worked on for many years that was ultimately published in 2000 by Greenwood Press. This placed in my mind the idea of writing a *Series Book Encyclopedia*, a project I’m still working on. This is just one of ways that he inspired and encouraged me in the time I knew him.

And yet, this only scratches the surface of the many research and collecting communities of which he was a part. He was an expert in detective fiction, literature in translation, pulp magazines, and much more. He contributed articles to encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries and a bewildering range of periodicals, including **English Literature in Transition**, **The Armchair Detective**, the **Wilson Library Bulletin**, the **Baker Street Journal**, **Baker Street Miscellanea**, and **Clues: A Journal of Detection**. He was the editor, co-author, or author of many books in his fields of interest, including a source book on H.G. Wells, and biographies of other literary figures such as *The Shadow* creator Walter B. Gibson.

Meanwhile, he was there to provide advice and encouragement to anyone who asked. Even after he ceased being the full-time editor of the **Dime Novel Round-Up** in 2012, he continued to provide advice to the publication. Installments from his new book on Nick Carter are currently being published in the **Round-Up**, and the upcoming Winter issue will be dedicated to him, his accomplishments and contributions to the field, and memories from the many subscribers who knew him.

After the Hess Symposium on Dime Novels in 1991, many of us were treated to a visit to Randy’s Northfield home and his amazing collections. In addition to books and dime novels, someone spotted a kid’s tricycle on a high shelf. When asked about it he replied that it was his, and someone quipped, “didn’t you break anything as a kid?” This gave us all a laugh and a smile to his face — the smile I saw each time I saw him at a PCA or another conference. We will miss him but won’t forget him and his many writings in many fields that will influence people for decades. He casts a long shadow, and that is fitting because he was a giant in his field.

Stratemeyer's venture with publisher Wessels

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

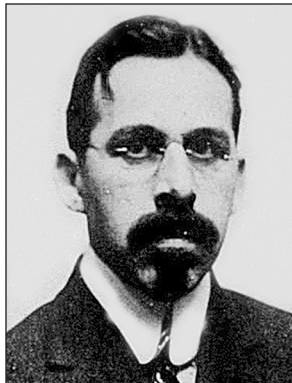
From his teenage years, Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930) had decided he wanted to be a writer, and after several hit-and-miss attempts while growing up in northern New Jersey, he finally had his first serialized story issued in a professional publication. It was "Victor Horton's Idea," which appeared in James Elverson's weekly story paper **Golden Days** in five installments from Nov. 2 to Nov. 30, 1889 (Vol. 10). The 18,000-word story for boys earned its author the then-handsome sum of \$75.

In addition to **Golden Days**, within the following decade, Stratemeyer had stories and serials appearing in such publications as Frank A. Munsey's **Argosy**, Street & Smith's **Good News** (where he also worked for a brief time as an editor), Norman L. Munro's **Golden Hours** and others.

But Stratemeyer wanted to write books, and he found that by selling his serial stories to book publishers was a good way to start. But the phrase "fits and starts" is more appropriate to apply to his early efforts.

Stratemeyer's first book started out as "Richard Dare's Venture, or Striking out for himself," an 1891 **Argosy** serial, issued in a handsomely bound book edition by The Merriam Company in 1894 as the first volume in its projected **Bound to Succeed Series**.

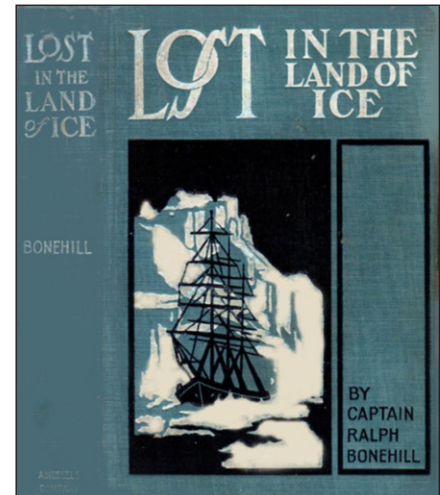
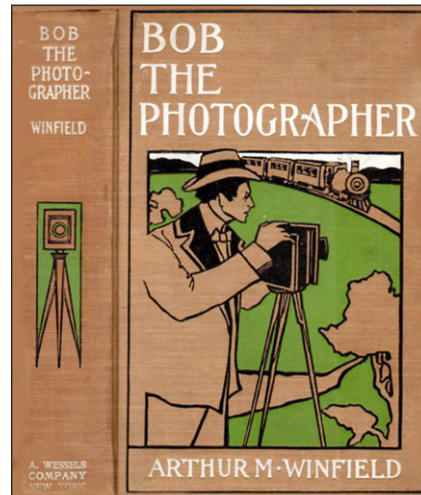
At about the same time, Merriam published the 1892 **Argosy** serial "Luke Foster's Grit; or, The Last Cruise of the Spitfire" to launch the **Ship and Shore Series**, using the inverted title *Last Cruise of the*



Adolph Wessels
1869-1933

Spitfire; or, Luke Foster's Strange Voyage.

In early 1895, Merriam followed with *Oliver Bright's Search; or, The Mystery of a Mine*, as the second title in its **Bound to Succeed Series**, and *Reuben Stone's Discovery; or The Young Miller of Torrent Bend*, as the second volume in the **Ship and Shore Series**, both from other **Argosy** serials. The firm also listed an additional title in each series as "In Press." However, shortly thereafter,



Edward Stratemeyer's *Bob the Photographer* and *Lost in the Land of Ice*, were initially published as serials in *Good News* (1893-94) and *Golden Hours* (1900-91), respectively. They first appeared as books by A. Wessels Company in 1902.

