

SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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A newsletter

(Non--profit)

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SUGGESTED ALGER BOOK VALUES

A statement prepared for the NEWSBOY by Ralph D. Gardner, author of the Biography and Bibliography of HORATIO ALGER, or The American Hero Era, (Fayside Press - 1964).

"From reactions I received from collectors, dealers, libraries and universities, there has been overwhelming approval of that aspect of my book. For one thing, I indicate reading copies as still being very inexpensive, and I make clear you can still pick up Algers for a nickel or dime at rummage sales and for maybe a quarter a lot at church and country auctions. But my pricing is definitely a great benefit to all collectors.

For one thing, if dealers were to be misled to believe that Algers were still worth only pennies, then they would have no incentive to search for them, and those that still remain may go undiscovered until they are discarded or deteriorate completely. And for searching for these fine rarities, you---and all the Society members---will agree dealers should get a fair price for their efforts. From the point of view of collectors, they now can be proud of the value of their collections of Horatio Alger's works. The prices I listed were not made up by me but were, as clearly pointed out in the book, based upon prices brought at book auctions, prices listed in catalogs of reliable dealers or in private offers from dealers. In some cases I disagree with prices asked, and so state. Naturally, I had to estimate values of some items that were never publicly offered, but a study of the values I indicate will show these are completely in line with the others.

My feeling is that some of those who object to my listing values are, nevertheless, well aware of the real values of Algers, but prefer that others should not have this knowledge. That isn't being fair. It's a fact that my bibliography, with values indicated, has made it worthwhile for many dealers to seek them who never handled Algers before. It has encouraged schools, universities and libraries who never had much previous interest in Horatio to at last increase efforts to collect and preserve his works-- This is definitely of great value, not

only to collectors, but to our heritage, to the record of Alger's efforts, and something to leave for our descendants.

Collectors write to tell me that since my book came out they find it easier to get Algers, as owners are digging them out and are offering them to the public. Dealers are pleased that they can now try to get fair prices for items that they never could afford to search and advertise for previously.

In the long run my publishing of the values will benefit all who have a genuine interest in Horatio, whether it be to buy, sell, or collect. This is already clearly indicated in only the few months since my book was published."

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Since Ralph's book came out I have been able to upgrade my own Alger book collection and add new titles for a total of 117 at prices to which I do not object, from collectors within our Society. Ralph by now, has returned from a scheduled trip to Marlboro, where he was invited to attend and participate in an anniversary celebration honoring the Alger family while residents there. My own TV appearance and museum exhibit in Kalamazoo, resulted in a few inquiries and offers of some of the less desirable Alger editions I have been asked to lecture at a neighborhood Historical Society meeting at a date when weather conditions permit.

My thanks for your co-operation in returning the congratulatory postal cards. The messages were unique and inspiring. They gave me an idea; and with the artistic ability of my wife, we jointly prepared one ourselves. On the address side of the card, a facsimile of a gold watch and chain was drawn, and attached to my ALGERTON postmark. Instead of the usual numerals on the dial, we used the 12 letters in Horatio's name, with the hands separating the two names. In the message, I referred to Horatio as "Man of the hour in his day." All cards will be on display at our Mendota Affair, and our Alger observance in South Natick.

Gilbert Westgard, PF-024, announces his marriage as of now, and now employed as a bank teller. His new address is: 9249 Barberry Lane, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018



MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

(Lack of interest) PF-011  
(Lack of interest) PF-012

Mr. Charles M. Clapp, PF-013 T- 83  
Box No. 103  
White Horse Beach, Mass. 02381

(Lack of interest) PF-014  
Mr. Eddie Le Blanc, PF-015 T-unknown  
87 School Street,  
Fall River, Mass. 02720

(Lack of interest) PF-016

Mr. Don Wallace, PF-017 T-120  
1254 Edmund  
St. Paul, Minnesota

(Lack of interest) PF-018  
(Lack of interest) PF-019

Mr. Milton R. Salls, PF-020 T-117  
HERKIMER HOME R3  
Little Falls, New York 13365

Will Partic'lar Friends -021 through -030  
please furnish me with title totals  
before March 1st.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Dr. David J. Thompson, PF-112 T-107  
214 Rodeo,  
Salinas, California 93202

Mr. Maurice G. Phillips, PF-113  
1610 N. Prospect Ave., T-unknown  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

CORRECTION - Gilbert Gardner, PF-108 in-  
forms me that I erred last month. His  
grandfather, Lemuel, was a personal  
friend of Horatio; and an Alger hero by  
the name of "Bert" was named for Gilbert's  
own father, Herbert Lawson Gardner.

