

# newsboy

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Monthly Newsletter of  
the HORATIO ALGER  
SOCIETY. The World's  
Only Publication Devoted  
to That Wonderful  
World of Horatio Alger.



*Horatio Alger, Jr.*  
(Span of life: 1-13-1832 - 7-18-1899)

Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth Butler

The girl in this illustration is verification that girls did ply this trade in New York City in the days of Horatio Alger.

The Alger title, Tattered Tom, often mistaken for the name of a boy, was a street sweeper. It was a meager paying trade, but honest, and perhaps attracted more pity than a real need for her services.

Irene Gurman, in a hasty note, informs me that it will be difficult for her to accept the recent assignment to serve on the Nominating Committee. She also enclosed an article on the possible origin of Boys Clubs, and wonders if Alger could have been the forerunner? Possible!

Remember, you must register by mail in order to get your room reservation card. And let's not forget to consider a site for our 1970 convention city! THIS OCCASION WAS DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND!



STREET SWEEPER

Mrs. George Cameron who resides near Rough & Ready, Calif. reports the city got its name from the nick name of Gen. Zachary Taylor. This also may be the source, or the origin of the nick name of Rufus, the hero of the story, Rough & Ready, which was published about 1869 a century ago.

This is also the Centennial Year of our first transcontinental railroad, completed May 10, at Promontory, Utah.

In spite of this fact it is interesting to note that in the stories written after that event, Alger preferred to send his heroes out west and to California by way of the stage coach and "around the horn."

The "train" stories usually took place in the State of New York with a terminal at Niagara Falls, and on occasions to Chicago and Milwaukee. Alger must have travelled the Transcontinental route for he is known to have visited Salt Lake City as late as 1877.



## RANDOM THOUGHTS FROM ALGERLAND

by Max Goldberg, President



Max Goldberg

Due to illness, Stewart McLeish, PF-231, has asked to be relieved from his duties as a member of the Nominating Committee. I have therefore appointed Irene Gurman to replace him. The Nominating Committee is composed of Ralph Gardner, Irene Gurman, and Roy Wendell. Please send in to them the names of your choice for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Trustees, before the convention. The time is getting short.

There has always been some speculation about the number of books by Horatio Alger, Jr., sold. It is doubtful that at this late date any reliable figures can be arrived at. A number of years ago, Everett T. Tomlinson, himself a writer for boys, in an article that appeared in the June 1910 issue of a publication called "World's Work" gives some startling but accurate figures which he gleaned from the stockbooks of one of the most successful and prominent publishing firms, who were making a specialty of books at low costs.

The firm is not identified but from the books and sets mentioned it was undoubtedly A.L. Burt. Tomlinson gives individual figures for many titles put out by this firm; the figures are for the year 1909 but the part that interests us most are his figures for the books of Horatio Alger, Jr., quote: "Among the books for boys the rapid and steady decline in the sales of the once famous Henty books was counter-balanced by the astounding figures of the Alger books."

Several publishing houses are now issuing these books but the sales in 1909 by the firm which has given me the figures for its stockbook show approximately a half million copies of the total long list of Alger's books for boys! The combined sales of these books by all the various houses that issued them was es-

timated at more than one million copies a year. Of course many of these are in an extremely cheap form listed perhaps at twenty-five cents a copy but the figures are staggering. Think of it -- in ten years a sale of ten millions. Whatever their elders may think of the Alger books there is no question concerning the opinion of the boys! These figures at least do not lie." Unquote.

So much Mr. Tomlinson has to say. It can now be understood why Burt issued and reissued the Alger books in so many formats and editions. The Alger books sold! No question about that.

Re-reading some old magazines about Alger I came across the following: "In the 6th floor of the Sun office in New York City there has been fitted up sleeping, reading and lecture rooms for the special benefit of the newsboys of New York City." (Gleason's Pictorial Companion... 1854)

Under the caption: Horatio Alger Can't Top This!, a newspaper clipping states the following: "Bobby Ward, a 20 year old West Virginian in search of work, checked in at the Placement Referral Office set up by the Chamber of Commerce to provide jobs for the hard core unemployed. Ward caught on as a truck driver with a new firm called - Movement Unlimited - rose to \$20,000 a year general manager in seven months and has asked the Referral Office to find him drivers for a projected expansion of the enterprise."

