



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.

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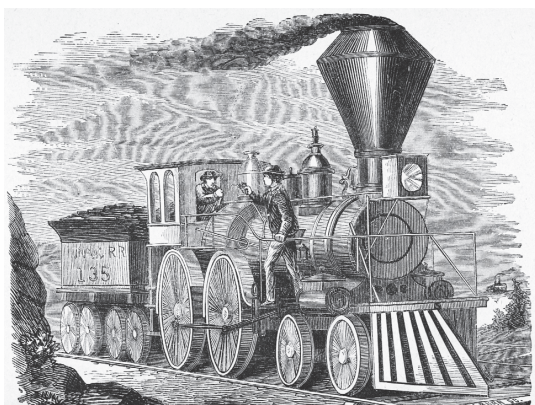
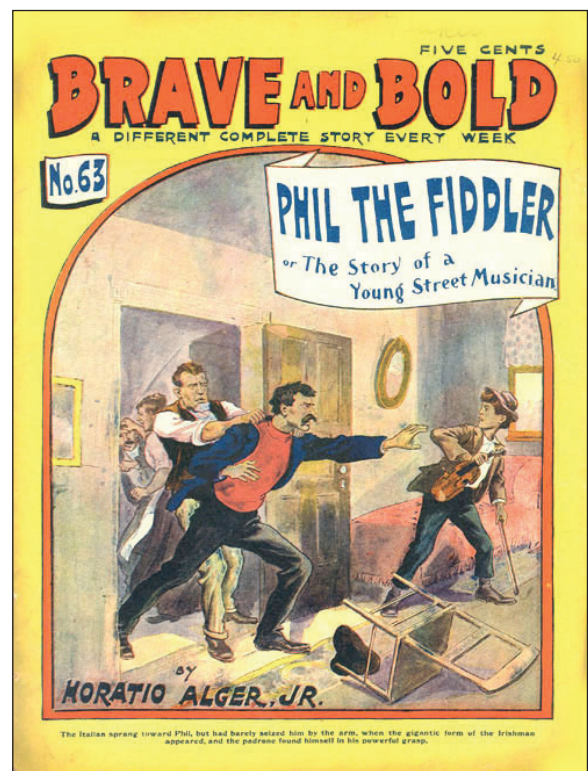
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President's column

Hi from Michigan! It has been cold, snowing, slippery, and all the other things that go along with weather in this part of the country!! I would very much like to be in a little warmer climate, but we are very busy here with our two ladies. The holidays are over, and hopefully, everyone had the opportunity to have family and friends over for the holidays and didn't eat too much. Leftovers are always great the next day, but they have a tendency to last "all" week. Jeanette and I were very fortunate to have two days off Thanksgiving, as her kids were not able to come down on Thursday, so they came down on Friday with the two grandkids, Jeanette's dad and his wife and most of all, grandma. Everyone had a great time.

During the holidays, Jeanette and I had the opportunity to be at the Senior Christmas celebration at the assisted living facility where the two ladies live. There is approx. 75 people living in apartments in the building, and the owners of the complex have a gala celebration each year at Christmas for all the residents and their families. It was nice to see the residents' families and friends, enjoying the festivities and singing.

I assume, for the people who watch the eBay bidding, there was a great book that went up for auction recently. One of our lucky members was very fortunate. The book was a paperback, titled *The Erie Train Boy*, by United States Book Co. — a very difficult book to find!!!

In early December, I was invited to sit in on the convention committee's meeting in Grand Rapids, at Dave Yarrington's home. The committee: Dave Yarrington, Art Smitter, Milt Ehlert and Chris Dehaan, have most of the convention details well on their way. Bill Gowen, our editor, was also there, along with the committee members' wives. Please don't forget to place the convention dates of May 12 through May 15 on your calendar.

Enclosed with this issue is the official convention registration form, along with a full-color flyer for the Holiday Inn Select in Grand Rapids, our official convention hotel. Make your hotel reservations early! The rate is \$79 per night, and please mention you're with the Horatio Alger Society. The next issue of **Newsboy** will include the full agenda and schedule of events.

Your Partic'lar Friend
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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 — youngsters whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and inspired hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans for generations to come.

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You can visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.ihot.com/~has/

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. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

The 2005 convention: an early look

Ready for a Grand old time?

That is what will take place on May 13-15, 2005, when the Horatio Alger Society heads to Grand Rapids, Mich., for its 41st annual convention, "Gathering in Grand Rapids."

The Society's co-hosts, Dave and Maybelle Yarrington, Arthur and Linda Smither, Milt and Carol Ehler and Chris and Doug DeHaan, have been working for months to organize what promises to be a great convention. In the next issue of **Newsboy**, we'll present our complete convention preview, but because the big event is getting closer, here's a "preview-preview," in order to whet your appetites.

The detailed agenda and schedule of events will follow in the next **Newsboy**, but in this issue we have enclosed the official convention registration form, along with a color brochure for the Holiday Inn Select, on the east side of Grand Rapids, near Gerald Ford International Airport. The hotel provides 24-hour shuttle service to and from the airport. Our room rate is a very reasonable \$79 per night plus tax, multiple occupancy.

This will be our fourth convention in Michigan. The Society's co-founder, Forrest Campbell, hosted "The Kalamazoo Occasion," the fifth annual convention, in 1969; Bob Bennett hosted the eighth convention in Mount Pleasant in 1972; and in 1994, "In Search of Treasure," our 30th convention, was in Grand Rapids, hosted by the Ehlers and DeHaans.

The convention committee has made an excellent choice in the Holiday Inn Select, the latest in the newest generation of hotels by one of the nation's most well-known hotel chains. The 148-room Grand Rapids location includes an indoor heated pool, free high-speed Internet access in every room, full restaurant and lounge, plus meeting rooms and banquet facilities. Convention activities such as our meetings, auctions, book sale and annual banquet will be held at the hotel.

One event not at the hotel will be Friday night's dinner, a pig roast hosted by Chris and Doug DeHaan at



The new Holiday Inn Select in Grand Rapids, Mich., will be the location for the Horatio Alger Society convention on May 12-15, 2005.

their dairy farm in nearby Wayland, Mich. This was one of the most popular events at the 1994 convention, and the DeHaans have agreed to do it again. Hopefully, we won't be hit by rain as we were the first time!

Dave Yarrington has announced that educator and author Donald Gallo has agreed to be our keynote speaker for the banquet on Saturday, May 14. Gallo, retired Professor of English at Central Connecticut State University, has authored or edited numerous books for young adults. The American Library Association listed *Sixteen*, a collection of short stories edited by Gallo, as one of the "Best 100 books for young adults published in the past 25 years."

"It has always been my intent to publish collections of short stories that are lively, entertaining, insightful, and of high quality — new stories, not ones selected from previously published sources — about teenage activities and concerns, written by the most highly respected writers in the field of literature for young people," says Gallo on his "meet the authors" page of the Random House publisher's Web site.

Please mail the enclosed registration form right away to **Arthur W. Smither, 2959 Coral Valley Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512**. Don't forget to mark your dinner entree choice for the Saturday banquet.

Call the hotel directly for your room reservations. The direct line is (616) 285-7600. Be sure to mention that you are attending the Horatio Alger Society convention!

For more information

Holiday Inn Select:

www.hiselect.com/grndrapidse

Things to do in Grand Rapids:

www.visitgrandrapids.org

Editor's notebook

Those of us who buy and sell on eBay received a jolt in mid-January when we found out the price of doing business with the on-line auction site was going up — in some cases as much as 60 percent.

As you read this, the new price structure will have just gone into effect, the fourth straight year the company has emulated the cable TV industry by raising rates.

The rate increases for sellers range from a 60 percent hike in the monthly fee to more than 100 percent for some of the features used on a per-product basis, such as "Buy it Now," in which the old five-cent flat fee for "Buy it Now" items — those auctions for which the seller sets the price for his items — will now become an escalating scale based on the price of the item.

Basic auction fees will range from five cents for any items ranging in minimum bid from a penny up to \$9.99, and up to 25 cents for items listed for more than \$50. Also, the duration fee for 10-day auctions rises from 20 cents to 40 cents.

Final value fees — the price the item is eventually sold for — are also on the rise for big-ticket items listed in the business and industrial categories, thankfully an area in which we as book collectors have no real interest.

Another change is in the look and cost of listing of so-called "Gallery" items, for which eBay is increasing the size of its Gallery image on search and listings pages by 56 percent. This makes it easier for buyers to see details of the item before clicking into the listing. The price? Gallery fees rise from 25 cents to 35 cents per listing.

The sellers likely getting hurt the most are those with "eBay Stores," basically an on-line version of a typical brick-and-mortar retail store. Although more than two-thirds of the goods on eBay are sold in the regular auction format, the eBay Stores service also lets merchants sell at fixed prices and present all their items in one place. The new rates mean that to keep a store open, the seller faces an increase from \$9.95 per month to \$15.95, an increase of 60 percent. Moreover, closing commissions on most items sold through eBay Stores will jump by roughly 50 percent.

The reaction in the buying and selling community has been mixed, to say the least, with many sellers closing their e-Bay stores or moving altogether to different auction sites. It will be interesting to see how this shakes out in the months ahead. I have a feeling most sellers will swallow their pride and stick with eBay because of its dominant position in the on-line auction field.

MEMBERSHIP

New members

Maybelle Yarrington (PF-1084)
O-1710 W. Leonard Road, NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49544 (616) 677-2689
E-mail: dyarrington@cs.com

Maybelle is the wife of 2005 H.A.S. convention co-host Dave Yarrington. Her collecting interests include books by Gladys Taber, Elizabeth Goudge, Elisabeth Ogilvie, Anne Tyler and Sarah Orne Jewett.

Stephen T. Quatro (PF-1085)
557 County Line Road
Hamlin, NY 14464

Stephen, at age 13, has become an avid reader of Horatio Alger's books, thanks to the donation of more than 60 books to the Hamlin Public Library by Partic'lar Friend Edward Evans (PF-1000). He currently owns four Alger books, and in addition to reading, he enjoys writing stories.

Robert M. Petitto (PF-1086)
874 Papoose Ct.
Carol Stream, IL 60188 (630) 462-1614

Robert, who almost joined the Society 20 years ago, finally did so at the suggestion of Bob Sipes (PF-1067). His collecting interests include Alger first editions and other early publishers (he owns about 40 Alger titles), along with a general collection of antiquarian juvenile books, including Oliver Optic. Other hobbies include crossword puzzles, fishing and golf.

