



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 – 1899

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

VOLUME XLIII

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2005

NUMBER 5

A new short story by Harry Castlemon

-- See Page 5



More from Ralph Gardner ...
'The rarest of the fabulous Algers'

-- See Page 9



A boy's life

Tom, Huck, Jerry and Poppy

-- See Page 12

President's column

Wow!!! the holidays are over at last, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Oops, I mean the *Holiday Season* is over. I don't think so! It is *Christmas* and that is that! I am so tired of the "minority" around the U.S.A. trying to dictate to the majority that we are to leave out Merry, Santa and God and everything that makes us the U.S.A. THIS IS WHAT WE STAND FOR! Most of the time, I don't say a whole lot about these things, but now I feel that it is time for the majority of us to start speaking out to the minority and tell them if they do not like it here, feel free to leave for wherever. They really don't have to stay, in fact most of us really would like them to stand back and keep their thoughts to themselves. Because we are a "FREE" society, they (the minority) are able to practice anything they wish, without anyone bothering them, which most of them could not do in their home countries. The ACLU should try minding their own business, too!!!

It is cold in Michigan and we've had a little snow. Prior to the holidays, I was up hunting, without any success. I did see some deer, but every year it gets a little more difficult for me to shoot, as I do like to see them just hanging around, but I also know that in Michigan they need to be harvested, as we have approx. 60,000 road kills a year, and the insurance rates just keep climbing.

Everyone down here is doing fine, including the two ladies. Jeanette has had me help her doing a little paint job around the house, that is well overdue (my fault). We just finished the family room and we are in the process of painting the living room. As everyone knows, the next item will be new carpet, as you cannot have a new paint job without the new carpet.

I would ask that everyone who reads this newsletter, please keep in mind the upcoming convention in Omaha, Nebraska, on April 27-30. Please mark these dates on your calendars, as we are looking forward to a great turnout. Our hosts, Mary Ann and Bart Nyberg, are planning a great convention! In the next issue you will see be able to read their write-up on the convention, along with the official registration form and schedule of events. They've already selected a beautiful hotel, with pictures all set for the next *Newsboy*.

On another important subject, in the future, if you hear of anyone who is sick or is having a rough time, please let me or one of the Horatio Alger Society officers

(Continued on Page 4)

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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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

Almost that time

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

It seems only yesterday that "Gathering in Grand Rapids" took place, and Partic'lar Friends were saying their goodbyes for another year.

Now, our 42nd annual convention, "On to Omaha," is moving closer to reality week by week. Our hosts, Mary Ann and Bart Nyberg, have been working very hard to assemble the elements for a fun weekend. The hotel, the Doubletree Suites, is all set, and the remainder of the program is coming together right on schedule.

The Nybergs' welcoming article and agenda for the convention are "in the house," and while you are reading this, they are being assembled for the November-December Newsboy, which should be in your hands by the end of January. We realize that many of you like to make your hotel reservations early, so this will provide that opportunity. For those who have asked, we've been able to hold convention registration and hotel room rates in line with last year. Just for fun, I checked my records and saw that for my first convention, "Collected in Columbus," in 1983, the

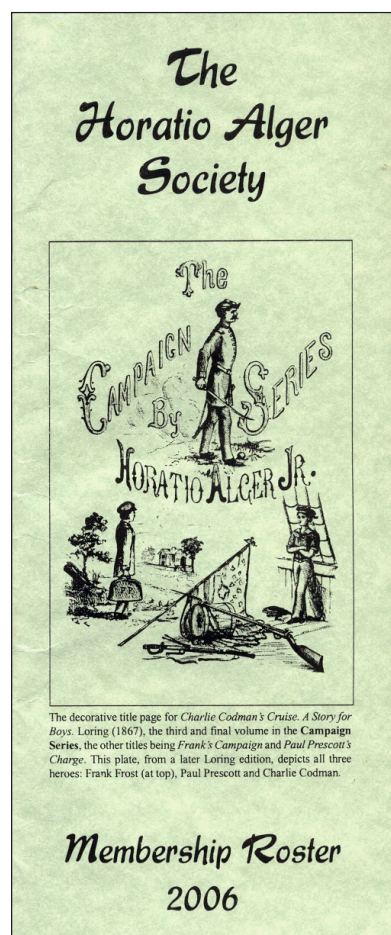


Omaha, Nebraska, awaits members of the Horatio Alger Society for the 42nd annual convention on April 27-30.

registration for the convention was \$35, and rooms at the Royal Motor Inn were \$30 for a single and \$34 for a double!

Well, since we as collectors are into nostalgia, we can afford (pardon the pun) to be nostalgic about the "good old days" when you could buy a cup of coffee for a dime.

So watch for the convention preview, official registration form and schedule of events in the next Newsboy. We hope to see all of you in Omaha!



