



*Horatio Alger, Jr.*  
1832 — 1899

# THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY OFFICIAL PUBLICATION **NEWSBOY**



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

VOLUME XXXVII

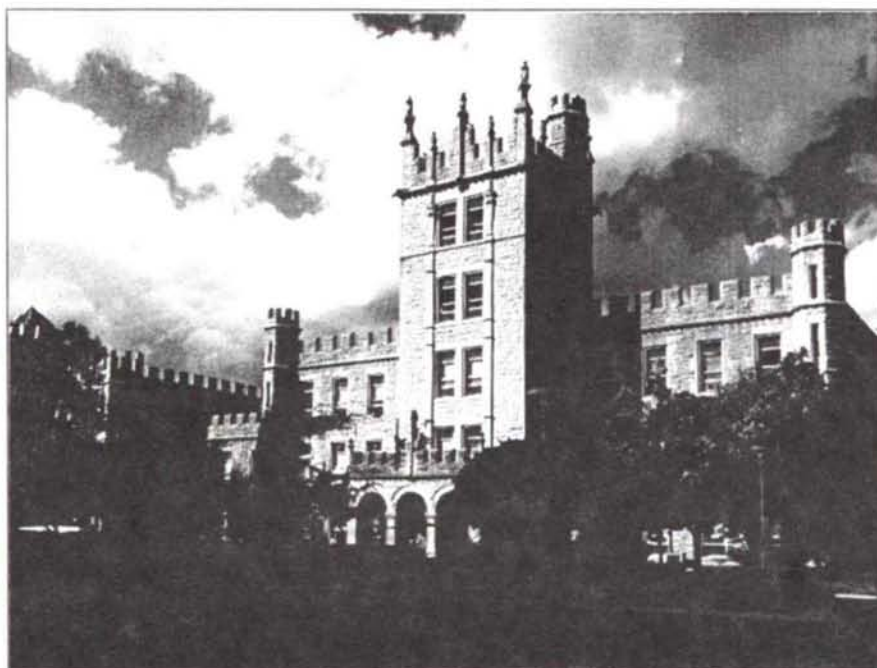
MARCH-APRIL 1999

NUMBER 2

## **Dash to DeKalb**

*H.A.S. Convention update*

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Altgeld Hall, on the campus of Northern Illinois University.

## *Mrs. Pollifax and Tattered Tom: A Sequel*

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## *Earl Reed Silvers: An appreciation*

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## *Ragged Dick in the Nineties*

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## President's column

Had lunch with our editor, Bill Gowen, while he was in Lansing getting the January-February *Newsboy* ready to mail. We had a very interesting conversation relative to the merits of an antique mall over an independent antique shop. I know that the best books I have found have been in small antique shops, whereas Bill feels you spend your time better looking at the malls where you are able to view many different shops at one sitting.

At the Antique Connection in Lansing, where my son has a booth (he handles comics and related items), Jean and I put out a few books. Ray Walsh, owner of the Curious Used Bookstore in East Lansing (one of the best in Michigan) also has a booth at the mall. Between us, most of the good books that come into the mall are picked up. Dealers selling items they specialize in to other dealers are very common. I guarantee that you will not find a first edition in DJ of Nancy Drew or Hardy Boys.

We have one dealer in Pottersville, Mich., who buys estates and leftover items from house sales. He has thousands of books and sells them three for a dollar. Most of his books are not old, more modern literature, but good reading material. Once in awhile we find an author we collect.

Drop us a line and let us know about your booking experiences.

I'd like to remind everybody again to make donations for our annual fund-raising auction. This is a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of the Society, in the 1960s, and continues to be a major means of fund-raising. While consignments have become more popular in recent years, donations mean all of the proceeds from those items go to H.A.S. They don't necessarily have to be Alger books. You can donate other series books, memorabilia (popular items include souvenirs from past H.A.S. conventions), along with arts-and-crafts items (homemade jams and relishes, etc.).

If you don't have room to bring your auction items with you, send them to Samuel Huang, Founders Memorial Library, FO 403, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Be sure you mark them with your name, and whether they are a donation or consignment.

I hope to see you all in DeKalb.

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 '99 Horatio Alger Society Convention update

The 1999 Horatio Alger Society convention, "Dash to DeKalb," is drawing near, and we hope you will be able to make it to Northern Illinois University May 13-16.

DeKalb is located about one hour's drive west of Chicago on Interstate 88 (the East-West Tollway). If you are coming to the convention by plane, Chicago's O'Hare International and Midway airports are approximately 60 miles east of DeKalb. Locator maps of the airports and directions via Interstate highways can be found on Page 5. To summarize:

If you arrive at O'Hare, you will take Interstate 294 (the Tri-State Tollway) south to I-88 west and drive approximately 35 miles to the second DeKalb exit at Annie Glidden Road (mile post 92). An alternate route is I-90 west from O'Hare to Illinois Rt. 47, south on Rt. 47 to I-88, and west on I-88 to Annie Glidden Road.

If you arrive at Midway Airport, you will take Cicero Avenue (Illinois Rt. 50) north about a mile to I-55 (the Stevenson Expressway), go south on I-55 (really, south-west) to I-294, exit north on I-294 to I-88, then west on I-88 as described above.

These directions are the same for those driving to the convention. If you are arriving from the east (Indiana, Ohio, etc.), you will take the Indiana Toll Road to the Frank Borman Expressway (I-80/94) west, follow it to the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), go north to I-88 west, and follow the directions above.

If you are coming from the north (Minnesota or central Wisconsin), take I-90 south to Rockford, Ill., pick up I-39 south to I-88 (about 22 miles) and drive east to the Annie Glidden Road exit.

From the south (St. Louis, etc.) take I-55 north to Bloomington, Ill., pick up I-39 north and drive about 90 minutes to I-88, then east to the Annie Glidden Road exit.

In entering DeKalb on Annie Glidden Road, turn right (east) at Lincoln Hwy. (just past the underpass), go a short distance to the McDonald's on your left, turn left at the light, and the Holmes Student Center is straight ahead. It is the tallest building on the campus.

You can rent cars at O'Hare or Midway airports, or the DeKalb-O'Hare Limousine Service is available. The fare from either airport is \$40 for one passenger or \$35 each for two or more passengers. Their nationwide toll-free reservation number is 1-877-367-5525.

A list of DeKalb-area attractions is currently available on the official 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention Internet site. The URL address for this web site is [www.libws66.lib.niu/alger/71999at.htm](http://www.libws66.lib.niu/alger/71999at.htm). We will also include this information in your registration package.



**The Egyptian Theater is one of many historic attractions in DeKalb, Ill.**

Northern Illinois University Photo

**Schedule corrections:** Please note that a clarification needs to be made in the enclosed convention schedule for Saturday morning, May 15. The annual H.A.S. members' book sale is going to be held between 7:30 and 9 a.m. in the Founders Memorial Library staff lounge, in conjunction with the release and signings of Brad Chase's new book, *Horatio Alger Books Published by The New York Book Company*. The breakfast buffet will also be served from 7:30 to 9 a.m. in the same room.

