



# 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 XXXVII

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NUMBER 1

*1999 CONVENTION PREVIEW*

## Dash to DeKalb

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Northern Illinois University campus, DeKalb, Illinois

## Humble Hans and Ragged Dick:

*Brothers under the skin*

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## President's column

As I sit here at the computer with my coffee in the Jacksonville Jamboree Alger cup (May, 1978) memories of all the wonderful Horatio Alger Society conventions Jean and I attended flood my mind. Every convention was great from small ones (15 in attendance) to large ones (over 100). It always seemed that the last one was the best yet, then the next was even better. I'm sure this will hold true with the upcoming convention in DeKalb, Illinois. If you can possibly find the time DON'T MISS THIS ONE.

In this issue you will find the details — send in your reservations NOW.

Met with our editor, Bill Gowen, at Lansing Printing in late December, where Bill was busy stuffing the November-December issue of *Newsboy* into mailing envelopes. Bill had driven to Lansing with the envelopes, picked up *Newsboy*, stuffed and mailed them. We didn't spend much time together because Bill had to be back to work that afternoon. Thanks Bill, I know our members appreciate all that you do.

*Newsboy*, as usual was excellent. The article on the Webster Series by James D. Keeline (PF-898) was very interesting and Part 2 of "Alger at the Comics," by Arthur P. Young (PF-941) should stir a lot of interest among our members. I also want to thank our Vice President, Carol Nackenoff, for taking over the President's column and doing such a fine job.

I sometimes feel that because so much has been written about Alger in past issues of *Newsboy*, there isn't much new to write about. Going over back issues, I have reread articles by then Vice President Steve Press (*Newsboy*, Aug.-Sept. 1968), on the effects the reading of Alger had on his 8th graders. Also the "Random Thoughts From Algerland" by our then President Max Goldberg, and "That Wonderful World of Horatio Alger," written by H.A.S. co-founder Forrest Campbell.

I know that many of our newer members do not have access to the older *Newsboys* dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, which were filled with Alger material. If you would be interested in reading any of the articles published in past issues, let us know and maybe we will be able to reprint them in future *Newsboy* issues.

Your Partic'lar Friend

Carl T. Hartmann (PF-102)

4907 Allison Drive

Lansing, MI 48910

E-mail: 75262.3005@compuserve.com

## 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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Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to **Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.**

*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 (PF-265).
- Horatio Alger or, The American Hero Era*, by Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053).
- The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse*, by Carol Nackenoff (PF-921).
- Publication Formats of the 59 Stories by Horatio Alger, Jr. as Reprinted by the John C. Winston Co.*, by Bob Sawyer (PF-455) and Jim Thorp (PF-574).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by A.L. Burt*, by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by M.A. Donohue & Co.*, by Bradford S. Chase (PF-412).
- Horatio Alger Books Published by Whitman Publishing Co.*, 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, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering 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 ads or "Letters to the Editor" to *Newsboy* editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047.

# Dash to DeKalb

## *A preview of the 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention*

To all Partic'lar Friends planning to attend the 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention May 13-16, welcome to DeKalb and Northern Illinois University! We have an exciting weekend lined up for the convention, which will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Alger's death. The complete schedule and registration for are enclosed.

The founding of DeKalb is credited to Russell Huntley. He came from New York in 1837 and purchased land for farms and grain mills. Huntley then built a log cabin, housing a tavern and his home, at what is now 105 N. First St. Other settlers purchased homes and store sites from Huntley for \$1.25 per acre. In 1853, Huntley donated the right-of-way and depot site for the Chicago and Galena Union Railroad.

The population leapt from 29 in 1851 to 557 in 1856, when the village was incorporated as DeKalb (in honor of Revolutionary War hero Gen. Johann (Baron) DeKalb (1721-1780). The village was originally called Huntley's Grove, and subsequently Centerville, Buena Vista, DeKalb Center, and finally DeKalb.

Barbed wire fencing was invented in DeKalb in 1873 as an alternative to wood rail fences. Farmers and ranchers throughout the nation ordered fencing from the "Barb City" factories of Joseph Glidden, Jacob Haish and Isaac Elwood. Other manufacturing flourished, too, from wagons and farm implements to shoes, cigars and cheese, leading to thriving downtown businesses and fine residential neighborhoods.

The best soil in the world surrounds DeKalb, whose strong agricultural heritage is reflected in the founding there of the nation's first farm bureau. DeKalb is also the birthplace of Hybrid Corn, invented by what is now DeKalb Genetics Corporation.

DeKalb is also known for its cultural and education environment as the home of Northern Illinois University. Northern Illinois University is a comprehensive research institution with a student enrollment of over 22,000. With a main campus in DeKalb, Northern also operates education centers in the cities of Rockford and Hoffman Estates and a field campus in the town of Oregon, Ill. The university is composed of seven degree-granting colleges that together offer 53 undergraduate majors; 75 graduate majors; and one professional (Juris Doctor) degree.

The Northern Illinois University Libraries became the Horatio Alger Society Repository in 1994. When the 1999 Horatio Alger Society convention is held in DeKalb, many H.A.S. members will be visiting the Repository for the first time. We extend our warm welcome to all participants and look forward to seeing all of you here.



**The University Guest Room Hotel, located in the Holmes Student Center.** Northern Illinois University Photo

As mentioned earlier, the 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention will be a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Horatio Alger, Jr.'s death. Here are a few highlights of events listed on the enclosed schedule:

There will be three speakers: Nicholas Basbanes, J. Randolph Cox and Arthur Young, along with a book restoration workshop to be conducted by a local bookbinder, Virginia Plemons. Another big event will be a special book auction on Friday, May 14. E. Christian Mattson (PF-067) will be our auctioneer for this event. The H.A.S. member-consignment book sale will be Saturday morning, May 15. We have arranged a large room for this event.

Also, do not forget our annual H.A.S. auction of donated items from our Partic'lar Friends, which will be held on Saturday evening, following the annual banquet.

Please send your donated items to Samuel Huang, Founders Memorial Library, FO 403, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115; or, you may wish to bring them with you.

Additionally, Founders memorial Library has recently acquired two silent films: "T. Haviland Hicks — Fresh-

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Editor's notebook

Enclosed with this issue is the 1999 H.A.S. convention registration form, along with the schedule of events for "Dash to DeKalb." I hope as many Partic'lar Friends as possible can make it. The spring season here in northern Illinois can be quite pleasant, although rain is not uncommon.

