



Newsboy

Vol. 5 No. 7

March 1967

This newsletter published
monthly except July and
January for Society members.

Incorporated 1965
(Non-profit)

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Kalamazoo, Michigan
49002

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PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

OUR ABLE SECRETARY-TREASURER, who has served us so faithfully for nearly two years, has joined Uncle Sam's Peace Corps and is awaiting assignment. Mrs. Blanche G. Lloyd, whose work has been as children's librarian at Lafayette, Indiana, has thus resigned her office with the Alger Society, since she expects to be gone to some distant land for a couple of years.

Mrs. Lloyd has delivered all the records, files, and funds to your president, who will take care of the duties of the office for the next three months on a pro tem basis until a successor is elected and installed at the Des Moines annual meeting.

Be sure, then, to send any correspondence, new member application, or any other business normally carried on with the secretary-treasurer, instead to me, Kenneth B. Butler, 1325 Burlington Road, Mendota, Illinois 61342.

Mrs. Lloyd deserves and receives the grateful thanks of the membership for her devotion to her duties, and all our best wishes for an exciting and productive career serving the Peace Corps which does such effective work overseas. We have asked Mrs. Lloyd to keep our editor posted on her place of training, the country to which she is finally assigned, and her experience in Peace Corps work. You will keep up to date of this through items from time to time in Newsboy.

LAST CALL for nominations from members on the Newsboy Award. This plaque goes to the person whose published writings have during the year done most to advance the Horatio Alger image. Nominee does not need to be a member. Send any nomination to me now, giving supporting information, and I will forward the nomination to our Awards Committee for consideration with others already suggested.

JACK ROW and his committee are doing a thorough and terrific job of planning for the Des Moines Session in May. We think it will prove to be the highlight meeting of our entire H.A.S. history to date. You have all been sent information. More will be told later, and you'll be asked to register so that accommodations can be arranged. Don't miss this big one!

EVERY ISSUE of Antiquarian Bookman contains more and more listings by dealers of Alger titles wanted. We have noted many new booksellers listing their wants. This can only mean that our effort to bring Horatio Alger to the forefront among the literary-minded, is beginning to bear fruit.

WANT A COLORFUL BLAZER PATCH? Your president now has these in custody and will be glad to fill any orders. They are \$1 each. Wear our emblem and let the world know about your hobby interests.

Milton Salls writes to encourage efforts to build a catalog of Alger book values. Many members have been thinking about this; some are working on it. Edition identification is one important starting point.

Milton and I agree on one thing: many collectors under-rate the values of the very rare titles. I myself use as barometer the rarity table I developed from a careful two-year count of titles offered to Ralph Gardner from his widespread "Algers Wanted" ads.

In the 80's certain Alger books sold up to \$1.50. Surely any evaluation of \$2 or \$3 for them today is not realistic. What about the scarce-as-hen's-teeth ones? Like Victor Vane? What is a Victor Vane worth, even if the cover is much-used? We might hope fervently that we might stumble on to one for a buck. But honestly, if a dealer or a collector has turned up one, is he not entitled to a few dollars profit for his work and his service?

It is illogical to expect such rarities at bargain-table prices. I'd hate to feel that despite my long efforts in building a nearly complete collection it would be worth no more than \$300. Let us distinguish between the "rare lucky break" and "hard reality".

ONE OF THE YEAR'S Alger highlights is the publication and production in at least two little theatres of the play "Rags to Riches" by Aurand Harris. It is a musical melodrama and is based on two of Alger's stories, "Ragged Dick" and "Mark the Match Boy". The premiere was at WestHarwich, Mass., in August, and two weeks later at Beverly, Mass.

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PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS: (continued)

Publisher is Anchorage Press, Cloverlot, Anchorage, Kentucky 40223. Cost per copy is \$1.60 postpaid.

Your Partic'lar Friend, KEN BUTLER

What amazing things you learn when you compare the various editions of Alger works! I acquired a "complete edition" Donohue of The Young Adventurer, with a view to replacing a none-too-fancy Donohue of an un-named edition. For one thing, I compared condition of plates to try to determine which was the older. The task was not difficult. The "winner" was a book selling for 75¢ and contained 306 pages.