The event listed from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the schedule as the "book sale" is really the H.A.S. members' consignment auction. This event will take place in the Regency Room located in Holmes Student Center, as listed on your schedule.

**An important reminder:** All registration forms must be received by Samuel Huang at NIU Libraries by **April 30, 1999**. This deadline is critical for the accurate planning of meals, particularly the Friday dinner at Kishwaukee Country Club and annual H.A.S. banquet on Saturday night.

**Registration deadline:** Forms must be received by NIU no later than April 30, 1999

**Hotel registration:** Call the University Guest Room Hotel direct at 1-815-753-1444



## Editor's notebook

I open this column with sad news. Dawn Nyberg, 46, the wife of Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879) passed away on March 24. This is particularly difficult for me, since Bart is a Chicago-area neighbor, and in addition to the many, many book-hunting trips we've made over the years, I have frequently socialized with him and Dawn.

Bart asked that I mention this in *Newsboy* because he hasn't had the time to contact all of his friends in the Society on such short notice. If you want to drop him a card, do so at 20W450 Rutgers Drive, Downers Grove, IL 60516. Dawn died of complications from hepatitis-C induced liver disease. She was being evaluated for a transplant at the time her condition worsened.

One thing I'll remember most about Dawn was her unending patience with our book-collecting obsession. And that went both ways, because Bart never let his hobbies (books and fishing) interfere with his marriage. In all the trips to H.A.S. conventions we've made together (six straight between 1992-1997), he never failed to call home daily for a chat with Dawn (usually at around dinnertime). And when we had travel problems (like when our return flight from the 1992 Waco convention was delayed some five hours) his main concern was for Dawn and the Sunday dinner they wouldn't have together that evening. Dawn and Bart hosted a reception in their home the weekend of the November 1997 directors meeting. Those officers and directors who attended will not forget her kindness. We all will miss her greatly.

**In this issue:** Final preparations are being made for the 1999 Horatio Alger Society convention, hosted by Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. The article on Page 3 mainly deals with "how to get there" with full travel information. One thing about DeKalb — it's in the middle of the U.S., and easily accessible by car or air. Also, a reminder that NIU needs your convention registration form by **April 30** so that meals can be planned. Also, be sure to make hotel registrations directly to the University Guest Room Hotel by calling 1-815-753-1444.

We have three interesting articles in this issue: Leading off is a sequel to an article John Dizer (PF-511) did a few years ago about popular "Mrs. Pollifax" author Dorothy Gilman and how she was influenced by reading Horatio Alger stories as a youth. Lois Varney (PF-1004) gives us a look at the career of Earl Reed Silvers, who wrote more than two dozen books for young people. Finally, Prof. Carol S. Loranger of Wright State University discusses her literature class's use of Alger's *Ragged Dick* as part of an active-learning curriculum.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Gowen:

Under separate cover I am sending you a complimentary copy of my new book, *The 122 Books of Horatio Alger, Jr.* I will not describe the book here, but let it speak for itself.

As you will see, it is a computer printout, bound by myself. I have 25 copies on hand and intend to sell them for \$25 each, plus \$2 shipping and handling. Whether there will be takers remains to be seen. I

also plan to have a small supply on hand for the convention in DeKalb in May.

Ralph Gardner was kind enough to praise the book and he suggested that I send you a copy. Please comment on my work and give me your criticisms, suggested changes, etc.

Also, if you want to acquaint your *Newsboy* readers with its availability, or if you want to use my five-page "Confessions of an Alger Fan" in *Newsboy*, please feel free to do so.

Sincerely,

Alvin K. Funderburg (PF-1025)

3840 Hertland Dr.

Kettering, OH 45439

### The 122 Books of Horatio Alger, Jr.

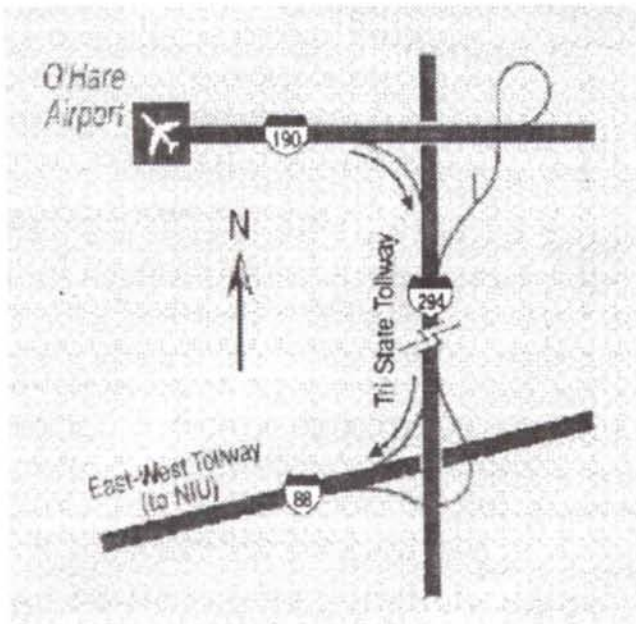
By Alvin K. Funderburg



**Editor's note:** This is a wonderful piece of work, a clean and fully professional example of desktop publishing. To describe the book a little more fully, Mr. Funderburg, one of our newest members, has written one-page plot synopses of Alger's books. (For *The Disagreeable Woman* and Timothy Crump's *Ward*, he acknowledges not being able to provide synopses because he did not have access to copies of these scarce titles, although he devotes a page of background information on each. Mr. Funderburg's "Confessions of an Alger Addict," the preface to this book, will be published in an upcoming issue of *Newsboy*.)

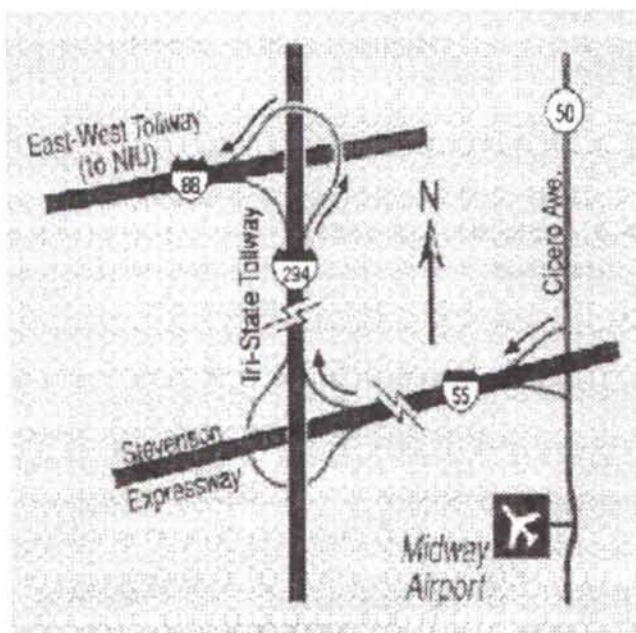
## Directions from Airports

### From O'Hare International Airport to DeKalb



- Take I-190 to I-294 South (Tri-State Tollway)
- Take I-294 South to I-88 (East-West Tollway)
- Take I-88 West to second DeKalb exit (Annie Glidden Road)

### From Midway Airport to DeKalb



- Exit Midway Airport north (left) on Cicero Avenue (IL Route 50)
- Take Cicero Avenue North to I-55 South (Stevenson Expressway)
- Take I-55 South to I-294 North (Tri-State Tollway)
- Take I-294 North to I-88 West (East-West Tollway)
- Take I-88 West to second DeKalb exit (Annie Glidden Road)



## MEMBERSHIP

### New members

Dan Ussery (PF-1026)

1404 Emerson Ave.

Salisbury, MD 21801 (410) 546-5018

E-mail: du771664@aol.com

Dan, whose profession is outside sales for an electrical distributing company, began reading Alger's stories at age 9, and now, as a book collector, is interested in the older, illustrated editions (his collection now numbers 102). His book collecting interests also include mystery and science fiction, and he also collects music items (records, CDs and books). He learned about the Society from David Collier and Bob Bennett.