DeKalb is also just slightly more than an hour's drive from Chicago, which I can vouch is one of America's great cities. If this is your first trip to the area, plan on arriving a little early or staying after the convention to sample the "Second City's" restaurants, museums, theater events and the magnificent lakefront. I'll try to provide a few more details in the March-April *Newsboy*.

Also, a reminder to make your convention hotel reservations directly to the University Guest Room Hotel. The rates are very reasonable at \$44.40 (tax included), multiple-occupancy. The number to call is (815) 753-4444. A block of rooms has been set aside for us, but to be certain you will be accommodated, please call early.

**New Alger guide:** I just received an e-mail from Ed Mattson (PF-067) informing me that he and Tom Davis (PF-976) are producing an updated version of Bob Bennett's long out-of-print Alger bibliography, fully updated, and produced with Bennett's permission. Titled *Collectors Guide to Horatio Alger, Jr.*, the total press run will be 500 copies — 350 in softcover, along with 150 hardcover deluxe copies, the latter each numbered and signed by Bennett.

The format will be 8x11 inches, and will contain approximately 270 pages, including photos, along with the latest identification information on Alger's works.

Mattson notes that Bennett has requested that all contacts about this upcoming book be made directly to Mattson, since he and Davis hold the copyright and are in charge of producing, selling and distributing the book. In the meantime, check out Mattson's Internet site at [www.qis.net/~emattson/](http://www.qis.net/~emattson/)

**In this issue:** There's no skating (pardon the pun) around the fact that Horatio Alger was influenced by other authors, one of which seems to have been Mary Mapes Dodge, author of the popular *Hans Brinker or the Silver Skates*. I hope you enjoy Professor Marilyn Stauffer's article beginning on Page 7, which shows where Alger may have gotten some of his story ideas.

**Coming next issue:** An update on the convention, plus several book reviews, along with an article on one of the finest (but often overlooked) authors of series books.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill:

I wonder just how many of our members understand how important our annual auctions are? They are a major — and needed — source of H.A.S. income. Without money earned from these auctions we would either have to raise our very low dues and/or cut the benefits we take for granted.

It may be too late for this year's sale to have auction contributors list highlights of items that are being offered, but it's a great idea to do this prior to future conventions. In this way, members who cannot attend may participate by mailing in their bids. This will result in wider participation and additional income for the Horatio Alger Society.

Every year we offer a very wide selection of items that often generate spirited bidding. Almost invariably lots are sold for far below what dealers regularly charge. There truly are bargains galore. This year, for instance, I hope to offer three decent non-first edition Loring's: *Ragged Dick*, *Tattered Tom* and *Paul the Peddler*. All are surely desirable to all who don't have these titles in the Loring editions.

I'd like to appeal to all who will not be able to attend the convention to contribute to our auctions. Lots to be offered include books by many authors and in recent years we have offered such things as antique toys and games, old postcards, gadgets and all sorts of collectibles.

Your contributions to the auctions are tax-deductible. Let's all help out. It sure beats raising dues!

Sincerely,  
Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053)  
135 Central Part West  
New York, NY 10023

**Editor's note:** The annual auctions are indeed a very important source of revenue for the Horatio Alger Society. We have three different types of auctions, as follows:

■ **Consignment auction**, in which a member consigns books, memorabilia, etc., which are auctioned off with 20 percent going to the Society and the consignor receiving 80 percent.

■ **Donation auction**, in which a member donates the item and 100 percent of all proceeds go to the Society. This is the most traditional H.A.S. auction, dating back to the 1960s.

■ **Special auction**, in which a large collection of books (usually Algers) from one person or estate is auctioned, with the commission to the Society negotiated in advance.

If you have books or items to donate or consign and don't plan to bring them in person to the 1999 Convention, send them to:

Samuel Huang, Founders Memorial Library  
FO 403, Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Make certain each item is clearly marked with your name and address, and whether it is a donation or consignment.

# Dash to DeKalb

(Continued from Page 3)

man," based on the book of the same title by J. Raymond Elderdice; and "The Half-Back," based on the story of the same title by Ralph Henry Barbour. These two films will be available for viewing at the 1999 H.A.S. Convention. We have also received permission to reproduce video copies of these two films, and interested individuals may wish to order a copy at the convention.

On the lighter side, we have arranged for an optional bus tour, "Stroll Through Historic DeKalb, Illinois." If you are interested, please mark in the place indicated at the bottom of the enclosed registration form.

We will also provide you with free time for visiting bookstores and antique stores in Chicago and Rockford. A list of bookstores, museums, antique stores and other points of interest around the DeKalb area will be provided at the convention.

DeKalb is located on Interstate 88, just 66 miles west of downtown Chicago. If you are planning to fly to the convention, O'Hare International Airport is about an hour away. More travel details, along with area tourist attractions, will appear in the March-April *Newsboy*.

The Horatio Alger Society has reserved rooms at the University Guest Room Hotel for the very reasonable rate of \$44.40 (tax included), multiple-occupancy. Please



**The H.A.S. Repository, located at NIU's Founders Memorial Library.**

Northern Illinois University Photo

make your room reservations directly to the hotel at (815) 753-1444. For more information, see the enclosed convention reservation form.

The month of May in DeKalb may be on the cool side. You may wish to bring a sweater and a lightweight jacket. We hope that Mother Nature will bring warm weather to us in 1999, and we look forward to seeing you all.

Convention information and our schedule of events are also available on the H.A.S. Repository Internet site at: <http://libws66.lib.niu.edu/71999s.htm>

## Brad Chase's fourth book to be released at convention

The New York Book Company was one of the most prolific publishers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr., even though they were published for only 12 years, from 1908 through 1919. Thousands and thousands of such Alger books were cranked out by the company, apparently in response to meeting a substantial demand for Alger's stories by the youth of that day.

What appears today to be a never-ending number of different New York Book Company Alger formats and series, is in reality an ordered and logical presentation of Alger books published by the New York Book Company. Such books were sold inexpensively and thus likely reached a wide segment of youngsters during the first few decades of this century. The number of Alger titles, series and formats that were produced during this period has now been thoroughly researched and is now presented in a new paperback book completed by Brad Chase, titled: *Horatio Alger Books Published By The New York Book Company* (available during and after the convention, for \$15 per copy).

