



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY OFFICIAL PUBLICATION NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 — 1899

A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

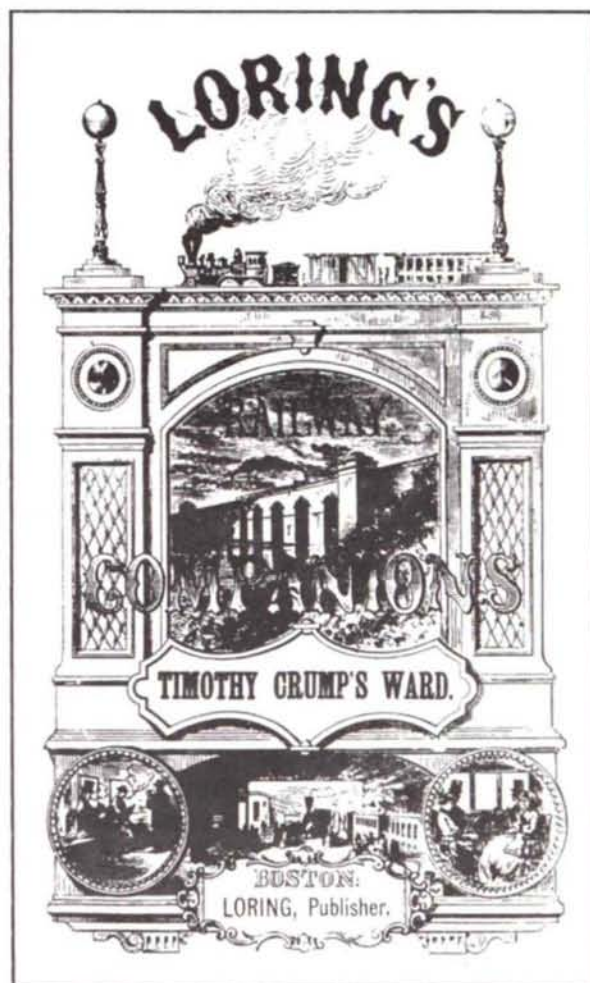
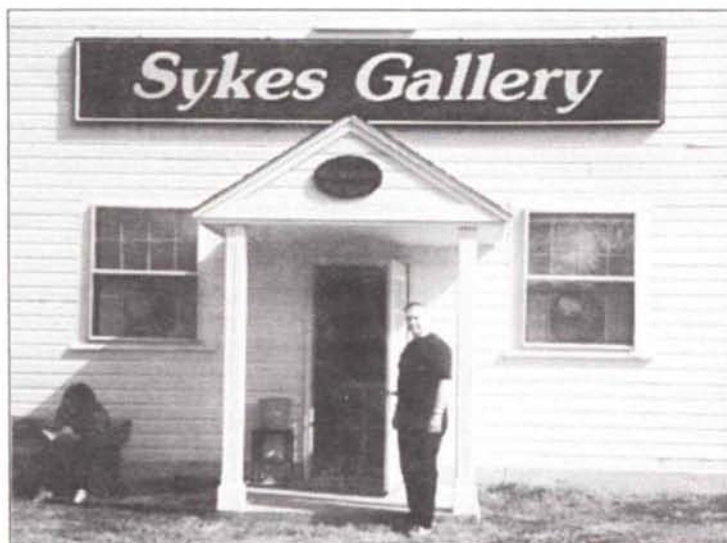
VOLUME XXX

JULY-AUGUST 1992

NUMBER 4

An auction odyssey: 'Timothy Crump's Ward'

— See Page 3



Pranks: A curriculum at Putnam Hall?

— See Page 8

President's column

More on the '93 convention

I spoke July 20 with our 1993 convention host, Murray Levin (PF-851), who is hard at work preparing for our next annual meeting. Murray has narrowed the choice of convention sites down to 2 or 3 hotels and will probably make a final decision by the time you read this. The next issue of **Newsboy** will announce the exact address and other convention information.

As I mentioned in my previous column, Murray has obtained a post office box specifically for all convention activities.

The address is:

Murray D. Levin
P.O. Box 320
Jenkintown, PA 19046

The above address is to be used for all convention registrations and auction donations. Please note that this address is different from Murray's home address listed in the 1992 H.A.S. membership roster which you will be receiving in the September-October issue of **Newsboy**.

Paul Miller recently informed me of the death of Jack Barker (PF-186) on July 1. Jack was a longtime member who joined the Society in 1967. Although Jack rarely frequented the H.A.S. conventions, he corresponded with many members and was well known for his Alger research.

I am in the process of sending a copy of the "new" **Newsboy** to all H.A.S. members who dropped out of the Society during the last three years. I can't think of a better way to renew your interest in Horatio Alger than by reading our official publication.

If you know anyone who might be interested in the Horatio Alger Society, either ex-member or potential member, please contact me or send his or her name to Carl Hartmann, who will forward an application blank and the "newest" **Newsboy**.

Your partic'lar friend,
Robert E. Kasper
585 E. St. Andrews Drive
Media, PA 19063

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.

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Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is \$20, with single issues of **Newsboy** costing \$3.00. Please make all remittance payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to Executive Secretary Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, MI 48910.

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY H.A.S.

- "Horatio Alger, Jr., A Comprehensive Bibliography," by Bob Bennett.
- "Horatio Alger or, The American Hero Era," by Ralph D. Gardner.
- "Publication Formats of the 59 Stories by Horatio Alger, Jr. as Reprinted by the John C. Winston Co." Compiled by Bob Sawyer (PF-455) and Jim Thorp (PF-574).
- "Horatio Alger Books Published by A.L. Burt," by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- "The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.," by Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales (PF-258).

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, to Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, MI 48910. The above rates apply to all want ads plus non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send such ads to Carl T. Hartmann or directly to editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 923 South Lake St., Apt. 6, Mundelein, IL 60060.

Finding 'Timothy Crump's Ward'

or, Fun at a Book Auction

by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)

It was a beautiful New England spring Saturday morning as Ann and I pulled slowly into Sykes Gallery in Weare, New Hampshire.

We were excited because a copy of the paperback edition of "Timothy Crump's Ward" (Loring: Railway Companion Series, 1866) was to be auctioned, for the first time ever, that day. I was there primarily to observe and experience this rare Alger moment and not as a bidder. There was no way I could afford what rumor had speculated the sale price of this gem might be! I was also there as a reporter for *Newsboy* at the impassioned urging of our editor.

Now, you have to realize that Weare is not exactly suburbia: in fact, it is downright rural. The gallery is housed in one of several older white barn buildings with an adjacent field serving as the parking lot for the many cars attending auctions. It was evident that not long ago, these buildings had been part of a working farm with rolling pastures all snuggled among a pastoral and beautifully scenic landscape. There were about 50 cars already in the field, so we pulled our Toyota under the nearest tree to give it shade while we were attending to auction business. We could see lilacs blooming in the distance as we made our way through the parked cars to the buildings.

The first thing that caught my eye was a sign on one of the buildings that said in gold lettering against a green background: "Sykes Gallery." (I learned later that it was a brand new sign!) We entered through a very squeaky screen door and found ourselves in a smallish room, as auction rooms go. People were milling about, gently fingering books that were stacked neatly all around the room in bookcases and on tables. In each book was a bookmark showing a carefully lettered lot number. I'm always impressed how quiet 60 or more people can be as they respectfully inspect rare book items to discover and marvel at leather, word or pictorial craftsmanship of years gone by. I recognized several used-book dealers among those who were looking at the books and talking softly with others. To my knowledge, no other Alger person attended the auction.