The "loser", selling for 25¢ and having definitely inferior paper, being more like kraft wrapping paper than white, had one other marked difference. This book, the "complete edition", had only 256 pages! In checking to find out how this could be accomplished, since they were printed from identical plates and as far as I could see ran page-for-page exactly alike, I discovered the secret. Five whole chapters had been eliminated in the cheaper edition, and the chapter numbers and page numbers had been reset to conform.

The "complete edition" had only 27 chapters. The earlier, costlier edition, had 32 chapters. I must say, the opening chapter after the deletion didn't make much sense. "The Indians were taken by surprise", read the opening sentence, whereas there had been no previous reference to a raid. The only ones who got scalped, apparently, were the original purchasers of Donohue's "complete edition". (KBB) (E.N. My Winston edition from Loring plates also has 32 chapters, but only 293 printed pages)

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Among the thousands of wonders offered for sale in the vast 1100-page Sears, Roebuck & Co. mail order catalog, 1925, are your choice of 26 books for boys by none other than that eminent author, Horatio Alger Jr. Proving that Alger was still a drawing card as late as 1925. The editions obviously are Donohues, based on cover illustrations shown.

The selling copy states that more Alger books have been sold than those of any other boys' author. "Full of interesting incidents, they teach without preaching, that wholesome and honest living is far preferable to trickery and deceit." The prices? they are pre-inflation — two books for 25¢, or six for 69¢. (KBB)

E.N. Donohue is one of many publishers who entered into a competitive market, however, their 50¢ deluxe edition is inferior to the 63¢ 40¢ editions.

....Needless to keep commenting every time I get the Newsboy, I sincerely believe each issue is definitely the best yet. The best, that is, until the next month's eagerly awaited issue is delivered. I really think that as regards quality, readership-interest and enthusiasm, there is no other organization publication to match the Newsboy.

As Ken writes, I agree that big things are shaping up for a big Alger year, with maybe even bigger things in store for the years ahead. We'll all have to keep an eye peeled for Alger events in order to report them to you and maybe even for individual members to participate (in their own regions). At any rate, things definitely ARE happening, which we know was not the case three or four years ago.

In the questions and answers column, which I think is fine, as the questions thus far submitted are of interest to all of us: Q#1: I doubt if a close estimate of total Algers printed can ever be worked out, due to the many publishers, most now defunct. That makes it impossible to verify press runs. Incidentally, those Alger editions published in the past couple of years and the one or two now in the works will swell any recent estimates.

Q#6: Incorrect date of Alger's birth is something it will take years to correct, if it is indeed, possible at all. I've been writing to a few encyclopedias, trying to get them to change the wrong 1834 date. As you know, I have a (censored) job persuading them, and so far we've been successful only in the World Almanac case which Ken and yourself started and I merely followed up. Generally I'm told that 1834 is the date given by DAB (Dictionary of American Biography) and this is respected and almost always accepted in preference to anything a casual letter writer will suggest. As far as I can see, DAB has been giving 1834 since the 1890's, which, editors write, was during Alger's lifetime and would appear to have validity since he never corrected it.

This isn't much of an answer, but we must assume that to these editors, content to keep using the date they've been using without rebuttal for years, it is good enough. At first I thought there were just a few places where the date is wrong. But today, various encyclopedias are being issued by dozens of publishers, and they are merely accepting the 1834 date without question or research on their part. It'll be a tough job finding these errors and fighting them, especially, as many of these volumes — some are rather cheap quality — may never be reprinted in additional editions. At any rate, we know the right date, and we should continue doing what we can to set the record straight. I suppose the sketch in NYB editions is partly to blame for the persistence of the incorrect version but my guess is that this, too, originates in DAB. Cordially, (Ralph D. Gardner)

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-200 Mr. Daniel M. Petersen T-003
105 East Street,
West Union, Iowa 52175

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Dan comes to us by way of Jack Row. More about Dan, and how he became interested in Alger, is told in The Vice President's Column, page six. Dan and his wife, Roberta, have one son, Dean. Dan was born in Minneapolis and is now Court Reporter for the Iowa 13th Judicial District.

Dan of course, has the distinction of PF-200, another milestone in the history of our organization. The distinction of PF-100 was assigned to Carl W. Dahlberg, Lake Valhalla, Montville, New Jersey, in July, 1964. Carl is currently inactive.