Chase's book will be initially released at the Society's annual convention in DeKalb, Illinois, in May. Northern Illinois University's Samuel Huang, conference organizer, has indicated that the book will be released at a special session for that purpose, on Saturday morning,

May 15. Incidentally, the New York Book Company Alger collection that Brad developed and used as the basis for his new book, is now located at the NIU Alger Repository and numbers well over 500 volumes.

Chase's latest work is the fourth in a series of books he has written, each documenting the history and background of certain publishing firms, detailing specific characteristics about the various Alger series and formats produced by those firms. The other three books written and produced by Chase cover Algers published by the A.L. Burt, M.A. Donohue and Whitman publishing companies.

"Trying to document accurately what was produced 70 to 100 years ago and who the men were that made decisions about such Alger book production, has been a real challenge," Chase said. "It was very hard to find who made the decisions about Algers for the New York Book Company because that company turned out to be only a small subsidiary of a much larger publishing firm.

"However, I feel good about what I have discovered concerning the firm, as well as about the pattern of format production used by the company to publish Algers. I hope Alger collectors will consider these findings useful."

A review of *Horatio Alger Books Published By The New York Book Company* will appear in the March-April *Newsboy*.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I am a new member of the Horatio Alger Society who has read 100 Alger books in a little over a year. I had to stop at 100 because I ran out of titles in my personal library. I wish I had some of the more difficult to find books. Horatio Alger books contain good stories to go to bed on and I have had trouble recently finding a good substitute.

It was not my intent to research Alger's work when I started out but while reading about the terrible snow storm in Chapter 25 of *Phil the Fiddler*, something occurred to me. I had read 41 Alger books and this was the first one to have weather worked into the plot! But it wasn't until my 86th book that I found a mention of rain!! That was *Nelson the Newsboy*, where Page 165 mentions that "a slight rain was falling" — but that was all.

I kept reading. It snowed a little in *Chester Rand* (a few inches) and eventually, my 98th book, it rained for the second time on Page 150 of *Shifting for Himself*. A paragraph at the beginning of a chapter starts off, "The third day was rainy..." but that was only to place an overcoat on the scene for the villain to plant some money in.

I had saved two Stratemeyer/Alger books till last — my 99th and 100th — because I wasn't fond of Stratemeyer's modification of the Alger style. And wouldn't you know it! It rained cats and dogs in *Lost at Sea*, and in *Joe the Hotel Boy*, it started raining in Chapter 1, there was rain on top of ice on Page 185 and more rain on Page 250.

I may have missed a mention or two of rain somewhere along the way (I am sure other Horatio Alger Society members will find my omissions) but I remember watching pretty closely right after *Phil the Fiddler*. Even if I did miss the word "rain" once or twice, it is obvious to me that Alger (unlike Stratemeyer) seemed to favor good weather. Alger let it get cold quite often — especially on the streets of New York after the sun went down — but except for one light rain and a couple of snowfalls, that was it for meteorology in my 100 Alger novels.

In fact, when I look back on my year of Horatio Alger before bed, I find very little science of any kind in his books. For example, he mentions Niagara Falls a few times but only as an attraction that should be seen. No facts. No figures. When he finally does feel the need to explain the origin of the gold in the gold fields he reprints a newspaper article (with credits) and leaves it at that! In the 100 books I read, the science word "electric", or any form of it, appears only twice (Page 281 of *The Young Explorer* and Page 157 of *Tom Tracy*).

Don't get me wrong. I'm not finding fault with Horatio Alger's work. As I said before, I miss not having one of his books on my bedstand. I want to share the Alger observation I had with other Alger fans.

Sincerely,  
Edward D. Evans (PF-1000)  
979 Hamlin Center Rd.  
Hamlin, NY 14464

## MEMBERSHIP

### New members

Cindy Christine Sutton (PF-1024)

P.O. Box 285

S. Lancaster, MA 01561-0285

Cindy, 13, like her older brother Steven (PF-998), both of whom learned about the Horatio Alger Society from Ronald A. Murch (PF-970), is a very enthusiastic reader of Alger books and owns about 20 titles.

Alvin Funderburg (PF-1025)

3840 Hertland Dr.

Dayton, OH 45439

(937) 298-6036

Alvin, who is retired, currently has 116 Algers, and is interested in good reading copies. His other interests include Bible reading. He learned about the Society from Ralph Gardner (PF-053).

Arthur T. Seybert (PF-850)

2100 Draper St.

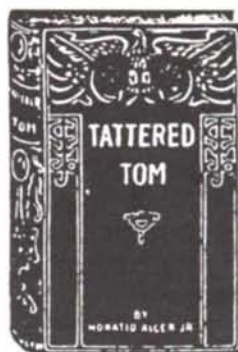
Baraboo, WI 53913

(608) 355-0343

Arthur is rejoining the Society after a brief absence, following his move from Chicago to Wisconsin. His other interests include history in general, and he currently owns 20 Alger titles. Welcome back!

## WANTED

Nine Winston Library Editions  
to Complete My Set



A Boy's Fortune  
Hector's Inheritance  
Helen Ford  
Helping Himself  
Luke Walton  
Only an Irish Boy  
Struggling Upward  
Store Boy  
Young Bank Messenger

Please send me a quote

Brad Chase  
6 Sandpiper Rd.  
Enfield, CT 06082

# Humble Hans and Ragged Dick:

## Brothers under the skin

By Marilyn H. Karrenbrock Stauffer, Ph. D.  
School of Library and Information Science  
University of South Florida

**H**oratio Alger, Jr., was a most prolific writer of series books, producing well over one hundred of them during the nineteenth century. He is primarily remembered as a popular writer of stories about boys who rose from "rags to riches" although in fact, his heroes achieved respectability, not riches.

Alger was certainly not an entirely original author. Many of his books are modeled on characters and incidents in the works of greater authors, including Franklin, Cooper, Dickens, Melville, and Twain (Scharnhorst 1981, 175). However, his considerable debt to another popular author of the time, Mary Mapes Dodge, has been overlooked.