I immediately worked my way toward a small glass case set on a table in the front of the room which contained about 15 of what happened to be the rarest books for auction. There, on the top shelf, in black-and-white cover drawings and lettering in very nice condition, was what I had come to see: the Loring paperback



Eric Wells of the Sykes Gallery holds up "Timothy Crump's Ward" during the auction of the rare Alger paperback on May 30 in Weare, N.H.

of "Timothy Crump's Ward." Just for a fleeting second, I pictured myself in a used-book store and pretended I had just found this rarest of the Alger rare books and I fantasized that for only two dollars it could be mine! This moment was then almost completely crushed by a young woman, who not-so-gently nudged me aside to get a better look at some other rare book in the case.

Well, back to reality. My assignment from our hard-driving editor was to get several pictures of the book, the gallery, the book being auctioned, the winning bidder, etc. So, I hunted out who I assumed to be the head of Sykes Gallery: Dick Sykes. Now, some auction people are rough-and-tumble types and probably would not care about my interest in taking pictures of one of the books. Not Dick Sykes. A nicer and more cordial guy you'll never meet. Responding to my request to take a picture of the Alger, he immediately retrieved it from the case and held it up for me.

I excitedly snapped away. "Got enough?" he asked pleasantly. I said yes and thanked him. We chatted a moment and then he was off to attend to the thousands of things a big auction like this needs tending to just before starting time.

At 10 o'clock sharp the auction started. There were atlases, ephemera, modern fiction, fine bindings, books about books, Civil War, California and Texas material, architectural books, and so on. All items were auctioned by number as listed in a nicely printed catalogue. Dick's

(Continued on Page 4)

Editor's notebook

This is where it happened . . .



Dealey Plaza has changed very little in 30 years.

Those of us old enough can remember where we were on Nov. 22, 1963. Dates of great events, tragic though they may be, sear themselves into the mind. Two dates in 20th century American history rise above all others: Dec. 7, 1941 and Nov. 22, 1963.

This past Dec. 7 we observed the 50th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, and it was obvious by looking at their faces during the numerous television specials that those who survived the "day of infamy" found their lives forever changed.

That is why Dealey Plaza in Dallas, the site of the Kennedy assassination, remains such a magnet—not only are the so-called "assassination buffs" attracted to the site, but people who were alive as adults or schoolchildren on that horrifying afternoon now visit, bringing their children and grandchildren. The restored Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. holds the same attraction.

The recent Waco, Texas convention afforded many H.A.S. members an opportunity to visit Dealey Plaza. Your editor, along with fellow Illinoisan Bart Nyberg (PF-879) and new H.A.S. president Rob Kasper (PF-327) visited on Thursday afternoon, April 23.

All remains as I had envisioned: the sixth-floor corner window of the Texas School Book Depository building, the infamous "grassy knoll" and the downward slope of Elm Street toward the railroad underpass and Stemmons Freeway beyond.

The Book Depository houses one of the finest specialty museums I have ever seen. Named "The Sixth Floor," the museum occupies a good portion of that floor

(Continued on Page 14)

Finding 'Timothy Crump's Ward'

(Continued from Page 3)

son was the main auctioneer (and he was excellent!); Dick's wife bid for absentee bidders and periodically became the auctioneer, giving her son brief rests; a daughter gave out numbers and took payments; and a son-in-law was one of five runners and set-up people which also included, I'd guess, a grandchild or two. Dick himself did a little bit of everything. This was a real family business. They all knew exactly what they were doing and they really did it well.

I was particularly impressed with the quiet efficiency and professional ambience of the whole auction process and operation which completely captured all of us attendees and established a pleasant, efficient tone to the business at hand.

The rules of the day were made very clear; there was ample opportunity for all to bid each item; there were no "uppers" or people up front yelling to "up" bids; all material was handled gently and carefully; and each item was treated as a distinct and special entity. It is a joy to watch people do things well, and the Sykes people were real pros.

The auctioneer handled about 120 lots the first hour. "Timothy" was No. 252 of some 613 items. Just about noon, the Alger was raised high for auction. The auctioneer said: "I have an opening bid (absentee) of \$3,100. Is there any advance on that bid?"

The room grew silent, for that was the highest amount bid for any book up to that point in the auction. Not a hand or nose wiggled! "For No. 252, I have a bid for \$3,100. Is there any advance?" the auctioneer repeated.

It was very quiet in the auction room. The bid opportunity was again stated and as there was no movement in the room, the "Timothy Crump's Ward" paperback, at its first time at auction, was "sold to order" to an absentee bidder for \$3,100.

After I took more pictures, Ann and I got into our Toyota and spent the afternoon "booking" our way back to Connecticut. In each place we stopped, I strained to look under this and around that to see if I just might find a hidden paperback that had a black-and-white pictorial and lettered cover, with the words "Timothy Crump's Ward" on the spine, and a \$2 price penciled in some place.

I didn't find one that day (May 30), but you can bet I'll keep looking, now that I've seen what to look for!

Editor's note: The illustration on the front page of this issue is the front cover of the paperback edition of "Timothy Crump's Ward" as reproduced from the Wayside Press edition of Ralph D. Gardner's "Horatio Alger or, The American Hero Era." The copy of "Timothy Crump's Ward" auctioned for \$3,100 as described above on May 30 reportedly went to a dealer bidding for a West Coast collector.

Whatever became of Horatio Alger?

by Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053)

There was a time when virtually every boy and many girls read Horatio Alger stories. To them, these narratives of the gaslit era represented a fixed world of order, opportunity and eventual prosperity. Those who grew up to achieve prominence in life often credited his easily digested fiction with wielding considerable influence on their success.

Horatio Alger's name today possesses legendary meaning. It is a symbol, an American colloquialism with recognition no other name implies. When Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist James Reston wrote that Republicans sought candidates with a "Horatio Alger image," no further explanation was necessary. The uniquely American phenomenon Alger chronicled -- starting from humble beginnings and, against great odds, reaching the top of the ladder -- has become as familiar a part of our heritage as Fourth of July fireworks.

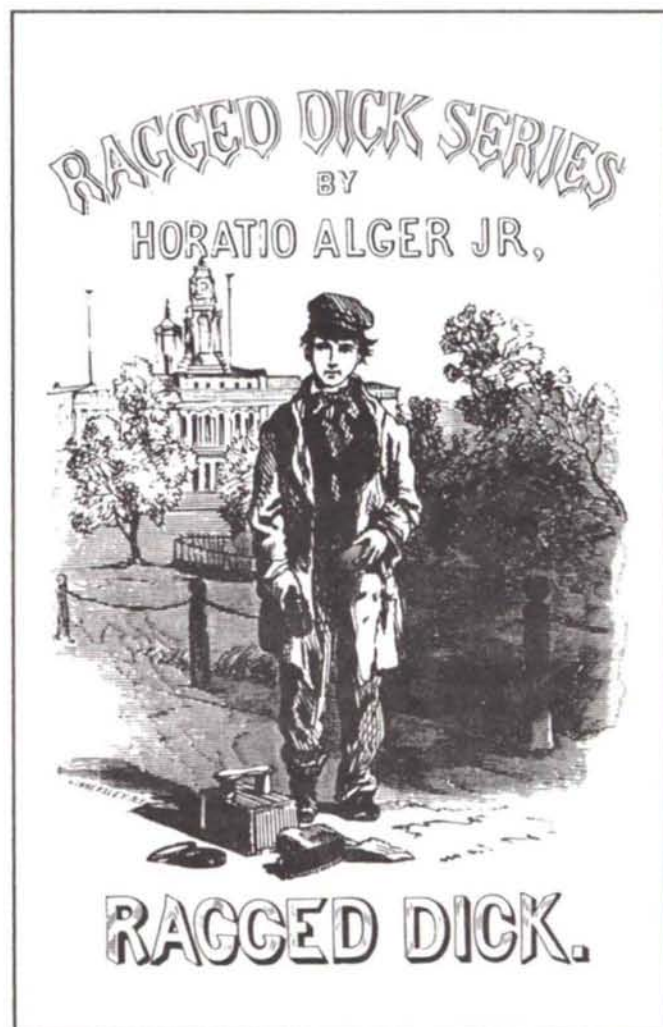
Although a 1982 postage stamp commemorated the 150th anniversary of his birth, it is surprising how few people in these waning years of the 20th century know exactly who he was. Horatio Alger was, indeed, the real name of a real person. Born at Chelsea, Massachusetts in 1832, he died at nearby South Natick in 1899.