John C. Walter (PF-160)
1307 Greenbush
Lafayette, IN 47904

John is the husband of longtime H.A.S. member Rohima Walter, who passed away in January 2004. The Walters were regular attendees at conventions for more than 30 years. John has decided to assume Rohima's membership.

Kathleen R. Chamberlain (PF-874)
P.O. Box 947
Emory, VA 24327

E-mail: kathleenchamberlain@yahoo.com

Kathleen, who is currently doing research for a book on girls' series books, has reinstated her membership. Welcome back!

Cut and Create

Or, Alger's editors make success heroes

By Kyoko Amano (PF-1049)

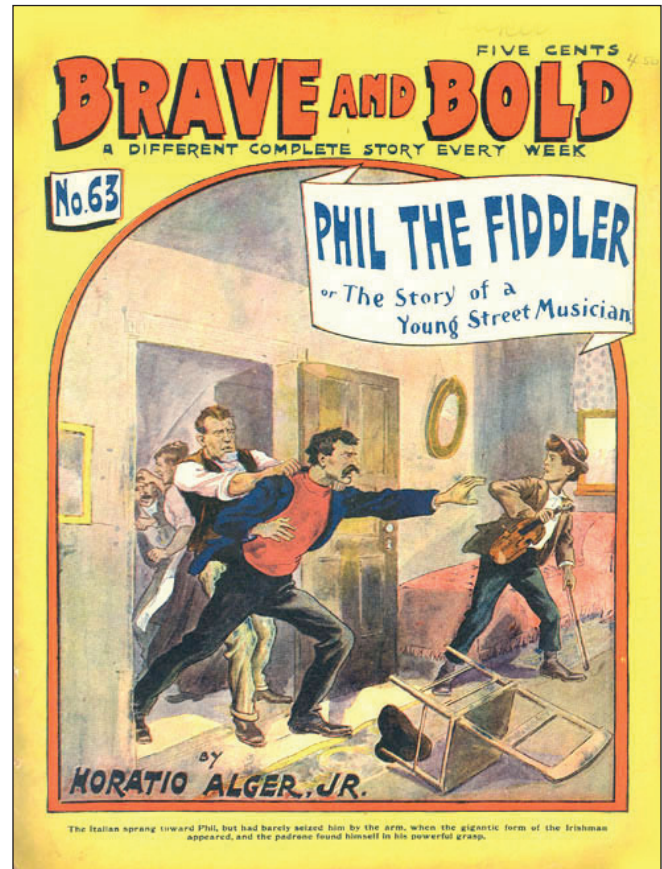
Avid readers of Horatio Alger, Jr.'s works have been aware that there are some editorial changes between Alger's original late-19th century publications and the editions published in the early 20th century. The differences between the A. K. Loring edition and the Street & Smith's **Brave & Bold Weekly** edition of *Phil, the Fiddler; or The Story of a Young Street Musician*, a novel Alger originally wrote for **The Student and Schoolmate's** young middle-class readers, show that the early 20th-century editors abridged Alger's descriptions of the middle-class people's charity to highlight the class differences and the importance of industry in an unsympathetic world. It is quite possible that the Street & Smith editors' abridgement played a role in creating Alger as an early-20th century success mythmaker out of a late-19 century reformer.

Phil, the Fiddler is one of many Alger's stories published in **Brave & Bold: A Different Complete Story Every Week**, between Sept. 19, 1903 and Dec. 24, 1904. In general, for Alger's stories, the **Brave & Bold Weekly** editors abridged the secondary episodes to fit the 32-page requirement. These secondary, abridged episodes, as seen in the comparison between the Loring editions and **Brave & Bold** editions, show that the implied audience has significantly changed from the middle-class audience to the working-class audience.

For example, in the original editions, Alger explains in the prefaces his wish to make his middle-class readers aware of the conditions of the poor street children in New York, but the **Brave & Bold Weekly** editors omitted the prefaces and de-emphasized the moralistic color of the stories. Also, the editors often, though not consistently, omitted the passages in which Alger addresses the middle-class audience. Lastly, a significant amount of abridgement occurs to episodes in which an Alger hero encounters middle-class people, for such chance encounters are secondary to the main plot, but show moralistic behavior on the part of the middle-class, who help the less fortunate children.

In other words, the episodes eliminated in Street & Smith's **Brave & Bold** editions include not the

Editor's note: This article is derived from a presentation by Kyoko Amano at the 40th annual Horatio Alger Society convention in DeKalb, Illinois, on May 14, 2004.



"descriptions of the hero's charitable activities," as Gary Scharnhorst claims in *Horatio Alger, Jr.* (143), but rather the descriptions of the middle-class people's charity, like financial assistance and moral guidance. As a result of such editorial decisions to eliminate the episodes concerning the middle-class, the **Brave & Bold** editions give the impression that working-class people and street boys live in a completely separate world from middle-class people. Instead of raising awareness of the existence of less fortunate children on the streets among middle-class readers and encouraging these readers to help the working-class children, Alger in the **Brave & Bold** editions demands efforts, industry, and charity on the street boys and the working-class people's part.

The comparison between the Loring edition and the **Brave & Bold** edition of *Phil, the Fiddler* is a prime example of the editorial changes. For example, in the preface to the Loring edition of *Phil, the Fiddler*, Alger expresses his hope to "excite an active sympathy" by revealing the "hardships and ill treatment of ... wandering musicians" (viii). Alger writes, "My readers will learn with surprise, probably, of the hard life led by these [wandering musician] children, and inhuman treatment which they receive from the speculators who buy them from their

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Cut and Create

(Continued from Page 5)

parents in Italy" (viii).

Compared to the young Italian musicians, Alger explains, Italian children of other occupations, such as bootblacks and newsboys, are "much better off" because they are "the children of resident Italians of poorer class" and the students of the Italian school (viii). It is apparent that Alger assumed that the readers of the Loring edition of *Phil, the Fiddler* were unfamiliar with the life and conditions of the subjects of the book. Alger's preface to *Phil, the Fiddler* may have been anachronistic—the preface was written on April 2, 1872, while the **Brave and Bold** edition was published on March 5, 1904. It was perhaps unnecessary to print Alger's hope to excite middle-class people's compassion toward the exploited children because the audience for the **Brave & Bold** edition was children of a less affluent class than the audience of **The Student and Schoolmate** and the Loring editions.

Not only the preface but also several chapters are missing in the **Brave & Bold** edition of *Phil, the Fiddler*. In the Loring edition, there are 26 chapters in total, but there are only 20 chapters in the **Brave & Bold** edition. Among these six eliminated chapters, four chapters deal with Phil's encounter with middle-class people and describe their charitable actions as if to emphasize the importance of helping each other as human beings, regardless of different classes.¹

For example, in Chapter 2, "Phil and His Protector," Phil stops at a large public school during its noon intermission and plays the violin and sings in the schoolyard upon request of the students. One of the students, Edward Eustis, passes his hat among his friends and helps Phil collect money or whatever the audience can give, encouraging his friends to be liberal. However, when Phil is about to leave the school, a bully steals Phil's apple that Edward's friend has given Phil for his performance, and instigates a fight. Here, Edward comes to rescue Phil.

Because this episode is omitted in the **Brave & Bold** edition, Phil magically has one dollar and twenty cents by one o'clock, when he meets his fellow fiddler, Giacomo, giving the impression to readers that Phil gains money on his own, without facing troubles, without being rescued.

Another example of a deleted episode in which middle-class people's charitable actions are described is Chapter 5, "On the Ferry Boat," in which Phil takes the Fulton Ferry and gains sympathy from a young lady, Florence. Unlike her father, who judges Phil by his ragged clothes and dirty face, she chooses "to be kind to a poor, neglected child" (56) and gives him 25 cents.

Also, in Chapter 8, "A Cold Day," Phil and his friend

Giacomo encounter a middle-class boy dressed in "a thick over coat, and a fur cap drawn over his ears, while his hands were snugly incased in warm gloves" (77). Noticing Phil and Giacomo shivering, the boy gives them a pair of old gloves. Later in the same chapter, Phil and Giacomo walk into a grocery store to warm up, but the store owner tries to chase them out of the store. Seeing the owner's "inhumanity," Mr. Pomeroy, a valuable customer and "a gentleman of prepossessing appearance" (79) urges the owner to let them stay a while, gives them 25 cents each and a piece of advice: if their padrone treats them brutally, they should run away from him and complain to the police (83).

While acknowledging the fact that there are middle-class people unsympathetic to unfortunate children on the streets, Alger in the Loring edition counters the number of hostile middle-class people with equal or greater numbers of compassionate and charitable middle-class people. The **Brave & Bold** edition of *Phil, the Fiddler*, on the other hand, not only omits episodes dealing with the middle-class, but also occasionally adds such summaries as "He [Phil] worked on a ferryboat and in front of barrooms, and *success* attended him," as if to stress Phil's mercantile ability (7; emphasis added). Again, Phil, in the **Brave & Bold** edition appears to be able to collect the amount of money required by the padrone (two dollars per day) all on his own, without middle-class people's assistance.

In addition to chapters 2, 5, and 8, most of Chapter 10, "French's Hotel," is eliminated in the **Brave and Bold** edition of *Phil, the Fiddler*. In this chapter, Phil and Giacomo, cold and fatigued, enter the hotel to rest because they have not collected enough money during the day to avoid the padrone's beating. In the hotel, after playing the fiddle for two young merchants, Giacomo falls asleep, and Phil meets a gentleman with a 10-year-old boy. The conversation between the gentleman and his son regarding Phil's condition seems to show the relationship between Alger and his reader: the gentleman becomes the spokesperson for Alger, and his son becomes an equivalent of Alger's young, middle-class readers.

By asking questions of Phil and talking to his son, comparing the different lifestyles between Phil and his son, the gentleman/Alger instills in his son/the readers that they are fortunate to live with their parents and go to school, and that they are not forced to sit up so late as 11 o'clock at night to avoid the padrone's beating. At the same time, this conversation, along with the episode with Edward Eustis at school, makes Phil aware of children of a different class, who can go to school.

What these eliminated episodes have in common is that Phil meets middle-class adults and children, and they show signs of compassion, sympathy, and humanity. When Phil gets in trouble, middle-class people rescue



The edited version of Alger's *The Erie Train Boy* was published by S&S in *Brave and Bold Weekly* on January 30, 1904.

him. In other words, the Loring edition not only raises the awareness of what Alger called white slavery to the middle-class but also shows how the middle-class can help young Italian musicians in New York in small ways.