It is an interesting coincidence that Dodge and Alger each published their first children's book in November, 1864: Dodge's *The Irvington Stories*, and Alger's *Frank's Campaign; or, What Boys Can Do on the Farm for the Camp*.<sup>1</sup> Both books were written to capitalize upon interest in the Civil War. In both, a company of village boys drill as soldiers, undoubtedly a common pastime with boys during the Civil War.

In Alger's book, the hero, Frank Frost, assumes the work of the family farm so that his father can join the Union army. The war itself is limited to some factual accounts of Civil War battles, disguised as letters from Mr. Frost to his family. Dodge's book is a collection of stories, only one of which, "Capt. [sic] George, The Drummer-Boy, A Story of the Rebellion" is about the war. George, although only fourteen years of age, enlists as a drummer boy, sees action, is wounded, but saves the day. The other stories in Dodge's book are diverse, exhibiting variously humor, pathos, or sensation.

Although *The Irvington Stories* was well-received (the *American Literary Gazette* called it "a healthy, pleasant, moral book, which fully merits the highest success"), it was Dodge's second book which was a best-seller (Mott 1947, 309). *Hans Brinker; or, The Silver Skates A Story of Life in Holland*, first published on December 30, 1865 (Wright 1979, 35) is a classic, still in print. It "received more reviews than any other children's book published be-



A VERY SUSPICIOUS ACCIDENT

*Struggling Upward*, frontispiece

tween 1865 and 1881" (Darling 1968, 228), with 22 reviews appearing during that time, many of them accompanying new editions of the book. The first edition received six reviews in 1866, "far more than most books received in 1866" (Darling 1968, 229). They ranged from a few lines in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and the *American Literary Gazette* and a paragraph in *The Nation*, *The Independent*, and *The Catholic World*, to one of more than 1,000 words in the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly*. All were favorable; the only negative comment was in *The Catholic World*, which objected to one sentence about the Inquisition which is part of a story from Dutch history that is told in the book.<sup>2</sup>

Reviewing of children's books was sporadic at this time, as the figures just quoted attest. During this time, Alger received far fewer reviews and less extensive ones

(Continued on Page 8)

*Editor's note:* This article was originally presented as a paper at the 28th meeting of the Popular Culture Association on April 9, 1998, in Orlando, Fla.



Hilda Abner

## HANS BRINKER

OR

## THE SILVER SKATES

## A STORY OF LIFE IN HOLLAND

BY

MARY MAPES DODGE

AUTHOR OF "RHYMES AND JINGLES," ETC.

With Sixty Original Illustrations

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1907

## Humble Hans and Ragged Dick: Brothers under the skin

(Continued from Page 7)

in important periodicals. In 1865-1866, *Frank's Campaign* received a couple of short reviews, plus a mention in the prominent *North American Review* in a column on Civil War books for juveniles.

Alger's second juvenile book, *Paul Prescott's Charge*, received three short reviews. In the next few years, although Alger received reviews in more important periodicals such as *The Nation* and *Harper's Monthly*, most reviews of his books appeared in *Student and Schoolmate*,<sup>3</sup> a publication which was hardly disinterested; it had been publishing Alger's stories since 1865.

Alger had undoubtedly taken notice of Dodge, a fellow author who was writing for the same audience and getting far better reviews and sales. It is not surprising that he decided to borrow some of her ideas for his own work. Alger certainly read *Hans Brinker* and used it as a source for his own material. Anyone who doubts it has only to read the first two chapters in *Struggling Upward* or, *Luke Larkin's Luck*, where the famous skating

match of *Hans Brinker* is reproduced, with adaptations which might be expected in an Alger story.

When the great skating match is proposed in Dodge's book, *Hans Brinker* does not expect to compete, since he is too poor to own a pair of metal skates; his are made of wood. But he soon earns money to buy skates for his sister Gretel and himself, and they take their places in the race. Gretel wins the girl's race, but Hans is not so fortunate. The first heat is almost won by Hans, but at the last minute, proud Carl Schummel, who resents the fact that a peasant boy like Hans is allowed to race, shoots by him to win.

The second heat (the winner must win two) is won by Peter von Holp, who although also rich, is a pleasant, kind boy who has been a friend to Hans. During this heat, Carl Schummel falls: "He is not hurt, though somewhat stunned. If he were less sullen, he would find more sympathy in these warm young hearts." (Dodge 1943, 304). As the third heat is called, Hans realizes that Peter is in trouble; his skate string is broken. Hans offers to lend him his, but Peter refuses. Hans pleads with him (Dodge 1943, 306):

"Mynheer," pleaded Hans, in a husky voice, "you have called me your friend. Take this strap — quick! There is not an instant to lose. I shall not skate this time:

indeed, I am out of practice. Mynheer, you must take it," and Hans, blind and deaf to any remonstrance, slipped the strap into Peter's skate, and implored him to put it on.

"You are a noble fellow, Hans!" cried Peter, yielding at last. With Han's help, Peter wins the race.

In *Struggling Upward*, Luke Larkin, like the early Hans Brinker, is too poor to own a pair of metal skates and therefore must use old-fashioned wooden ones. Even so, he is one of the best skaters; his only competition in the race that the schoolmaster has proposed is Randolph Duncan, a rich, conceited, autocratic boy typical of many antagonists in Alger novels. The prize in this race, which has only one heat, is a watch, rather than the silver skates of Dodge's novel. Tom Harper, Randolph's follower, hopes that Randolph, who already has a watch, will give him the prize if he wins. This prospect becomes brighter when Luke breaks his skate strap before the race begins. But an Alger hero cannot be eliminated so easily. A friend comes to Luke's rescue (Alger 1945, 6):

"You may use my skates, Luke," said Linton Tomkins. "I think they will fit you."

Linton was only thirteen, but he was unusually large for his age.

"You are very kind, Linton," said Luke, "but that will keep you out of the race."

"I stand no chance of winning," said Linton, "and I will do my skating afterward."

"I don't think that fair," said Randolph, with a frown. "Each boy ought to use his own skates."

"There is nothing unfair about it," said the teacher, "except that Luke is placed at a disadvantage in using a pair of skates he is unaccustomed to."

Randolph did not dare gainsay the teacher, but he looked sullen. When the race begins, Luke is soon far ahead.