David, PF-112 heard of us in Collectors  
News over a year ago and a recent revival  
of interest inspired him to contact us.  
He is busily engaged as Research Director  
for Ferry-Morse Seed Company but takes  
time to reread his Alger books and ac-  
quire new copies and new titles. He has  
196 duplicates in addition to 107 titles.  
He also collects the works of John Buchan,  
Eugene Manlove Rhodes, Frederick Faust,  
(Max Brand et al.), F.R. Burroughs, and a  
host of other authors of juvenile fiction.  
He has a few Alger stories in serial form  
which were never issued in book form.  
Born in Indiana, 1934. Attended schools  
in Michigan and Idaho. Received B.S. &  
M.S. from University of Idaho, and Ph.D.  
from Cornell University.

Maurice, PF-113 was informed of our news-  
letter through contacts with Ralph Gard-  
ner. He and his wife plan to attend our  
Mendota meeting. He is also interested in  
John Steinbeck, Horace Gregory, D.H.  
Lawrence, Harry Thornton Moore, William  
Dean Howells, Knut Hamsun and George Eliot.  
Please contact him for further details.

We have been informed by friends of the  
family that PF-056, Paul J. Schmidt, Sr.  
passed away on November 12, 1964; I have  
no information regarding his age, but I  
do know he had enjoyed the newsletter for  
the past two years, and loved to re-read  
any Alger book he could get, and so we  
close the file on the first Partic'lar  
Friend to pass.

Walter P. Larson, PF-111, our new Western  
States Representative informs me that he  
accepts the appointment, subject to your  
approval in Mendota, which he hopes to be  
able to attend. He says his middle name  
is 'Park' and all his friends at home call  
him that and he prefers it. He wants all  
his Partic'lar friends to address him ac-  
cordingly. Park now has 25 titles and he  
would like to hear from any PF who has  
duplicates for sale. I am sure Park is  
very modest in reporting his activities  
as our representative, still they are  
very impressive. He was interviewed on  
Salt Lake Radio Station KSL in remem-  
brance of Alger's birthday anniversary,  
for three minutes, January 18th. He ap-  
peared on Salt Lake TV Channel 7 for 15  
minutes on January 27, and was instru-  
mental in obtaining two columns about  
Alger in the Salt Lake Desert News (else-  
where in the news, we received honorable  
mention in the Jersey Journal, through  
the co-operation of Gilbert Gardner and  
Martin Gately; and another two-article  
spread in the Revere Journal, written by  
our own Jenny Breedveld.) Park suggests  
that we modify point one of our proposed  
creed ("Preserve the good name of Horatio  
Alger Jr.") as follows: "Present Horatio  
Alger Jr. as the great man we know him  
to be." Park feels there is much to be  
done in this area to overcome past pub-  
licity, which without a doubt has been  
effective in molding public opinion. I  
predict that PF Park will be a great  
asset to the future of our Society.

RAGGED DICK FUNDContributions

Previous balance reported:	\$165.00
Item #67 \$3.00 #69 \$2.00	
68 2.00 70 2.00	9.00
Interest added (January 1965)	.81
New Balance:	\$174.81

ALGER MEMORIAL OBSERVANCE (1965)

Item #2 Roy L. Wendell PF-090	\$ 2.00
#3 Morris Olsen PF-106	2.00
#4 Charlie Clapp PF-013	2.00

BOOKS FOR REVERE

(none)

I have pledged a copy of Ragged Dick and  
Helen Ford as soon as they can be removed  
and replaced in my local museum exhibit.

BULLETIN

We have a prospect of another Partic'lar  
Friend from Birmingham, Alabama which will  
be a new state represented. Our thanks to  
PF-032, Ernest P. Sanford for this pros-  
pect. OUR GOAL - 50 STATES REPRESENTED.



An Alger short story contributed from the collection of Gilbert K. Westgard II,

THE KING AND ABBOT --by Horatio Alger Jr.

