

Newsboy



Monthly publication of the HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY,
a magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

Horatio Alger Jr.

1832 - 1899



Jack Bales, Editor
1214 W. College Ave.
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

Volume XVIII

June-July, 1980

Numbers 11 & 12



THEIR ONLY BED.—SUPPERLESS AND HOMELESS STREET BOYS SLEEPING OUT AT NIGHT.—A NIGHT SCENE IN AN ALLEY.

Many of the newsboys and street boys of New York have no homes. Driven out from the alleys and by-ways of the slums, and from the dens in tenement districts, where most of them were born, they sell papers, black shoes, beg or steal, as need be, and sleep wherever night overtakes them. Their faces are old from constant exposure as well as from the struggle for existence. Their thin clothes afford small protection against the winter's cold. It is not till one sees them at night curled up on some doorstep, tucked away in old barrels and empty packing boxes, lying in any and every sheltered spot in dark alleys or deserted hallways, that one begins to realize that there is no softer pillow for them.

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr., and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes — lads whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

OFFICERS

JERRY B. FRIEDLAND	PRESIDENT
BRADFORD S. CHASE	VICE-PRESIDENT
CARL T. HARTMANN	SECRETARY
DALE E. THOMAS	TREASURER
RALPH D. GARDNER	DIRECTOR
RICHARD R. SEDDON	DIRECTOR
LEO (BOB) BENNETT	DIRECTOR
MAX GOLDBERG	DIRECTOR

Newsboy, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society, is published monthly (bimonthly January-February and June-July) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$10.00. Cost for single issues of Newsboy is \$1.00 apiece.

Please make all remittances payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, changes of address, claims for missing issues, and orders for single copies of current or back numbers of Newsboy should be sent to the Society's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

A subject index to the first ten years of Newsboy (July, 1962 — June, 1972) is available for \$1.50 from Carl Hartmann at the above address.

Manuscripts relating to Horatio Alger's life and works are solicited, but the editor reserves the right to reject submitted material.

The Horatio Alger Society Convention — the Connecticut Conclave was a huge success, and all who attended it had a great time. Our thanks to Brad Chase who was a terrific host!!

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-596 Deidre Ann Johnson
37 S. Harvard
Villa Park, Illinois 60181

Deidre is a student and heard of the HAS through research on Edward Stratemeyer. She collects Stratemeyer and his Syndicate books, as well as girls' series books and children's fantasy. She is presently compiling a Stratemeyer Syndicate bibliography.

PF-598 J. Randolph Cox
Route 5, Box 10
Northfield, Minn. 55057

Most everybody in the boys' book field has heard of Randy Cox. A long time contributor to the Dime Novel Round-Up, he is undoubtedly the leading authority on the Nick Carter Series. A reference librarian by occupation (as is your editor!!), Randy collects detective fiction, dime novels and other paper Americana, which includes newspaper comics and comic books. Friends in the HAS (Jack Dizer, Jack Bales, Eddie LeBlanc) told him of the Society.

PF-599 Harold W. Yerty
P.O. Box 184
Indio, Calif. 92202

Harold is a retired teacher and collects old books. Other hobbies include reading, music (playing the organ) and photography.

PF-600 Douglas Schwalbe
520 East 86th Street
New York, N. Y. 10028

No biographical information on Douglas is known at this time.

* * *
CHANGES OF ADDRESS

PF-OA1 Irene Gurman
506 Intracoastal Drive
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33304

PF-210 Col. Paul L. Webb
3805 Brandon Road
Huntington, W. Va. 25704

June-July

PF-508 Harry R. Smith
27 W. Home St.
Long Beach, CA 90805

* * *

BOOK MART

The listing of Alger books in this department is free to HAS members. Please list title, publisher, condition and price.

Offered by Lester Bird, Old York Road, Bordentown, N. J. 08505. He writes: "All prices are cost plus postage. Please send no money with order. Order books by title and publisher."

Andy Grant's Pluck	JCW	G	\$3.00
Adrift in N. Y.	Mershon	F	2.00
A Cousin's Conspiracy	Hurst	G	3.00
Bob Burton	Donohue	G	3.00
Bound to Rise	JCW	F	2.00
Driven from Home	Mershon	G	3.00
Frank's Campaign	Hurst	G	3.00
H. Carter's Legacy	Hurst	Vg	4.00
Helping Himself	Hurst	G	3.00
Hector's Inheritance	Hurst	F	2.00
In a New World	JCW	F	2.00
Julius the Street Boy	Hurst	F	2.00
Phil the Fiddler	Hurst	F	2.00
Paul the Peddler	Hurst	G	3.00
Risen from the Ranks	JCW	G	3.00
Sam's Chance	Hurst	F	2.00
Sink or Swim	Hurst	G	3.00
Strong and Steady	Hurst	G	3.00
Slow and Sure	Hurst	G	3.00
Strive and Succeed	Burt	F	2.00
The Store Boy	Hurst	G	3.00
The Erie Train Boy	Hurst	F	2.00
Young Adventurer	JCW	G	3.00
Young Explorer	JCW	G	3.00
Young Outlaw	Donohue	F	2.00
Young Acrobat	Hurst	G	3.00
Young Miner	Burt	F	2.00
Tom the Bootblack	Burt	F	2.00
Try and Trust	S&S	G	3.00
The Tin Box	Hurst	G	3.00
Wait and Hope	Hurst	G	3.00
W. Sherwood's Proba.	JCW	G	3.00
In a New World	Mershon	G	3.00
H. Carter's Legacy	Hurst	G	3.00
In a New World	Hurst	G	3.00
Julius the Street Boy	Donohue	G	3.00
Risen from the Ranks	Federal	G	3.00
Sam's Chance	Mershon	Vg	4.00
Helping Himself	Hurst	G	3.00