In *Hans Brinker*, fat Jacob Poot drops out of the race halfway. In Alger's novel, it is Tom Harper who drops out (Alger 1945, 7-8: "Indeed, it seemed strange that Tom should have given up so quickly. It soon appeared that it was not caprice, but that he had an object in view, and that a very discreditable one." Tom deliberately runs into Luke. "Tom, however, got the worst of it. He was thrown violently backward, falling on the back of his head, and lay stunned and motionless on the ice. Luke fell over him, but was scarcely hurt at all. He was up again in an instant, and might still have kept the lead, but instead he got down on his knees beside Tom, and asked anxiously, 'Are you much hurt, Tom?' Stopping to help a wounded schoolmate was a properly heroic reason for an Alger hero to lose a race.

The many similarities in these passages — the race, the wooden skates, the broken strap, the loan of strap or

skates, the boy who quits halfway, the skater stunned in a fall, the sullen antagonist — make it clear that Alger knew Dodge's more famous story. As early as the 1870s, Alger was reusing scenes and characters from the works of better-known authors. *Struggling Upward* was first published in 1890. It is possible that Alger had not read *Hans Brinker* until one of the later editions, but he probably knew it from the first. In fact, it is likely that it was the source of one of the most famous episodes in Alger's novels.

It has been pointed out many times that Alger's books provided information for boys who were new to New York, boys coming from the rural towns and countryside that still made up most of the nation (Coyle 1966, ix; Monkkenon 1977; 79). Alger provided many clues in how to behave and even how to find one's way around the city. In *Ragged Dick*, particularly, this is true (Scharnhorst 1985, 82):

By chance, Dick is hired by merchant to guide his nephew Frank Whitney around the city in exchange for a better suit of clothes.

The next several chapters, like a Baedeker guidebook, highlight historical and other sites in New York.

No one has explained why Alger happened to use such a tour in this, his most popular book. But he had a parallel and a source for such an event in plain view, the most famous such tour in American children's books, the skating trip of the Dutch boys from their village of Broek near Amsterdam to the Hague and back again.

*Hans Brinker* was published at the very end of 1865. By June, 1866, it had received favorable reviews in five very prestigious periodicals.<sup>4</sup> The book was a best-seller; by the end of the year it was in its fourth edition. In January, 1867, the first installment of *Ragged Dick* was published in *Student and Schoolmate*. Alger had time to assimilate the success of Dodge's book, and he used the tour, one of its most famous events, adapting it to the New York scene. If it worked for Dodge, why not for him?

On their trip through Holland, the Dutch boys see endlessly fascinating sights and people, recount tales from Dutch history, and visit museums and churches. They are accompanied by Joseph Poot's English cousin, who is naively astounded by what he sees; the others good-naturedly explain Dutch customs to him.

The first adventure of the trip occurs in Haarlem at midday, when the Peter van Holp, the leader, discovers that he has lost the money for the which had been entrusted to him by the other boys. Without money the boys cannot proceed. They start home, but the day is saved when they meet Hans Brinker who has found their money on his way to Leyden to find a doctor for his sick father. The boys then proceed on their journey. In the

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## Humble Hans and Ragged Dick: *Brothers under the skin*

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afternoon when they are tired, the boys hitch a ride on an ice-boat. That night in Leyden, a thief enters their room and tries to steal their money. Peter awakes in time and the boys capture the thief and turn him over to the police.

The next day, after some sightseeing, the boys briefly visit the Bosch, "a grand park, or wood, nearly two miles long" (Dodge 1943, 178), beautiful despite the winter weather. The trip ends at Peter's sister's home nearby in the Hague.

Alger adapted the tour to the New York scene. Ragged Dick is engaged to lead Frank Whitney, a naive country boy, on a tour of the city, and is given one of Frank's suits to wear. It is the beginning of his transformation from street boy to respectable citizen. The two boys see sights and people just as fascinating as the ones the Dutch boys see in Holland, but there is much more emphasis on the dangers of the city: thieves, swindlers, and con men. Their route takes them up Chatham Street and Broadway to Madison Square. Instead of visiting art and history museums, they take in such sights as Barnum's Museum; the New York Hospital; Stewart's store, the largest on Broadway; Taylor's saloon, an elegant eating-place where the two boys have ice creams; and the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Dick tricks a con man who tries to swindle him; "I ain't knocked around the city street all my life for nothin'," he tells Frank (Alger 1945, 185).<sup>5</sup>

At Third Avenue, since no ice boats are handy, the boys take a ride on the horse-cars. There Frank is accused of stealing a woman's purse, but she soon finds it in her pocket. After this brief flurry of excitement, the boys exit the cars to see Central Park. It is still under construction, so they do not stay long.

The parallel with the Bosch is made by Dodge herself;

in the last chapter of *Hans Brinker*, where she tells about the future of the children, she says, "Van Mounen's present home is not far from Central Park; and he says, if the New Yorkers do their duty, the Park will in time equal his beautiful Bosch, near the Hague" (Dodge 1943, 328).

On their way back the boys stop at the Custom House, where they meet a countryman who has been swindled out of fifty dollars. A few minutes later, while crossing on the ferry to Brooklyn, Dick spies the a man whom he recognizes as a thief involved in just such activities. He tricks the man into giving him the fifty dollars, which upon his return he gives to the victim. The boys end their journey back at the Whitney's hotel, the Astor House.

The tour around New York has many parallels with the Holland one. A naive boy, unused to the prevailing culture of the place, is shown the sights by someone more knowledgeable. They travel by foot, board a conveyance, and return to foot travel.

The eccentricities of the



THE "DROP GAME"

*Ragged Dick*, P. 78

people, the fascination of the street scene and the stores, and the introduction to principal sites are similar in the two books, although Dick's commentaries are far more droll and far less educational than those of Peter and his friends. Dick, like Hans, finds and returns money to someone who has lost it. He and Frank witness and spoil the exploits of several thieves, not just one. These scenes are not as sensational as the one in Dodge's book, but similar events in other Alger books are quite sensational indeed.

If Alger got the idea of a tour from Dodge, where did he get the idea for making a street boy his main character? Alger said that he got the idea from a young bootblack, Johnny Nolan, whom he met at the office of a friend (Alger 1890, 29).