The following appeared in a Boston newspaper: HOW TO BE A HORATIO ALGER, by Herbert Kenny in a book review of "Here's How by Who's Who." It was written by Jesse Bell, quote: "In an age when youth is badgered and bewildered, a statement of some of the old verities by a variety of men who have risen to eminence has a certain value. Mr. Bell has collected the comments and advice of 100 men who have 'made it' one way or another. Almost all of the contributors are nationally known figures from J. Edgar Hoover to Danny Thomas. Some are less known. The line-up reads like a roster.. Coleman Andrews, Ronald Reagan, Mac Rafferty, Mark Hatfield, Eddie Rickenbacker,



Richard Nixon, James Farley and Orville Faubus. The council given the young is solid gold, if on occasion framed in phrases some will deem 'corn' but the gamut is so wide, many young men moving through the book is going to find some barb that will stick in his mind. George Meany of the AFL-CIO, urging more education. Diplomat Ralph Bunche, urging persistence. Gen. Lucius Clay, emphasizing ambition, and Author James Michener, acknowledging that he is confused 'as to what success is' but warning the young that whatever their aims, they must master basic skills. 'If you don't have the basic tools of your trade, you are limited to second class performance.'

Does anyone know who bought Frank Gruber's Alger collection? Did he get his price which was \$7,500. ? This included the "only known copy of Timothy Crump's Ward" letter sent to me a few years ago. Also, "First offer takes the entire lot."

I often wonder what stories we would have been told about the Alger family if we were fortunate enough to have met Miss Mabel Parmenter of South Natick. Ralph Gardner and I missed meeting her, but Mayes, Millner and Dr. Enslin had the opportunity. She lived at 4 Merrill Road off Pleasant Street, directly behind the parsonage where Rev. Horatio Alger, Sr., spent 20 years as Pastor of the First Unitarian Church of South Natick. She was born there May 29, 1869 and died Nov. 11, 1960. Was a member of the Historical Society, Daughters of the Revolution and for 29 years Curator of the Natick Society. In her youth she played with Alger's niece, Ann Lock Alger Richardson and also graduated High School with her.

She remembered the trips that Alger used to make to the parsonage nearly every summer and the hikes along the Charles River that he planned for the young boys, and the croquet games on the Alger lawn which continued on until dusk in the summer evenings. She was fond of showing the rocking chair which Alger used in his dormitory room at Harvard. It can still be seen in the Historical Society quarters. Her letters from Frank Millner are very interesting and informa-

tive. That Dr. Enslin thought highly of her is indicated in a letter he wrote to me in 1965 in which he states "Miss Parmenter was a very reliable source of information on many points in connection with the Alger family." It is through persons like her that we learn much of the intimate lives of prominent people and therefore a great loss when we miss them.

The next time some one asks you "Was there a real Horatio Alger?" or "I thought that it was a pen name," don't show contempt or compassion at his ignorance even though it may annoy you. Perhaps he read it in the newspapers. You don't believe it? Here is the contents of a yellowed newspaper clipping:

"After many years it has suddenly been discovered that Horatio Alger Jr., was only a pen name. The man who wrote all the Alger stories was really Laurence Stallings! This information has been gathered by Herbert R. Mayes who is just finishing a biography of Horatio Alger Jr. Mr. Mayes wrote to about 200 successful men, asking them whether they read the works of Alger when they were young, and whether Alger spurred them on to their present success. From Laurence Stallings came this reply: Dear Mr. Mayes: In response to your inquiry I wish to state I wrote many books under the name of Horatio Alger Jr. They helped me considerably and now I hope they will help you. (signed) Laurence Stallings."