Probably no more unscrupulous or exacting king ever sat upon the English throne than King John, the unworthy brother of the chivalric Coeur de Lion. He was continually devising some new scheme by which he might extort money from his subjects to supply his extravagance. The chronicles of the time relate the many instances in which he subjected to torture wealthy Jews, who then monopolized most of the traffic carried on in the kingdom. But even taxation and the Jews could not always satisfy the rapacious temper of the king. He was one day consulting with one of his ministers about fresh exactions, to be levied in the form of a tax upon the people.

"I am afraid," said the prudent minister, shaking his head, "that it would hardly be wise."

"And why not?" demanded the king, impatiently, pausing in his walk up and down the audience chamber.

"If you will permit me to say so," returned the minister, evidently a little in fear of the king's hasty temper, "there are already decided symptoms of dissatisfaction among the people."

"So they grumble, do they, the caitiffs?" exclaimed the king. "Well, what do they say?"

"Since you command me to speak, your majesty, you must pardon me if the words prove not altogether pleasant to your ear. Remember it is not I that say them."

"Go on," said John, with impatience, "I know all that. Tell me what they say."

"They say," quoth the minister, "that you are the greatest tyrant that ever sat on the throne."

"Ha!" exclaimed the fiery king, knitting his brows.

"And that he who should rid the country of you would do a good deed to his people."

"My lord," said the king, furiously, "you shall answer for this language. How dare you use it to your king?"

"Your majesty," said the minister, appalled by the storm he had raised, "remember that these are not my words. They are only what I have heard. Is it just that your indignation should fall upon me?"

"It is somewhat bold," said the king, frowning, for you even to repeat such words in my presence. Do the caitiffs say more than this?"

"Nay," said the minister, "if they did, I should scarcely dare to repeat it after what your majesty has said."

"Speak," said the king, imperiously. "Since we have begun we will hear all that these disloyal traitors dare to speak against their lawful sovereign."

"They talk of organizing an expedition to bring back your brother Richard from his imprisonment."

It will be remembered that Richard was,

at this time, treacherously detained in captivity in Austria. He was the rightful king, and John, who was his younger brother, only held the reins of government in his place. Of course the latter, whose ambition and love of power far exceeded his brotherly love, was interested that Richard should still continue a captive. Physically a coward, he felt that he should have neither the courage nor the daring to oppose his brother's claim, even if he had not felt well assured that the people would rise en masse in support of Richard, who was a favorite throughout the kingdom.

John turned pale at this last suggestion of the minister, and it was with some dismay that he asked:

"Do you think there is any likelihood of this movement on the part of the people?"

"Not if your majesty is prudent. It was for this reason that I counselled against any further taxation."

"Perhaps you are right," said John, thoughtfully; "But what am I to do? I am in immediate want of money. I must get it somewhere."

"The Jews."

"I have already drained the richest of them. I must leave them time to accumulate more."

"There is one class," suggested the minister, hesitatingly.

"Who do you mean?"

"I mean some of the church dignitaries. The Abbot of Canterbury, for instance, is reputed to be immensely wealthy. I have it from a sure hand--no less than a Palmer from the Holy Land, who gained a night's lodging at the monastery--that he lives as sumptuously as a prince."

"Ha!" exclaimed the king.

"I am told," continued the minister, "that he maintains an hundred followers, and that fifty men in gold chains and velvet coats wait in his presence chamber."

"That exceeds my own state," said the king, in surprise. "So the knave would dare to vie with his king, would he? We will see to that. Why, it is rank treason."

"You might make that a reason for stripping him of some of his superfluous wealth," suggested the crafty minister.

"By my crown, you say truly," returned the king. "I will even do as you advise; and as the sooner it is done the better; we will instantly summon our retinue to to attend us, and pay a visit to this presuming subject, who would assume the prerogatives of a king."

The Abbot of Canterbury was not a little surprised when one of his household brought him intelligence that King John, with a numerous retinue, was coming towards the monastery. He quickly donned his finest raiment, and with a chosen band of retainers, went out to meet the king.

"Your majesty does me great honor," he said, "in visiting this my poor house."

"Poor house," retorted John, surveying with a frown the massive pile that rose before him, and then glanced at the portly abbot, attired in mitred splendor, with



Alger short story continued from page -3-

his well-fed retainers; "beshrew me, my lord abbot, I should have said your house were a rich one, and yourself some prince, judging from the style in which you live, had you not told me to the contrary."