In 1866 he wrote "Ragged Dick," the adventures of a homeless bootblack. A Huckleberry Finn of the Bowery, Dick became a sensation, making Alger a best-selling author and setting a pattern for every other book he wrote.

His Boston publisher, A.K. Loring, proclaimed Alger to be "the dominating figure of our new era. He has captured the spirit of reborn America. The turmoil of the streets is in them. You can hear the rattle of the pails on the farm...What Alger has done is to portray the soul -- the ambitious soul -- of the country."

As super-salesman for the Great American Dream, Alger wrote more than 100 melodramatic novels with stereotyped heroes and such alliterative titles as "Brave and Bold," "Luck and Pluck," and "Sink or Swim." In a style unlike anything written then or now, he flavored these masterpieces of naivete with fast-paced dialogue, non-stop action and dramatic suspense.

Readers bought, borrowed and swapped them.



The first-edition title page of "Ragged Dick," the book that made Alger a best-selling author.

Judged by teachers' presentation inscriptions, Alger's books led the rest as prizes for penmanship, punctuality and Sunday school attendance. They were recommended from pulpits and -- unlike lurid dime novels -- could be read in the parlor.

In Alger's time the pace was slower, skylines lower and the air sweeter. It was a period of transcontinental expansion, industrial growth and the arrival of immigrants -- a golden age of determined individuals striving to better their lives through vigor and ingenuity.

The cobbled streets of Lower Broadway -- settings for much Alger activity -- were crowded with hurrying throngs and clattering wagons that gave off a certain jolly hum as streetwise kids struggled to survive in a tough game.

His hero -- about 15 years old as most stories began -- often was a widow's son or an orphan of mysterious background. Adrift with only a few cents in his pocket,

(Continued on Page 7)

Editor's note: This article is reprinted from the Winter 1992 edition of *The Northern Centinel*, published by Peter J. Gardner of Kinderhook, N.Y. *The Northern Centinel* is the oldest weekly newspaper in the United States, dating back to 1787.



Will Wright (PF-639) is presented a statue of "The Whistler" from his family during the annual banquet at the 1992 convention in Waco, Texas.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Partic'lar Friends:

When most children were being read bedtime stories of "Little Red Riding Hood" or "The Three Bears," my brothers and sisters and I were listening to the adventures of "Tattered Tom" and "Phil the Fiddler." Daddy would come into our room each night and read us a chapter from one of his many Alger books. And, of course, if the chapter ended in a "cliff-hanger" we would beg for "Just one more chapter, Daddy...please!" Sometimes he would smile and continue; sometimes he would say, "We'll just have to wait until tomorrow to see how this works out."

Being the children of William Wright was always an adventure...not just in the stories he read to us, but also by the life we led. Every day, Dad would have something new to show us or teach us. Sometimes they were tangible things, sometimes they were from the heart.

Dad was both a wonderful listener and teacher. Not only with his family but also with his friends. He had an insatiable thirst for knowledge...the intelligence to understand it and the compassion to share it. For example, one night he called us kids into the front yard and to our astonishment, there was a telescope. Each taking our turn, he pointed out the different constellations...Orion, Little Dipper...etc. Just a few weeks later in school, I got an "A" on my science test on that exact subject. Funny, I haven't even seen that telescope since. My friends and associates, at Dad's funeral, related stories to us about Dad. It's amazing how many lives he touched.

Dad always told us we could do anything we set out to do. "Strive and Succeed," he would say. "Set your

(Continued on Page 15)

MEMBERSHIP

New members:

Douglas E. Fleming (PF-899)
Box 4096, Station E
Ottawa, ON Canada K1S 5B1
(613) 233-2994 (phone or fax)

Douglas is a promoter of craft shows and concerts who, in addition to collecting Alger books and information on Alger's career, collects music tapes and movies on video. He heard about H.A.S. from Barrie J. Hughes (PF-617).

Change of address:

Ralph W. Anderson (PF-144)
807 12th St.
Grundy Center, IA 50638

James J. Lowe (PF-668)
P.O. Box 57
Colchester, VT 05446-0057
(802) 862-4309

David A. Moulton (PF-541)
1225 Martha Custis Dr., Apt. 411
Alexandria, VA 22302

University of Minnesota Library
Walter Serials Processing
108 Walter Library
117 Pleasant St., SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

BOOK MART

William Russell F-4
240 E. County Line Rd.
Hatboro, PA 19040

The following Horatio Alger short stories are for sale:

From **Gleason's Monthly Companion**, single issues \$10 each:
Feb. 1880: "The Golden Test;" June 1880: "Matthew Pendleton's Wager;" Oct. 1879: "A Chance Meeting" and "The Gift Enterprise;" Jan. 1872: "John Golding's Mirror."

From **Ballou's Monthly**, Oct. 1886: "Tommy's Adventure." \$10.

From **Our Young Folks**, Aug. 1866: "How Johnny bought a Sewing Machine." \$5.

Whatever became of Horatio Alger?

(Continued from Page 5)

he eagerly accepted menial work. From the beginning he had enemies: street-corner ruffians, a drunken guardian, swaggering snobs plus other evil-doers.

The young hero soon performed some courageous deed: pulling a child from the path of a runaway horse, rescuing an elderly person from being robbed or diving into the East River to save a life. He returned lots of lost wallets and jewelry.

In appreciation, he was awarded with a job and soon was introduced to his benefactor's daughter -- described by Alger as "winsome and flirtatious" -- who invariably found him fascinating.

His initiative thus recognized, the youth was sent upon hazardous journeys that tested his grit. He overcame a dozen perils, during the course of which he met someone who solved the puzzle of his past. The mission was always a triumph and he achieved middle-class respectability before he was 18. There was the inevitable joyous ending, often with a mortgaged homestead saved from a scheming squire and enemies scattered in disarray.

These rattling good thrillers were robust, and Alger was inventive enough to inject a bit of the devil into many of his heroes. They smoked penny cigars and guzzled whiskey at three cents a glass. Tom Temple was known as "the bully of the village" and another is introduced burglarizing the townhouse of a wealthy gentleman who later turned out to be his grandfather.

Of course, character flaws were quickly overcome. These rambunctious heroes reformed, studied nights and showed every determination to better themselves.

But are there youths today as enterprising as those Alger created? Assuming someone as eager should come along, would he strive and succeed as Alger prescribed? Might a boy like Carl Crawford labor in a factory for two dollars a week or like Luke Larkin receive "a dollar a week for taking care of the schoolhouse?" And who, like Harry Walton, would become a cobbler's pegger at three dollars a week after a period of apprenticeship?

It would be next to impossible to find American youngsters willing to accept those terms today. And any who applied would be hindered by dozens of laws from earning their living as Alger's boys did. They must contend with compulsory education statutes; city, state and federal labor acts; taxes, social security and medical insurance deductions; union membership, work permits, street trades licensing, indoor and outdoor employment regulations and numerous other restrictions.