Leslie Smith and John Odell are examples of a British Horatio Alger story. Twenty-one years ago the two ex-servicemen pooled their demobilization pay of \$1,440. and set up a die casting business in North London. Today their company's profit will reach 13 million. The firm is capitalized at 288 million and the company's 12 cent per share rose to \$5.40 and now to \$16.35 per share. They turn out 5 million miniature cars a year. The match box models selling for 25¢ each. We can't keep up with the collector's demand. We are millions of models behind and opening five new factories this year, they report. The turning point was their decision to produce an inch long model of Queen Elizabeth's coronation coach

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## RANDOM THOUGHTS FROM ALGERLAND continued

selling for 35¢ each. Now they are turning out miniatures in everything on wheels. They have 115 models. They have competition in American, Italian and other companies but are still looking for new markets. Amazing what an idea will do.

Roy Wendell, PF-090, has sent me a newspaper clipping about the passing of a Mr. William R. Gilman, President and Co-Publisher of the Malden Evening News and Medford Daily Mercury (Mass.), on Xmas morning. The editorial in bold print states: "A great loss. His biography is like an Horatio Alger story. He came out of poverty to make his mark in life." He was one of eight children. Graduated from Harvard in 1919. Was a chemist at the Converse Rubber Company and attended night classes at Suffolk Law School, graduating in 1927. Was legal counsel on nine corporations. Served on Malden's Common Council. Was elected to two terms in the State Legislature. Served in WWI. Was active in many fraternal, veterans and civil organizations. "One of the kindest and generous of men." What an epithet for a life well spent. Would that the present generation could emulate such men!

In a world beset with violence and confusion reminding us of Bernard Shaw's "We are living in a large lunatic asylum," there may be some comfort in this poem from the Household Monthly, May 1859:

How sweet it is in peace to live,  
Each others failings to forgive,  
Each others burdens bear!  
For love the darkest hour can bless,  
Spread around us beams of happiness,  
And drive away our care.

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## COMMEMORATIVE ALGER BOTTLES ANYONE?

Mrs. Martha Landis, PF-226 writes to renew her plea for a show of individual or group interest in a Commemorative Alger Bottle Project. One year ago she encouraged such a project and supported it with a cash deposit, which was returned to her due to a lack of interest at that time. How about now?

The NEWSBOY, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society is published monthly except January and July, and is distributed free to Society members by our Executive Secretary from 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

Each individual membership begins with date of application. Junior membership, \$3 annually; adult membership, \$5 annually, to be presented in advance with membership application. Each member receives a membership card, membership roster, and ten issues of the Newsboy. Other incidentals are optional and available upon request, subject to prevailing prices. Convention City: Kalamazoo, Michigan, July 8-11th.

## OFFICERS

Max Goldberg,	President
Steve Press,	Vice-President
Carl T. Hartmann,	Executive Secretary
Dan Fuller,	Treasurer
Kenneth B. Butler,	Director
Ralph D. Gardner,	Director
Forrest Campbell,	Editor

Please use membership roster for mailing address of our members and officers.  
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## BOOK MART

The listing of Alger books in this department (space permitting) is free to our members. Please list title, publisher, condition, and price. Editor disqualified due to first notice. First editions underlined.

Offered by Willard Thompson, PF-146,  
835 S.W. 14th Avenue, Portland Oregon  
97205.

Ben's Nugget,	HTC	Fair	\$ 2.50
Canal Boy To President,			3.00
Errand Boy, The	ALB		2.50
Fame & Fortune,	AKL	Good	4.00
Mark The Match Boy,	HTC		4.00
Ragged Dick, (AKL ?????)		Fair	7.50
Ragged Dick,	JCW		2.25
Try & Trust, (miniature Hurst)			1.50
Young Adventurer, The	HTC		4.00
(HORATIO ALGER, or The American Hero Era,			
Wayside Press,		Good	5.95)



## THE KALAMAZOO OCCASION (July 8 - 11th)

Early registrations of Particular Friends from five States have been received, with ten States yet to be heard from. The early registrations have been appreciated, and it is now time for the rest of you to make your plans known. Remember, we've designed this OCCASION with you in mind! Especially those of you who could not attend previous conventions because of school commitments.