### Change of address

Douglas E. Fleming (PF-899)

1557 Blakeney Rd., P.O. Box 221

Parkenhurst, Ontario CANADA KOA 2X0

(613) 256-1414

## The Horatio Alger Society Repository Endowment

### Charter members

Brad and Ann Chase (PF-412)

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Robert G. Huber (PF-841)

Mr. and Mrs. James J. Lowe (PF-668)

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Florence O. Schnell (PF-344)

Carl E. Wulff (PF-900)

### I JUST PURCHASED SEVERAL MAJOR COLLECTIONS:

#### I HAVE THE FOLLOWING TO TRADE:

In dust jacket complete sets of the following:

Tuffy Bean

Trigger Berg

Andy Blake

Jerry Hicks

Numerous runs of the following series in DJ:

Many Hal Keen, ie Doom, Amazon, Swamp etc.

Most Poppy Otts and Jerry Todds

lots of early Edgar Rice Burroughs, TARZAN, Venus, Mars etc.

X-Bar-X high numbers, Don Sturdy

Hancock - Invasion of the US in dj (and applique)

Beverly Gray - Worlds Fair

Horatio Alger Jr.

Non - DJ books:

1st edition early Oliver Optics

many other single books in DJ and w/out DJ

Verrill - Deep Sea Hunters

Wycoff - A L Burt editions

Adventures in the Unknown - Claudy

Ralph of the RR, Great Marvel

Square Dollar Boys

early Stratemeyer authored books

etc etc.

#### I WANT BOOKS FROM THE FOLLOWING SERIES AND WILL BUY OR TRADE FOR THEM:

To a large degree these are books from my childhood that were printed from the 50's - 70's picture cover illustrated boards AND dustjacketed versions are both desired.

Rick Brant by John Blaine

Ken Holt by Bruce Campbell

Chip Hilton by Clair Bee

Alfred Hitchcocks Three Investigators, various authors

Brains Benton by Verral or Wyatt

Christopher Cool by Jack Lancer

Dig Allen by Joseph Greene

Mike Mars by Donald Wolheim

Judy Bolton by Margaret Sutton

Tom Swift Jr. by Victor Appleton II

Tom Corbett by Carey Rockwell

Rocky McCune by Wilfred McCormick

Bronc Burnett by Wilfred McCormick

Biff Brewster by Andy Adams

Lone Ranger by Fran Striker

also interested in:

Sue Barton by Boylston

Trixie Belden by Campbell or Kenny including paperbacks

#### LET'S MAKE A DEAL!

Jeff Escue 164 Larchmont Lane, Bloomingdale, IL 60108-1412

(630) 307-6415 email: jsq2@yahoo.com

# Mrs. Pollifax and Tattered Tom: A Sequel

By John T. Dizer (PF-511)

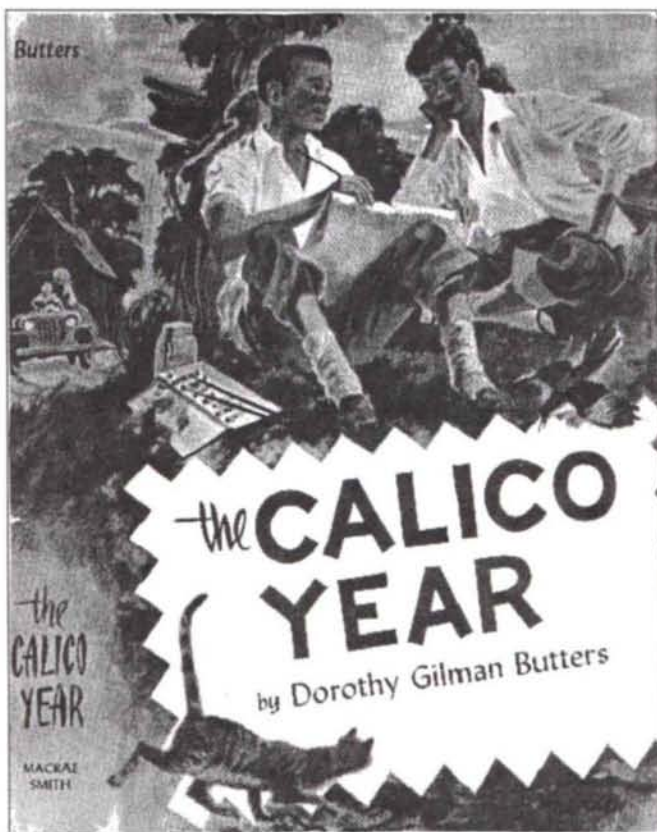
A brief article in the May-June 1993 issue of *Newsboy* explored the connection between Dorothy Gilman and Horatio Alger, Jr. Mrs. Gilman, as most readers know, is the author of the world-famous Mrs. Pollifax mysteries as well as a number of other highly regarded books. Horatio Alger is known to a more limited audience as the author of *Tattered Tom*, *Ragged Dick* and many other books, most of them in the "rage to riches" vein.

The 1993 article described one of Mrs. Gilman's juvenile books in which *Tattered Tom* played a prominent part. In the book, *The Calico Year*, published in 1953, two sisters (one 16 and one 22) found four boxes full of papers and old books. I quoted from the Gilman book, "Here are three by Horatio Alger," cried Tina (the 16-year-old), pocketing a copy of *Tattered Tom*. "this is going to be fun."

As I pointed out in the article, the 16-year-old girl recognized Alger, had apparently read other Alger books and expected to have fun reading *Tattered Tom*. In fact, Gilman says that Tina read *Tattered Tom* while she was fishing and was so engrossed in reading Chapter 3 that she didn't notice when her line sank with a nibble. I also noted that near the end of the book, a rare-book dealer gave them a lecture on the value of first editions, with Hawthorne, Melville, Alcott, Mark Twain, as well as Alger, all discussed. I finished the article with "It is a real pleasure to find a writer of such wide knowledge and reputation as Dorothy Gilman who knows Alger and mentions his books in a non-judgmental way in one of her own books for young people."