Critics carped that Alger was an overrated fraud and that he misled devotees, causing many who stood up to

a bully to wind up with a bloody nose. Some believed Alger so frightened children with threats of mortgage foreclosure that they grew up fearful of mortgages, although they didn't really know why they were afraid or exactly what they were afraid of.

Concerning Alger's admittedly meager literary talent, one critic called his stories "literary murder." Nevertheless, a *New York Times* editorial, praising their "irresistible attraction," called Alger the young people's "prose laureate."

Westbrook Pegler denounced Alger's stalwarts as "sanctimonious little heels," but Heywood Broun recommended these "simple tales of honesty triumphant." William L. Shirer, in his memoirs, remembers finding "Alger's books a constant delight. We read him avidly. They became our gospel."

Alger's popularity crested during World War I. His tales, like the old oaken bucket, became relics of the past. His heroes were replaced by Frank Merriwell of Yale, the Rover Boys and by Tom Swift, who was already inventing television, sky trains, aerial warships and other fantastic gadgets.

Readers became enthralled with new technology and sagas of far-away places. They switched to The Motor Boys, The Moving Picture Boys, The Radio Boys and The Motorcycle Chums. The airplane opened a new realm, while the war in Europe produced The Boy Allies, The Submarine Boys and other series.

Alger's works now receive serious evaluation in universities, recognized as a pivotal literary development separating a heavily moralized fare that preceded them from the new themes that followed.

Asked frequently if young readers today might enjoy Alger, I gave a dozen duplicates from my collection to two Children's Aid Society centers. Their librarians soon reported that youngsters who scanned through them, borrowed them. Upon returning these books, they selected others and, finishing those, asked for more.

Several Alger titles have been reissued in recent years. These editions have often been targeted to old-timers seeking a nostalgic excursion back to their own youth, or to give their grandchildren. Some public libraries still have the Alger stories. Earlier editions often turn up at second-hand bookstores, thrift shops and yard sales.

Find a copy. Read it for fun. You'll enjoy a carefree evening in Alger's uncomplicated world. It could be the renewal of old acquaintances or the start of a new one.

The "blueprint for success" found in these stories by Jim Farley (postmaster general and Democratic Party chairman during Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration) may not make you rich, or even get you started up the road to fame and fortune. On the other hand, it may.

I think I'll read one tonight.

Pranks: A curriculum at Putnam Hall?

by Rocco J. Musemeche (PF-898)

With the permission of all proper individuals, this article is dedicated to my reading chums of yesteryear: Dracos D. Burke, David Dupuy and the late Robert Lewald, and those others who have ventured into a delightful one thousand and one nights of reading one thousand and one juvenile boy/girl series books dominated largely by Edward Stratemeyer, Leo Edwards and Percy Keese Fitzhugh.

My appreciation to the ACA and PCA for the opportunity given me in touching upon a topic from a Stratemeyer series concerning the pranks at Putnam Hall, so common in chapter after chapter you'd think they were part of the curriculum.

For all you Stratemeyer buffs, you will recognize how familiar the introduction to this article begins, how near to the Winfield (Stratemeyer) Open Sesame he employed in each book: My Dear Boys and Girls:

This introduction to an article on the Putnam Hall Cadets and the frivolous but not so merry pranks of hero and villain alike, paradoxically points up the high merit of Captain Victor Putnam, headmaster of this semi-military boarding school in upper New York State.

Heroes thrive here, a galaxy of Sir Galahads romping among a full field of ruffians. The selection of this school in no way is intended to designate them the best of the worst nor to belittle the other boy series villains. The choice is due mainly to being introduced to Putnam Hall a tad bit earlier than others.

We submit a time-frozen maelstrom of malice stymied by the cadets; a bedlam celebration of triumph and the emergence of the true hero of the occasion to climax triumph over shenanigans as it were, Captain Victor Putnam.

Captain Putnam? Why yes, for is not his name appropriately...Victor?

Affectionately and sincerely yours,
Arthur M. Winfield, Jr.
March 10, 1899

Pranks: A curriculum at Putnam Hall?

The Putnam Hall Cadet -- helpful, courteous, friendly, respectable. No cad is he, nor mean or fallow or cheap. So how does that square with the Putnam Hall Cadet, a prankster of the first degree, whose actions under the guise of "fun-loving" often were generously sprinkled with more than a dab of malice?

It may be a commentary on "modern" values that what passed for pranks at Putnam Hall might well get

*Other authors...
...other books*



POOR PELEG SNUGGERS CAME IN FOR HIS FULL SHARE OF THE SNOWBALLING.

Putnam Hall Cadets.

(Page 205.)

somebody arrested today.

Pranks -- so common that along with traditional subjects like math and geography and daily military drilling -- pranks seem part of the Putnam Hall curriculum.

The prolific Edward Stratemeyer, writing under his most recognized pseudonym, Arthur M. Winfield, liberally used the prank in book after book (a total of six books) about the doings at Putnam Hall.

In his introduction to "The Putnam Hall Cadets," Winfield nee Stratemeyer acknowledges the acclaim given his preceding series about the Rover Boys and expresses the hope the Putnam Hall collection will meet with approval.

(Continued on Page 9)

Public curiosity about the days and doings at Captain Victor Putnam's semi-military academy prior to the Rovers inspired Winfield's Putnam Hall Series. Winfield, either by design or intent, molded his characters to the confines of the times and love of the prank, which is part of their personality.

One could easily be appalled at the mayhem and mischief that transpires in the hallowed halls of Putnam Hall under the guise of "fun." Is Winfield operating at his tongue-in-cheek best when he describes the goings on? Probably. Then one recalls the first page of the first book where a manly cadet, responding to the topic of being organized, replies he organized as much as he expects and one cannot expect someone like him to be as meek as a lamb, now can you?

So, what is Winfield up to? I suspect the answer is nothing more than telling a good story, aimed at young readers of the times, young readers who came to love and expect the prank as part of the tale.

Before proceeding, perhaps we should refresh our knowledge of the "Prank Capital of the World," Putnam Hall and the main characters. Putnam Hall is located on a 10-acre tract, a stone's throw from the village of Cedarville, a community wide-awake enough to boast of a blacksmith shop. The most imposing structure on the Putnam campus is the three-story brick and stone building that serves as a combination dormitory, mess hall and administrative center.

The cadets conducted their daily marching drills on the parade grounds. When target practice was on the agenda the entire company would take an hour-long march down a country road to three ranges set up on the 100-acre tract known as Rawlings Pasture.

The school was founded by Army Captain Victor Putnam, whose military career was cut short by injuries suffered on a tour of duty "out west." One would think a military officer would notice the villainous activities of one Josiah Crabtree but nevertheless, Crabtree is Putnam's head assistant through both the Putnam Hall and Rover Boys books.

The heroes include such sterling characters as Jack Ruddy, Pepper Ditmore, Fred Century and Dale Blackmore. To balance the scale and enliven the proceedings, the oderiferous cast is peopled with the likes of Reff Ritter, Dan Baxter, Gus Coulter, Roy Bock and the little sneak, John "Mumps" Fenwick.

It must be remembered the setting is the turn of the century with the morals of the time in vogue. Speech, attire and way of life differ from today.