The advance (and only) registration fee is \$1 per member, \$1 per spouse, and \$1 per adult guest. Send registration fee to Forrest Campbell, Convention Chairman, in care of NEWSBOY at our Kalamazoo address.

The registration fee is reasonable, and not refundable, and has been designed to pay only a portion of our convention expenses. Upon your arrival you will be invited to make reservations for our Thursday Evening banquet @ \$3.75 per plate, plus 19% to cover tax and tips, or a total of \$4.47.

The 11x14 posters of the illustration on the front cover of the April Newsboy will be available @ 50¢ each. None will be mailed.

There will be a Special Convention issue of the Newsboy listing the agenda of convention events. None will be mailed.

Les Langlois will be in charge of games and contests. Les and Bertie are currently vacationing in the southwest but will be on hand come July. It might be well for you to review the Alger titles listed by Langlois in the October & November 1968 issues of Newsboy. The games & contests arranged by Langlois will be announced later, but I assure you there will be no idle moments between the main events of the day.

Can you ride a pogo stick? We have one ready and waiting. There will be time-trials and perhaps a prize for the best endurance record. Bring your movie camera equipment for this event. It should be a riot with a scream in every scene. A first aid crew will be on duty.

And then we'll be prepared to entertain you with the new game of Frisbee. Just in case you are not familiar with the name or the game, it's a device that looks like a hub cap which you sail through the air. Remember when you used to sail your mother's pie tins across the back yard. Well, it's the same principle. It's fun for all age groups. It's a game you don't seem to tire of.

If you are aiming at a target, the Frisbee is difficult to control until you have mastered the art to some degree. Suggested rules are for a team of two players at one goal post to oppose another team of two players at the opposite goal post. For goal posts I have purchased two hula hoops. The object of the game is to sail your Frisbee through the target which can be held by the two players stationed at opposite goal posts.

We have practiced, and can assure you that you will need practice too, if you hope to score, and we feel safe in making a guarantee that there will be no high scores.

The Frisbee, about 11 inches in diameter, and constructed of either plastic or flexible rubber, can be obtained at your neighborhood shopping center, or department store. The plastic model which may have a tendency to split or crack with hard usage, sells for a little over a dollar. The other model sells for a little over two dollars, but perhaps worth the difference.

If you attempt to practice in your back yard, I suggest that you remove the bird bath, and any other obstacle on the course. For best control keep your Frisbee on a low and level course. Goal posts or players should not be more than 50 feet apart. If you try for greater distance by lofting your Frisbee, the angle allows a greater wind resistance and your Frisbee will sail out of bounds into your neighbor's yard, or his window.

We will provide two Frisbees and two goal posts but I suggest you bring yours along so that as many teams as possible may play at the same time. Best individual and team scores will be honored.

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## THE KALAMAZOO OCCASION (continued)

We urge you to be on hand for the Tuesday Evening performance. After we have been officially welcomed to Kalamazoo by our local Chamber of Commerce, and the Society Officers in attendance introduced, an impromptu skit will be attempted.

To prepare yourself for this skit I appeal to you all to read the story of Julius, at least through chapter ten, "A Bootblack's Speech."

But instead of the boys being escorted to Wisconsin by Mr. O'Conner, they have been escorted to Kalamazoo, hopefully to be accepted by the people there in the year 1869 just a century ago.

The lead role will be played by Jack Bales, PF-258, in presenting the bootblack's speech, and supported by impromptu responses from other members present. The representative from the Chamber of Commerce will again welcome the boys to the village of Kalamazoo.

PF-000 will play the part of Mr. O'Conner, and I am hopeful that someone will volunteer to play the part of Horatio Alger who accompanied the boys on this trip. And it is also hoped that four of the boys will favor us with a selection, fresh from the "Grand Duke's Opera House" in New York City. Hereafter to be identified at future conventions as "The Four Street-Boys."

The local public will be invited, and after the skit, we shall enter into a question & answer period. If all goes well, the performance will be repeated on the following night.

Michigan remains on Eastern Standard Time which is the same as Central Daylight Saving Time, so, if you approach Michigan from the Eastern Time zone, be sure to adjust your watch accordingly.