Since the article appeared, I have had a number of questions from Alger friends as to whether I had learned any more about how Alger came to appear in a modern children's book and how Mrs. Gilman knew so much about Alger. I really dislike immensely bothering famous writers with such questions but I was as interested as other *Newsboy* readers, so several years ago I wrote Mrs. Gilman. She very graciously answered, and at the prodding of several Partic'lar Friends, I am belatedly sharing her response. I have also sent her this article and she has given me permission to reprint her letter. Pertinent excerpts follow:

About *Tattered Tom* I can only tell you that growing up the daughter of a minister, most of the books I read had to come from the public library, but occasionally — perhaps from some "missionary box" or someone in the church — I would inherit some quite Victorian books (wish I'd kept some of them) and *Tattered Tom* was one



of them. It was so very superior to the others, which seemed to begin with snow falling and bloody foot-prints of some poor orphan child in the snow. I loved it, but it's so long ago I'd forgotten that *Tattered Tom* was a girl.

So there you have my introduction to (and affection for) one of the Horatio Alger books (and I believe I found more in the library and continued reading them). It seemed only natural to fit it into *Calico Year*.

And how good to see the cover of it reproduced! I would guess that I was ten or eleven years of age when I met with Horatio Alger — which begins to be a l-o-n-g time ago.

With thanks and best wishes,  
Sincerely,  
(signed)  
Dorothy Gilman

It was a gracious answer from a gracious lady. What have we learned? We now know that Dorothy Gilman first read Horatio Alger when she was 10 or 11 years old. We know a little about the circumstances. We know that she felt *Tattered Tom* was much superior to the other Victorian books which she read and we know she be-

(Continued on Page 8)



## Mrs. Pollifax and Tattered Tom: A Sequel

(Continued from Page 7)

believes she read additional Horatio Alger books from the library. It is also pleasing to note that she read Alger and remembered his books, although she did not collect Alger's. Too often, we find Alger collectors who never read the books.

Mrs. Gilman tells of her affection for *Tattered Tom*, though she had forgotten that Tom was a girl. Finally, she notes that with her fondness for Alger it seemed only natural to fit *Tattered Tom* into one of her books. And so



**Dorothy Gilman**

Tom appeared, very happily, in *The Calico Year*.

Another question from several readers of the original article concerns the titles of Dorothy Gilman's other juvenile books. These books are highly readable, highly collectible and also highly difficult to find. Any Alger fan who also appreciated the writings of Dorothy Gilman will find them well worth the hunt. I should also note that the author of these early books is given as "Dorothy Gilman Butters," with the exception of *The Maze in the Heart of the Castle*, which is under the name Dorothy Gilman.

### Juvenile Novels

Title	Publisher	Year
Enchanted Caravan	Macrae Smith	1949
Carnival Gypsy	Macrae Smith	1950
Ragamuffin Alley	Macrae Smith	1951
The Calico Year	Macrae Smith	1953
Four-Party Line	Macrae Smith	1954
Papa Dolphin's Table	Alfred Knopf	1955
Girl in Buckskin*	Macrae Smith	1956
Heartbreak Street*	Macrae Smith	1958
Witch's Silver*	Macrae Smith	1959
Masquerade	Macrae Smith	1961
Ten Leagues to Boston Town*	Macrae Smith	1962
The Bells of Freedom**	Macrae Smith	1963
The Maze in the Heart of the Castle	Doubleday	1983

\* Junior Literary Guild selection

\*\* Weekly Reader Book Club selection

**Note:** *Enchanted Caravan* was published as *Caravan* by Doubleday in 1992; *The Bells of Freedom* was reprinted by Peter Smith in 1984.

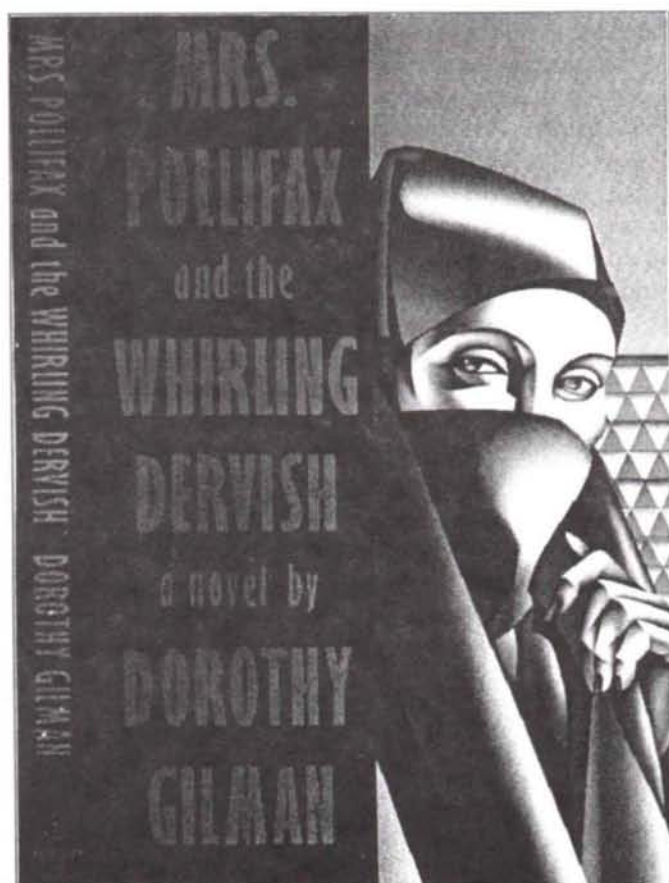
### Adult Novels

The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax	Doubleday	1966
Uncertain Voyage	Doubleday	1967
The Amazing Mrs. Pollifax	Doubleday	1970
The Elusive Mrs. Pollifax	Doubleday	1971
A Palm for Mrs. Pollifax	Doubleday	1973
A Nun in the Closet	Doubleday	1975
The Clairvoyant Countess	Doubleday	1975
Mrs. Pollifax on Safari	Doubleday	1977
The Tightrope Walker	Doubleday	1979
Mrs. Pollifax on the China Station	Doubleday	1983
Mrs. Pollifax & the Hong Kong Buddha	Doubleday	1985
Mrs. Pollifax and the Golden Triangle	Doubleday	1988
Incident at Badamya	Doubleday	1989
Mrs. Pollifax and the Whirling Dervish	Doubleday	1990
Mrs. Pollifax and the Second Thief	Doubleday	1993
Mrs. Pollifax Pursued	Wheeler	1995
Mrs. Pollifax and the Lion Killer	Fawcett Columbine	1996
Mrs. Pollifax, Innocent Tourist*	Fawcett Columbine	1997

### Other Books

On Creative Writing (contributor)	Dutton	1964
A New Kind of Country (non-fiction)	Doubleday	1978

**Note:** Several of the above adult novels were Reader's Digest Book Club selections; some were also reprinted in paperback by Fawcett or Ballantine. \*Also published in 1997 by Random House in a large-print edition.