Helping Himself	Donohue	G	\$3.00
Sink or Swim	Burt	G	3.00
Wait and Hope	Burt	G	3.00
Hector's Inheritance	Trade	G	3.00
Sam's Chance	Hurst	G	3.00
Sink or Swim	JCW	F	2.00
Try and Trust	JCW	F	2.00
Hector's Inheritance	Hurst	F	2.00
Cousin's Conspiracy	Donohue	F	2.00
Frank's Campaign	Donohue	G	1.00
The Cash Boy	Trade	G	1.00
Adrift in New York	Superior	G	1.00
Bob Burton	Donohue	Vg	2.00
Young Miner	NYB	G	1.00
Young Outlaw	NYB	G	1.00
Brave and Bold	Donohue	G	1.00
Bound to Rise	NYB	Vg	2.00
Do and Dare	NYB	G	1.00
Wait and Hope	NYB	Vg	2.00
Helping Himself	World	G	1.00
Helping Himself	Goldsmith	G	1.00
Slow and Sure	NYB	Vg	1.50
Do and Dare	NYB	G	1.00
Slow and Sure	Whitman	G	1.00
Driven from Home	Hurst	P	1.00
Cousin's Conspiracy	Hurst	P	1.00

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS MONTH'S
"BOOK MART": P = Poor, F = Fair, G =
Good, Vg = Very good, NYB = New York
Book, JCW = John C. Winston.

* * *

The April 28, 1980 issue of Time had a short piece on HAS member Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, author of the Nancy Drew mystery stories. Accompanying a picture of Harriet is a lengthy paragraph in Time's "People" section (p. 85) which states in part: "It's 50 years since Harriet Stratemeyer Adams and Nancy Drew first met. To celebrate the anniversary, and the 58th adventure of the adroit adolescent detective, The Flying Saucer Mystery, her publishers tossed a mystery-theme party for Adams, who writes the Drew dramas as Carolyn Keene. At 87, the author is spry, . . ."

Harriet and her associate Nancy Axelrad (who writes the Bobbsey Twins stories), have been at several HAS conventions where they are always welcome guests. The Alger Society congratulates them on this anniversary.

* * *

ALGER'S NEW YORK: A STORY FOR OLD BOYS
by Harold M. Harvey

"Hordes of men have written in praise of Horatio Alger, a few in disparagement. Of all of them, one man touched upon the truth and formed what seems an accurate estimate of his work. Harold M. Harvey, in a feature article published in the New York Tribune on January 28, 1917, . . ."

—Herbert R. Mayes
Alger: A Biography
Without a Hero

(Editor's note: Though most of Mayes' Alger book is, as he readily admits, fiction, he was telling the truth about the existence of this article. It does appear in the Tribune's January 28, 1917 issue [section 5, pp. 3-4 to be exact], and deserves mention because it is one of the few Alger pieces that was written before 1928, the year Mayes' book was published.

Besides detailing "Alger's New York," Harvey includes pictures of some of the numerous locales the author featured. Captions include the following: "House at 163 Bleecker Street, Familiar to Readers of Ben the Luggage Boy"; "Mott Street, the Early Home of Ragged Dick"; "Broadway, Between Dey and Cortlandt, Location of Paul, the Peddler's Neck-Tie Stand"; "Site of Lovejoy's Hotel, Park Row, Where Paul the Peddler Had the Adventure with Mr. Felix Montgomery and the \$300 Diamond Ring."

At the beginning of the article there is this in large letters: "Father, when that boy of yours comes home and says, 'Pop, you can't get Alger at the library any more,' don't you take it as a personal insult? Why, you were brought up on Alger." And in the middle of the first page, set off from the rest of the article, is this paragraph in italics: "Horatio Alger, Jr. wrote of New York when city lots on Forty-fifth Street near Fifth Avenue were selling for \$440 and Central Park

was a dumping ground. In his stories of newsboy life he has preserved New York of the late fifties with the descriptive detail of a Baedeker. Forty years ago the youth of America waited feverishly for each volume added to the "Ragged Dick" and "Tattered Tom" series. Hundreds of thousands of Alger's books were sold to libraries, particularly to Sunday school libraries. To-day a search for his stories is almost fruitless. Libraries everywhere have thrown out his works or are rapidly eliminating them from their shelves. We have been interested in Hugo's Paris and Dickens's London. Here we have Horatio Alger's New York.")

Fifty years ago Horatio Alger, Jr. published his first story of a New York urchin. A Harvard graduate of the class of 1852, and later ordained as a Unitarian minister, he came to the city in 1866 for the purpose of studying the life of its street gamins.

As a result of his research Ragged Dick was published the following year as a serial in a magazine called Student and Schoolmate. The bootblack hero was a new type and the warm reception he received prompted A. K. Loring, of Boston, to issue the story in book form and to order five more volumes of the same general character. Almost immediately Alger became the most popular author of books for youngsters. Working with feverish haste, he brought out the volumes of the "Ragged Dick" series in rapid succession and followed with the equally popular "Tattered Tom" group. Hundreds of thousands of copies of these books were sold, at least a third of which found their way into circulating libraries, particularly into Sunday school libraries. Ragged Dick was hailed as an "undying book."

To-day the name of Horatio Alger, Jr. has almost completely disappeared from the rolls of American writers. Boys of the last two generations, who loved Ragged Dick, Paul the Peddler, Mark the Match Boy, Ben the Luggage Boy, Phil the Fiddler and the rest of the Alger family of heroes, will find the search



The Fifth Avenue Hotel on Madison Square between 23rd and 24th Streets, 1896 — the place where many an Alger Hero was treated to dinner by the Benevolent Patron.



Easter Sunday, 1898, on Fifth Avenue, looking north from 41st Street, with the Croton Reservoir.

for their old friends a difficult one. Public libraries have cast them out. Book stores harbor them but occasionally, and then between the covers of cheap reprints. An exhaustive hunt through the stocks of several second-hand dealers recently turned up but three volumes.