It took us two years to reach our first milestone, all subscribers by virtue of a \$2 donation to our RAGGED DICK FUND. It took us nearly three years to reach our second milestone, most of them at \$5 for full membership privileges. I predict we will reach our third milestone before our 1968 (Centennial) annual meeting.

With some 30 states represented in our roster of members, and with our suggested slogan of "Every member get a member" it should be an easy task. It would only be an average of three new members per state represented. Michigan has the potential of exceeding our quota by 500 per cent or more, but we will have to get up off our "easy chairs" and hang out the welcome sign. Playing second fiddle to the State of Iowa is not an accomplishment worthy enough to brag about.

Our organization is operating on a non-profit basis. We gain nothing financially in building our membership. Our goal in three steps is: (1) suggested by Park Larson, PF-111: To present Horatio Alger as the great man we know him to be, (2) Promote the welfare of our Society, (3) Create good will among our Society members. Our members are deserving of a fair profit in the sale of Alger books, but it is hoped that this is not their primary interest when applying for membership. (1) We are dedicated to inform a new generation with the truth about our hero. (2) Invite into our membership those with new or nostalgic interests in our hero. (3) Assist new members in building their collection.

The task of acquiring new titles by our new members may be difficult and perhaps a bit discouraging, since they have few contacts outside of our Society. I admire with pride, my 123 titles, not with a miserly admiration of monetary gain, but as a legacy, or treasury of historical facts, and good reading. We can attract and hold new members by sharing. Make a new member happy today. Share! (000)

PF-000 (Forrest Campbell) offers:

F 28HTC, G 44H&C, G 48H&C, G 76ALB,
F 81ALB, G 83MAD, G139H&C, P148JCW,
G150H&C, F190JCW.

WE URGE YOU TO BUY FROM, AND SELL TO
PARTICULAR FRIEND COLLECTORS AND DEALERS
WHEN POSSIBLE TO DO SO. THANK YOU.

BIRTHDAYS (to April 15th)

PF-160 Mrs. Rohima Walter March 19
PF-198 Mr. Orson C. Grant March 24
PF-093 Mr. Les. Langlois April 9

If your birthday occurs between April 15, and May 15, be sure to notify us. If this department fails for lack of response, it will be discontinued with the June issue of the newsletter.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. #5 (PF-090) Repeated: How about Poole's Index for information on Horatio Alger?

A. This Index refers to The New England Register. A photostat copy of Vol. 29, page #270 has been provided by Michigan State Library. This historical reference refers to "The Alger Family Of Maine, and specifically refers to Andrew and Arthur Alger, their wives and children, of the 17th century. There seems to be no connection with the Algers of Bridgewater.

Q. #1 What is an accurate total of all Alger books (not titles) printed before the 1920's (repeated)

A. In certain editions the publisher, in a brief biographical sketch, or advertisement, make such statements. In a Mac Lellan edition, "World's Work" is quoted that in 1910 Alger books were selling at the rate of one million a year.

The Loring edition of RAGGED DICK was acclaimed a best seller and at least 300,000 were sold in one year. Consider the ensuing years for this title alone.

Q. #7 I have a (MAD) edition insert with (NYB) cover and end papers. Did (MAD) succeed (NYB) in the publishing business? (Norman Peterson, PF-184)

A. Open for further comment. This (MAD) insert may have been placed in a (NYB) cover, as a makeshift repair job.

Q. #8 Does Gardner's estimate of Donohue values apply to all variations? (Norman Peterson)

A. Open for further comment. There is of course some range in quality, and rarity regardless of quality should be considered, such as Wren Winter's Triumph. Condition in addition to quality should also be considered in establishing a value, as a very important factor. Harry Vane is another (NYB) rare title.

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DEPARTMENTS: Questions & Answers,
(continued)

Q. #9 What has been the history of retail prices of Alger books from 1856 to 1930. Were first printings more expensive than reprints? (Norman Peterson)

A. Justice cannot be done to this question in a paragraph or two. Much could be said on this subject. The early Loring editions ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.50 depending on the series which varied in quality and bindings. In the 1930's I believe only paper backs were being published. The early S&S paper back editions sold for 10 cents. Later, in the 20's & 30's their advertisements listed no price.