July days in Michigan are warm, but the nights are cool, so, adjust your wardrobe accordingly. The motel does have a pool, so, pack your swim-suit and water-wings. A midnight snack shop is within walking distance.

KALAMAZOO AND HORATIO ALGER IN 1928  
by Jack Bales, PF-258

A lot of Alger readers probably read other juvenile books of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, than just ones by Alger himself. Some of the authors of these books are Harry Castlemon, Oliver Optic (William T. Adams), and Victor Appleton. Another one is Leo Edwards, author of the popular Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott series that were published in the 1920's and 30's. Leo Edwards, whose real name was Edward Edson Lee, wrote many titles of the above series, and in one gave a boost to Horatio Alger.

In Chapter XI, page 127-128 of Poppy Ott and the Freckled Goldfish, published in 1928 (Grosset & Dunlap), Poppy is showing some furniture to a woman visitor who asks, "What have you upstairs?"

"Some very rare old Kalamazoo bedsteads, Mrs. Ringbow," the guide beamed with pride. "One of them in particular, associated with the death of that great author of juvenile classics, Horatio Alger, Jr., has a very interesting--"

Our editor, Forrest Campbell, is a student of early Kalamazoo history, and happens to have some early city directories. He examined one of them that was dated 1876, but it contained no listing of anyone that sold\* (sic) bedsteads. Of course the mention of this in the Edwards book was fiction, but as Mr. Campbell put it, "Who knows what the author really knew about the subject?"

Kalamazoo and Horatio Alger in 1928. I wonder if Leo Edwards was thinking of a certain day and a certain city in Michigan, in November, 1961.

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(E.N. \*No manufacturer of bedsteads, of either wood or iron, was listed, but we did manufacture iron pumps, stoves and wildmills; and wooden clothes pins, washboards and coffins. Now we specialize in pills, paper and palaver! Jack Bales, the hope of our Society's future, will enroll at Illinois College (Jacksonville) next fall, and in a few month's time, has collected 48 Alger titles.)



## INGREDIENTS OF AN ALGER STORY

Some critics of the Alger Success stories go to great lengths to discredit and discourage the Alger theory in reducing it to a formula using an algebraic equation and an unknown quantity, which in their opinion is pure unadulterated luck.

Most anyone will concede that if you depend upon luck, you are taking a gamble and I agree, however, since the Alger heroes always achieved their goal, their philosophy could not have been based upon luck alone but something else. Something not always easy to identify. Perhaps an outstanding virtue in each of the individual heroes.

Mr. Alger couldn't have written his success stories from his own personal experiences, for he had not yet achieved success in any form when he became famous for the story of Ragged Dick which touched the hearts of the nation. He could not have written from experience, using the so-called "Rags to Riches" formula, for he was neither born in poverty, or of wealthy parentage.

Horatio was urged to follow in his father's foot-steps, and so he prepared for the ministry, but the young minister found it difficult to sound convincing when preaching to his elders, so, what could be more natural than to direct his ministry to an age group younger than himself.

Fresh from his boyhood home, and aware of his own personal problems, and of his schoolmates, his style of ministry changed from the pulpit to the pen. And guided by his theological training he developed a theory which should prove to be attractive to young readers. It is true that he preached, practiced and believed in Divine Providence, but such faith was based upon many virtuous qualifications.

The first ingredient must be a boy, one in the same age group of the boys he hoped to attract with his message. He must name the boy. An alliterative name is helpful but not always necessary. At least one parent is necessary; usually a mother, and sometimes an overbearing

step-father is added to bring our hero's problem into sharper focus. It can also be portrayed in the village squire who is about to foreclose on the mortgage, but our hero must have a burden to bear. In the case of one of Alger's early juvenile stories, Paul Prescott's Charge, his burden was to clear his father's name of a charge of dishonesty over an unpaid debt of five hundred dollars.

With the proverbial three strikes on our hero it becomes a challenge to win out against overpowering odds. Can he do it? The young reader has similar problems of his own, and this is what he wants to know. Just how does the hero accomplish his goal?