Several of the Putnam Hall pranks border on April Fools-type stunts but many are conceived and carried out on a more ambitious and grander scale. The difference is comparable to fast food versus steak and baked potato (with all the extra ingredients, thank-you). On the

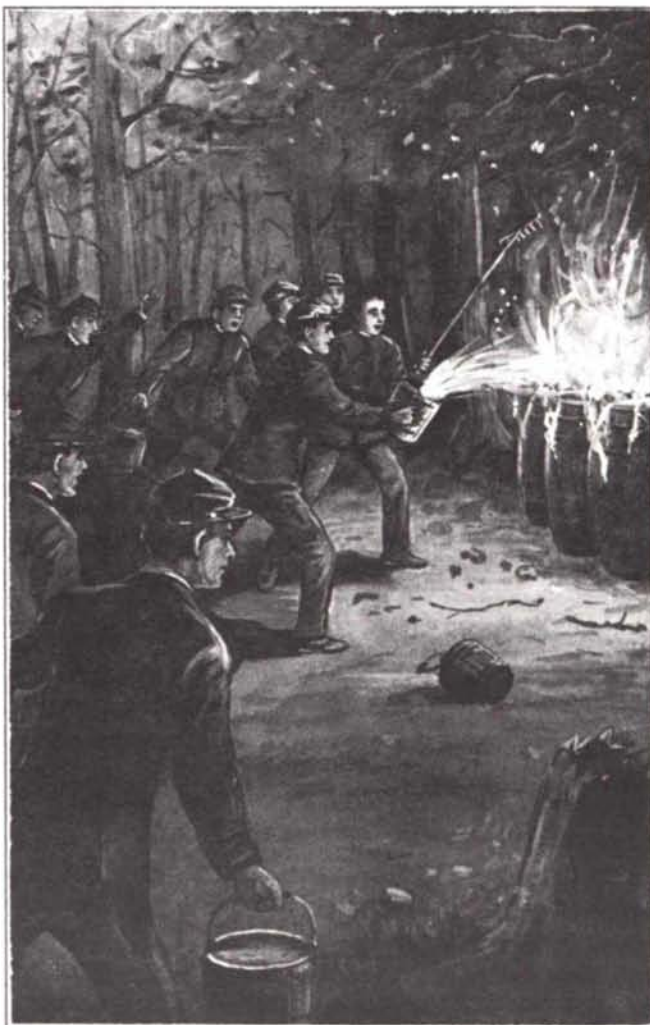
"hot dog" level one finds such gags as soap in the coffee, cakes doctored with sand or doused with red pepper, pillows stuffed with snow, bluing sprinkled on towels prior to use, bags of flour suspended at head level as one enters a tent, disarrayed beds, overturned chairs and wash basins. Step up to steak, though, and the "fun-loving" Putnam Hall cadet moves to the head of the class.

Once, Coulter, no friend of our heroes, took advantage of a half-hour break awarded the cadets after their long march to target practice.

While our friends rested, Coulter substituted blank cartridges for the real thing in Ruddy's rifle. Ruddy took several shots and was credited with a miss every time, much to his chagrin.

After a 1911 football victory over Dauntless, Putnam prepared to celebrate by lighting tar barrels. Winfield

(Continued on Page 10)



SOME CADETS CAME INTO VIEW, EACH CARRYING A BUCKET OF WATER.

The Putnam Hall Mystery.

Page 95.

Pranks: A curriculum at Putnam Hall?

(Continued from Page 9)

makes things interesting by storing the highly flammable tar barrels in a tinderbox wooded area near the school gym and boathouse. Naturally, the prank (arson today) involved the barrels being set ablaze by the bad guys and threatening the school. Our heroes save the day, however, with a bucket brigade and shovelsful of dirt and stone to quench the fire.

On another occasion, Ruddy and Ditmore, responding to a dare, sneak up the stairs of a 75-foot church steeple to get at the church bell to steal the clapper (it was a prank, not robbery, because the good guys did it). Ritter comes by and locks the heroes in, bolting shut the underside of the trap door that led to the belfry. However, Ruddy and Ditmore use the bell rope to eventually escape and Ritter eventually winds up confessing his "crime."

Wildman's Great International Circus, Largest Aggregation of Wild Beasts on the Globe, brings a day's excitement to Cedarville on another day. Winfield, who didn't let the facts interfere with a good story, writes that the circus featured elephant-faced monkeys from Greenland. Monkeys from Greenland? Anyway, the monkeys bolt to freedom and one is captured by hero Ditmore. Does he return the monkey? No, he puts it at the foot of a snoring Crabtree's bed and the monkey takes it from there.

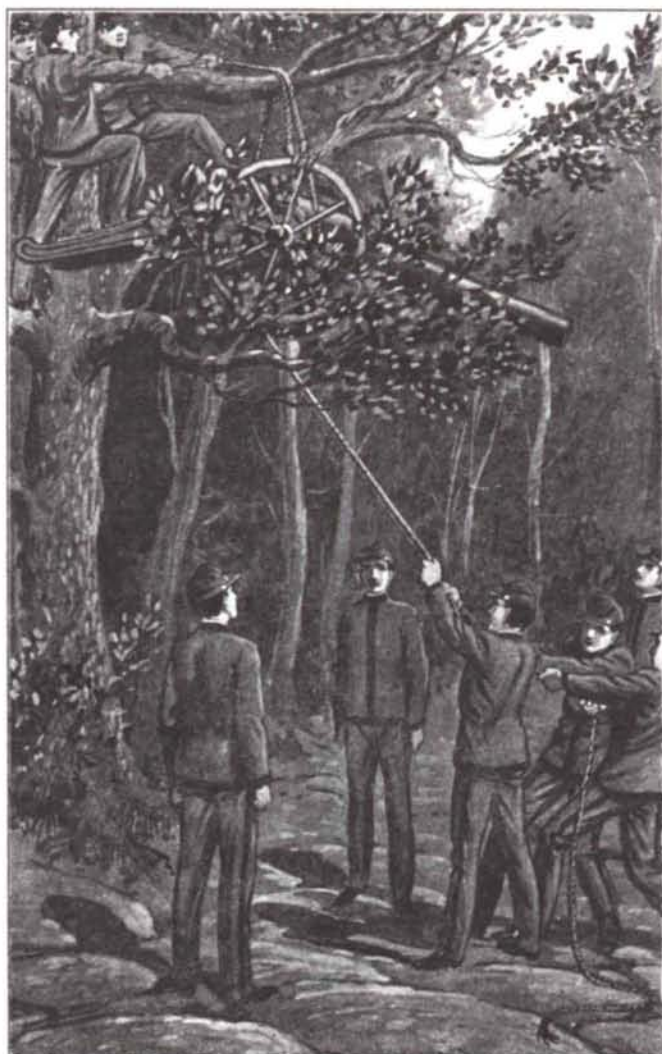
Later, it's reported a tiger has escaped and is heading for a mansion where Pepper and Jack's girl friends reside. Our friends rush to the rescue with Jack, armed with a pistol, facing the beast in the kitchen. The tiger is eventually dispatched. It's later learned that the lock on the tiger's cage has been tampered with. Winfield never lets on who did it.

In "The Putnam Hall Champions," a newly purchased cannon occupies a prominent place on the parade ground, right next to a towering flagpole. We can imagine the pride Captain Putnam must have felt at the two pieces, one squat in strength and the other lofty in glory.

One morning, it's discovered that both the cannon and flagpole have disappeared. Wagon tracks indicate the items were carted away. Consternation, bafflement and alarm make it to the scene. Captain Putnam is indignant. Mischief has finally gone too far. Fun is fun, but this is malice.

Putnam lines up the corps and lectures the troops. His call for the guilty party or parties to acknowledge the deed falls on deaf ears. Could this be a prank by the students of rival Pornell Academy? A cannon and flagpole don't just vanish.

After several pages of trying to untangle the enigma,



THEY LOWERED THE CANNON TO THE ROCKY ROADBED.
The Putnam Hall Champions. —Page 238.

Jack finds the key to the mystery. The cannon has been hauled up into the trees by rope while the flagpole has been weighted down with stones and sunk in the waters off Rock Point.

In triumph, Captain Putnam orders a salute from the cannon to announce the items have been found. The cadets cheer and the Pornell students who did the deed are taken before their headmaster for punishment. The good guys win again.