Phil is not "a self-made man" in the Loring edition, either. Phil is able to collect enough money to satisfy his padrone and avoid beating because of the charitable actions of the middle-class people. Phil, in the *Brave & Bold* edition, on the other hand, appears to be a self-reliant boy with mercantile ability.

In both the Loring edition and the *Brave & Bold* edition, Phil's final rise occurs when he is adopted as a son of a village doctor at the end of the novel, but the same conclusion gives different impressions of Phil's social rise. Because Phil meets middle-class people who are kind to him numerous times in the Loring edition, the adoption in the Loring edition is presented as if it is likely to happen to children who meet philanthropists on daily basis. The adoption in the Loring edition's conclusion also is the absolute solution to prevent what Alger called white slavery. In the *Brave & Bold* edition, however, the adoption gives the impression that it was mere luck because Phil lives in a world completely separate from his adoptive father/doctor, in a world where

Phil rarely encounters middle-class people. Indeed, in the *Brave & Bold* edition, Phil meets middle class characters only at the beginning when he is playing the violin to a sick boy of his own age and at the end when Phil is adopted by a doctor. Because of the lack of middle-class people's involvement in an effort to improve the conditions of young Italian musicians, Alger's wish is twisted in the *Brave & Bold* edition. Its editors change Phil into a hard-working street musician with a mercantile ability and a good heart, who, by luck, rises socially as a reward.

Through reproduction of Alger's novels written for the genteel-class audience, the *Brave & Bold* editors encouraged the working-class audience to work hard. Using Alger's novels for genteel-class children, the *Brave & Bold* editors created for working-class readers a world separate from the higher classes and misrepresented the Alger heroes as "self-made men," though the Alger heroes always depended on the adult philanthropist for their initial social rise. Also, deleting sections of the novels gave the impression that Alger heroes climb up the social ladder through their industry and luck only, for their chance encounters with the men of higher social status were often omitted. By cutting several episodes from Alger's novels, as seen in the example of *Phil, the Fiddler*, the editors of Street & Smith's *Brave & Bold Weekly* created new Alger heroes who are now most commonly remembered as Alger's "self-made" heroes.

Editor's note: The style of Street & Smith's editing cited by Ms. Amano for *Phil, the Fiddler* is evidenced throughout the 14 Alger stories published in *Brave and Bold Weekly* between Sept. 19, 1903, and Dec. 24, 1904. A complete list of these stories can be found on Page 8.

NOTES

¹ Chapter 14: "Lucia, the Tambourine Girl" describes a tambourine girl from the same village in Italy as Phil, the fiddler. She is hired by another padrone, suggesting that the existence of many other padrones in New York City. Chapter 16: "Mrs. Hoffman's Fashionable Party" is about the article Paul Hoffman fantasizes based on the neighbors getting together the previous night to listen and dance to Phil, the fiddler's violin. It seems that these chapters were eliminated because they are secondary to the main character and plot.

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—, *Phil, the Fiddler; or, The Story of a Young Street Musician* (1872). *Brave and Bold: A Different Complete Story Every Week*. No. 63. New York: Street & Smith, March 5, 1904.

Scharnhorst, Gary, *Horatio Alger, Jr.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980.

Editors and editing practice at Street & Smith

By J. Randolph Cox (PF-598)
Editor, Dime Novel Round-Up

Who were the editors at Street & Smith Corporation, Publishers, as the imprint is phrased on the title pages of the paper books like the Merriwell Series? We know the names of the authors, or at the very least their pseudonyms. We know the titles of the stories they wrote, but we may not know the names of the people who saw to it that the texts were shaped to be readable. These were the editors. A number had begun as writers for the firm and progressed to editorships. Their jobs encompassed a range of duties: they decided which stories would be published, recruited authors for their weeklies, and did whatever was needed to make stories publishable.

The editors not only acquired new stories, usually from individuals who contributed to the publications on such a regular basis they were the equivalent of staff writers, but also cut and revised stories purchased from other publishers to make them fit the requirements of an issue of a new five-cent weekly. A 1902 purchase of material from Norman L. Munro gave Street & Smith an incredible number of stories to be used in some of

their new publications. The editorial staff had their work cut out for them to make the transitions as smooth as possible.

Publications like the **Old Broadbrim Weekly** and its successor the **Young Broadbrim Weekly** were built on material that had appeared 20 years earlier in Munro's **Old Cap. Collier Library**. Each issue was re-designed to showcase the characters of Old Broadbrim and his partner Young Broadbrim. The names of the detectives in the original story were changed to Old and/or Young Broadbrim and transitions inserted when a chapter was cut from the source. In some cases, an entirely new ending to the story was written.

Publications like **Brave and Bold Weekly** (where the Alger stories appeared) were anthology series made up of stories taken from story papers and other five-cent weeklies. The editorial skill needed for such a series was basically one of deciding which chapters to cut from the original source and whether transition sentences needed to be written. It was rare that a new story would be written for such a weekly. An Alger novel like *Adrift in New York* (originally published in the **Family Story Paper**, 1889) containing 78,000 words,

Horatio Alger, Jr.'s stories appearing in **Brave and Bold Weekly**:

The Cash Boy
No. 39, Sept. 19, 1903

Adrift in New York
No. 45, Oct. 31, 1903

Dean Dunham
No. 54, Jan. 2, 1904

Ned Newton
No. 57, Jan. 23, 1904

The Erie Train Boy
No. 58, Jan. 30, 1904

Paul, the Peddler
No. 59, Feb. 6, 1904

The Five-Hundred-Dollar Check
No. 60, Feb. 13, 1904

Phil, the Fiddler
No. 63, March 5, 1904

Slow and Sure
No. 65, March 19, 1904

The Young Acrobat
No. 68, April 9, 1904

Only an Irish Boy
No. 88, Aug. 27, 1904

The Young Outlaw
No. 94, Oct. 8, 1904

Julius, the Street Boy
No. 100, Nov. 19, 1904

Ben Barclay's Courage
(reprint title of *The Store Boy*)
No. 105, Dec. 24, 1904

Source: Bennett, Bob: *Horatio Alger, Jr., A Comprehensive Bibliography*. Mt. Pleasant, Mich. Flying Eagle Publishing Co., 1980.

was condensed for **Brave and Bold Weekly**, No. 45 (1903) to 38,000 words.

For the firm of Street & Smith, some names of editors are known: Thomas Glynn was editor of **Street & Smith's New York Weekly**, the flagship of that publishing firm and the story paper that saw the beginning of the careers of a number of such famous fictional characters as Buffalo Bill, Diamond Dick, Jesse James, and Nick Carter. There is a poignant anecdote about Glynn's last years with Street & Smith. During the last months of the **New York Weekly** in 1915, circulation was so low that only a single copy (made up of material reprinted from earlier issues) was printed and placed on the editor's desk each week. It is said that when Glynn discovered this ruse, he went home and died soon after.

As the publications from Street & Smith became more diverse, there were editors assigned to different divisions: the general magazines (like **Ainslee's**, edited by Richard Duffy; **Smith's**, edited at one time by Theodore Dreiser; and **The Popular Magazine**, edited for much of its run by Charles Agnew MacLean), the genre magazines (like **Detective Story** and **Western Story**, edited by Frank Blackwell), and eventually the character magazines (like **The Shadow**, **Doc Savage**, **Pete Rice**, and **Nick Carter**, edited by John Nanovic). Even the five-cent weeklies that flourished from 1889 to 1915 had their editors. For the most part the identities of these editors are unknown, but research has revealed some of their names, if not their specific functions. Fortunately, there are a few sources of information.

One of the more prolific writers for the five-cent weeklies, William Wallace Cook, was a master of record keeping and saved the letters he received from his editors at Munsey, Tousey and Street & Smith. A study of these in the William Wallace Cook Papers in the New York Public Library makes it possible to piece together an account of the men whose policies shaped the reading of the young people who were the audience for the five-cent weeklies. The other major source of information is Gilbert Patten's autobiography, *Frank Merriwell's "Father"* (published posthumously in 1964).

The first editor whom Patten encountered at Street & Smith was Edward Stratemeyer, then editing **Good News**. This would have been in 1893 or 1894, before Stratemeyer was succeeded by Arthur Dudley Hall. Patten did not have good relations with Stratemeyer, but he did with Hall, and it was Hall who recommended Patten when the publisher was looking for someone to write a new series which became the Frank Merriwell stories in **Tip Top Library** (later re-named **Tip Top Weekly**).

It is unfortunate that we do not know the names of all the editors on **Tip Top Weekly**, or how many there were. Patten mentions Charles Agnew MacLean, "a young newspaperman recently employed to edit my

stories." (203) MacLean appears to have been something of a phenomenon. His name may be found in the Street & Smith Records at Syracuse University as an occasional contributor to a number of the five-cent weeklies.

We can suppose that his work on these publications brought him to the attention of O. G. Smith and led to Smith assigning him to **Tip Top Weekly**. Patten's casual use of dates in his autobiography makes it difficult to determine just when MacLean was editing the Merriwells, but from the context of that section of the autobiography, it would appear to have been shortly before 1904. Patten mentions being sent on a sort of goodwill and research trip with his wife at the time of the Louisiana Territory Exposition at St. Louis in 1904 and having a meeting with MacLean. This would have been just prior to MacLean's editing of **The Popular Magazine**.

Another editor of **Tip Top Weekly** was Frederick Tilney, who later became "a famous specialist at the New York Medical Center." (243). Again, there is no record of just when he was in the editor's chair, but it would appear that he was in charge during the last years Patten was writing the Merriwell stories, 1909-1912. He was succeeded by Gilson Willets, perhaps in 1912. Willets later recruited William Wallace Cook to write for **Tip Top Weekly**.

In 1910, Patten himself became an editor when he agreed to name and edit a new monthly, **Top-Notch Magazine**, and guided it through at least four issues in its five-cent weekly format. He was succeeded by Henry W. Thomas who appears to have been the most disliked editor at Street & Smith. Apparently, he lacked the necessary tact required when dealing with writers.

William Wallace Cook never progressed from being a writer to being an editor. Instead, he wrote stories for Street & Smith on an occasional basis beginning around 1893 with some stories for the **Nick Carter Library**. This was followed by a greater number of stories, mostly for **Log Cabin Library**.

The correspondence from Street & Smith editors in the Cook Papers at the New York Public Library begins with 1899 and continues through 1919. During that period he received editorial direction from several people on the five-cent weeklies. In 1899, he was writing stories for **Diamond Dick, Jr.**, and the correspondence is all signed by George C. Smith, brother of Ormond G. Smith. In 1903, the corresponding editor is Charles Agnew MacLean, who, by 1905, was put in charge of **The Popular Magazine** as Managing Editor.