True it is that there is a marked similarity of plot in all of Alger's stories. In every case the youthful hero rises from the lowest depths of poverty to a sure position in the high road to fortune. Each boy finds his inevitable guardian in a chance acquaintance, always possessed of influence and money, and in turn befriends a youngster less fortunate than himself. In outward appearance the lads never vary—bright youngsters of twelve to fourteen, who, in spite of their rags, are attractive. "It was easy to see," Alger writes of "Ragged Dick," "that had he been clean and well dressed he would have been decidedly good looking," and as Dick was a success from the first, he did not bother to change the formula.

Looking back over the happy hours spent with Alger's boys, their adventures do not seem as striking as the reality with which their creator painted the New York of the late fifties in which they lived. Faithfully he describes the city as it was then, going into details of architecture long since destroyed, locations remembered only by few, and customs obsolete for forty years, with all the elaborate care of a guidebook. If for no other reason, Horatio Alger, Jr. should find his niche in American literature because he has preserved the New York of their fathers for the youths of the present day.

"It may be explained for the benefit of readers who have never visited New York," Alger remarks as he lays the geographic plans for his later books in Ragged Dick's opening pages, "that about a mile from City Hall the cross-streets begin to be numbered in regular order. There is a continuous line of houses as far as 130th Street, where may be found the terminus of the Harlem line of

horsecars. When the entire island is laid out and settled, probably the numbers will reach two hundred or more. Central Park, which lies between Fifty-ninth Street on the south and 110th Street on the north, is true to its name, occupying about the centre of the island. The distance between two parallel streets is called a block, and twenty blocks make a mile."

It may be said that Harlem at this time was a community of "neat cottages" and that Ragged Dick was able to purchase a plot of land, 100 feet square, on Forty-fifth Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, for \$2,200.

To further set the stage for his future volumes, Alger devoted nearly all the first half of Ragged Dick to a sight-seeing tour in which Dick acts as guide for his wealthy friend, Frank Whitney. As a logical start they climb to the lofty roof of the Custom House, "a massive structure at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets," and from there survey the city.

"The Custom House," Alger writes, "is in the form of a parallelogram 200 feet long by 90 wide, and about 80 feet in height, the ascent to the entrance being by eighteen granite steps. The boys entered and made their way to the roof, from which they had a fine view of the harbor, the wharves crowded with shipping, and the neighboring shores of Long Island and New Jersey. Toward the north they looked down for many miles upon continuous lines of streets and thousands of roofs, with here and there a church spire rising above its neighbors."

To-day they could not have seen beyond Pine Street, at the north end of the building.

For Alger the Astor House was the pivot on which New York life revolved. In front of "this massive structure, which for over thirty years has welcomed travellers from all parts of the world," he introduces us to most of his characters.

"The massive pile of gray stone has a solid look, as if it might stand hundreds of years," he declares with manifest pride, and promptly uses it as a background for Ragged Dick's prosperous shoe-shining business. Below it, on Broadway, between Dey and Cortlandt, Paul the Peddler sets up his necktie stand, and from its steps Ben the Luggage Boy gathers his first impressions of city life on the day he reaches New York.

"He stood on the steps a few minutes taking in what may be considered the liveliest and most animated part of New York," Alger writes of Ben. "Nearly opposite was Barnum's American Museum, the site now occupied (1870) by the elegant 'Herald' Building and the Park Bank. He looked across the lower end of City Hall Park, not yet diverted from its original purpose for the new Post Office Building. He saw a procession of horsecars in constant motion up and down Park Row.

"He crossed the foot of the park and walked up on the Park Row side. Here he saw street merchants. Most conspicuous were the dealers in penny ballads, whose wares lined the railings, and were various enough to suit every taste. Here was an old woman, who might have gained first prize for ugliness, presiding over an apple stand."

Not so different from the Park Row of our own day, though the sellers of penny ballads have vanished with the high iron railings which surrounded the park, "an inclosure of ten acres," in Alger's words, "which years ago was covered with a greensward, but now is a great thoroughfare for pedestrians and contains several important public buildings." In the park were the City Hall, the Hall of Records and the Rotunda. "The former is a white building of large size and is surmounted by a cupola," runs the author's Baedeker-like comment.

The old Post Office, replaced by the one now in use, was "a brick building, on Nassau Street, and was formerly a church. It is a shabby brick building

and quite unworthy of so large and important a city," Alger says in criticism.

Perhaps no one has a keener insight into the personality of the city than the boys whose daily occupation keeps them in the New York streets. They are alert, ready to receive impressions and quick to form judgments which are generally correct. Alger realized this, and his minute knowledge of the New York of his day was gained from the boys about whom he wrote.

In an article, "Writing Stories for Boys," [Ed. Note: In Writer, vol. 9, Feb., 1896, pp. 36-37] he says: "A writer for boys should have an abundant sympathy for them. He should be able to enter into their plans, hopes and aspirations. He should learn to look upon life as they do." His ability to practice what he preached gives us a graphic picture of New York streets before the Civil War. Through the eyes of the boys, who lived in them, he discovered the personality and distinctive feature of each.

"Fifth Avenue, as most of my readers know," he writes in Ragged Dick, is the finest street in the city, being lined with splendid private residences, occupied by the wealthier classes. Many of the cross streets also boast houses which may be considered palaces, so elegant are they externally and internally."

Fulton and Ann Streets, in the vicinity of Nassau, were the homes of cheap restaurants where Mark the Match Boy often indulged in a banquet of roast beef and baked potato, all for the sum of 20 cents.

On Madison Avenue, preferably in the brownstone row between Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets, Alger located the home of Any Rich Man. Dozens of kind-hearted business men, whose offices occasionally were located at 125 Fulton Street, seemed drawn to that particular neighborhood.