# Ragged Dick in the Nineties

## An active student learning project

By Carol S. Loranger  
Assistant Professor

Dept. of English Language and Literature  
Wright State University

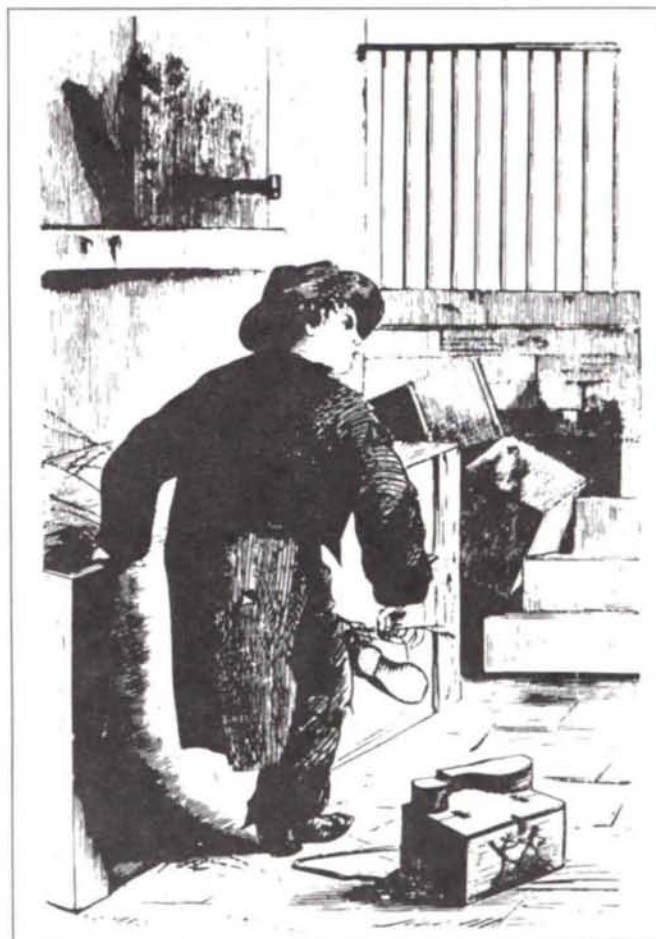
Horatio Alger, Jr.'s *Ragged Dick* is the most popular text in my syllabus for English 356 "American Texts: 1860-1920." Ours is a metropolitan university with a large population of working-class and low-income, disabled and minority, first-generation college students.

Alger's affable hero, his struggle toward "fame and fortune," and the detailed depiction of urban life has resonance for students for whom just getting to college has been a struggle, as well as piquancy: their life experience suggests that "moral capitalism"<sup>1</sup> no longer operates, if indeed it ever did, but they know they must act as if it did if they are to have any chance at all of getting ahead.

As a mild-mannered Marxist with a long-standing commitment to helping students see how literature abets or challenges the hegemony, I teach *Ragged Dick* with other period texts that address the relationship between character, money and success, including *Sister Carrie*, *The Song of the Lark*, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, *The Home-Maker* and *McTeague*.<sup>2</sup> As the first text of the term, *Ragged Dick* has a way of bringing the others into focus, particularly in presaging the attention of nickel-and-dime accounting so characteristic of that materialistic era and its evocation of the substratum of poverty underlying the American dream.

English 356 is a writing-intensive course required for English majors and strongly recommended for students majoring in English Education. In addition to the usual course essays and exams, I like to give my students a choice of brief independent projects emphasizing Internet or primary source research or, for education majors, development of unit plans and activities for teaching one of the texts in regular or advanced placement high school English classes.

**Author's note:** In this article I describe a course assignment geared toward teaching Alger's *Ragged Dick* in the context of a politicized or historicized literature course. I have had a great deal of success with this active learning approach and believe it can open the way, not only toward more inclusion of Alger and other "ephemeral" 19th century writers in contemporary curricula, but also to increasing student understanding of a culture and literature soon to be seen by them as two centuries old and, therefore, irrelevant.



**Ragged Dick**, an illustration appearing with the first chapter of Alger's serial in *Student and Schoolmate*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Jan. 19, 1867.

The *Ragged Dick* research assignment, which I devised soon after the Congress passed welfare reform in 1996, has proved nearly as popular as the novel. Despite its early due date (typically the third week of the term) and the necessity for some off-campus travel and creative problem-solving, about one quarter of the class routinely opts for it. I offer it here as an eye-opening exercise for students and instructors, particularly because the data and its possible interpretations may differ region to region, year to year, and student to student. The assignment itself is brief:

In the first half of the novel, Alger gives a careful accounting of Dick's shoeshine income and cost of living, including the costs of lodging on Mott Street, food, new and used clothing, hospitalization and care for Johnny Mullen's injured leg, etc. As you read *Ragged Dick*, keep

(Continued on Page 10)



## Ragged Dick in the Nineties

(Continued from Page 9)

careful track of all mention of income and expenses, then do a little research on the possibilities for a *Ragged Dick* in Dayton in the 1990s assuming no social safety net. Likely income from shoe shines? room rent? clothing? the equivalent of beefsteak and coffee breakfast? week in a hospital with treatment for leg injury? equivalent of a night at Tony Pastor's? other expenses? Don't worry about adjusting for inflation, just find out if our Dick could enjoy a lifestyle comparable to that of Dick Hunter. Arrange comparative data in tables and write a 500-750 word introduction in which you comment on the prospects for orphaned street urchins today. Attach copies of advertisements, price lists, menus, etc., from which you drew your information.

Students may need some additional guidance in the beginning, especially if they have worn running shoes all their lives. I give a list of likely locations for local shoe shine operators — the airport, Air Force base and local yuppie grocery — and suggested students search the want ads for rooming houses. Most students need no assistance locating used clothing stores and cheap food. Depending on city codes, students may need to investigate the cost of permits or booth rental, neither of which were an issue for Dick Hunter.

What my students initially find is that the going price for a regular shine in Dayton is about \$2.50, with high shines running at \$4.50 to \$5. Most conclude that if Dick worked with "energy and industry (p. 8) and performed enough highshines each day, he could indeed afford a "not particularly attractive" (p. 75) room without bath in any of several rooming houses<sup>3</sup>, eat a similarly fat-and-protein laden meal in a fast-food establishment and clothe himself serviceably from thrift stores. While my students are comfortable with the food and clothing available to Dick in the 1990s, those who actually visited the rooms they found advertised were disgusted with the squalor of a \$45 to \$50 a week squat, even in comparison with student-affordable housing, which can be pretty squalid itself.

In meeting the bare necessities both young entrepreneurs are generally equally successful, but the nineties' Dick lags behind his predecessor in "lifestyle" and health-care expectations. Second-run the dollar theaters — for our purposes the equivalent of the plays of the Old Bowery — to ensure the need never to miss a night's amusement. But some students argue that today's Dick could not often enjoy hearing the latest songs sung by rising artists as at Tony Pastor's, since concert tickets at Dayton venues begin at about \$25. The more mathematically inclined point out that, while a shine today brings in 25 times as much money, a shot or glass of beer costs

125 times the 1860s price of "two cents a glass" (p. 7).