The following year, Cook received letters from two Street & Smith editors, W. R. Andrews and St. George Rathborne, as well as from George C. Smith. The first two wrote him about stories for the **Paul Jones Weekly**, **The Bowery Boy Library** and **Rough Rider Weekly**. This sug-

(Continued on Page 10)

Editors and editing practice at Street & Smith

(Continued from Page 9)

gests that the same man handled more than one weekly. Smith wrote in regard to two serials for the **New York Weekly**, one about the San Francisco earthquake and fire and the other, a story called "Her Motor Hero."

Rathborne and Smith's letters give an indication of the process of editing and the range of concerns. Rathborne's letters to Cook even included instructions on laying out the pages of his typescripts, the width of the lines as well as the number of lines per page, so that he would come up with the requisite 30,000 words for the story in an individual issue.

Apparently, each submission at the beginning of an assignment was given more than one reading. When Cook was asked to write the "Motor Matt" stories for the new **Motor Stories** weekly, the first reader seemed to find fault with the manuscript of the first story until George C. Smith intervened. After Smith had given it a second reading, he informed Cook that the story was satisfactory as it stood. Smith explained that since the class of material wanted for **Motor Stories** was so different from that Cook had supplied for **Diamond Dick, Jr.**, it was not a certainty that whatever he wrote for the new series was going to be acceptable.

Interestingly enough, it was the use of what were considered out-of-date "boyish expressions" in the new stories that concerned the editors the most. Smith informed Cook that Rathborne was combing the texts of current juvenile fiction in search of examples of modern expletives. Another of Rathborne's responsibilities was notifying writers when weeklies folded: he told Cook to stop writing stories for the **Paul Jones Weekly** as the publisher had decided to cease publication of that weekly.

Rathborne continued to serve as editor for the five-cent weeklies in 1909 and the correspondence from him that year dealt primarily with **Motor Stories** and another problem editors faced. Apparently Cook was submitting his manuscripts so close to the publication date that Rathborne feared what would happen should Cook be taken ill and a new man be assigned to the series. He wanted the material at least two weeks before it was scheduled to be used. Then came the news that **Motor Stories** was to be canceled and Cook was reassigned to **Buffalo Bill Stories**.

In addition to correspondence from Rathborne, Cook received letters from Charles Edward Rich, who appears to have been an editor in Street & Smith's paper book department. The discussion in those letters concerns

Cook's revisions and lengthening of magazine serials for the **New Fiction Library**, which was made up of stories published under Cook's name.

In 1910, Cook was dealing mostly with Henry W. Thomas, who was now editing **Buffalo Bill Stories** and **Nick Carter Weekly**, but by mid-year had taken over **Top-Notch Magazine** from Gilbert Patten, the first editor. Two years later Cook was approached to write for **Tip Top Weekly**, especially the stories about Frank Merriwell, Jr.

A number of the letters are signed George C. Smith, but others have the initials H.W.R. It isn't clear who the "H. W. R." was, since these letters originated in the business department. At the time, Henry W. Ralston, later to become a vice-president with the firm, was only the circulation manager and would hardly have been signing letters dealing with editorial matters. A 1912 letter signed George C. Smith, however, refers to recent correspondence between Cook and a Mr. Rothstein, offering another possibility.

In 1913, the correspondence dealing with the Merriwell assignment is signed by Frank Blackwell. Frank Blackwell was the legendary force behind **Detective Story Magazine** and **Western Story Magazine**, the original genre fiction magazines. Each had begun life as a five-cent weekly: **Detective Story Magazine** was originally **Nick Carter Stories** while **Western Story Magazine** was originally **New Buffalo Bill Weekly**.

In the initial issues of the pulp format of each title, one could find new stories of Nick Carter and reprints of Buffalo Bill stories from the five-cent weekly. Blackwell, of course, was the editorial hand on those weeklies at that time and guided them into becoming pulp magazines. The letters from Blackwell to Cook are quite expansive, running to three pages sometimes, in which Blackwell outlines story ideas. It is Blackwell who suggested to Cook the series of stories about Owen Clancy, which replaced the Merriwell stories in **New Tip Top Weekly**, apparently another of his innovations.

The correspondence relative to the work of editors with William Wallace Cook on the five-cent weeklies ends about there. The last letter (from 1919) concerns the possibility of introducing Dick Merriwell (Uncle Dick) from time to time in the Frank Merriwell, Jr. stories. Blackwell also corrects Cook on his use of words like "smiled," "grinned" or "laughed" in conversation when the phrase is "Hello, old top," grinned young Frank. Blackwell didn't believe you could use those terms in the way Cook did.

The changes in language were reflective of greater changes in publishing patterns. By 1920, the era of the five-cent weekly was definitely over. The new pulp magazines replaced them, and the editors who remained received other assignments.

Workin' on the railroad

Boys' books ride the rails

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

The romantic theme of that old rail gangs' song, "I've been workin' on the railroad, all the live-long day," brings back echoes from all our childhoods, whether at Boy Scout camp or in church-youth gatherings. My father and his brother, George, for example, were accomplished amateur banjo-pickers, and they loved to work up a duet of this old favorite at our annual Thanksgiving gatherings.

But really, was the railroad profession all that romantic? When you think about it, "working on the railroad" was a dangerous, often-thankless profession, in particular the blue-collar jobs on the locomotive or its tender, in the switching yards or roundhouse. In the days of coal and steam power, it was also a dirty profession, with coal dust permeating workers' clothes as well as their lungs.

And the hours were long, too. Trains didn't run on bankers' hours. In the railroads' heyday in the United States from the Civil War era through World War II, trains ran around the clock, visiting nearly every city in America — large and small — as well as many of those small towns of under 2,000. One is the mid-Hudson Valley village of Chatham, N.Y., near where I grew up, which really owed its existence to the fact that it marked the junction of three major rail lines. And we must remember that large U.S. Midwestern cities such as Chicago, St. Louis and Kansas City became centers of commerce and industry, thanks in large part to being major railroad hubs.

So, railroading would be a natural theme for boys' books, right?

Wrong.

Even with all its romantic allure, there were precious few books for young people written in the first half of the 20th century with railroading as a setting.

Part of it has to do with timing, of course. By the time hard-cover series books as we know them today gained increased popularity shortly after the turn of the century, railroads began to have some competition, both in the commercial marketplace and for the



RALPH STEPPED OVER HIS RECUMBENT COMPANION
AND PLACED HIS HAND ON THE LEVER. — Page 42.

Ralph of the Round House

attention of young readers' minds.

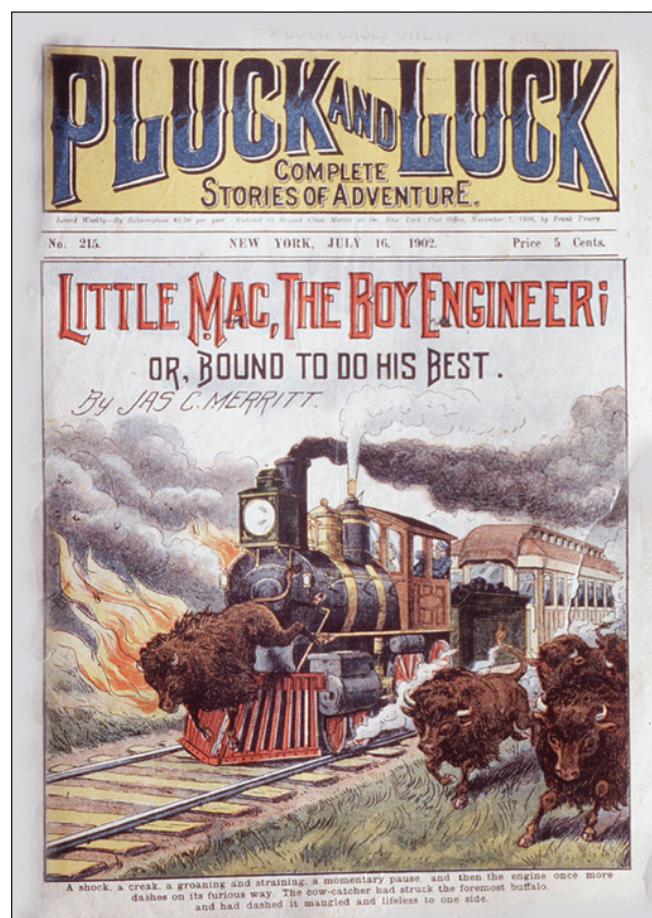
Shortly after World War I, aviation entered the commercial field, and motorized transportation (automobiles, motorcycles and trucks) began to find their places on an ever-expanding national highway system.

If you look at the topical categories of boys' books, you'll find an abundance of school and sports stories (by Ralph Henry Barbour, Albertus T. Dudley and William Heyliger, to name just three authors); various Boy Scouts series, mystery stories (Hardy Boys, Hal Keen, Ken Holt, etc.), humorous youth adventures (the Leo Edwards books, Seckatary Hawkins, Mark Tidd), as well as stories involving the recent invention of wireless radio, written by such authors as Lewis E. Theiss.

When it came to adventures involving various modes of transportation, aviation (the latest "new thing") became dominant in series books. Remember, Tom Swift started out with a motorcycle, which he didn't build himself but

(Continued on Page 12)

Editor's note: This article was first presented as a paper at the 32nd annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on March 16, 2002.



Workin' on the railroad

(Continued from Page 11)

acquired from the eccentric Wakefield Damon, who had tried to climb a tree with it. However, Tom soon was creating his own inventions, with various forms of air transportation starting to dominate this ever-popular series, which ran from 1910 to 1941.

So, even though railroads were to remain the dominant form of public transportation until the early 1950s when the Interstate Highway System and commercial jet travel came into being, the railroads still were barely a blip on the radar screen of boys' books.

The dime-novel precursors

Like most subject areas of boys' books as they evolved, railroading as a setting and subject area dates back to the dime-novel era, which flourished in the last three decades of the 19th century and remained popular during the opening years of the 20th century.

Here are a couple of examples:

"Little Mac, the Boy Engineer" — in this incarnation the story is authored by "James C. Merritt," in Frank Tousey's **Pluck and Luck: Complete Stories of Adventure**, Issue

No. 215, a 32-pager dated July 16, 1902. This story was originally published under the same title in **Boys of New York**, Nos. 61-68, between Oct. 16 and Dec. 4, 1876, by Jacob Ralph Abarbanell (1852-1922), under one of his best-known pseudonyms, "Ralph Royal." According to J. Randolph Cox (PF-598), "James C. Merritt" was a house name used for various railroad stories reprinted in **Pluck and Luck**.