Books about street boys had appeared sporadically for over thirty years.<sup>6</sup> Scharnhorst, in his biography of Alger, notes that *Ned Nevins, the Newsboy; or, Street Life in Boston*, by the Reverend Henry Morgan, had been pub-

lished in 1866, and says that Joseph Allen, the publisher of *Student and Schoolmate*, suggested that Alger write a similar book.<sup>7</sup> Alger may already have had such an idea in mind. If he had not read *The Irvington Stories* when it was first published — it had not received many reviews — he probably did after Dodge became famous with *Hans Brinker*. The last story in *The Irvington Stories* is called "The Artist and the Newsboy." It describes an engraving by Henry Inman. Called "The Newsboy," the painting, said Dodge (1864, 247, 249):

"... represents a ruddy, ragged, but honest-looking little fellow leaning against the steps of the Astor House, with a bundle of newspapers under his arm.

The little fellow was ragged and dirty enough, but what of that? Health and cheerfulness fairly gleamed through the dirt, ... and the black, tangled hair, shining where it curled in spite of every thing, straggling from beneath the tattered straw hat, made the ruddy face look all the handsomer. Then the man's coat that he wore, with its tails cut off, and its sleeves shortened by a great roll at the wrist, was a picture in itself; while the trousers full of patches — to say nothing of the places where patches ought to be — filled the artists's heart with delight.

Ragged Dick is described very similarly as he climbs out of the box where he has slept all night (Alger 1945, 152):

[He] picked out one or two straws that had found their way into the rents of his clothes, and drawing a well-worn cap over his uncombed locks, he was all ready for the business of the day.

Dick's appearance as he stood beside the box was rather peculiar. His pants were torn in several places, and had apparently belonged in the first instance to a boy two sizes larger than himself. He wore a vest, all the buttons of which were gone except two, out of which peeped a shirt which looked as if it had been worn a month. To complete the costume he wore a coat too long for him, dating back, if one might judge from its general appearance, to a remote antiquity.

Washing the face and hands is usually considered proper in commencing the day, but Dick was above such refinement. He had no particular dislike to dirt, and did not think it necessary to remove several dark streaks on his face and hands. But in spite of his dirt and rags there was something about Dick that was attractive. It was easy to see that if he had been clean and well dressed he would have been decidedly good-looking.

Alger may well have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, in his selection of the street boy as hero by

Dodge's very attractive description of Inman's picture.

There are other times when Alger may have used Dodge as a model. Scharnhorst has said that the plot of *Brave and Bold* "seem[s] to be [a] modernized [version] of *The Odyssey* told from the point of view of Telemachus."<sup>8</sup>

The plot concerns Robert Rushton, whose father, a sea captain, has apparently been lost at sea. Before leaving, Captain Rushton deposited five thousand dollars with Mr. Davis, the superintendent of the factory in his hometown. He told his wife only that he had some money invested, but she could find no trace of it.

Meanwhile, the Captain is in Calcutta, having lost his memory after his ship was sunk. Mrs. Rushton learns what had happened to the money when she receives a letter which her husband had launched in a bottle after the ship was lost. Although Robert tried to collect it, he had no receipt and Mr. Davis denied having the money. Robert goes looking for his father and fortuitously is sent to the same boarding house in Calcutta where his father has lived for two years. The father's memory is miraculously restored upon seeing his son, the receipt is presented, and all ends happily.

The amnesia and the shipwreck in this story are reminiscent of *The Odyssey*, but there are other things in the story which suggest the influence of *Hans Brinker*. Hans also has a father suffering from amnesia, due to a blow on the head while working on the dikes during a storm. The Brinkers, through hard work, had saved a thousand guilders, but after Raff's fall, it had disappeared. Hans was able to convince the great Dr. Boekman to see his father; the surgeon operated and restored Raff's memory. The money was found where Raff had buried it under a tree.

Captain Rushton's amnesia was more easily cured than Raff Brinker's, but the loss of the money is very similar. Upon his awakening, Raff says (Dodge 1943, 253), "Thousand guilders!... Ah, I am sure they have been of good use to you, *vrouw*, through the long year while your man was idle." Captain Rushton asks his son (Alger 1874, 232), "You are sure your mother is well provided for? But Mr. Davis has no doubt supplied her with money." Both men think that they have left their family well provided with money during their absence.

Another common element of Dodge and Alger is the "lost heir" story. Dodge first used it in *The Irvington Stories*. The first story in that book is "The Hermit of the Hills," in which Old Pop, a miser who lives alone in the wood, recovers his lost daughter and granddaughter and is brought back to society by them.

The story appeared again in *Hans Brinker*. In a coincidence quite as great as any in Alger, the watch that Raff Brinker had been given by a young man

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## Humble Hans and Ragged Dick: *Brothers under the skin*

(Continued from Page 11)

before his fall is found to belong to Dr. Boekman's missing son. The lost heir is restored to his father through another coincidence when the maker's name inscribed on the case for Gretel's silver skates is found to be that of the doctor's son.

*Donald and Dorothy*, Dodge's other novel, is an extended variant on the "lost heir" story. Three babies were rescued from the sea; one dies. Donald must prove that Dorothy is really his sister and not his cousin Delia. Alger first uses the lost heir plot in his sixth children's book, *Mark the Matchboy; or, Richard Hunter's Ward*, in which Ragged Dick (who is ragged no more) cares for a young boy who turns out to be the lost grandson of a prosperous Milwaukee businessman. Mark recognizes his mother's picture to prove he is the heir. The lost heir is a plot that Alger was to use again and again.

Another plot which Alger used several times is the hero who is captured by savage and stereotypical Indians. Although this is usually attributed to his admiration for the works of James Fenimore Cooper, his stories in such books is more reminiscent of Dodge's sensationalized story "Po-No-Kah An Indian Tale" in *The Irvington Stories*. It is, of course, impossible to tell how much of this was due to the prevailing cultural view of the time and how much to Alger's reading of other authors.

In 1873, Mary Mapes Dodge began a 32-year stint as the editor of the most famous children's magazine of all time, *St. Nicholas*. While Dodge was in Europe (she finally was able to visit the country of Hans Brinker, which she had written about eight years before), her assistant editor, Frank Stockton, was recruiting authors for the new periodical.

One of those he sought was Horatio Alger, Jr. Stockton reported (Ellsworth 1919, 92): "Horatio Alger, Jr., finds that his contract with another publisher will not allow him to write for us."