Second-hand and ready-made clothing dealers, in Alger's day, held full sway on Chatham Street, "that peculiar thoroughfare, the shops open to the street, with half their stock in trade exposed on the sidewalk. The proprietors of these establishments stood at the doors, watching attentively the passersby, extending urgent invitations to any who even glanced at the goods to enter."

On Chatham Street, also, was the pawnshop of Eliakim Henderson—might Alger have meant Simpson?—where Paul the Peddler bought the second-hand coat to give Julius, the burglar's ward, and the old pawnbroker haggled with Phil the Fiddler over the price of the violin with which the young Italian replaced the one stolen by Tim Rafferty.

Bleecker Street was the realm of inexpensive though eminently respectable boarding houses. Many of Alger's heroes moved there from the Five Points neighborhood when fortune had taken them under her wing.

"The time had been when Bleecker Street was fashionable and lined with dwellings of substantial and prosperous citizens," runs the description in Slow and Sure. "That time had gone by. Still, it was several grades above the streets in the lower part of the city."

It was in Bleecker Street that Paul Hoffman and his mother sought lodgings after their Pearl Street tenement was burned, and here Dick and his friend Henry Fosdick moved as soon as their salaries as office boys permitted a change from Mrs. Mooney's boarding house in "the far from fashionable" Mott Street.

In Bleecker Street, too, at number 163, lived Mrs. John Jones, whose husband, as described by Mrs. Jones's mother to Ben the Luggage Boy, while he acted as guide to her daughter's home, "is a nice man, though his head is bald on top, and he keeps a grocery store."

Nowhere does Alger describe a quarter

resembling the East Side ghetto of the present time. Indeed, although he mentions practically every other nationality, not a single Russian Jew appears in any of his stories.

Corresponding to the modern congested tenement districts were Baxter Street, "miserable lodgings in Worth Street, in the precincts of Five Points, very near where the Five Points House of Industry now stands," and Rector Street back of Trinity Church.

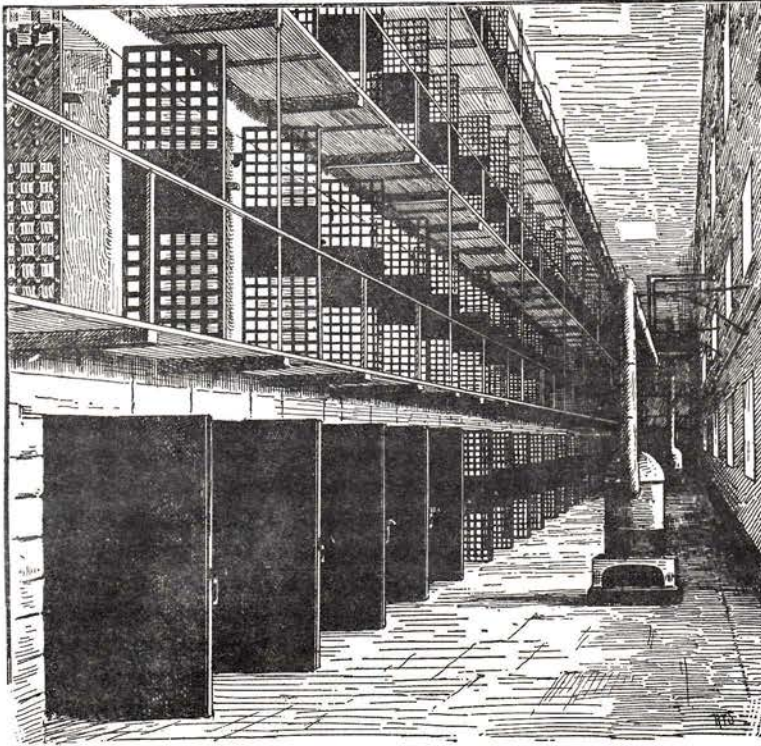
Baxter Street Alger calls "one of the most wretched spots in the city, lined with miserable tenement houses, policy shops, and second-hand stores. Whoever passes through it in the evening," he warns, "will do well to look to the safety of his pocketbook and watch, if he is imprudent enough to carry either in a district where the Ten Commandments are unknown, or unregarded."

Rector Street, along which Ben the Luggage Boy used to pass when seeking a night's lodging among the cotton bales on the wharves, "notwithstanding its clerical name, is far from an attractive street," Alger declares. "Just in the rear of the great church and extending down to the wharves is a collection of miserable dwellings, occupied by tenants upon whom the near presence of the sanctuary appears to produce little impression of a salutary character."

The Bowery, not yet sung as the haunt of the sweated "tough guy," is spoken of as "a broad avenue, wider than Broadway, and lined with shops of great variety, but of a grade inferior to those of its more aristocratic neighbor." At its head, then as now, stood Cooper Institute, opposite which was the Bible House, "a very large building, covering an acre of ground." In the same neighborhood was Steinway Hall, where on a Sunday night Ben the Luggage Boy attended a sacred concert with his new found sister.

Broadway was a source of unceasing inspiration to Alger. From the Battery
(cont. on p. 10)

June-July



PRISONERS' CELLS IN THE PENITENTIARY, BLACKWELL'S ISLAND. (THE DARK CELLS ARE ON THE LOWER FLOOR.)

"Among the down-town bootblacks was one hailing from the Five Points,—a stout, red-haired, freckled-faced boy of fourteen, bearing the name of Micky Maguire. This boy, by his boldness and recklessness, as well as by his personal strength, which was considerable, had acquired an ascendancy among his fellow professionals, and had a gang of subservient followers, whom he led on to acts of ruffianism, not unfrequently terminating in a month or two at Blackwell's Island. Micky himself had served two terms there; but the confinement appeared to have had very little effect in amending his conduct, . . ."