I love the caption used for the full-color illustration used on this cover (at left):

A shock, a creak, a groaning and straining, a momentary pause and then the engine once more dashes on its furious way. The cow-catcher had struck the foremost buffalo, and had dashed it mangled and lifeless to one side.

I am reminded of the American Cruelty Society's disclaimer at the end of most current movies, which states, "No animals were harmed during the making of this picture," and note that this ethic certainly did not apply during the dime-novel era!

"Engineer Ned; or, Running the Night Express" — This one was published in Frank Tousey's **All Around Weekly**, No. 1, dated Oct. 29, 1909, with the author credited as "Tom Burns." This story was originally published as "Night Express Ned; or, Running the Night Express," by "Frank Forrest," in **Boys of New York Pocket Library**, No. 46, on Oct. 1, 1881. "Frank Forrest" was a house name used on several types of stories including school and railroad stories. The real author was likely Francis Worcester Doughty (1850-1917), who, according to Cox, "was one of the most prolific writers on Frank Tousey's staff, specializing in detective stories" (*The Dime Novel Companion*, Page 89).

But once again, despite these examples, railroad stories were not one of the more prominent subjects of dime novels, although they certainly made a presence. According to Cox, the only dime novel series primarily devoted to railroad stories was Street & Smith's **Comrades: Tales of Adventure for Young Folks** (March 31, 1900-Aug. 10, 1901). This 32-page publication ran for 72 issues, merging with Street & Smith's **Do and Dare Weekly**, starting with issue No. 60 on May 18, 1901.

Although the stories were mainly about railroading, several issues strayed off into adventures about mining camps in Colorado and California, and still later, into baseball. Among the authors for this magazine (and the man primarily responsible for the railroading stories) was Weldon J. Cobb, whom we'll discuss in more detail later. For the railroad stories, the main character is Tom Wright, who starts out as a lowly clerk and eventually becomes an engineer and ultimately is elevated to division superintendent of several railways (*The Dime Novel Companion*, Page 63).



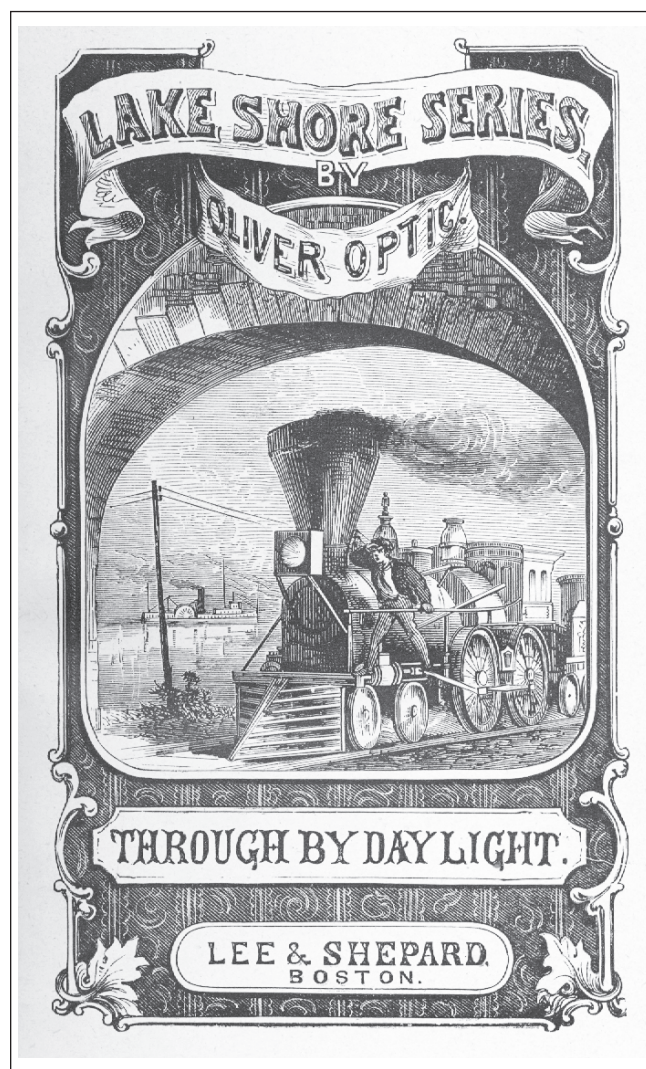
Transition to hard-cover books

There are examples of railroad stories originating as serializations that managed to make it into hard-cover form. Let's look at a few examples:

"Oliver Optic" (William T. Adams) proudly carries the banner for the transition period with his stories for young people, published serially in his own magazine, with a great number of them produced in hard-cover by Boston's Lee & Shepard, Adams' main publisher. Of special note in terms of a railroading theme is the **Lake Shore Series**.

Like most of William T. Adams' output, these stories are extremely well written, make for highly enjoyable reading, and despite their copyright dates going back to the late 1860s, less-expensive reprints are relatively easy to obtain today. The first title in the **Lake Shore Series**, "Through by Daylight," was serialized in Adams' own **Oliver Optic's Magazine: Our Boys and Girls**, beginning Oct. 3, 1868 (see illustration, above).

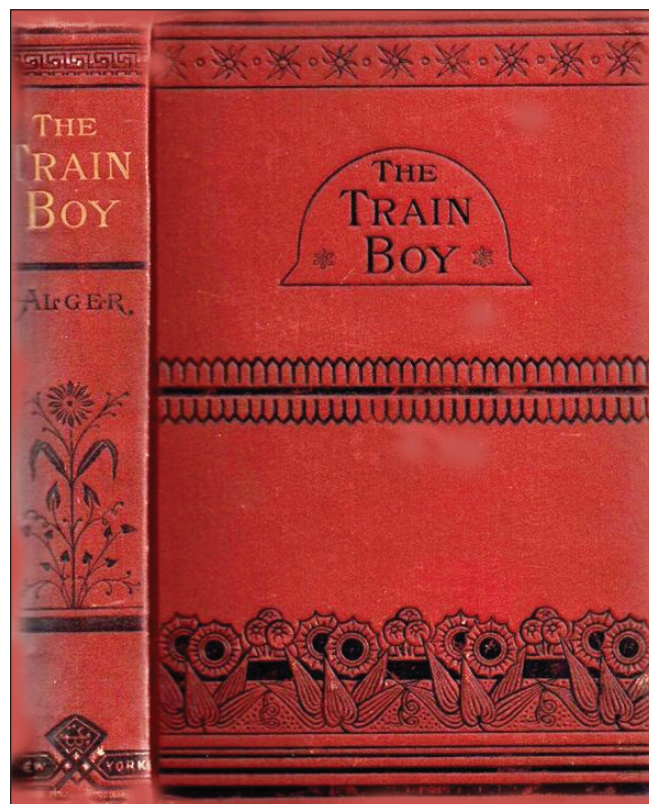
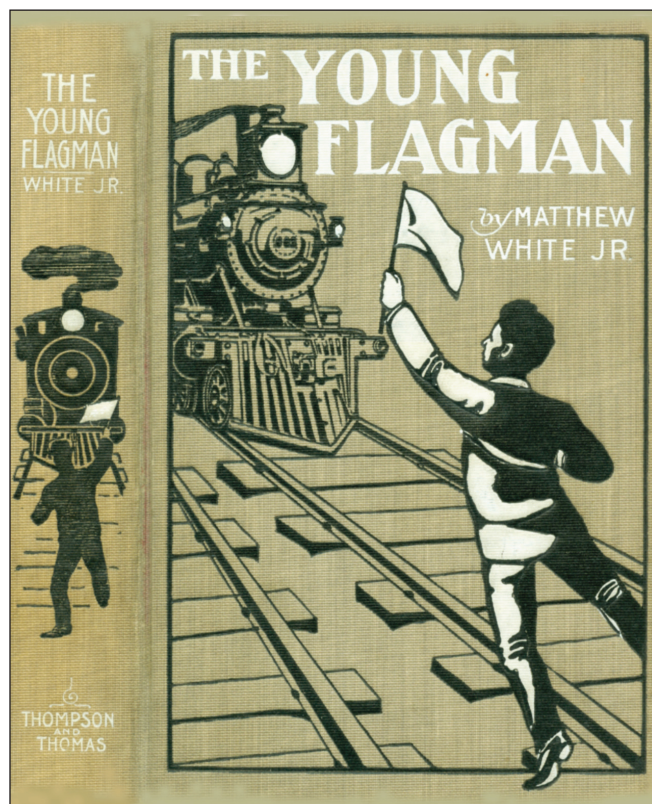
The subsequent five titles of the **Lake Shore Series**



followed quickly, the series ending with the final chapters of "Bear and Forebear" on March 26, 1870. In very short order, the **Lake Shore Series** was published in book form by Lee & Shepard of Boston, which also produced the magazine, making for a rapid transition to hard cover (see list on Page 20). Over the years, reprint editions were issued by L&S and its successor, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, along with Street & Smith and other publishers, including S&S's **New Medal Library** and **Alger Series** paperbacks (first series, Nos. 147-152). This reprint history was used for various "Oliver Optic" series.

In many ways, William T. Adams, whose *The Boat Club* was published by Brown, Bazin & Co. of Boston (copyright Oct. 5, 1854), may be considered the father of the popular series book as we have come to know it, and although Adams wrote adventures on numerous themes, the fact that the **Lake Shore Series** contained stories primarily with a railroad setting makes the author

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Workin' on the railroad

(Continued from Page 13)

a key contributor to the theme of this article.

Another author most worthy of attention is Matthew White, Jr. (1857-1940), who was a prominent member of Frank A. Munsey's organization for about 40 years (1887-1927), including editor of **Golden Argosy** and dramatic editor of **Munsey's Magazine**.

One of White's best-known "success stories" with a railroad theme was "The Young Flagman, or The Triumphs of a Boy Railroader," which was published as a serial in **Argosy** between Nov. 29, 1890 and Feb. 14, 1891, and may have even appeared earlier in **Munsey's Magazine**. Of special interest is that this was among the first post-Optic railroad-themed books to appear in hard cover, with Chicago publisher Thompson & Thomas producing *The Young Flagman* in a very attractive edition (above) in 1902, with reissues by Thompson & Thomas and M.A. Donohue under the alternate title *The Young Railroader, or The Triumphs of a Young Flagman*.

White was among several authors whose serial stories with a railroading theme popped up around 1902 in hard-cover form in Street & Smith's (and later, David McKay's) **Boys' Own Library**, also appearing (1899-1916) in "thick" paperback format in Street & Smith's **Medal Library** and its related successors.