That's the dessert Winfield serves with his menu of pranks; right will somehow win out and our heroes will finish on top. Pranks are important to the Putnam Hall Cadets. And, important to the reader enjoying their exploits nearly 100 years later.

Fire the cannon again, Captain Putnam!

Fire a salvo in honor of Winfield's history of your school and its cadets.

The state of juvenile book collecting:

Horatio Alger Books

by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)

I'm sure that each of us differs in what, where and how we collect and what we think is important as we pursue our individual collecting interests. Every collector is **absolutely** different. It is those individualized differences within any one specific collecting area that make meeting and talking to each other at conventions so interesting and challenging. We each have knowledge that is of benefit to others and the willingness to share becomes a basic tenet of the well-liked and respected book collector.

It is in this spirit that I offer my thoughts about the current state of collecting books written by Horatio Alger Jr.

Let me warn you from the start that the following thoughts have developed primarily as the result of analysis of some current numbers, real-life observation and experiences, all mixed with prejudice, whim, unsettled non-objective research and pure speculation. I was asked to discuss what I think, so here it is -- and with some trepidation and nervousness I might add! Many of my Alger friends may either disagree with some of my thoughts or, at the minimum, guffaw and think senility has finally set in. Well, recognizing that risk, here goes anyway.

First, I think that the overall status of juvenile book collecting, in general, is very good. There appear to be plenty of collectors, plenty of books around, a variety of different individual interests and several excellent supporting and popular publications which devote themselves to the collecting of older juvenile books. **Newsboy**, **Dime Novel Round-Up**, **Yellowback Library**, etc., act as the glue which brings together collectors with collectors, collectors with books and collectors with information about collecting. I understand that Phantom Friends, the Henty Society, the Oz people, those interested in children's illustrators and the Zane Grey enthusiasts all have their own publications as well. These instruments are so useful and important today in maintaining hobby interest and momentum.

The generators of these publications should be showered with compliments and rewarded in heaven for their tenacity, veracity, initiative and perseverance. I dare say that without them, the rest of us would be individuals

collecting individually, not individuals collecting with friends.

My, what a difference! People like Forrest Campbell, Carl and Jean Hartmann, Jack Bales, Bill Gowen, Jim Ryberg, Gil Westgard, Gil O'Gara, Eddie LeBlanc, etc. have meant so much to us over the years as we have pursued our collecting interests together. And, I believe strongly that the current vibrant health of juvenile book collecting today is directly due to the efforts of these and others involved in producing relevant, exciting and newsy hobby publications of high quality.

Well, within this framework, where do I think we are currently in the matter of collecting books written by Horatio Alger, Jr.? First of all, collecting the works of more recent authors seems generally to be gaining more advocates and aficionados lately than people who are newly becoming interested in Alger. I just feel it as I see what's on dealers' shelves, what's being advertised in hobby publications and what is being offered at book shows. I also observe the age group of collectors (young) now into Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, Ted Scott, Rick Brant, Judy Bolton, etc. And, at the same time, I know many who now collect Alger and I try to recall the last new Alger collector I met who was under 50! However, let me hasten to add that over the years I've found many Alger collectors collect alone (for some reason that is a mystery to me) and are not generally known to many of us. There may be many new Alger collectors out there, but I certainly haven't seen them!

Beyond this question of age, I would like to present five predominant trends which I think essentially describe the current state of Alger collecting. Following that, I will then suggest where I feel these trends can lead us as we pursue this fascinating hobby which many of us love so much.

Current trends in collecting Horatio Alger books

1. Alger collecting is becoming more and more mature as a hobby. Major pieces of Alger research have been completed. This is evidenced by the work of Gardner, Bennett, Gruber, Westgard, Pachon, Bales, Scharnhorst and several others who have documented well both who Alger was and what he produced. I expect all major revelations have been made about Alger's life, and his basic body of work is well documented and described.

Hobby-wise, most of those who only collect Alger have pretty much completed their collections, leaving only the most rare items left to obtain. These folks now have four directions they can pursue: stop collecting, be

Editor's note: This article was prepared for presentation at the book collecting symposium at the 1992 Horatio Alger Society convention in Waco, Texas.

(Continued on Page 12)

Membership in the Horatio Alger Society, 1986-1992

Type	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Regular	196	185	186	189	176	178	177
Honorary	14	11	11	9	9	9	11
Foreign	6	5	5	7	6	6	8
Library	11	10	10	10	10	10	7
Life	9	9	11	11	11	11	12
Total	236	220	223	226	212	214	215

The state of juvenile book collecting: *Horatio Alger books*

(Continued from Page 11)

satisfied only to upgrade, diversify into other aspects of Alger or pursue collecting other things.

My feeling is that all of these things are occurring at the same time among current collectors. In addition, I believe that the number of collectors who concentrate specifically on Alger is decreasing and their average age is increasing. Also, younger peoples' involvement in Alger seems to be peripheral to their other collecting interests. Another sign of maturity is that people are collecting Algers now more for preserving them as antiques rather than using them for pleasure reading as was fairly common among Alger collectors in the past.

Lastly, many Alger-only collectors seem to be diversifying their interests and are collecting certain reprint Alger editions such as Hurst miniatures, Winston Library editions, recent paperbacks, Donohue sets in dust wrappers, different editions of the same title, specific quality bindings, etc. This diversification is a healthy trend for both the individual collector and the hobby as a whole. In my view, it should be encouraged.

2. I'd guess that the total number of Alger collectors has declined in recent years. This, of course, has to be intuitive. No one really knows how many Alger collectors there are, for example, who do not belong to the Horatio Alger Society. However, recent membership numbers for that organization provide some credible evidence which supports my guess.

Also, experiences gained dealing in the used book market provide me with further support for my thinking about numbers of people who collect Alger. For example, several book dealers have indicated to me that they have seen far fewer Alger collectors come into their stores these days than in the past. However, on the other

hand, one dealer in Denver told me that he can't keep Algers on his shelf! This was not due, he said, to Alger collectors per se, but primarily results from a demand by young businessmen in that area who, for some reason, have fairly recently become interested in Horatio Algers!

Inspection of Horatio Alger Society membership figures for the past seven years provided to me recently by executive secretary Carl Hartmann shows a decline in total membership. This decline appears to be due primarily to a decrease in the number of regular members. These membership figures are shown in the table at the top of this page.

One can see that the decline in **regular** membership since 1986 mostly occurred between 1986 and 1987 and between 1989 and 1990. Since then, the numbers level off.

The other four categories of membership, much smaller in actual number, show a more even pattern for the seven-year period with **foreign**, **life** and **honorary** memberships up in the past year and **library** membership down after being steady for five years. In broad terms, the big decrease in **total** membership for the seven years (21) is essentially due to the large number decreases in just two years, 1987 (11) and 1990 (13). All in all, though, except for those two years, total membership in the Society has been fairly steady and even increased slightly in the past three years. However, the bottom line for the past seven years is an eight per cent decrease in **total** membership.

3. The quantity of Alger books available to collectors has been increasing. Several things have been happening in the past several years which together have released good Alger books into the collecting market at

(Continued on Page 13)

a steady and even increasing rate. These include auctions of Algers, which are now common as estates and older collectors decide to turn their collections into cash; the breakup of households, generally as empty-nesters scale down living arrangements, including the contents of old libraries, which often include Algers; the heralded rise in the value of Algers (actual or perceived) pushes dealers into bringing Alger books to market; the increased number of multi-dealer cooperatives send many new small dealers searching for product variety, often including Algers because they are small, old, pricey and meet their needs as dictated by limited space; and there is an upgrading in quality by advanced Alger collectors who then trickle down their substituted copies to the rest of us.