"Nay," said the abbot, hastily, "your grace misjudges. I am but a poor servant of the Church."

"Is it meet," queried John, "since such is your degree, that you should maintain a richer household than your king. Look you to the difference between thy followers and mine."

The retainers of the abbot were undeniably better apparelled than those of the king. It may be remarked, however, that the crafty monarch had, before setting out, strictly forbade his followers to don their best attire.

The abbot looked, and unable to make denial, remained silent in confusion.

"I fear me much," said John, following up the attack, "that thy money is ill-gotten."

"Nay," said the abbot, "I spend only what rightfully belongs to me--and the Church."

"Then thy coffers need draining," retorted the king. "Hark you, my lord abbot, it would be no more than just if I should at once strip thee of all thy ill-gotten treasures. But, mark my clemency, I will demand but the half."

"Your majesty, we shall be ruined," groaned the abbot.

"That I may leave you no ground of complaint," continued the king, "I will give you one chance of retaining them."

"What is that?" inquired the abbot, looking up with some hope.

"I will spare you, on my word as a king and true knight, on condition that you answer me duly and truly three questions that I may propose."

"And what may be these questions, may it please your grace?"

"The first is this. You must tell me what I, in my royal state, am worth, and that to a penny."

The abbot's countenance fell.

"The second question is this: How soon shall I ride about the whole world?"

"And the third?"

"You must tell me, and that with exactness what I am thinking of."

"Your majesty, I never could answer these difficult questions."

"Then you know the alternative."

"At least, your majesty, I crave the space of three weeks in which to find the answers, for my wit is but shallow."

"Agreed," said the king. "It shall be as you ask. But mind, not a day more. At the end of three weeks I shall expect you at my palace, and there, unless you answer duly and truly the three questions which I have proposed, half your estates shall rightfully be mine."

After a sumptuous repast, the king left the monastery, leaving behind the poor abbot in an uncomfortable frame of mind.

"The king might as well rob me out-

right," he said to himself, "for surely how could I or any other man, tell how much he is worth to a penny, or how am I to tell when he will ride the whole world about, or how, if I be not a witch, can I read the thoughts of his heart."

After Monday's fruitless thought, the abbot concluded to visit the universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and see if the wit of the learned doctors in either place could help him out of his dilemma. He at once set out, and in either place made known that he would bestow a large reward on whoever would solve for him this troublesome problem. Many were the attempts made, and many the answers suggested, but none of them seemed satisfactory to the abbot, and after spending a week in each place, he set out on his way homeward, very much depressed in mind; for, but two days now remained of the time appointed by the king.

As he was riding along, with his eyes on the ground, he chanced to meet one of his own shepherds, who made bold to ask the cause of his evident disturbance of mind. The abbot was glad to obtain the sympathy of any one, however humble, straightway made known to the shepherd the dilemma in which he was placed.

"Master," said the clown, "I think I can get you out of this."

"What, Colin," said the abbot in surprise, "can you answer the questions which have puzzled the most learned doctors?"

"If, my master, you will send me to the king in your place day after to-morrow, I think I can do it. You know I am said to resemble your lordship."

Though this seemed a desperate resort, the abbot, who could think of nothing more feasible, consented.

Two days afterwards, the shepherd, in the abbot's robes, presented himself at the king's palace.

"Well, my lord abbot," remarked King John, "are you now prepared to give answers to my questions?"

"If your majesty will propound them."

"Tell me then how much I in all my royal state am worth, and mind that thou neither exceed nor fall short a penny."

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE MARCH ISSUE

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Also in the March Issue I will publish the Alger short story "MRS. CORDNER'S REFORMATION" from the collection of Morris Olsen. Then I have enough material for three more months. Beyond that point, we shall continue depending upon your co-operation and interest shown. Perhaps this space could be used to a better advantage. Milton R. Salls suggests that a poll be taken to determine the most favorite Alger story. A general discussion <sup>on</sup> Alger story plots may be of interest, pointing out realistic and unrealistic situations which Alger's critics are always referring to and condemning. Alger was under pressure at times. Did he have a ghost writer in Arthur Lee Putnam and Arthur Hamilton? Let me hear your comments on unrealistic situations and where they can be found.