—Horatio Alger, Jr.
Ragged Dick



WAIFS AND STRAYS OF A GREAT CITY.—A GROUP OF HOMELESS NEW YORK NEWSBOYS.

WHITEY. DUTCHY. YALLER. KING OF BUMS. BUMLETS. THE SNITCHER. KELLY THE RAKE.
SLOBBERY JACK. KING OF CRAPSHOOTERS. SHEENY. SNODDY.

Most of the boys who frequent the Newsboys Lodging Houses are waifs, pure and simple. They have never known a mother's or a father's care, and have no sense of identity. As a rule they are known by nick-names, and they generally speak of each other only by these names.

up to Madison Square, or Madison Park, as he sometimes calls it, his boys travel time and again.

"There was novelty in the evening aspect of Broadway, with its shops and theatres glittering with light," he writes in describing the section near Bleecker Street, in the neighborhood of the Metropolitan and St. Nicholas hotels. Along this street were the city's best known shops: "Tiffany, whose fame as a jeweller is worldwide, had not yet removed to his present magnificent store on Union Square"; Ball & Black, who maintained a "handsome jewelry store" a short distance below Amity Street, and A. T. Stewart's, "the large white marble building at the corner of Chambers Street, the largest store on Broadway," where Paul Hoffman purchased many a dress pattern for his mother.

At 365 Broadway, on the corner of Franklin Street, was Taylor's Saloon, in the building later occupied by the Merchant's Union Express Company. This ice-cream parlor was said to be "very elegant," and attracted Ragged Dick and Frank Whitney on their tour of the city. Entering, "they found themselves in a very spacious and elegant saloon, resplendent with gilding, and adorned on all sides with costly mirrors. They sat down at a small table with a marble top, and Frank gave the order."

Just below Franklin Street stood the New York Hospital, "a structure several rods back from the street, with a large yard in front. It was an unusual sight for Broadway, all the other buildings in that neighborhood being even with the street."

Even in Alger's day traffic on Broadway near City Hall Park was congested. Crossing the street at this point is "easier proposed than done," he declares. "There is always such a throng of omnibuses, drays, carriages and vehicles of all kinds in the neighborhood of the Astor House that the crossing is formidable to one who is not used to it."

Ben the Luggage Boy passed Paul the Peddler's necktie stand on his first walk to the Battery, although he did not make Paul's acquaintance at the time. As he went down Broadway "his attention was soon drawn to the street merchants doing business on the sidewalk. Here was a vendor of neckties, displaying a varied assortment of different colors, for 'only twenty-five cents each.' Next came a candy merchant, with his stock in trade, divided up into irregular lumps, and labelled a penny apiece. Next came a man with an assortment of knives, all of them open, and sticking into a large board, the only shop required by the proprietor."

The Battery failed to impress Ben any more than Central Park did Ragged Dick. "Here was Castle Garden, a large structure, now used for recently arrived immigrants, but once the scene of Jenny Lind's triumphs. Now it would seem very strange to have a grand concert in such a locality. However, Ben knew nothing of the purposes of the building, and looked at it ignorantly. The Battery he thought might once have been pretty, but now the grass has been worn off by pedestrians, and the once fashionable houses in the neighborhood have long ago been deserted by their original proprietors, and turned into warehouses or cheap boarding houses."

It took Frank Whitney and Ragged Dick three-quarters of an hour in a horse-car to reach Central Park from the Astor House, and they were ready to return as soon as they had reached Fifty-ninth Street.

"It had not been long since work commenced upon it, and it was still very rough and unfinished," Alger writes of the park in 1868, some years after their visit to it. "A rough tract of land, two miles and a half from north to south and half a mile broad, very rocky in parts, was the material from which the Park Commissioners have made the present beautiful inclosure. There were no houses of good appearance near it, buildings being limited mainly to rude

temporary huts used by workmen who were employed in improving it. The time will undoubtedly come when the park will be surrounded by elegant residences, and compare favorably in this respect with the most attractive parts of any city in the world."

Returning from the park the boys took the Sixth Avenue cars. "Sixth Avenue," Alger says, "is lined with stores, many of them of very good appearance, and would make a respectable street for a good sized city."

For amusement Alger's boys loved above all to go to the Old Bowery or Tony Pastor's. Here Ben, Dick, Mark or Rough and Ready often finished up the day and "from his seat in the pit indulged in independent criticism of the acting, as he leaned back in his seat and munched peanuts, throwing the shells about carelessly."

Barnum's Museum, "a great building with a lot of flags," was also very popular. Here Paul took his mother and his brother Jimmy to see Tom Thumb. The play that day happened to be "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which Alger naively surmises most of his readers have seen.

Niblo's Garden, the New York Circus and Wallack's, where a gallery seat cost thirty cents and London successes were often performed, were places occasionally visited by the boys.

Although the Astor House was the centre of Alger's little world, other hotels in the neighborhood of the City Hall stand out prominently in his stories. The heater in French's Hotel, at the corner of Chatham and Frankfort Streets, across from old Tammany Hall and the "Tribune establishment," offered warmth to many a freezing lad on winter nights.

At 34 Park Row stood Lovejoy's Hotel, a favorite hostelry for transients. In the "refectory, attached to Lovejoy's," Ragged Dick frequently ate when he had had a prosperous day, and in Room 287, on one of its upper floors, Paul

the Peddler was chloroformed by Mister Felix Montgomery, who, posing as a jeweller from Syracuse, stole the \$300 diamond ring the lad's mother had found in Central Park.

Alger also speaks of the more aristocratic St. Nicholas and Metropolitan Hotels, with their "imposing fronts, the former of white marble, the latter of subdued brown hue, but none the less elegant in its internal appointments." Generally he adds, that "each of these splendid structures cost with furnishings not far from a million dollars."