First editions, or printings were generally high in quality, and protected with copyrights. Reprints, often unprotected by copyrights, met competition with a lesser quality. (Open for further comment).

Q. 10 If books known to be scarce are reprinted, what happens to the value of the scarce editions? (Norman Peterson)

A. The value of a first edition will never decrease because of reprints. (open for further comment).

Q. #11 Is City Hall, Astor House, and Bowery Theatre still in existence?

A. City Hall, yes; Astor House, no; the old Bowery Theatre, at last report is still operating, but under a new name (Thalia) since 1879. The old Bowery burned out at least twice. In outward appearance, it may still look the same.

Please send in your comments, and your questions. If you know the answers, send them in also. The newer members would appreciate it.

NEWS DEPARTMENT

Max Friedman, PF-001 has just contributed 21 of his duplicate Alger books to The Boys Club in Kalamazoo.

Les & Bertie Langlois are vacationing in Arizona. Expect to be home by Easter.

Steve Press rides a bicycle around New York City. Last December while riding, he got hit by a truck. Bike demolished. Steve escaped with 8 stitches at the temple, a black eye and some dandy bruises. He now has a new bike, and a new crash helmet. Recently he took a one day 100 mile trip. Steve sent me a candy bar wrapper, with contents missing, but manufactured by the Alger Candy Company of Salem, Mass. An inquiry from me pertaining to their relationship (if any) with Horatio, has not been answered. Steve, an up and coming playwright, reports that his musical, The Other Side of the Stars, is in rehearsal at the Warwick Playhouse, Warwick, New York, and will

open late in March, and he has had an offer from the same source to do his Alger Musical, Tom Cooper, Captain of Industry. Steve has sent me an autographed copy of (one of four) his first draft. Thanks, Steve!

On the TODAY SHOW, February 20th, Hugh Downs and Barbara Walters exhibited a Winston edition of RAGGED DICK. It was presented as one of the rare items which could be seen at the National Antiques Show at Madison Square Garden. The one-minute discussion did not reveal its ownership. From another source, Ken Butler, and our Society received some advance publicity.

The UPI "Almanac" feature mentioned in last month's Newsboy, as a "target" drew my "fire" this past month. We have been assured of their cooperation, and I must eat humble pie for saying "but by no means a bull's eye." In addition to their assurance, the New York office alerted the Detroit Bureau for a follow-up story. I have received a very nice letter from Mr. William B. Mead, Michigan News Manager, requesting details for a future news story. So, it seems we did hit a bull's eye, after all.

Have any of you who read the Alger stories, taken the opportunity to read Alger's preface statements? You will not find them in all editions, but should find them in your Loring and P&C editions. In the preface statement of RUFUS & ROSE, I find some historical facts and some of Alger's philosophy.

Also please note the Illustrator credits, the Dedication pages, and some of the early advertisements of books yet to be published. In BRAVE AND BOLD, (Loring), I note a reference to BOLD AND BRAVE.

The familiar illustration of a boot-black in City Hall Park, with City Hall in the background, is identified with the name, Kinnersley. Other illustrators in the Loring editions are identified in some manner, but some are not identified. In some of the A.L. Burt editions, I note that the illustrator is identified on the title page by the name of J. Watson Davis.

The many dedication pages are most enlightening. I note that his mother, father, brothers, and sisters are all mentioned. Other friends, and business associates are also mentioned. For further reference to the names mentioned in LUCK & PLUCK, ROUGH & READY, and STRIVE & SUCCEED, you will find them mentioned in Gardner's book, pages 200 to 204. I suspect that the names of Washington and Jefferson, mentioned in STRONG & STEALY, were actual street-boy friends of Horatio. Perhaps the most lengthy dedication to come to my attention is the dedication to the readers of the NEW YORK WEEKLY, found in TONY, THE HERO; (JSO). The use of dedication page was eventually discontinued, and perhaps for economy reasons, many of the reprint publishers deleted the dedication page. (000)

EDITORIAL ERUPTIONS

The manuscript for my Alger-type drama is now completed. The title is THE BOY FROM THE BOWERY. The idea was conceived in 1964 and accepted as a challenge as a result of an inquiry from Hal McCuen, PF-096, Director of Mansfield Childrens Theatre.