Most significantly, the nineties Dick could not help underwrite the cost of Johnny Mullen's week in the hospital, much less emergency care for his injured leg. Alger does not make clear how much of the \$3 Dick chipped in, but even if students assume it was no more than one-third (or the income from 10 shines), it's clear to them that Dick and his friends would have to shine several thousand shoes to pay Mullen's bill. Health-care costs vary wildly across the United States, and students will have to speculate about the nature of Mullen's injury, resulting in dramatically different estimates of the cost — but no matter how modest their figures, even my most socially conservative students are amazed at how inaccessible basic and emergency care have become for the working poor.

Some of my more pragmatic students have noted other drains in the nineties Dick's pocketbook. One may not legally shine shoes on street corners in our city, so Dick would need to rent space and supply a seat for his customers. Changing attitudes toward personal hygiene mean Dick would have to spend some of his earnings at the laundromat or risk losing both his customers and his space. Dayton is the fifth most dispersed urban area in the United States and none of the three popular shoe shine venues in our town are near the district where Dick could rent lodging. Dick would need to budget and additional 10 shines (\$25) per month for a bus pass and, if he held the airport concession, begin his commute no later than 6 o'clock if he wanted to catch the a.m. business commuters.

When students present their findings to the class, it sparks a lively and unpredictable discussion of Alger's novel and comparative class and economic politics in the United States from the Gilded Age to the era of diminished expectations. Since *Ragged Dick* is briefer than the majority of more canonical 19th century texts, still eminently readable and strangely current in its concerns, this assignment can easily be adapted for American history or interdisciplinary courses or for secondary school English curricula.

### NOTES

1. "A Network of influences and cross-influences in which all who are in need, and who are good and industrious enough to help themselves, are given a hand on their way to the top." (Ernest 61).

2. See Loranger, "'Character and Success': Teaching *Sister Carrie* in the Contest of an On-going American Debate." *Dreiser Studies*, forthcoming summer 1999.

3. *Ragged Dick* housed himself and Fosdick on the income from 10 shines per week. The nineties Dick needs a weekly minimum of 10 high — or 18 regular shines.

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# Earl Reed Silvers: An appreciation

By A. Lois Varney (PF-1004)

Earl Reed Silvers was a writer whose characters, situations and ideals reflected his personal life. His 26 published books for youth were based on experiences which occurred during his career as an administrator and teacher at Rutgers University. Writing was an avocation rather than a vocation.

Reed, as he was called, was born on Feb. 22, 1891 in Jersey City, N.J. When he was seven years old, his pharmacist father, Earl Britton Silvers, died. His mother,

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

Evelyn Reed Silvers, moved the family to Rahway, N.J., to live with Dr. Elihu Silvers, Reed's grandfather. He lived in Rahway for the rest of his life.

It was early in life when Reed first met publishing success. Encouraged and helped by his Aunt Emma, Reed wrote and published a small book of poems, This

was duly recognized by the local newspaper and the story was picked up by *The New York World*, which published an accompanying picture of Reed in white knickers and a blue jacket, with the caption "Boy Poet of Rahway." At least two copies of this early work are treasured by Reed's family today.

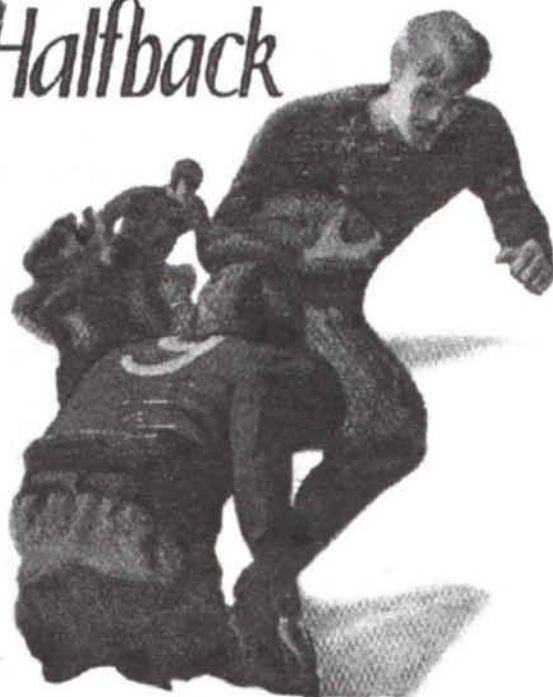


**Earl Reed Silvers**

For the next few years, Reed's writing talents were honed on the usually required school compositions and a column of high school news which he wrote for the local paper. Upon graduating from high school, Reed was awarded a scholarship, allowing him to attend Rutgers College in nearby New Brunswick.

Reed commuted to college from his home in Rahway for his first two college years, but realizing that he was missing much of the college experience by not living on campus, he looked about for some way to earn the cost of room and board for the remaining two years. He found the necessary funds by taking a part-time English teaching assignment at a private girls' school and by becoming a Rutgers news correspondent for three newspapers. Living on campus, he edited the

## *The Red-Headed Halfback*



*by Earl Reed Silvers*

college yearbook and newspaper. His scholarship abilities were never in doubt and Reed was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Athletic ability was not lacking, either, for Reed played football, basketball and earned his varsity letter as a member of the track team. Earl Reed Silvers graduated from Rutgers in 1913.

However, Reed was not finished with that institution. In fact, he was to be associated with Rutgers University for the rest of his life. Shortly after graduating, he returned to become Assistant to the President of the college.

In successive years, he developed and served in the Alumni Office, taught a writing course, and finally became Dean of Men. The university awarded him the honorary degrees of Master of Arts in 1923 and in 1942 a Litt. D.

Shortly before his marriage to Edythe I. Terrill in 1916, Reed had begun writing short stories for church newspapers and youth publications, which were numerous at

*(Continued on Page 12)*



Earl Reed Silvers, right, with — from left — his son Earl, Jr. (Sam), his wife Edythe, and daughter Evelyn (Fliv) in the summer of 1931 at Sebago Lake, Maine.

Photo courtesy of Earl Reed Silvers, Jr.

## Earl Reed Silvers: An appreciation

(Continued from Page 11)

the time. His inspiring stories appeared in such magazines as *Boy's Life*, *The American Boy*, *The Youth's Companion*, *St. Nicholas*, *The Open Road for Boys* and *The American Girl*. His first book for boys was an expanded version of one such story, which had first appeared in serial form, which was often the custom at the time. Silvers was to write more than 1,000 short stories and 27 books.

In his non-fiction book, *The Editor Accepts*, published by Rutgers University Press in 1943, Reed mentions the boy's books written by Ralph Henry Barbour, whose writings stressed the Good Sport and Clean Living image. Reed was to incorporate the same moral values into his own books. Silvers once told a friend, "When you write for youth, you hold the same power as a minister of the gospel to influence boys and girls for good or bad, but your opportunity to inspire thousands of boys and girls who would often write to him for advice in solving teen-age problems. His message was often the same as he gave to young men of Rutgers:

"Keep the faith. Don't let yourself down."

Some of Reed's stories moved away from the school campus, into the experience of young people at summer camps. In 1924, at the invitation of the headmaster of the Menlo School in Menlo Park, Calif., Reed and Edythe, along with their children, Earl, Jr. (Sam) and Evelyn (Fliv), traveled to Menlo Camps on Lake Tahoe to spend a few weeks and gather material for *The Spirit of Menlo*, which was published in 1926. For *Carol of Highland Camp* (1927), Silvers drew on his experiences as Associate Director of a girl's camp in Naples, Maine, where his wife was a swimming instructor and his daughter, Fliv, one of the campers.