One prominent example is White's *The Tour of a Private Car*, which first appeared in Frank A. Munsey's **Argosy** between Feb. 15-May 3, 1890, and ended up, as mentioned above, in Street & Smith's **Medal Library** and **Boys' Own Library**.

Horatio Alger, Jr., also deserves mention, although his two books with "train" in the title are not involved with the "coal and steam" aspect of railroading. Both of Alger's heroes, Paul Palmer in *The Train Boy*, and Fred Fenton in *The Erie Train Boy*, are as the titles state, "train boys," youthful concessionaires working aboard passenger trains, selling newspapers, magazines and other items for the enjoyment of the riding public. They are not engineers, switch-tower operators or members of rail gangs — white-collar, rather than blue-collar.

The first of these books, *The Train Boy*, was copyrighted in hard cover by G.W. Carleton & Co. in 1883, this first edition (above) one of the rarest of all Algers among collectors. The story first appeared as a serial in **New York Weekly**, a Street & Smith publication, between Nov. 20, 1882, and Feb. 19, 1883 (Vol. 38, Nos. 9-22). Still later, the story reappeared as a serial under the title "Plucky Paul Palmer" in S&S's **Good News**, from Aug. 29-Nov. 21, 1891. (Vol. 3, Nos. 69-81).

The other prominent Alger story is *The Erie Train Boy*, whose first appearance was as a serial in Frank A. Munsey's **Golden Argosy**, between Jan. 4 and March 29,

1890 (Vol. 9, Nos. 370-382). Its first collated "thick edition" appeared in the U.S. Book Company's **Leather-Clad Tales of Adventure and Romance**, selling for 25 cents. *The Erie Train Boy* first appeared in hard-cover form in American Publishers Corp's **Berkeley Series**, and subsequently in the **S&S Medal Library** (soft-cover) and **Boys' Own Library** (hard-cover) editions.

Edward S. Ellis also wrote several railroading stories, two of the best-known *Arthur Helmuth of the H. and N. C. Railway*; and *Check Number 2134*. *Arthur Helmuth* first appeared as a serial in **Golden Argosy**, while *Check Number 2134* first appeared in S&S's **Good News**, before both wound up reprinted in the **Medal Library** and related S&S soft-cover "thick" editions, as well as the hard-cover **Boys' Own Library**.

Series books arrive at the station

So much for the transition period. We now turn to boys' series books with a railroading theme, few as they are in comparison with books inspired by the great new world of aviation. There are book collectors who specialize in aviation-related series books, and have a whole wall filled with them. If they had chosen railroading, their collecting task would be a lot easier: one or two shelves at most!

Before delving into the books themselves, let's categorize them as follows:

A: Books with a railroading theme, but not the subject of entire series.

A very famous example is *Tom Swift and his Electric Locomotive*. It's the only title in the Stratemeyer Syndicate's **Tom Swift Series** with a railroad element in the title, although one would be hard-pressed to categorize this a "railroading" book. For young Tom, his "two miles a minute on the rails" electric locomotive is just another in his long list of inventions. So that's why *Tom Swift and his Electric Locomotive* lies on the fringe of the main topic of this article.

However, this category has several examples that fit the description more ideally.

One of the earliest series involving railroading is Kirk Munroe's **Rail and Water Series**, published by G.P.

Putnam's Sons between 1890 and 1893. The third of the four titles, *Cab and Caboose: The Story of a Railroad Boy* (1892) describes the adventures of young Rodman Ray "Railroad" Blake, who in the opening two chapters wins the five-mile Railroad Cup bicycle race over bitter rival Snyder "Cider Apples" Appleby, who, after finishing third, accuses Rod of sabotaging the wheel bearings of Snyder's bike by tainting the oil cup with emery sand.

Rod goes on to work for the New York and Western Railroad (sponsor of the bike race), and has many of the thrills and adventures typical of boys' books. The main characters include Brakeman Joe and Conductor Tobin, and the plot involves stolen diamonds (of which Rod is wrongly accused), and the inevitable train-wreck finale. The aforementioned bully, Snyder Appleby, is mortally injured, but he finds the time to confess to Rod (who had pulled him from the wreckage) that Rod had won the

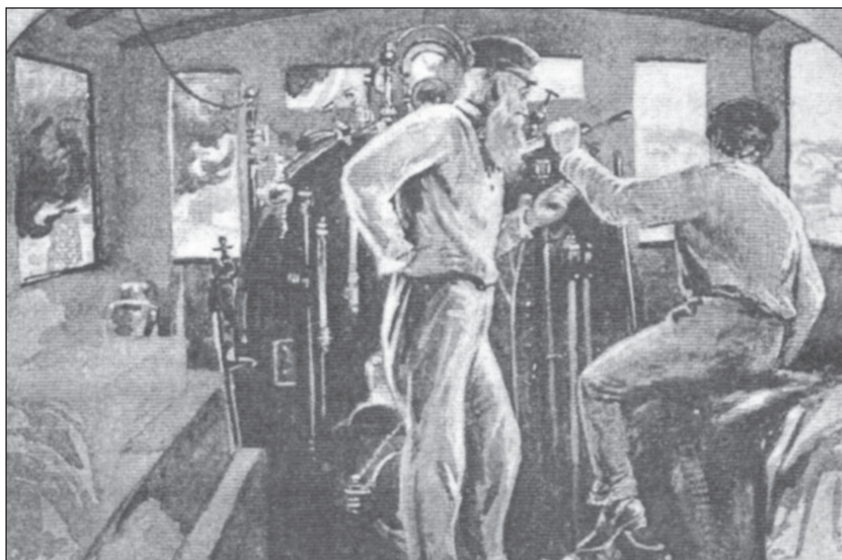
Railroad Cup race fair and square. "I put the emery in my wheel myself. Can you forgive..." and then he dies, with Rod leading the teary-eyed mourners.

Another important example is *Steve and the Steam Engine* (1921), the second title in the **Invention Series** by Sara Ware Bassett (born in 1872), the six volumes published by Little, Brown and Company between 1920

and 1925. The titles of this series all are alliterative: *Paul and the Printing Press*, *Ted and the Telephone*, *Walter and the Wireless*, *Carl and the Cotton Gin* and *Christopher and the Clockmakers* are the others.

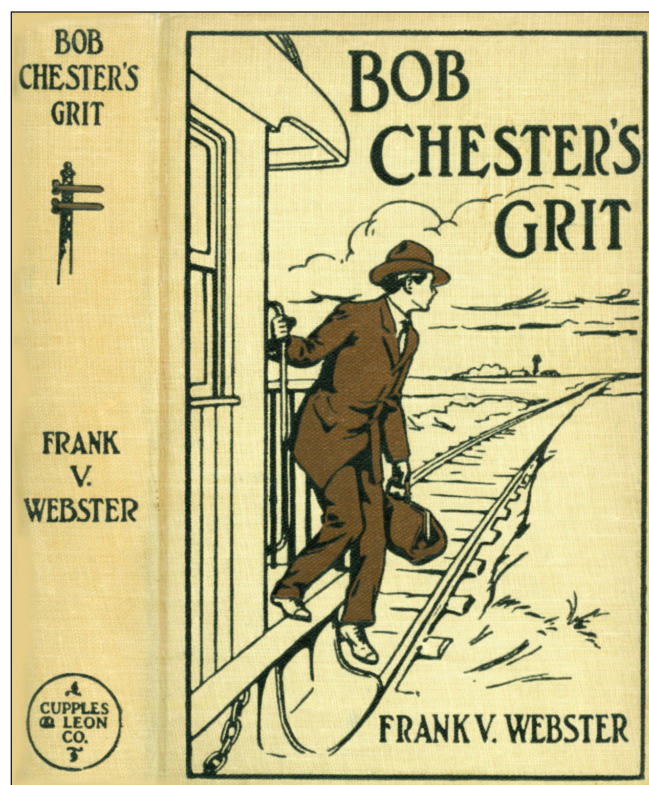
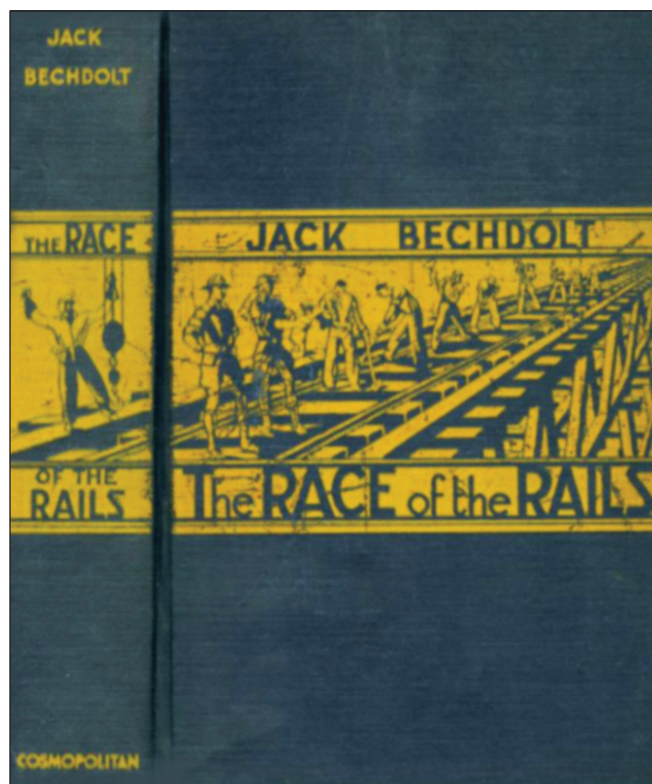
In *Steve and the Steam Engine*, the book's young hero, Steve Tolman, the son of a railroad man, gets into trouble over a lost pocketbook, which causes him to become estranged from his father. Steve befriends a steamboatman and learns about the mechanics of steam engines, as well as a history of railroading. At the book's climax, Steve almost drowns after falling through thin ice while skating but is saved by his father, who forgives him for earlier indiscretions.

Another good example is *The Race of the Rails* (1931) by Jack Bechdolt, published by Cosmopolitan as part of the
(Continued on Page 16)



ROD IS ALLOWED TO HANDLE THE THROTTLE. — Page 232.

Cab and Caboose: The Story of a Railroad Boy



Workin' on the railroad

(Continued from Page 15)

five-volume **Barrow Brothers Series**. In this story, really a straight adventure story rather than a strict railroad career story, Bob and Paul Barrow and their new friend and colleague Dick Carden head north from Seattle to Alaska, where, under the direction of railroad-builder George Aiken, they help lay the tracks for one of two competing rail lines between Prince William Sound and a newly discovered inland copper mine beyond the Chugach Mountains.