My only qualification at the time was my project of writing THE YOUNG POSTMASTER in serial form as a monthly supplement to our newsletter from January 1963 through December 1965. The only material in the nature of a drama, written by Alger, is SEEKING HIS FORTUNE, which was reprinted in two parts in the Newsboy, October and November 1965.

Hal accepted the challenge and expressed a hope that it could be premiered in his Childrens Theatre that year. Enthused as I was about the prospects of this exciting project, I was forced to inform Hal that such a project would have to wait until the completion of the serially written, THE YOUNG POSTMASTER. Nevertheless, the idea was born, the title selected, the setting was chosen, and the leading characters were visualized and named. The plot began to take shape, and since it is of historical nature, a research of facts began.

Unlike modern-day productions, it is not a musical adaption. It is pure melodrama, written in the way, I believe Alger would have written it. It is not based on any Alger story, yet, it is based on street-boy characters he created, using entirely new names.

The time is 1888. There are three acts. Due to the nature of a stage production, only two scenes are used. The setting of act one and three is on the portico of New York City Hall facing on City Hall Park. Act two is located in the parlor of our hero's fifth floor apartment on Mulberry Bend in the Bowery section. Hence, the title. Act two is divided into two scenes, both with the same setting, except for the time element. Noontime, and evening-time.

There is a cast of 10 juvenile-age boys, two women, and six men. All parts could be played by a juvenile cast, if necessary. There are 16 speaking parts. The name of our hero, a newsboy, is Perly Gates, age 15. The name of his supporting lead, another newsboy, is Dirty Shirt. The adult supporting lead is a visiting Philadelphia lawyer, a shrewd individual to be reckoned with in his own environment, but a gullible "easy mark" at the mercy of the street-boys.

The play, viewed, or read, should appeal to adults as well as juveniles, if interest is shown in Alger-style

material. In addition to its authentic historical value, and the Alger created characters of the newsboys, the boot-blacks, the baggage smasher, the city dude, the country yokel, and the pick-pocket, all new gimmicks are provided for your entertainment, or reading pleasure. There is of course, the usual Alger moral injected. And there is of course, a legacy, which our hero will use to further his education, and to promote the welfare of his street-boy associates.

There is of course, a happy ending; a slight touch of romance. Our hero is presented with a key to the city by Mayor Hewitt, and the curtain falls with a humorous vein of comedy leaving you with the impression that in spite of Alger's attempts to convert the street-boys, life around City Hall Park will continue as in the past.

Those who have read the script, are withholding comment, with some doubt, and a wait-and-see attitude. This is understandable, for it is a nineteenth century story presented to a twentieth century audience. There is a good chance that it will be premiered in Mansfield, Ohio, but from there, it's future is uncertain as a stage production. There is also a good chance that you will be able to buy the script in booklet form.

WAYSIDE PRESS has estimated that it would cost \$820. to print 500 booklets, based on 64 printed pages, plus a heavy paper cover. I know of no one person who would be willing to take the risk of financing the entire expense, including myself.

I am hoping to find financial support from our Society membership. Such supporters need not be dealers. I would divide up the risk and financing in units of ten. Fifty booklets for \$82.00

The suggested list price per booklet would be \$2.50. The cost per booklet would be \$1.64. The margin of profit would not be excessive, but fair. Personally, I am not interested in the profit, but I would like very much to see the booklet published. I could financially take the risk of one unit. I hope I can find financial support for the other nine units.

The script is ready for printing. If interested, do not send money yet, but your pledge to accept the risk of one unit or more, immediately. If more than nine such pledges (in units of one) are received, they will not be accepted.

Such supporters must be members of our Society before their pledges will be accepted. The booklet should be of interest to all Alger collectors, and a means to revive interest in Alger during the centennial occasion. The script in booklet form will be protected by copyright. I can make no guarantee that they will sell like hot cakes. Do I really have nine Particular Friends? (000)

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

We're still basking in the warm glow of the enthusiastic reception given us at the annual banquet of the "Historical & Literary Club" at West Union, Iowa, February 20th, where a large selection of Alger books, story papers and "Algeriana" was on display, and a 45 minute talk was given on Alger, his life and writings, by yours truly.