Twenty of Silvers' books for youth were published by D. Appleton and Co. Six books of the **Yank Brown Series** were published by Barse & Hopkins under the pseudonym "David Stone."

Although Reed had proven himself in successfully writing youth fiction, he longed to break through into writing for adults. With a year's leave of absence from Rutgers, he moved his family to Maine for a few months while he concentrated on writing for the adult market. In 1937, the story, "Do You Remember" was published in



**Good Housekeeping**, which was to publish subsequent short stories. Other "slick" magazines which published Silvers' stories were **The American Magazine**, **Country Home** and **Reader's Digest**. Eventually, Reed had published three adult novels and a manual for teaching others to write "short stories that magazines will buy." This book, *The Editor Accepts*, is somewhat autobiographical and gives the reader a glimpse into the life and philosophy of the author. One can see how his books were patterned to appeal to the youth of that day.

In 1948, Reed and Edythe went to Sarasota, Fla., where Reed was to recuperate after suffering an attack of pneumonia the previous winter. His heart, weakened by the illness, confined him to the hospital, where he died on March 26 at age 57.

Rutgers honored him with a memorial tribute in the March 1948 issue of **Rutgers Alumni Monthly**, a publication which he had begun for his beloved university. It was clear from the tributes written to commemorate his years at Rutgers that he would be much missed at that institution. His books, which are somewhat difficult to find now, reflect the man and the ideals he chose to follow.

#### SOURCES

Silvers, Earl Reed. *The Editor Accepts*. 1943, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

**Rutgers Alumni Monthly**, March 1948. "In Memoriam." pp. 7-20.

Interviews with Earl Reed Silvers, Jr. (Sam) and Evelyn Silvers Daly (Fliv), July 1998, at South Casco, Maine.

### Books by Earl Reed Silvers

#### Juvenile fiction

Title	Publisher	Year
<b>Dick Arnold Series</b>		
Dick Arnold of Raritan College <i>Illustrated by George Varian</i>	Appleton	1920
Dick Arnold Plays the Game <i>Illustrated by George Varian</i>	Appleton	1920
Dick Arnold of the Varsity <i>Illustrated by George Varian</i>	Appleton	1921
<b>Ned Beals Series</b>		
Ned Beals, Freshman <i>Illustrated by Leslie Crump</i>	Appleton	1922
Ned Beals Works His Way <i>Illustrated by Leslie Crump</i>	Appleton	1923
<b>Hillsdale High Series</b>		
At Hillsdale High <i>Illustrated by Richard Holberg</i>	Appleton	1922
Jackson of Hillsdale High <i>Illustrated by Richard Holberg</i>	Appleton	1923
The Hillsdale High Champions <i>Illustrated by Richard Holberg</i>	Appleton	1925

#### Barry Series

Barry the Undaunted <i>Illustrated by Edward C. Caswell</i>	Appleton	1924
Barry and Budd <i>Illustrated by Edward C. Caswell</i>	Appleton	1925
Barry Goes to College <i>Illustrated by Edward C. Caswell</i>	Appleton	1928

#### Menlo Series

The Menlo Mystery <i>Illustrated by Manning de Villeneuve Lee</i>	Appleton	1926
The Spirit of Menlo <i>Illustrated by Edward C. Caswell</i>	Appleton	1926

#### Carol Series

Carol of Highland Camp <i>Illustrated by A.D. Gabriel</i>	Appleton	1927
Carol of Cranford High <i>Illustrated by Beebe</i>	Appleton	1930

#### Glenwood Series

The Red-Headed Halfback <i>Illustrated by James Reid</i>	Appleton	1929
Team First <i>Illustrated by T.F. Hargg</i>	Appleton	1929
The Glory of Glenwood <i>Illustrated by T. Victor Hall</i>	Appleton	1930

#### Other Appleton books:

The Scarlet of Avalon <i>Illustrated by George Avison</i>	Appleton	1930
Code of Honor <i>Illustrated by Ferdinand E. Warren</i>	Appleton	1932

#### Yank Brown Series

(written under pseudonym "David Stone")

Yank Brown, Halfback <i>Illustrated by Charles L. Wrenn</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1921
Yank Brown, Forward <i>Illustrated by Howard L. Hastings</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1921
Yank Brown, Cross Country Runner <i>Illustrated by Howard L. Hastings</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1922
Yank Brown, Miler <i>Illustrated by Howard L. Hastings</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1923
Yank Brown, Pitcher <i>Illustrated by Howard L. Hastings</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1924
Yank Brown, Honor Man <i>Illustrated by Charles L. Wrenn</i>	Barse & Hopkins	1925

#### Adult fiction

If This Be Forgetting	Westminster Press	1944
Son of Tomorrow	Westminster Press	1947

#### Non-fiction

The Editor Accepts (Reprinted by Grosset & Dunlap in 1947 as <i>How to Buy Short Stories That Editors Buy</i> ).	Rutgers U. Press	1943
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bradford S. Chase: *Horatio Alger Books Published by The New York Book Company*. 1999, Sandpiper Publishing, 6 Sandpiper Road, Enfield, Ct., 06082. 144 pages, softbound. Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 98-90066. Available at the 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention, and thereafter, for \$15.**

**Reviewed by William R. Gowen (PF-706)**

In this, the fourth in his ongoing series on selected Alger publishers, Brad Chase tackles what may be his toughest subject of all: The New York Book Company. Not only are these books regarded as "the cheapest of the cheap" by some Alger collectors, this company proved to be among the most difficult for Chase to research, simply because The New York Book Company was a mass-production subsidiary of a larger firm, and not as easy to trace historically as such firms as M.A. Donohue, Whitman and A.L. Burt, the subjects of Chase's three earlier books in this series.

But the intrepid Chase, with the help of his brother, Rolfe (PF-602) and son, Scott, worked through genealogical sources to paint a fairly complete picture of how the firm came into being in 1908, the locations where it did business and how it met its demise in 1929. This fully annotated portion of Chase's book is invaluable to anyone doing research on early publishers. Also, the New York Book Co. Alger reprints themselves were very helpful since nearly every book in the 1908-13 period has a printed date on the title page, and they are relatively easy to find in used-book stores and flea markets, although not usually in great condition.

Before he provides detailed descriptions of the book formats themselves, Chase offers a chapter titled "Understanding New York Book Company Algers," which gives general information, along with an introduction to the formats. He also describes the quality of the books, any textual changes or abridgments that were made to Alger's stories, plus specific characteristics of the books (end papers, illustrations, advertisements, etc.). He follows with a general introduction of the four main series in which Alger books were produced over a 12-year period, 1908-1919, by the company. These are based on spine designs, which Chase calls Series I (Plain Spine), Series II (Curlicue Spine), Series III (1910 Double Volumes), and Series IV (Leaves Spine).