Then a bully must be added to the plot to make it more difficult for the hero. And often the bully is also a rival in scholastic sports and prefers to challenge the hero for the highest honors. Invariably the rival comes out second-best, and influences his father to add some discomfort to the hero.

Fortunately for our heroes, they always had kind, loving and understanding mothers, who usually became widows as the story opens. If my readers think they see a parallel here with Horatio's own home life, they are mistaken; for his mother was the first to go. Oddly enough, the statistics recorded on the family monument show these figures for her: B. 9-5-1807. D. 9-5-1878.

And our hero is usually forced to leave home to seek his fortune. If he had any worldly possessions when he left home he was dispossessed of them before long. And again, if my readers see a parallel here with certain fraternal organizations, I cannot dispute your claim, for Horatio's father's grave is marked with a fraternal emblem.

A pick-pocket or a confidence man is usually standard procedure and an important ingredient to guide our hero in being cautious when among strangers.

A child, or an aged person in distress is also an important ingredient, and one whom our hero must never

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## INGREDIENTS OF AN ALGER STORY (continued)

fail to assist. To illustrate such situations Alger usually uses a runaway horse and carriage, or a drowning person. The Alger critic will be quick to point out that such situations were conveniently written into the script for the sake of the reward, thus saving our hero from the poor house. They overlook the possibility of its intention as an object lesson of the manly thing to do.

Even when our hero receives a monetary reward, or just happens to find a large sum of money, the incident was not recorded to ease his hardships but to suggest a proper solution. You may recall that Rufus, in the story *Rough & Ready* (see also reference on page one), found a wallet containing three hundred dollars. Was he tempted? Not in the least, for Rufus had one of the virtues of the hero caliber, honesty. Even though the rightful owner was never found, Rufus was never destitute enough to feel the need of it.

In many cases our heroes have had to put off completion of their education for one reason or another and spend their idle moments in study, and often assist a young friend less fortunate than themselves. And so a weak character must be introduced into the script; weak in education, finances or health. Purely an object lesson to show the compassion of our hero.

On rare occasions the dude from back home meets our hero on the streets of the city. If our hero does not show outward signs of prosperity, he is recognized with scorn and ridicule, designed to irritate and tax his temper, but our hero with the outstanding virtue of self control, responds respectfully and in a gentlemanly fashion, forcing the dude to accuse him of putting on airs.

If our hero in such instances has had some degree of prosperity, he further mystifies the dude by inviting him to lunch at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and then escorting him to Central Park. The dude then, and only then, is willing to accept him as an equal, and asks to borrow \$10.

An episode of city life is important to the young reader too, so that the country boy may learn first hand the problems of the boys who are forced to make a living on the streets of the city, such as the art of working and living together.

The street-boys, a product of the mid-19th century, had a choice of semi-confinement in institutions, or survive on the streets, offering their meager services in exchange for the few pennies necessary for food and shelter. And to make matters worse there was much competition in the street-boy trades.

Alger in chronicling the adventures and experiences of the street-boys made it clear to the country boy, the problems of competition he would experience should he decide to seek his fortune in the city. The Alger critics will claim that Alger encouraged great masses of boys to come to the city. It is my conviction that he discouraged them by revealing the many hardships, and writing of the desires of the city boys to seek their fortune in the West.

The city boys, forced to eke out an existence on the city streets, had but few principles, survival at any cost being of utmost importance, but perhaps the most outstanding of their virtues was independence. They did not prefer to submit to the regimentation of institutions. But always hanging over their heads as a warning was the dreaded regimentation of Blackwell's Island.

The art of living together in such places as the Newsboys' lodge was an occasional comfort as well as a luxury in bad weather but there were certain restrictions enforced while they were overnight guests.

In the art of working together, competition between the shiftless and otherwise unprincipled street-boy and the country-bred boy often caused rivalry when their employer was forced to make a decision between them.

And so I rest my case. If the critics prefer to gamble, I'll stake my chances on the Alger hero every time! (PF-000)