These actions are making many Algers readily available to those of us who operate directly in the Alger-wise community, which means that we are essentially trading among ourselves. On the other hand, fewer Algers seem to be reaching dealer shelves these days and when they do, prices seem very high. My brother Rolfe and I recently visited 12 or so bookstores in the central Boston area and only found two that had any Algers at all! Somehow, we must push dealers harder to become more aggressive in seeking out Algers that I just know are still hidden away in many attics! This would place more Algers on dealers' shelves, providing more opportunities for both old and new Alger collectors alike.

4. The quality of Algers generally available to collectors today has improved immensely over the past five years. This is primarily due to the recent phenomenon of long-standing Alger collectors breaking up their collections for dollars and mostly selling within the Alger-oriented community. As a result, a large number of high-quality Algers have become available, which has then stimulated upgrading by existing collectors.

In addition, there is more awareness and consciousness now about book quality and better descriptions of different quality levels than previously. I remember the days when a first edition having all the right points would sell at a good price almost regardless of quality. Last May, I could not sell or even trade any of five complete firsts that I brought to Indianapolis for any reasonable price since they were just good or less in quality. Apparently, the abundance of good quality Algers which currently abound has made many of us very choosy. Incidentally, I still have those five firsts if anyone is interested!

5. The average cost of Algers has risen significantly in recent years. The most startling figure I've heard recently involves the "Timothy Crump's Ward" paperback that was offered at \$10,000! (It was finally sold at auction in New Hampshire on May 30 for \$3,100; see related story on Page 3). Then, there is the "Ragged

Dick" first edition (Bennett) which sold at auction last fall for a reported \$6,500. Incredible! But before we all get excited thinking about the tremendous value now of our collections, I'm reminded of a point made to a group of us recently by a Hartford antiquarian book dealer. He said no one should collect rare books today solely as an investment. The rapidly changing and dynamic nature of collecting tastes, he feels, provides great risk and a limited guarantee that such books will have an increased value at some time in the future. His view was that people should collect **for the fun of it** and not try to "build a nest egg for the kids." During his presentation he cited several examples where certain "rare" books are valued considerably less today than they were five or 10 years ago. That's something for each of us to think about!

Some people feel that publicity about Alger prices reaching dealers and collectors alike provides incentive for both to consider any Alger to be of high value. I think this may be partly the reason for higher prices today, but there are other forces at work as well. The strong desire to upgrade collections itself will create a demand for quality books (thus higher prices). Upgrading releases books to the market that are seldom available but are of lesser quality. Such books are also in demand and often command good prices.

Other important influences on price include the "deep pocket" and "sponge" people. The deep pocket types have almost unlimited financial resources to pay whatever it takes to get what they want, literally snuffing out the rest of us when reasonable bidding gets too high. The "sponge" people just sop up every Alger they can get their hands on and then hold them for a period of time, hoping, I suppose, to resell them later at higher prices. The actions of both of these kinds of people essentially affect higher prices by decreasing the supply of Algers around, thereby increasing demand and raising prices. It should also be mentioned that prices on the West coast have historically been much higher than in the East. However, that may be changing because people now know about this regional price disparity and the sponge people have been flocking to New England and draining the supply, thus raising prices here for all of us. A true example of classic economics!

Implications of these trends

I believe these trends are leading the Alger hobby into new and exciting waters. Here we have a maturing hobby with plenty of good things available to collect, dynamic interplay and free exchange among the involved hobbyists and an organizational structure providing effective communication. This situation gives most of us ample opportunity to substantially improve our collections in many directions. Admittedly, there

(Continued on Page 14)

The state of juvenile book collecting: *Horatio Alger books*

(Continued from Page 13)

are higher prices. However, such prices are bringing new books to market for our benefit from attics and old libraries, long-time collectors cashing in or by trickle-down. In any case, right now there is plenty of opportunity to **have fun** by adding to our collections and indeed, isn't that the reason we are into Alger in the first place?

If we individually are collecting to satisfy innate creative urges and just have fun, I think the future of Alger collecting for us is very rosy. This is particularly true when one looks at the great uncharted waters involving Donohue, Whitman, Hurst, Goldsmith, World, Winston, New York Book, McLoughlin Bros., Saalfeld, etc. So much is unknown about the Alger products these publishers produced: the number of titles by format, the total number of formats, titles contained in set Alger series, the relationship and succession of Alger publishers and their inter-use and rental of their printing plates, the use of colored pictures, the characteristics and use of dust wrappers and the illustrators used for both cover appliques and inside pictures. Research on these aspects of the books is challenging and essentially unknown territory for many of the less well-known Alger publishers. What fertile collecting and research ground there is when we take off our first-edition and title blinders!

This diversion of interest is already happening as more progressive Alger people who seek new challenges delve into looking at the world of Alger reprints. H.A.S. president Rob Kasper (PF-327), for example, a premier first-edition collector, has just added to our Alger knowledge by bringing forth in *Newsboy* previously unknown information about "The Nugget Finders." My brother Rolfe B. Chase (PF-602), also primarily an Alger first-edition collector, is now heavily into trying to make some sense about the number and formats involved in the production by Hurst of Alger miniature editions. They both have expressed to me great satisfaction in discovering new information and have found their new efforts challenging and immensely rewarding. Because of their work, we all know more information about two other aspects of Alger collecting and we can now pursue our interests in those directions more knowledgeably.

It is healthy that our hobby and we as hobbyists are moving in the direction of discovering new interests in the reprint field. I believe that younger people may well be attracted to collecting Alger now as more and more variety in the ways of collecting and researching the hobby unfold. The key is to move away from our traditional concentration on first editions and titles and

exploit the challenging potential of the Alger reprint world.

To summarize, the overall status of Alger collecting today is good and I think just glows with potential. Current trends certainly support us in going in new and exciting directions. All we need now is for us...yes, we as Alger hobbyists, to recognize and accept what is happening naturally. We must then do a self-analysis of our Alger interests, review our individual collections to see how they relate to these new interests and then pick out a new area of Alger to collect and **get to work**.

My sage advice (if it means anything to anyone) is that if you want to have more fun with Alger and continue to grow in your Alger hobby life, find a new direction now, and go!

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

of the building. A newly constructed entrance and elevator provide access to the sixth floor where for an admission of \$4, you take a walking tour (with audio tape narration for an extra two dollars). You travel back in time to the 1960s, including the Kennedy presidency (two screening rooms offer short films). Chronological visual displays (which include TV monitors that replay news film taken that fateful day) cover everything that happened on Nov. 22, 1963. The "sniper's post" among stacked book cartons has been re-created and walled off by a glass partition, but adjacent windows are available for visitors to get an assassin's-eye view of the plaza below.

It was an eerie experience. All visitors, even the youngest children, acted with proper reverence.

For a long time, Dallas had a guilt complex over the assassination, but instead of pretending it didn't occur, the city, along with the private association operating the museum, has preserved the site in a dignified manner. The next time I'm in Dallas I'll visit Dealey Plaza again, and I urge all of you to do so as well.

In this issue: Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053) talks about the continuing allure of Horatio Alger, Jr. and his books, Brad Chase (PF-412) reports on an auction of one of the rarest of all Alger books, while one of our new members, Rocco Musmeche (PF-898), provides his humorous look at "Pranks at Putnam Hall." Also, Chase discusses at length the current state of Alger collecting.

Coming in September-October: William Russell (PF-549) offers a brief look at Alger's "Adrift in New York," John Dizer (PF-511) has an update on Mershon and Stitt Alger printings and Prof. Fred Erisman gives an academician's analysis of series book research. Also, an Alger short story not listed in current bibliographies!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 6)

goal, take it one step at a time, do not become discouraged, do it honorably and truthfully, appreciate those who help you along the way, and you can accomplish even the most impossible task."