The heart of Chase's book, the section titled "Presentation of Formats," gives us a detailed description of the 26 formats within these four series, listing the Alger titles appearing in each particular format. He uses his own detailed line drawings of the covers (a tradition for this series), a feature that makes this book even more valu-

### HORATIO ALGER BOOKS PUBLISHED BY

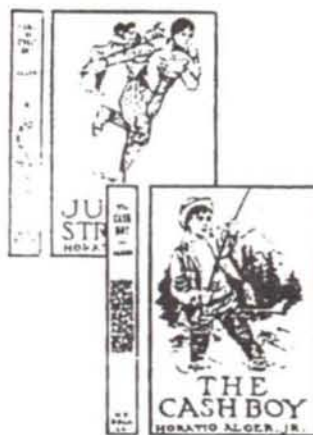
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ALGER



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BY.....BRADFORD S. CHASE

able to the collector. Also of special note is a "flip index" of thumbnail cover designs in the upper-right corner of each page, making it easy to locate a format quickly.

Incidentally, Chase has calculated that if a collector went after every possible New York Book Company format produced for the 49 Alger titles over that 1908-1919 period, he would accumulate 752 books! At the back of his book, Chase offers a matrix table for all formats, series and years they were produced, in case some collector desires to shoot for all 752.

I'm sure there will be few Partic'lar Friends who want nearly 800 different New York Book Company Algers, but *Horatio Alger Books Published by The New York Book Company* is an excellent reference tool for the collector, as well as a "good read." The historical overview of the company flows like a good detective story.

In sum, *Horatio Alger Books Published by The New York Book Company* is a valuable addition to Chase's series, both for the Alger collector or anyone interested in book publishing in general in the early years of this century.



Horatio Alger, Jr. and O. Augusta Cheney: *Seeking His Fortune, and Other Dialogues*. 1999, Collier & Westgard, Glendale, Calif., and Boynton Beach, Fla. 270 pages; facsimile of the original 1875 A.K. Loring edition. \$79 in cloth covers, \$99 in leather (a limited edition). Postage is \$3 per book. Make checks payable to David Lee Collier, and mail to 1845 Crestmont Court, Glendale, CA 91208.

Reviewed by William R. Gowen (PF-706)

Some very delightful writing can be found in *Seeking His Fortune*; unfortunately, the original book is so scarce that not many Alger enthusiasts have had an opportunity to read these 22 "dialogues," which he wrote in collaboration with his sister, O. Augusta Cheney.

"Seeking His Fortune," the opening dialogue, is acknowledged by Alger in the book's preface as the only one written by him, and he credits the other 21 dialogues to Cheney, with his contribution "merely that of an editor."

No matter their authorship, these are very readable "dramas," and it's an Alger family project, so it deserves to be in your collection.

These little "sitting room plays" present stories of human foibles — greed, jealousy, love gained and lost. A typical example is "Aunt Patience's Ear-Trumpet," in which Mrs. Granby and her daughter, Clara, have eyes on elderly Aunt Patience's \$30,000 estate. When the aunt visits, using an ear-trumpet and claiming to be deaf, the mother and daughter discuss out in the open what they plan to do with their inheritance, saying Aunt Patience won't hear them scheming since she is "deaf as an adder."

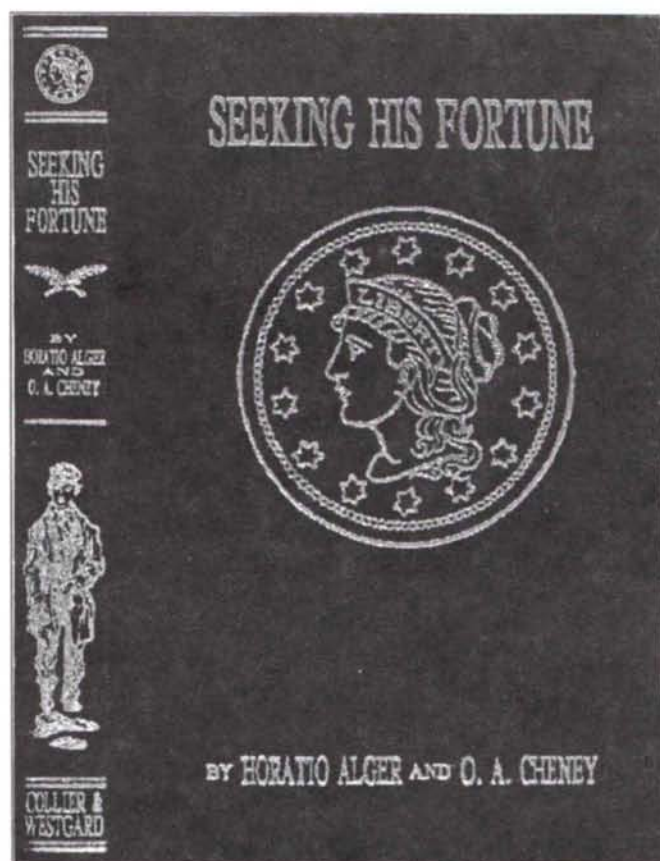
Of course, she can hear perfectly well, and after she leaves, she sends them her ear trumpet, along with a letter informing them she has decided to will her money to the Home for Aged Women. "Although deaf as an adder when I came to visit you, my hearing has been wonderfully restored, so that I can now dispense with my ear-trumpet. I therefore send it to you, hoping it may do you as good service as it did me, in showing me for what I was valued most."

Alger's contribution portrays a typical "country boy heads to the big city to get rich" theme, in this case, a real bumpkin named Jonathan Peters who, at age 21, wants to leave the family cabbage and potato farm in Beanville and move to "Bostown," in order to "... make my fortin."

He withdraws \$250 from the bank (an inheritance from his aunt) over his parents' objections, and gets ready to leave home:

**Mrs. P:** The city is a wicked place, Jonathan. Who knows but you'd get to drinkin' and swearin'?

**J.:** There aint no danger of that, marm. I tasted some whiskey, the other day, down to



Hiram Johnson's, and it almost turned my stummick. I shan't drink anything stronger than cider."

**Deacon P:** That's right, my son. Cider's good, for we know what it's made of. Apples are healthy, and when a body's tired, a mug of cider goes to the right spot.

You get the idea. Plenty of slang, fractured English and interesting conversation between characters. True to form, Jonathan has hardly settled into his over-priced Boston lodgings (he wonders aloud where the citizens "pastur' all their cows") when he answers a newspaper ad for a job supposedly paying \$2,000 per year. You guessed it — he ends up getting swindled. But, in true Alger spirit, things turn out all right in the end.

Gilbert K. Westgard II (PF-024) has designed the cover of this book with great care. The cloth edition is in Loring green, with gold lettering and design elements. He has chosen a Liberty-head coin motif for the front cover, with the figure of Ragged Dick on the spine, which Westgard describes in the January-February issue of *Newsboy* as "in the style of the popular Loring volumes."

The pages of the book are acid-free paper, with printing a clear, exact reproduction of the original.

*Seeking His Fortune* in this facsimile edition is a very worthy addition to any Alger collection. It looks great on the shelf, and better yet, it makes enjoyable reading.

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