"Tie those two points up with rails, so the copper ore can get to market, and you've got a business worth millions," says Aiken, as they head north on the steam ship San Juan. Along the way, they are confronted with several dastardly acts by persons working for the rival railroad, before the boys and their crew overcome long odds and triumph in the end.

Another example, closer to the already-cited *Tom Swift and his Electric Locomotive*, can be found in the long-running **Hardy Boys Series** — *The Mystery of the Flying Express*. First published in 1941, this is the 20th volume in this long-running Stratemeyer Syndicate series. But make no mistake, this is no "railroad story." It is a typical Hardy Boys adventure, part of it set on a train which, predictably, wrecks in true cliff-hanger fashion:

At that instant there came a terrific jolt, then a crash that hurled both boys over the back of the seat ahead of them and out into the aisle. At once a chorus of hideous screams sounded on all sides! (Page 166)

A "road to success"-type series covering 25 volumes, yet not one book solely devoted to railroading? Yes, that happens with the Stratemeyer Syndicate's **Webster Series**. You would think a railroading book would have been a natural part of this Alger-type series, but no. The closest we get is *Bob Chester's Grit*, volume 13 in the series, published by Cupples & Leon in 1911. The dust jacket even shows a boy (presumably Bob Chester) at the throttle of a speeding steam locomotive. But the story only touches on railroading, with country-boy Bob Chester accused of a trumped-up swindle in the big city of New York. Subsequently, Bob heads West via the Grand Pacific Railroad to Chicago, and then travels on to Oklahoma to make his career as a cowboy.

Shortly after boarding the train, Bob is befriended by railroad magnate Horace Perkins, who helps him financially. After leaving Chicago, Bob boards a freight train, and through a strange series of events is invited to man the controls in the locomotive cab. He later foils a holdup, joins the train crew as a "temp," and eventually arrives at the ranch.

While there's railroading aplenty, this is more of a "road story" than a career story about railroads.

B: Books published after 1900 in which railroading is the theme of the entire series.

Now, we get to series exclusively devoted to railroading. And, this list is a short one — just *two* series.

Ralph (Railroad) Series

By “Allen Chapman” (Stratemeyer Syndicate house name)

By far the most widely known, and the first under consideration in this discussion is the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s well-known **Ralph Series**, alternatively known to collectors as **The Railroad Series** (the official title as marketed by the Syndicate).

This 10-volume series was published between 1907 and 1928, the first two titles copyrighted by The Mershon Company and the rest by Grosset & Dunlap.

James D. Keeline (PF-898) has kindly provided the authors behind these 10 volumes, from information obtained from the Beinecke Collection at Yale University and the Stratemeyer records collection at the New York Public Library: Volumes 1 through 5 were written by noted dime novelist Weldon J. Cobb, Volumes 6 and 7 by W. Bert Foster, Volume 8 by John W. Duffield, Volume 9 by Roger C. Garis and Volume 10 by J. F. Carter. One of the reasons for so many writers is the 21-year span of this series.

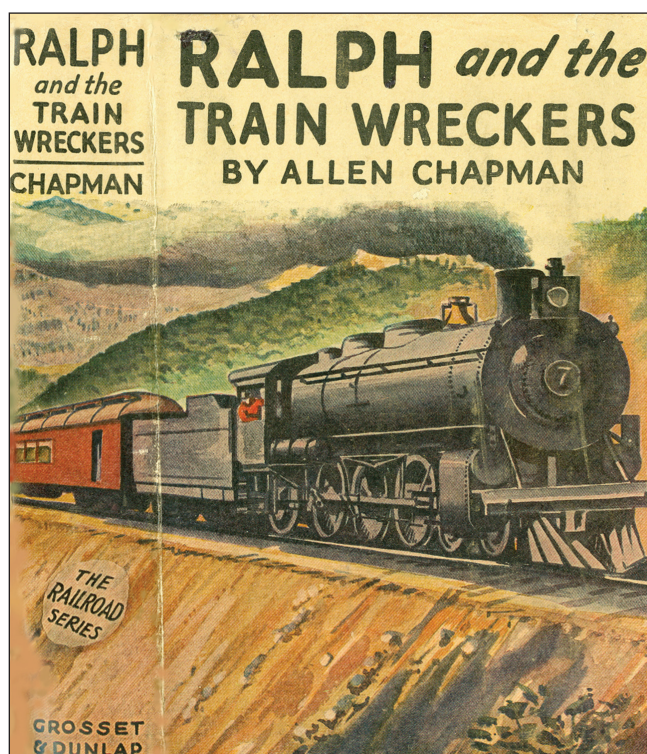
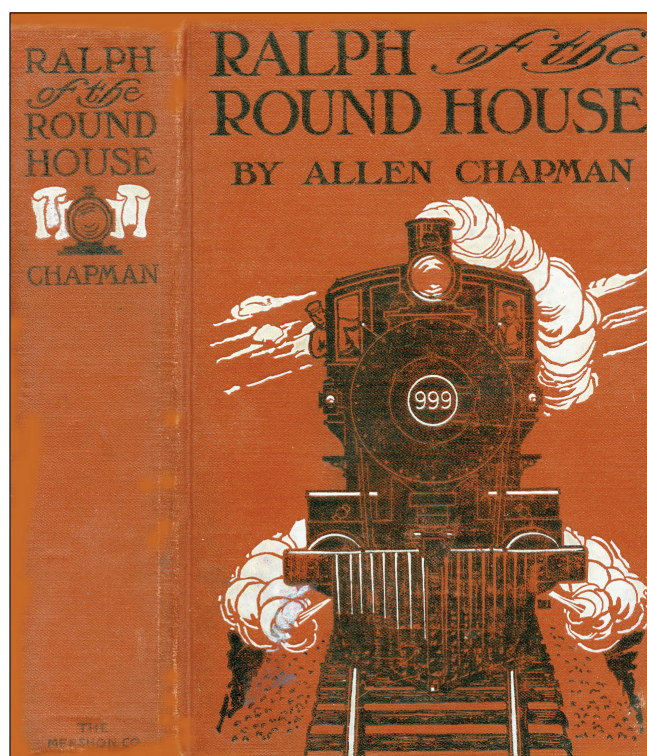
Weldon J. Cobb (1849-1922) was a Chicago newspaperman who became a dime novel writer for Street & Smith in New York City, where he likely met Edward Stratemeyer in the mid-1890s when Stratemeyer was an editor for S&S. Cobb most likely inherited his love for railroading from his family, which was involved in building the trains used on the Illinois Central Railroad (*The Dime Novel Companion*, Page 60).

Cobb, along with Howard R. Garis, was among the first authors hired by Edward Stratemeyer to write for the Stratemeyer Syndicate, which was formed in 1905. It is believed Cobb developed the Ralph Fairfield character from his Tom Wright serials, published in Street & Smith’s **Comrades** in 1900-01 (discussed above).

Walter Bertram Foster (1869-1929) was also a dime novel writer who met Stratemeyer early on, and is credited with authorship of many volumes in several of the Syndicate’s series, including early titles in the **Ruth Fielding Series** under the “Alice B. Emerson” house name. Foster also authored numerous books under his own name for such publishers as Penn and Donohue, including the latter’s **Clint Webb Series** in 1913-14.

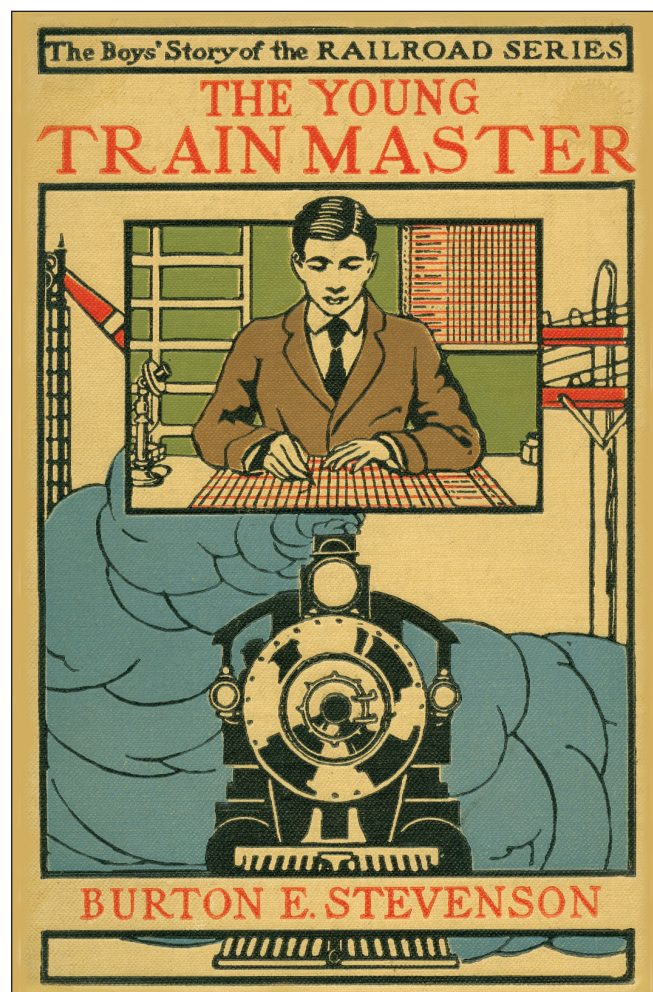
John W. Duffield is credited with the Syndicate’s **Radio Boys Series** (“Allen Chapman”) and one of the later volumes in the **Ted Scott Flying Stories**, among his work for Stratemeyer. His own name appears on the eight-volume **Bert Wilson Series** published by Sully & Kleinteich in 1913-14.

Roger C. Garis (1901-1967) was the son of Howard R. Garis, the major contributing author to the Stratemeyer



Syndicate during its formative years. Roger wrote a small number of books for the Syndicate, as well as the non-Syndicate **Outboard Boys Series** (4 volumes, 1933-34) for

(Continued on Page 18)



Workin' on the railroad

(Continued from Page 17)

A.L. Burt. His biography of Howard Garis, *My Father Was Uncle Wiggily*, was published by McGraw-Hill in 1966.