In his descriptions of the Fifth Avenue Hotel Alger reflects the pride which the city at large took in the building. "At the junction of Fifth Avenue and Broadway, facing a beautiful park of two acres," it stood, "a large marble building presenting a fine appearance with its extensive white front. One of the Queen's Palaces," he boasts, "is far from being as fine a looking building as the Fifth Avenue Hotel. St. James Palace is a very ugly looking brick structure and appears much more like a factory than the home of royalty. There are few hotels in the world as fine as this democratic institution."

Although Alger's street-boys seldom found their way to church alone, their benefactors often took them to services. It was through his friend Mr. Greyson that Ragged Dick attended church at Twenty-first Street and Fifth Avenue, and in a church not far from Union Square Paul Hoffman encountered his self-appointed guardian, Mr. Preston.

Fulton Market, South Ferry, Cortlandt Street Ferry, where the youthful "baggage smashers" waited for the trains from Philadelphia, and the piers of the Stonington and Norwich boat lines were all familiar to the Alger family.

Behind all of Alger's writing he held to the purpose of interesting the public in the friendless boys of the city. It is said that Phil the Fiddler resulted in breaking up the padrone system, by which Italian boys were leased by their

parents to cruel masters, to whom they were forced to give their small earnings. In all of his stories he pays tribute to the Newsboys' Lodging House and to Charles O'Connor, its superintendent.

"The downtown Newsboys' Lodging House," he writes in Mark the Match Boy, "was located at the corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets. It occupied the fifth and sixth stories of the building then known as the Sun Building, owned by Moses S. Beach, publisher of that journal."

Alger died in 1899. His life had been an active one, yet he had always found time to be interested in his immediate surroundings. When other writers turned to the then recent Civil War for material, Alger described the daily life of his city. Chronicles of national reconstruction are many. Horatio Alger, Jr. has left us one of the few accurate pictures of a great city in the making.

(Editor's note: As I stated at the beginning of this article, the author appended the following words to his essay: "Father, when that boy of yours comes home and says, "Pop, you can't get Alger at the library . . ." Elsewhere in it, Harold M. Harvey offers this nostalgic plea: "Get your hat, father; Join us in a hike to the haunts of Fame and Fortune. Let's see what is left of those shrines of our youth. Boy, page Ragged Dick and Paul the Peddler!"

* * *

According to the publisher's ad, the following book will be released this September in Twayne's United States Authors Series. Details will appear in a later Newsboy.

Horatio Alger, Jr.
Gary Scharnhorst
TUSAS 363
ISBN 0-8057-7252-9

Twayne Publishers

A Division of G. K. Hall & Co.
70 Lincoln Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

A NOTE ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF ALGER'S LIFE OF EDWIN FORREST

by Gary Scharnhorst

(Editor's note: This article was originally published in Theatre Studies [no. 23, 1976-77]. It is published in Newsboy by permission of the editors of the journal and by Alger Society member Gary).

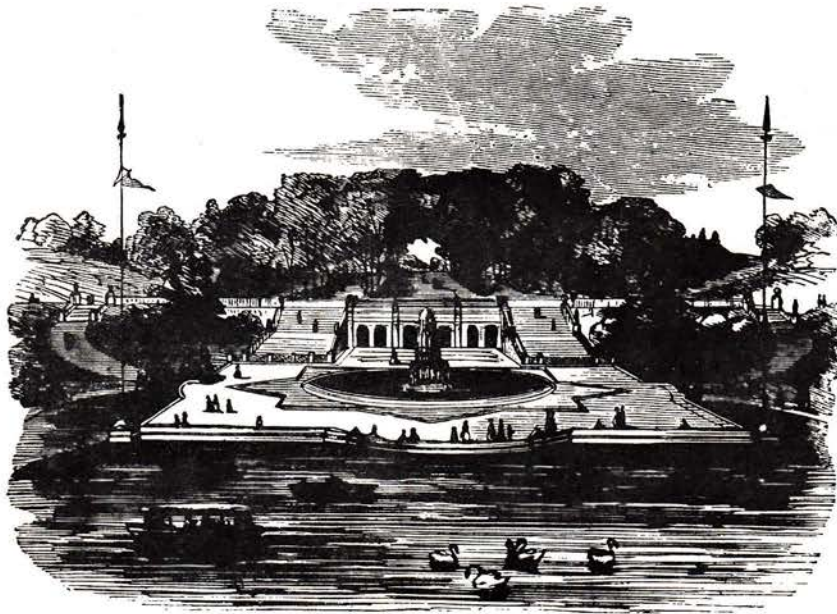
In the summer of 1869, Edwin Forrest asked Unitarian clergyman William Rounseville Alger to write his official biography. Forrest had conducted a careful search for a qualified biographer over a period of months, for he well understood that his biographer would be charged with the difficult task of recording the life of an actor who, in the wake of his notorious feud with Macready and a celebrated divorce, was generally considered a disreputable rogue. Although he told Alger to "Paint me as I am," (1) as the subject of the portrait he undoubtedly expected to be painted in the most complimentary colors possible. Had he lived to contemplate in 1877 the two-volume finished work, Forrest could hardly have been disappointed. As Richard Moody notes, his biographer "chose the path common to most nineteenth-century biographers, sheltering his hero under a cover of romantic and sentimental apology." (2)

Forrest's selection of Reverend Alger, however, was influenced by considerations distinct from those of conventional literary qualifications for the task. More importantly, Forrest wanted a distinguished name prominently displayed as the author on the title page of his Life. And as an appreciative Forrest wrote on July 16, 1869, to the friend who had nominated W. R. Alger, "We could not have selected a better man" (3) than the chaplain of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although Reverend Alger, the author of several theological treatises, had never before attempted a biography, he was assigned the task of writing this one. Forrest's (continued on page 18)



A DEN IN BAXTER STREET.