It's strange how opportunities such as this come about. Dan Petersen, certified Court Reporter in West Union, read something of Alger some time ago. He became interested, and asked someone in Chicago to find him a book about Alger. After receiving and reading Gardner's book, Dan became even more interested and thought that Alger would make a good program for their club. He discussed this with one of the members, Dr. E.E. Garbee, President of Upper Iowa University in Fayette, who promptly volunteered that he knew an "expert" on Alger — namely, his old friend Jack Row, of Marion. (My definition of expert: A common guy among strangers). Dr. Garbee suggested that Petersen write me, which he did. I was pleased to accept the invitation to speak on Alger.

An interesting note: The Historical & Literary Club is the oldest men's study club in the U.S. west of the Mississippi. It was started in 1887! A local resident of West Union has the name "Tom Tatters". Yes, that's his real name! When a boy, his friends called him "Tattered Tom", from which source you can all guess. Tom regards this appellation as a "point of beginning", as in a typical Alger story. Mr. Tatters is now president of the largest industry in West Union — a real Alger success story. Incidentally, Dan presented me with his application to become the next member of the H.A.S. Welcome, Dan!

Realizing the futility of obtaining a copy of Nothing To Do — I am in the process of having a Xerox copy bound — on the theory that "a copy is better than no copy." EUREKA! Accidentally acquired an excellent bound copy, Volume 9, The Argosy, 1889-1890, containing Silas Snobden's Office Boy, The Odds Against Him, and The Erie Train Boy — as well as an announcement of Tom Tracy, which was to appear in the next issue.

It's hard to say where some book dealers get their prices. Recently, I received quotations on 3 common title Hurst Algers, at only \$45.00 each! Also, Camel Boy To President, 1st ed., was quoted at \$80.00! If anyone wants to grab these at these prices, I'll furnish the sources on request. (Needless to say, the dealers were not H.A.S. members).

Here's a tip for book collectors with leather-bound books. During an interesting visit recently with a bookbinder,

a real craftsman who learned the trade in Europe in the 1890's, we queried as to what should be done to preserve leather bindings. The gentleman stated that, "leather is nothing but fat and fiber, and, when the fat dries out, the remaining fiber is practically dust." He uses pure Italian olive oil — sparingly, to replace the fat in the leather.

ALGERIANA: As H.A.S. fans know, Alger's book "Nothing To Do" was published anonymously. However, we noted that, on the title page of the copy deposited with the Library of Congress for copyright, Alger signed the title page — in the same place where the author's name would have appeared had it been shown. Was this to establish authorship for copyright purposes? That would be my guess. Does anyone else have any opinions on this?

Frank H. Fenno, A.M., F.S.Sc., author of "The Science and Art of Elocution", also wrote "Fenno's Choice Dialogues for Speaking and Acting", published by Thompson & Thomas, Chicago, 1904. We have a copy of this book, and wonder if Frank Fenno is a relative of Horatio's mother?

We now have 30 different versions of Phil The Fiddler, but have only 14 different publishers. Altogether, there must have been 100 or more varieties of this popular title.

Also on hand and proudly displayed are 23 Hurst miniature Alger titles. Does anyone know how many titles were published by Hurst in miniature?

I recently acquired a couple old periodicals from Ernest Sanford. The Schoolmate, Vol. 29, No. 6, June 1872, contains an interesting original dialogue, "Two Paths In Life", by O. Augusta Cheney, Horatio's sister. Publisher of the "Schoolmate" was Joseph H. Allen. Wonder if he was the "Josh Allen" or "Josiah Allen" of "Samantha At The Centennial" fame?

"Merry's Museum And Parley's Magazine", Vol. 47, No. 6, June, 1864, contains an announcement of a new book published by Walker, Wise & Co., "The Pioneer Boy, And How He Became President" — which contains the early history of President Lincoln; and the lessons of perseverance, honesty, and industry inculcated by the book, renders it one of the best that can be put in the hands of the young. (the foregoing comment is verbatim)... This sounds like an ad for an Alger story.

Note that this predates Alger's "The Backwoods Boy; How He Became President" by almost 20 years. Ib. A letter to the editor (addressed to Uncle Merry) postmarked Louisville, April 4, 1864, was signed Arthur Lee... Arthur Lee Putnam? Do you suppose that Alger subscribed to this magazine under one of his pen names, shortened to "Arthur Lee"?

Hope to see you in Des Moines. Remember the dates: May 19, 20, & 21...Jack Row.