I wish I could fully endorse the **Ralph (Railroad) Series** as an ideal example of a "railroad career series," but I can't. There is nuts-and-bolts railroading to be found in these books, to be sure. They are well-crafted Syndicate-style mystery adventures with the requisite cliff-hangers at the ends of chapters, along with Syndicate "bad guys" and such. Yet, they are quite fun to read. Ralph Fairbanks, our hero, is full of energy, and his adventures make us keep turning the pages at a rapid rate. While Ralph may not in reality be "a full-fledged railroader, young as he was," as stated at the beginning of Chapter 2 of *Ralph in the Switch Tower*, he still gets to apply his railroading skills while also playing the role of an early Hardy Boys-style detective. Also, periodic train wrecks and natural catastrophes occur throughout the series to keep the young readers' blood at full boil.

Overall, this is an enjoyable series, and there is just

enough in the books about railroading to keep us on track (pun intended). These books sold reasonably well in their day, thanks in part to the high pedigree of the several authors involved. It is interesting to note that there was a seven-year hiatus between volumes 5 and 6, and with the appearance of the latter title in 1918, Edward Stratemeyer (as he did with several of his ongoing series at the time) brought World War I into the picture to keep the story relevant with current events.

The Boys' Story of the Railroad Series By Burton E. Stevenson

This four-volume series was published by L.C. Page of Boston between 1905 and 1912. It is largely unknown today, but it is a series that places railroading front and center, yet is filled with plenty of adventure, well-crafted by an author who wrote no other juvenile series. If you check American Book Exchange and keyword the author's name, Burton Egbert Stevenson (1872-1962), you will more likely find titles such as *Home Book of the Verse: American and English, 1580-1920*, of which he was editor. Incidentally, a non-series youth adventure written by Stevenson, *Tommy Remington's Battle*, is included as Vol. 59 in Grosset & Dunlap's **Every Boys' Library, Boy Scout Edition** publisher's series.



Burton E. Stevenson

Reading *The Boys' Story of the Railroad Series*, it's a shame we don't have more than the four volumes. Burton Stevenson, whose major literary output was aimed at the adult market, was a fine writer, and he isn't afraid to take chances.

For example, in a typical Alger success story, Chapter 1 opens with our young hero, whether he be Ragged Dick, Phil the Fiddler or Mark the Match Boy, and all we learn is that he is an orphan, likely having never met his father, often left to fend for himself on the streets of New York or elsewhere. These heroes learn to survive and succeed.

Stevenson, however, decided to take a harder-edged approach. In the opening chapter of *The Young Apprentice*, our 15-year-old hero-to-be, Jim Anderson, is seated at the dinner table eagerly awaiting his father's return home from a day's work in the nearby railroad yards.

The chapter does a nice job introducing us to Jim's family, and how his parents have raised him under difficult economic conditions, even to the point of their living in a converted farm house that had been condemned years before because it lay in the new railroad's right of way. Part of the house was removed to obtain clearance from the newly laid tracks, and the Andersons moved in.

While working at the table on a model steam engine he had built, young Jim is having a discussion with his

mother on why school courses such as Latin, French, Geology and Astronomy are a waste of time, "just like a lot of useless lumber cluttering up my head."

What Jim wants to study is mechanics, a course not offered at the local high school, but his parents know the disadvantages of joining the workforce at a young age without a formal education. "She knew from her husband's experience how hard and depressing the battle was."

But Mr. Anderson is not home at his accustomed 6 o'clock. An hour later, she decides to serve her son dinner when she hears footsteps outside the door.

"There he is now," she said. But the door did not open. Instead, someone knocks.

When she answers the door, she finds an ill-at-ease railroader who identifies himself as Moore, the freight-house superintendent. Moments later, she hears the ultimate tragic news: there had been an accident in the yards, and her husband had been the victim:

"Tell me," she said; and when the visitor hesitated, his own face white, she said again, "Tell me — the whole truth — that's best and kindest."

"Perhaps you're right, Mrs. Anderson," Moore agreed, in a low voice. "Yes — he's dead. He stepped right in front of a cut of cars as he started home from work, and was instantly killed."

By the second page of the following chapter, young Jim, still grieving, tells his mother in a clear tone:

"Well, mother," he said. "I've been thinking it over, and there's no two ways about it. I've got to go to work."

"Do you think so, dear?" she asked, and then, as she looked at him, she saw that, even in these few days, his face had gained a new expression. It was more serious, more thoughtful. With a little pang, she realized that already her boy was ceasing to be a boy and was becoming a man.

Burton Egbert Stevenson was born Nov. 9, 1872, in Chillicothe, Ohio, attended public schools there, delivered newspapers as a boy, and at age 12, set up his own printing office and started his own amateur newspaper, which he published through high school.

Stevenson attended Princeton University, paying his own way by setting type in a print shop, as well as working as a correspondent for the **New York Tribune** and the United Press wire service.

After his junior year at Princeton, he returned to Chillicothe, was offered a full-time job on the local newspaper and never returned to college. He married Elizabeth Shepherd Butler in 1895.

During World War I, Stevenson was instrumental in organizing a nationwide appeal for books to be sent to our servicemen overseas. More than two million books were donated to the war effort. Stevenson spent the latter



war years in Paris as European director of the Library War Service. During that time he set up the American Library in Paris, which acted as a source of information about the United States for French citizens.

Other railroad-themed boys' books

There are also several more-obscure books, either part of a non-railroad-themed series, or "single" titles. The list on Page 20 offers a selection of these, as well as all the books discussed in this article.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to J. Randolph Cox (PF-598) for his detailed background on railroad themes in dime novels, with additional information from Cox's *The Dime Novel Companion* (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000).

Also, sincere thanks to James D. Keeline (PF-898) for providing the list of authors for the **Ralph (Railroad) Series**; and to Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879) for his research and detailed list of lesser-known railroad-related books.

The biographical information on Burton E. Stevenson was obtained from *Twentieth Century Authors* (Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, eds.). New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1942.

Boys' railroading books — a selected list

The Lake Shore Series

By "Oliver Optic" (William T. Adams)

1. *Through by Daylight; or, The Young Engineer of the Lake Shore Railroad*
Lee & Shepard, 1869 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 4, #92-104, Oct. 3-Dec. 26, 1868)
2. *Lightning Express; or, The Rival Academies*
Lee & Shepard, 1869 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 5, #105-117, Jan. 2-March 27, 1869)
3. *On Time; or, The Young Captain of the Ucayga Steamer*
Lee & Shepard, 1869 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 5, #118-130, April 3-June 26, 1869)
4. *Switch Off; or, The War of the Students*
Lee & Shepard, 1869 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 6, #131-143, July 3-Sept. 24, 1869)
5. *Brake Up; or, The Young Peacemakers*
Lee & Shepard, 1870 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 6, #144-156, Oct. 2, Dec. 25, 1869)
6. *Bear and Forebear; or, The Young Skipper of Lake Ucayga*
Lee & Shepard, 1870 (originally published in Our Boys and Girls,
Vol. 7, #157-159, Jan. 1-March 26, 1870)

Ralph (Railroad) Series

By "Allen Chapman" (Stratemeyer Syndicate house name)

1. *Ralph of the Round House; or, Bound to Become a Railroad Man*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1907
2. *Ralph in the Switch Tower; or, Clearing the Track*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1907
3. *Ralph on the Engine; or, The Young Fireman of the Limited Mail*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1909
4. *Ralph on the Overland Express; or, The Trials and Triumphs
of a Young Engineer*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1910
5. *Ralph, the Train Dispatcher; or, The Mystery of the Pay Car*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1911
6. *Ralph on the Army Train; or, the Young Railroaders's Most Daring Exploit*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1918
7. *Ralph on the Midnight Flyer; or, The Wreck at Shadow Valley*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1923
8. *Ralph and the Missing Mail Pouch; or, The Stolen Government Bonds*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1924
9. *Ralph on the Mountain Division; or, Fighting Both Flame and Flood*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1927
10. *Ralph and the Train Wreckers; or, the Secret of the Blue Freight Cars*
Grosset & Dunlap, 1928

The Boys' Story of the Railroad Series

By Burton E. Stevenson

1. *The Young Section Hand; or, the Adventures of Allan West*
L.C. Page & Co., 1905
2. *The Young Train Dispatcher*
L.C. Page & Co., 1907
3. *The Young Train Master*
L.C. Page & Co., 1909
4. *The Young Apprentice; or, Allan West's Chum*
L.C. Page & Co., 1912

Series books, railroading not subject of entire series (only the appropriate title listed):

Rail and Water Series — by Kirk Munroe

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-92 (4 volumes)

3. *Cab and Caboose; or, The Story of a Railroad Boy* 1892

Boys of Business/Boys of Pluck Series — by "Allen Chapman"

Cupples & Leon, 1906-11 (5 volumes)

1. *The Young Express Agent* 1906

Invention Series — by Sara Ware Bassett

Little, Brown & Co., 1920-25 (6 volumes)

2. *Steve and the Steam Engine* 1921

Barrow Brothers Series — by Jack Becholdt

Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1931 (5 volumes)

3. *The Race of the Rails* 1931

Tom Swift Series — by "Victor Appleton"

Grosset & Dunlap, 1910-35 (38 volumes)

25. *Tom Swift and his Electric Locomotive* 1922

Roy Stover Series — by "Philip A. Bartlett"

Barse & Co., Grosset & Dunlap, 1929-34 (4 volumes)

2. *The Mystery of the Snowbound Express* 1929

Hardy Boys Series — by "Franklin W. Dixon"

Grosset & Dunlap, 1927-79 (58 volumes)*

20. *The Mystery of the Flying Express* 1941

* Only the titles published by Grosset & Dunlap

Non-series titles, first published as books or derived from dime novels or other serializations:

Horatio Alger, Jr. (first book editions):

- The Train Boy* G.W. Carleton & Co. 1883
The Erie Train Boy U.S. Book Co. 1890

William O. Stoddard

- The Railroad Cut* W.A. Wilde 1895
(Short story, in book of same title)

Matthew White, Jr. (first book editions):

- The Young Flagman* Thompson & Thomas 1902
Tour of a Private Car Street & Smith 1902

Edward S. Ellis (first book editions):

- The P. Q. & G.* Dana Estes & Co. 1898
Arthur Helmuth of the H. and N.C. Rwy. Street & Smith 1902
Check Number 2134 Street & Smith 1902

Victor St. Clair (George Waldo Browne; first book edition):

- From Switch to Lever* Street & Smith 1902

Alvah Milton Kerr

- Young Heroes of Wire and Rail* Lee & Shepard 1903
(Short stories from various periodicals)

Walter Palmer

- The Young Switch-Tender* McLoughlin Brothers 1906

F. Lovell Coombs

- The Young Railroaders* Century Co. 1910

Graham M. Dean

- Gleaming Rails* D. Appleton & Co. 1930