As Alger notes on page 8 (2nd col.), Baxter Street is one of the worst locations in New York City. Of Central Park he has a much more favorable opinion; indeed, it was one of the sights that Ragged Dick pointed out to Frank Whitney. (See page 6, top of 2nd col., and pages 10-11).



VIEW IN CENTRAL PARK.



The old Post Office, 1887, with Broadway at the left and Park Row at the right, now southern end of City Hall Park. (See Alger's comments about it on p. 7, bottom of the 1st column).



The New York Herald building on Herald Square (at 34th Street), 1900, with Broadway at the left and Sixth Avenue at the right. (See p. 7 of this Newsboy, middle of the first column).



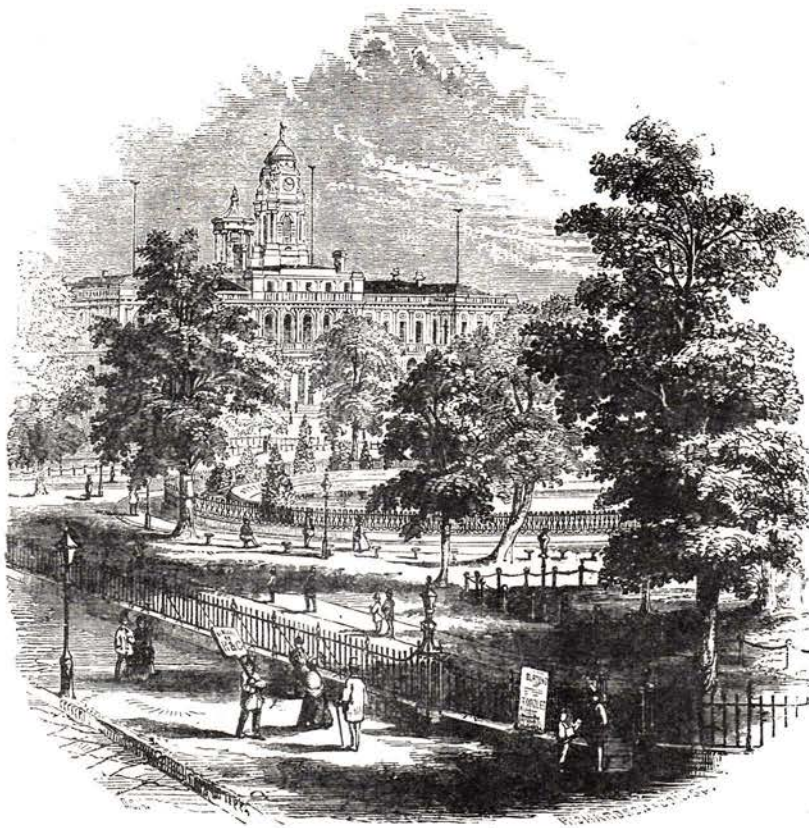
The Bowery, looking north from Canal Street, 1888. (See p. 8, second column, for Alger's description of it).



St. Paul's Chapel and the Astor House, off City Hall Park, 1892. (See p. 6 of Newsboy, bottom of second column).



City Hall, 1928, with the statue of Civic Virtue by Frederick MacMonnies. It is interesting to see that this building is pictured on the frontispiece of Ragged Dick, and if you compare that illustration (bottom, opposite page) with the one above it you can locate the spot where Dick stood. (For additional comments see page 7, first column, and page 10, first column).



CITY HALL.



The title page of the first edition of "Ragged Dick," showing the young bootblack in New York's City Hall Park. The book made Alger a best-selling author.

("Edwin Forrest" - cont. from p. 12) choice was a fortunate one, for by selecting W. R. Alger, he obtained both a name for display and the services of an apologetic biographer—although each of these requirements would be satisfied, as Forrest probably did not realize, by a separate individual. In all likelihood, William Rounseville Alger composed little of the biographical narrative published under his name in Life of Edwin Forrest; instead, Horatio Alger, Jr., the prolific writer of boys' books and William's cousin, probably assumed that responsibility.

Both external and internal evidence support this conclusion. In the spring of 1870, the philosopher Henry James wrote to his son, the novelist Henry James, Jr., that

Horatio Alger is writing a Life of Edwin Forrest, and I am afraid will give him a Bowery appreciation. He reports his hero as a very "fine" talker . . . as when telling Alger for example of old Gilbert Stuart's having when in a state of dilapidation asked him to let him paint his portrait. "I consented," said Forrest, "and went to his studio. He was an old white lion, so blind that he had to ask me the colour of my eyes and my hair; but he threw his brush at the canvas, and every stroke was life." (4)

James apparently obtained his information and access to the manuscript from which he quoted because as one of Forrest's friends, he had been interviewed by the biographer. Undoubtedly, the remarks of "one of the most distinguished philosophical writers of the country, who was a native of Albany and . . . a particular friend of Forrest," which appear on page 141 of the finished biography are those of the elder James. Moreover, his quotation from Horatio Alger's manuscript about Forrest's sitting for Stuart appears, in slightly emended form, on page 586 of the biography purportedly written by W. R. Alger. (5)

Internal evidence likewise suggests

that Horatio Alger, not W. R. Alger, authored the biographical narrative. Life of Edwin Forrest, in fact, has two subjects and is composed in two markedly different styles. Reviewing the work upon its appearance in 1877, Brander Matthews, like many subsequent reviewers, criticized it for paying homage to two gods, both to Forrest and to theatre and dramatic literature more generally, by interjecting chapters on psychological and historical aspects of theatre between chapters of Forrest biography. (6) Had Matthews or another reviewer also noted that each subject was treated in a peculiar style—the interchapters in the embellished prose of a metaphysician and the biographical chapters in the short, declarative sentences of a juvenile novelist—he would have been forced to conclude that the work was the joint product of two different pens.