This may or may not have been true; if he had wanted to write for *St. Nicholas*, he would certainly have had a chance to do so in the next 25 years. Did he, perhaps, have another reason? Was he embarrassed to write for the woman from whom he had borrowed? Did he think she would discover it and be angry? Did he simply not want to be edited by a woman?

We shall never know. But we can wonder if Alger, writing for one of the truly great editors, might have produced more critically acclaimed works than those in his legacy.

### NOTES

1. The date for *The Irvington Stories*, Dodge's first book, is given as 1865 in the book, but the copyright date is 1864, and Catherine Norris Wright gives the date as Nov. 1864, in her authorized biography, *Lady of the Silver Skates* (Wright 1979, 26).
2. For complete references, see Darling 1968, 286.
3. For complete references, see Scharnhorst and Bales 1981, 27-28.
4. The review in the *American Literary Gazette* did not appear until November. For complete references, see Darling 1968, 286.
5. *Struggling Upward and Other Works*, with an introduction by Russel Crouse, includes, in addition to the title story, *Ragged Dick* and two other Alger books.
6. Cawelti 1965, 106-108.
7. Scharnhorst with Bales 1985, 81.
8. Scharnhorst 1980, 73.

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# A publishing odyssey

## Seeking His Fortune and the \$500 check

By David L. Collier (PF-943)

After talking practically to every member of the Horatio Alger Society when I published *Striving for Fortune* two years ago, I found 10 members of the Horatio Alger Society who had copies of *Seeking His Fortune*. When I attempted to buy a copy, I found no sellers. Knowing I could never complete my Alger collection without this book, the problem of nearly every other Alger collector, I attempted to secure a copy of *Seeking His Fortune* from one of those owning a copy in order to have a facsimile copy made.

Unlike when I published *Striving for Fortune*, in which Carl Hartmann graciously lent me his volume to copy, I had no such luck this time. Some owners were too busy to bother, while others did not want their book opened flat on a Xerox machine as it might damage the spine. One said he had never read his copy of *Seeking His Fortune*, but kept it in a safe deposit box! All were inventive with their excuses. Essentially, no original copy of the book was available even to view, let alone read. It was like an "I'm better than you club, because I have a copy of *Seeking His Fortune* and you don't, never will, and will never even get a chance to read." It reminded me of the rich kids in Alger novels who thought themselves so much better than the heroes just because of their rich relations.

I never gave up. Taking out my checkbook, I wrote out a \$500 check and offered it just to make a copy of their precious *Seeking His Fortune*. There were no takers among those to whom this offer was made. As a result, I was determined that if I could ever secure a copy of *Seeking His Fortune*, I would make it available to members of the Horatio Alger Society at whatever the cost to me. I didn't want just 10 people to be the only ones able to have this volume.

Currently, I have spent \$8,000 making up the 200 cloth and 26 leather-bound volumes offered for sale. Luckily, my position with "NYPD Blue" provided the funds needed for this very expensive undertaking. Incidentally, not one of the owners of an original edition has inquired about purchasing this high-quality cloth or leather-bound volume to have as a "reading copy." Yet, the contents of this elusive volume, containing 22 dialogues popular during the latter half of the 19th century, rival *Bertha's Christmas Vision*, *An Autumn Leaf*, in marvelous short stories.

Some of the titles of stories found in *Seeking His fortune*

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This book will have you laughing, fascinated and enchanted while holding a mirror to your own foibles, in short, a masterpiece too long unavailable to the members of the Horatio Alger Society.

In the November-December 1998 edition of *Newsboy*, H.A.S. Vice President Carol Nackenoff says, "I finally own a first edition of *Nothing To Do*, and, thanks to the work of David Collier (PF-943) and Gil Westgard (PF-024), I have a handsome copy of *Seeking His Fortune*, the final two titles that have eluded me." As an avid collector, even Carol Nackenoff was unable to obtain *Seeking His Fortune*, until now.

Where did the copy of *Seeking His Fortune* used for this

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# Seeking His Fortune and the \$500 check

(Continued from Page 13)

edition come from? From Gil Westgard's collection. As many of you know, Gil, more than anyone in the Society, has made available many of the impossibly difficult to find Alger books through his quality signed limited editions.

His titles include *The New Schoolma'am*; *Number 91*; *Timothy Crump's Ward*; *Hugo, The Deformed*; *Nothing to Do*; *Bertha's Christmas Vision*; *Tom Tracy*; *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving*; *The Disagreeable Woman*; *Making His Mark*; *Wait and Win*; *Annie Graham*; *The Young Patriots*; *Herbert R. Mayes' Alger, a Biography Without a Hero*; *Addresses Delivered by Rev. J.P. Sheaf, Jr. and Rev. Horatio Alger, at the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Dedication of the First Unitarian Church, South Natick, November 20, 1878*; and *Robert Lawson: or, A Minister's Fortunes*.

All are listed on the back of the special advertising flyer for *Seeking His Fortune* included in the previous two issues of *Newsboy*. All 16 books, with identical edition numbers in each volume, can be purchased for the special price of \$350, plus \$1 shipping and handling for the first volume, 50 cents for each additional volume. Gil can be reached by phone (let it ring a dozen times) at (561) 736-2340.

After complaining to him about never being able to obtain *Seeking His Fortune*, Gil casually mentioned he had a copy. I practically screamed into the phone "Let's print it!!" Because of his expertise on his other publishing projects, I put the brunt of *Seeking His Fortune* into his capable hands — the layout into signatures, selecting and monitoring the printer and bindery, cover design and artwork, etc. (see Westgard's related article, which follows on Page 15).

So what was my part? Nothing, except to provide the capital necessary to make such a rare volume available and distribute it to the discerning Horatio Alger Society member, who now has a chance, for the first time, to complete his Alger collection.

Should you read it? Where else can you obtain 22 charming Victorian tales for less than \$3.50 each? Before these copies are exhausted, take time to order one, at \$55 anywhere in the U.S. By the way, *Striving for Fortune*, the S&S paperback republished less than two years ago, has fewer than a dozen copies remaining in my inventory. It is only \$25 per copy. I may be reached at (818) 246-2468.

What has eluded me? I have yet to obtain the two-volume set of *The Life of Edwin Forrest*, by William Rounsville Alger, Horatio's cousin. If anyone has such for sale, please contact me (it is available through [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), but I am after an original, published by

J.B. Lippincott in 1877).