Merriam went out of business, and Stratemeyer had to find new publishers for the four titles. Boston's Lee & Shepard took them on in 1899-1900.

Stratemeyer had similar problems with what became known as the **Bound to Win Series**, introduced as books by publisher William L. Allison in 1897. There were 12 titles, with four each under his own name and his main personal pseudonyms, "Arthur M. Winfield" and "Capt. Ralph Bonehill" — again, from serials in publications such as **Good News**, **Bright Days** and **Argosy**.

However, by early 1900 Allison went under, and Stratemeyer had to find new homes for those 12 books. This often complex tale of Stratemeyer's first book-publishing efforts is told eloquently in John T. Dizer's **Newsboy** article, "Merriam, Allison — and a little Alger" (July-August 2002, Vol. XL, No. 4).

However, this article will focus on a less-familiar tale of how Stratemeyer continued to seek viable book publishers for his serialized stories.

It wasn't until 1898, when he launched the Spanish-American War-based **Old Glory Series** for Boston's Lee & Shepard, and then, a year later, when his famous **Rover Boys Series** made its debut under the imprint of The Mershon Company, that Stratemeyer found publishers that were in it for longer than a year or two. The timing was perfect, because both the **Old Glory Series** and **Rover Boys** were conceived specifically as books, not serials converted into books.

Yet, he still had his ups and downs finding pub-

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Stratemeyer and publisher Wessels

(Continued from Page 15)

lishers who could stay the course. One example was his deal with the A. Wessels Company of New York, which had a brief encounter with two Stratemeyer serials published as books. They were *Bob, the Photographer* and *Lost in the Land of Ice*. And like Merriam and Allison, Stratemeyer's deal with Wessels was short-lived.

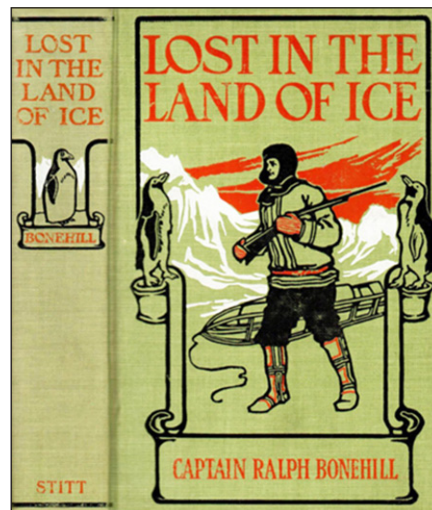
Adolph Wessels was born in Germany on Nov. 27, 1869, and he immigrated to the United States with his family on Nov. 27, 1875. Settling in New York, he had several jobs with various publishers before starting a partnership with M. F. Mansfield, their firm publishing literary works and periodicals, plus a series of guide books about cities in Europe. Mansfield left in January 1900, and a month later, the firm became the A. Wessels Company. Wessels died in Brooklyn on April 26, 1933.

Bob, the Photographer began life as the serial "Camera Bob; or, The Thrilling Adventures of a Traveling Photographer." It appeared under Stratemeyer's own name in Street & Smith's *Good News* (Vol. 7, Nos. 179-194) during the time Stratemeyer was an editor there. Wessels re-copyrighted the title in 1902 as *Bob, the Photographer*, using Stratemeyer's "Winfield" pen name.

The book *Lost in the Land of Ice* originally appeared as the serial "Lost in the Land of Ice; or, Bob Baxter at the South Pole." It was originally published in *Golden Hours* between Dec. 1, 1900 and Jan. 26, 1901 (Nos. 670-678). Stratemeyer's pseudonym "Roy Rockwood" was used for the serial, but when Wessels re-copyrighted it as a book in 1902, it used the "Bonehill" pen name with a new subtitle, *Daring Adventures Around the South Pole*.

During early negotiations in May 1902 with Wessels, Stratemeyer had also submitted the *Golden Hours* serial "Rival Ocean Divers," but in early December 1902 Wessels rejected the latter title because the firm's fall quota of juvenile books had been filled.

The two books did not sell well at all, and on April 8, 1903, Wessels offered to sell the printing plates and cover dies for both books back to Stratemeyer, stating: "The books are a little out of our line and we have not done



The rare 1910 dust jacket, above, for the Grosset & Dunlap *Enterprise Books* series. This was an eight-volume publisher's series by various authors, including Edward Stratemeyer's *Bob the Photographer* and *Lost in the Land of Ice*, initially issued in book form by A. Wessels in 1902. After Stratemeyer bought back the printing plates and cover dies from Wessels, he took the two books to William Stitt Publishing Co. (at left) in 1905. The cover designs were changed.

as well as we had anticipated with them." The following January, Stratemeyer allowed Wessels to drop the retail price to 75 cents, with any royalty to be 10 percent.

After extended negotiations over price, Stratemeyer bought back the plates, cover dies and illustrations for \$150 through a deal with the Wessels firm's H. Stewart Stoll, informing him in on Jan. 17, 1905, about the new firm of William M. Stitt. Stratemeyer planned to transfer the two Wessels titles, plus other books, to Stitt.

Thus, the Stratemeyer-Wessels arrangement ended, and in 1905 *Bob, the Photographer* and *Lost in the Land of Ice* entered the Mershon complex of Stitt, Mershon (after Stitt) and Chatterton-Peck. Several lawsuits later, in 1908, Stratemeyer took some 50 books to Grosset & Dunlap, with the two Wessels titles part of his eight-volume omnibus *Enterprise Books* series.

Lost in the Land of Ice and *Bob, the Photographer* finally ended up as volumes 122 and 123 in Street & Smith's *Alger Series* paperback issues in the 1920s and 1930s.