Limitations of space forbid a detailed examination of the two volumes for the purpose of demonstrating conclusively that Horatio Alger, Jr. wrote, at least in first draft subject to occasional revision by his cousin, the biographical sections of Life of Edwin Forrest. However, the stylistic affinity of the chapter in Life entitled "Breaking the Way to Fame and Fortune," for example, with numerous passages in authentic Alger juvenile novels does suggest that, while the exact size of his contribution to Life of Edwin Forrest may never be known, Horatio Alger, Jr. undoubtedly had a role in composing the work now attributed exclusively to his cousin. (Fame and Fortune, incidentally, had been the title of an Alger juvenile published in 1868).

Circumstantial evidence also indicates that the two cousins Alger often associated during the period that the biography was written. Horatio was friendly with his cousin as early as 1866, and mentioned him favorably in one of his letters dated that year. (7) The only extant letter which passed between them, dated December 7, 1874, was written by Horatio to congratulate his cousin upon his call to the Church

of the Messiah in New York, Horatio's own city of residence. "I look forward to seeing more of you," he wrote. (8) In a letter two years later, Horatio casually described an evening that he and "Wm. A." had spent together. (9) In short, no obstacle such as distance or disinclination prevented their collaboration.

The significance of this discovery is twofold. First, while it does not discredit the biography, it does emphasize again that the purpose of Life of Edwin Forrest, the reason Forrest commissioned it, was to aid in refurbishing a public image, and consequently it must be read in this light. Horatio Alger wrote three other biographies—of Garfield, Lincoln, and Webster—and those, like this one, were hero-worshipping sagas which portrayed their subjects apologetically. Second, the discovery that Horatio Alger shared in the writing of Life of Edwin Forrest is significant because it indicates that Alger, who generally is dismissed as a mere literary hack, was capable of writing serious works of merit. After all, it was his contribution of biography, though banal in parts, which enabled Life to succeed on a modest scale; the "digressions" contributed by his cousin were roundly and deservedly condemned by reviewers.

FOOTNOTES

(1) William Rounseville Alger, Life of Edwin Forrest (Philadelphia, 1877; Rpt. New York; 1973), p. 818. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.

(2) Richard Moody, Edwin Forrest: First Star of the American Stage (New York, 1960), p. 411.

(3) Edwin Forrest to James Oakes, July 16, 1869. Quoted by permission of the Princeton University Library.

(4) Henry James, Autobiography, ed. Frederick W. Dupee (New York, 1956), p. 401. It is not likely that the elder James was simply confusing the cousins Alger, for he continued his

letter by providing rather intimate details of Horatio's conversations with William James.

(5) The quotation appears as follows: "He was an old white lion, and so blind that I had to tell him the color of my eyes and of my hair. By sudden efforts of will he threw the lines and bit of color on the canvas, and every stroke was speech."

(6) [Brander Matthews], "Alger's 'Life of Forrest,'" The Nation, 25 (23 August 1877), 124.

(7) Horatio Alger, Jr. to William Conant Church, April 23, 1866. This letter is housed in the Church Collection, New York Public Library.

(8) Horatio Alger, Jr. to William Rounseville Alger, December 7, 1874. Quoted by permission of the Yale University Library.

(9) Horatio Alger, Jr. To Edwin R. A. Seligman, November 9, 1876. This letter is housed in the Columbia University Library's Seligman Papers.

* * *

One of the great paradoxes on the American literary scene was Horatio Alger, author of those scintillating success novels of yesteryear, such as *Ragged Dick* and *Mark, the Match Boy*. Alger himself was graduated from Harvard Divinity School and for a while served as a Unitarian minister. But despite the fact that his popular success stories brought him wealth and fame, his own life was little short of tragic. He never married or experienced the fulfillments of genuine mutuality with men or women, though he seems to have wanted these relationships desperately. He had two affairs with women who remained married to their spouses; he eventually suffered serious mental illness and spent his last days in the kind of boarding house which *Ragged Dick* and the other successful heroes of his novels had forever left behind. For Horatio Alger wealth and social prestige were hardly the marrow of salvation. His life had little victory.

Contributed by HAS member Peter Walther, from Pulpit Resource, vol. 8, #1, Jan.-Mar., 1980. This shows again the widespread influence of Herbert R. Mayes' 1928 fictitious Alger biography.



FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAP BOOK



I have been corresponding for several months with HAS member Willis J. Potthoff, 427 Graeser Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63141. He seems to me to be the most indefatigable collector of the Leo Edwards books that I know of. Besides owning copies of all his works, Willis offers photocopies of Edwards' dust jackets in color for all collectors who need them. I have quite a few of these dust jackets and it is hard to tell the difference between them and the originals.

But Willis' avocation does not stop with just the books. He has made a model of the Flying Flapdoodle from the illustrations in Jerry Todd and the Flying Flapdoodle; a reproduction of the sign, "The King's Silver," from the book, Jerry Todd Pirate; a model of the "Sally Ann" from Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure; a model of the Hidden House featured in Poppy Ott and the Tittering Totem; a model of Davy Jones on

the raft from Poppy Ott and the Prancing Pancake. He has just finished for his grandchildren two pairs of seven league stilts.

Other projects on which Willis is working include a full size reproduction of the wagon, the Comet Coaster, from the illustrations in Andy Blake and the Comet Coaster; a model of the Galloping Snail that is in Poppy Ott and the Galloping Snail; Juvenile Jupiter Detective badges from Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy; a mummy in a clear mummy case; a talking frog similar to the one in Jerry Todd and the Talking Frog; a Buffalo Bill Bathtub from Jerry Todd and the Buffalo Bill Bathtub; and a model of the cockeyed ghost from the Trigger Berg book.

Willis writes that "one of the very early projects was a bronze plaque, "The Freckled Goldfish is Here," from the Poppy Ott book.