If any of you can access **eBay** on your computer, you will find a wonderful ongoing auction of Alger books. Last summer, after wading through all the Camp Alger stereoviews, Alger Hiss biographies, etc., I found and purchased a first edition of *Ragged Dick* for \$51 on **eBay**. Ed Mattson (PF-067) verified it as a Bennett first edition, had it repaired, and it is one of the prizes of my collection. For repair work on Loring books in particular, Ed has a fantastic source for quality work, and his prices are wonderfully inexpensive ... and you can trust Ed to have it done correctly and in a timely manner. You can call him at (410) 668-4730.

I found a second *Ragged Dick* first edition on **eBay** (a Gardner first) and Ed also had it restored. It is for sale for \$550. By the way, Ed will be printing a revised edition of Bob Bennett's Horatio Alger bibliography, called *Collectors Guide to Horatio Alger, Jr.* (for more information on this book, see the Editor's Notebook — ed.),

If you have a want list and are not yet on the Internet, mail it to me and I will try to find copies for you on one of the book marketplaces such as Advanced Book Exchange. **eBay** is also a terrific place to sell your surplus books. If you attend the convention, ask Janice and Mike Morley or Art Young, who use **eBay** all the time to buy and sell Alger books, for details. Hope to see you at the convention!

One last thing. I wish to particularly thank editor Bill Gowen for his drudgery in inserting the advertising material in *Newsboy* for *Seeking His Fortune*, as well as going through the six-times-a-year agony of seeing that *Newsboy* reaches each and every one of us. Thank you, Bill!

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# Cover and spine designs of the Westgard and Collier & Westgard limited edition Alger volumes

By Gilbert K. Westgard II (PF-024)

Can you tell anything about a book from its cover, or from its spine? Not always, but I like to think that the different designs I've chosen for the Alger books I've published have been appropriate and do not suffer by comparison with those produced in Alger's lifetime.

The street sign on the cover of *Alger Street* was taken from an actual sign I photographed in Massachusetts in 1963, and which became the title for my collection of Alger's poetry published by J.S. Canner & Co., the following year. I showed this photo to the late Kenneth B. Butler at his Wayside Press, in Mendota, Illinois, who handled the printing and design of the book, as Canner had no printing facilities of its own, and was willing to accept my suggesting the Mr. Butler's firm do the printing. It took Ken only a few moments to interpret my idea and make a rough sketch of what eventually became the front cover of *Alger Street*. The photo of me on the back cover was a Polaroid taken by my mother in 1964.

The first four books showing my name as publisher, *The New Schoolma'am*, *Number 91*, *Timothy Crump's Ward* and *Nothing to Do*, are devoid of any cover designs, and the type on the spines was chosen by the firm that did the bindings, Zonne Bookbinders, Inc., which was located just across Dearborn Street, in Chicago, from the old M.A. Donohue Building, located just a few blocks south of the Loop. This historic area produced tons of Alger books in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Zonne has since moved to another location with a far different historical connection. The firm is now located just next to the site where Mrs. O'Leary's notorious cow kicked over a lantern to ignite the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

*Hugo, The Deformed*, is the first edition of a story that originally appeared in the *New York Sun* in 1857, and which I discovered in a newspaper collection at the New York State Library, in Albany, along with six other previously unknown Alger serials. At that time I was mainly engaged in a search for Alger short stories and essays. Since *Hugo, The Deformed*, had never before appeared as a book, I chose to create a design for the cover and title page that fit the dark and sinister undertones of the tale.

For *Bertha's Christmas Vision*, I used a large snowflake on the cover, and smaller ones on the spine.

*Tom Tracy* features a vignette of Tom on the cover, and a reduced version of the same figure on the spine.

As on the original, a sheaf of grain appears on the cover of *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving*.

Both *Making His Mark* and *Wait and Win* have foil-stamped designs showing the Winds of Fortune that

strongly buffet the young heroes of these epic tales.

The cover of *The Disagreeable Woman* reproduces the original silver-stamped script design of G.W. Dillingham.

*Alger, A Biography Without a Hero*, by Herbert R. Mayes, was issued as a 50th anniversary edition, bound in a golden metallic material, and stamped in black. The cover design shows a large "L," the Roman numeral for 50 that is composed of five lines, representative of five decades.

*Addresses Delivered by Rev. J.P. Sheaf, Jr., and Rev. Horatio Alger, at the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Dedication of the First Unitarian Church, South Natick, November 20, 1878*, is the only paperbound book I have ever done. It was prepared as a souvenir that was given to those attending the late Dick Seddon's convention, "Booked in Boston."

My three Alger miniatures, *Robert Lawson*, *Annie Graham* and *The Young Patriots*, which make up the Golden Signature Series, show the signature of Horatio Alger, Jr. stamped in gold on the front covers, and my personal monogram in a circle blind-stamped on the back covers.

The Collier & Westgard editions of *Seeking His Fortune* have a Liberty-head coin motif stamped in gold on the covers of the cloth and leather bindings. The spines differ, with the cloth ones showing crossed palm branches, while a laurel wreath appears on the leather copies. Both spines show a figure adapted from the well-known engraving of Ragged Dick in the style of the popular Loring volumes.

With the designs chosen for *Athens in the Time of Socrates*, what may well be considered the most handsome Alger book ever published will soon be available. Front and back covers show a 19th century engraving of a conjectured restoration of the Acropolis in the Golden Age of Athens. This view appeared in George Grove's 12-volume *History of Greece*, a work Alger quoted from his 1981 essay that gives this volume its title. It is stamped on black on tan linen that was chosen because of its similarity to the color of the native rock of the Athenian Acropolis. An interrupted Doric column dominates the spine, with title, author, editor and publisher appearing in the interruptions. The Dorians were the earliest of the tribes in ancient Greece, and their strength in battle gave rise to the mighty city-state of Sparta, while the strength and simplicity of the massed series of Doric columns has given the Parthenon of Athens, designed by the architect Ictinus, its delicate beauty, matchless perfection, great endurance and worldwide fame for nigh on two and a half millennia.

I am certain that Alger would warmly welcome and approve of this most recent volume, consisting of his earliest known writings, and the designs that so nobly portray his beloved and admired *Athens in the Time of Socrates*.

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