Our goal at this moment is to survive the tragic loss of our father. So for Daddy...we take one day at a time; attempt to exchange each tear for a fond remembrance; honor his memory and stand strong for our mother; and thank our friends for their kindness and emotional support.

The Society and several members sent lovely flowers and kind letters, or phoned Mom to extend their sympathies. We sincerely thank you. We know that the Society and its members were special to Dad and that he took pride in being a part. I recently joined the Society due to Dad's campaign to encourage a "second generation" membership. He seemed so pleased...I guess that goes back to one of those things from the heart.

My brothers, sisters and I thank each and every one of you for the joy, fellowship and friendship you gave Dad through the many years and your kindness to Mom during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

The Children of William Wright:
Stephen, James, Judy, Jan and
Dolores (PF-893)

Dear Bill:

Will Wright was certainly his own man. He was always affable, gracious, hard-working, enthusiastic and cut his own shapes when collecting Alger books. He collected so many different Algers, he once told me, because he wanted an Alger project he'd never be able to complete! This concept presented a continuing challenge to Will, and one in which he took delight in pursuing. Anyone who has visited his classic library building at his marvelous Chillicothe farm can testify to the thousands of Alger books all neatly sorted by publisher and format standing proudly on shelf after shelf, along with hundreds of other books reflecting both his and Nell's varied interests. Will was one of a kind; unfortunately, we don't meet many like him anymore.

In the past couple of years, I was fortunate enough to have worked closely with Will on several projects and came to know him both as a collector and as an individual. His devotion to family was absolutely complete and his interests beyond Alger quite extensive and overwhelming to the ordinary person. He and Nell were a perfect team with their varied hobbies enriching their lives together. It was a pleasure for me to know such an interesting person.

A couple of fond remembrances of Will come readily to mind which I think reflect what a really solid guy he was. The first involves my stint a couple of years ago as chairman of the H.A.S. nominating committee for new officers. Close to convention time in Catskill, N.Y., our committee suddenly found itself without a slate of candidates. We asked Will to step into the gap and accept nomination for President. "Heck, yes, if you want me!" was his instant reply. "Frankly though, Brad, I think someone much younger should take on the responsibility." We pursued this, but were unsuccessful, so we went back to Will. "OK," he said. "I'll accept, but you **must** have a younger person as my sidekick!"

As we all know, that was the way it worked out and Will provided excellent leadership to the Horatio Alger Society, successfully addressing several tough issues. Our current vibrant and active Society is full testimony to Will's logic and good sense in insisting on moving the Society toward younger leadership.

My second fond remembrance relates to our joint effort in trying to figure out the Donohue-Alger publishing pattern. Together, we had about 1,000 Donohue Algers in a variety of different formats. After discussing our Donohue interest at the 1991 Indianapolis convention, I visited Will and Nell in Chillicothe to compare Donohue notes. I spent two grand days poring over books with Will and being fed like a king by Nell. Will had developed a logical, orderly system for documenting Donohues and he and I inventoried our collections in accordance with that system. I will now continue that work alone, but I shall always reflect it as a joint effort -- Will's and mine. That way, his deep interest in helping others to better understand Horatio Alger and Alger collecting will live on.

Because Will was such a unique and participating person, no convention or gathering of Alger buffs will ever be quite the same again. His happy demeanor, leadership and intense Alger interest cannot be replaced, but those of us who were lucky enough to have known him will keep many fond remembrances that will somewhat comfort our deep sense of loss.

Sincerely,

Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)
6 Sandpaper Rd.
Enfield, CT 06082

Dear Bill:

In a telephone call to Carl Hartmann I was saddened when he mentioned that Will Wright had passed away. At first, I didn't want to believe it. It was just a short time ago that Will presided as our Society president at the successful Waco convention. Will and Nell were both there, enjoying the Texas get-together. The article about

(Continued on Page 16)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 15)

Will in the May-June **Newsboy** reaffirmed my thoughts that the Horatio Alger Society has lost a valued and respected member who gave more than his share.

One of Will's greatest loves was his family. That was borne out at the 1989 convention which the Wrights hosted in Chillicothe, Ohio. I purposely used the plural. Will was very proud of the part that Nell, his children and in-laws played in hosting that memorable convention. He truly loved his family and was proud of all of them. That same type of devotion was shared by Will toward our Society and its members. We have lost a family member; we all share Nell's loss.

Sincerely,
Bernie (PF-524)
and Marcy Biberdorf
5739 Winston Dr.
Indianapolis, IN 46226

Dear Partic'lar Friends:

Now that you've read (in this issue of **Newsboy**) the entertaining paper on Putnam Hall that Rocco Musemeche presented at last year's Popular Culture Association Conference, you'll have a good sense of how fun and interesting the PCA meeting can be. Each year, the Dime Novels/Pulps/Series Books section gets together on the Saturday of the conference to hear papers and to discuss the current state of collecting and research. At least four or five PFs usually attend. As Area Chair of the Dime Novels/Pulps/Series Books section, I'd like to invite more H.A.S. members to join us at next year's convention, April 7-10, 1993 in New Orleans.

If you'd like to present a paper, just send me a brief (250-300 word) proposal describing your topic and what you'll cover. The papers are limited to 20 minutes' reading time (about 10 double-spaced typed pages). You don't need to be a scholar or a professional writer. All you need is enthusiasm and knowledge about some area of dime novels, pulps or series books. Alger papers, of course, are also welcome.

The deadline for proposal submissions is September 1, 1992. You have until April to complete the whole paper. Presenters must be members of the PCA or the American Culture Association (ACA).

If you'd like to attend (without reading a paper) or if you just want to know more about joining the Association, please write to me for information. Hope to see you in New Orleans!

Sincerely,
Kathleen Chamberlain (PF-874)
Emory and Henry College
Emory, VA 24327

Dear Bill:

At the time I mailed off my information request to you (reprinted in the May-June issue of **Newsboy**) on the pedigree of Clara Augusta, I sent requests to several other sources for the same information.

I enclose a copy of a reply which I received back in April from Victor Berch. As always, Victor's research report is concise but covers the matter thoroughly.

I've also included some copies of the page containing what I'm certain must be Clara's portrait. You will recall that I had misgivings about the portrait reproduced in the recent May-June **Newsboy** being an actual portrait of Clara Augusta. I'm

not sure that the photo in the article sent to me by Berch is very helpful in making an accurate judgment.

I have also just received from Michael E. Sanchez-Saavedra (PF-788) of Richmond, Va. a mailing containing a photocopy of the same Clara Augusta biography as that sent by Victor Berch.

Sincerely,
Paul F. Miller (PF-351)
4365 Belmar Terrace
Vienna, OH 44473

Editor's note: The biographical sketch on Clara Augusta Jones Trask (1839-1905) described in Paul's letter (along with the photo-portrait reproduced above) can be found in Albert Johannsen's "The House of Beadle and Adams," 1950, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla. Mrs. Trask used the pen name "Clara Augusta" on many of her love stories and poems published throughout her 50-year writing career. Anyone desiring to read the entire biography can turn to Volume II, Page 273 of Johannsen's book, which is available in most libraries.



Clara Augusta Jones Trask

John T. Dizer, 10332 Ridgcrest Rd., Utica N.Y. 13502
Telephone: (315) 735-5925

For sale or swap: Send long SASE for list of 600 older boys and girls series books. Most books are \$1.00 to \$3.00 plus postage. Sixty Algers, mainly reading copies. Also urgently need to buy, borrow or copy (for research) any issues of **Young Sports of America** and **Young People of America** (ca. 1895).