Official roster ... at last!

For well over a year, we were deluged with the big question: when will the next H.A.S. roster be ready? We could use the old phrase, "better late than never," but it's better just to apologize for the delay. The 2006 roster booklet was mailed several weeks ago and should be safely in your hands.

In the recent past, we have issued a new roster about every three years. This time it took four and a half years. I promise it won't take that long next time!

A lot goes into producing this roster. The main problem is keeping our main database up-to-date. Every time one of us moves, changes marital status or passes away, the H.A.S. data base must be updated. This includes such items as new telephone area codes, new cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

In the past, we tried sending out prepaid roster-update postal cards. The response was so low (under 30 percent) that we scrapped that idea. So, we now rely on the periodic updates from Partic'lar Friends sent to our Richmond, Virginia, address. But even that doesn't catch all the changes. Shortly after the new roster was mailed, the son of one of our longtime members wrote to inform us that his dad had passed away several months previously. Hopefully, by the next Newsboy, we'll list this and other changes and corrections that you have told us about. You'll also notice that we have included three blank "notes" pages at the end of the booklet to allow you to write in new members, including PF-numbers and addresses, as they are announced in Newsboy.

This is important: Don't send corrections and changes directly to me in Illinois. They must be sent to our official address: Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255. This is where our official database is maintained. Once received there, all addenda and changes will be forwarded to me for publication in the following issue of Newsboy.

— William R. Gowen (PF-706)

Editor's notebook

I hope you have enjoyed Ralph Gardner's various reminiscences in this and the previous issue. In addition to Ralph's enjoyable style of writing, we have been treated to a slice of history when it comes to our book-collecting hobby.

For example, on Page 8, Ralph recounts how he was able to obtain a copy of the first edition of *The \$500 Check* during a business trip to Los Angeles in 1962, and did it for just five dollars! Of course, that was an era when Alger reprints were available for 10 or 15 cents and rarely did a first edition break the \$100 mark (with a handful of well-known exceptions).

This shows how our hobby has changed, and that a neophyte who desires to begin collecting first editions in 2006 had better be prepared to spend a lot of money. Of course, this is true of most collecting hobbies. Have you seen the latest Scott's U.S. catalog prices lately for most stamps issued prior to 1920? It's scary.

Anyway, the world of collecting has changed in many ways, with the Internet the most influential development of the past decade.

And following is a story related to that phenomenon, one I hope you may find interesting.

In mid-November, the Columbia City, Indiana, auction firm CatBecca ceased operations, citing "negative economic factors."

"So what?" you may ask. Small businesses are folding left and right these days. And have you driven a Ford lately? You'd better hurry, if the most recent quarterly report out of Dearborn, Mich., is any indication.

Back to CatBecca. This firm was founded less than three years ago as your typical regional auction house, with an eye toward coordinating its on-site sales with "eBay Live," a way for bidders around the country to get in on the action.

In the early going, business was good, the firm's staff was expanded and within the past year, a larger building was purchased.

CatBecca did business like most auction houses, selling consignments from estates and other sources from the immediate Northeastern Indiana area. But instead of waiting for estate dispersals to walk in the door, the company actively sought out items on its own for resale.

"In the company's early days, we had four or five (regional auction-house) sources where we would buy box lots of say, Depression glass," John Scherz, the firm's

(Continued on Page 17)

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

know. Just maybe our Society's members can pass along some e-mail messages to help cheer them up.

I forgot to welcome our newest Horatio Alger Society members in 2004 and I would like to welcome them at this time: John A. Cook, Brian K. Twedt, David Peterson, Linda J. Sohl, Stephen G. Downie, Luc Mitchell, Maybelle Yarrington, Stephen T. Quatro and Robert M. Petitto. New members for 2005 are: Barry Schoenborn, Aaron Talbot, David A. Scott, Joseph K. Strang, Lori Anderson, and Debby S. Jones. Welcome!

In closing, Jeanette and I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas season, and we would sincerely like to wish all of our Horatio Alger Society members and their families an extremely "Happy and Prosperous New Year."

Your Partic'lar Friend,
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MEMBERSHIP

New member

Debby S. Jones (PF-1092)
1378 Buffalo Run Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Debby was introduced to the Horatio Alger Society by President Bob Routhier.

Change of address

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New e-mail address:

Bernard A. Biberdorf: b2e2@sbcglobal.net

A new short story by Harry Castlemon

By Bob Sipes PF-1067

For avid book collectors, the thrill of the hunt itself is only superseded by the acquisition of that long-sought-after item. The excitement of a new acquisition is further increased when investigation identifies a previously unknown printing, binding, or published piece. This article will present such an item.

I collect among other things 19th century children's and young adult periodicals, primarily for short stories and periodicals by authors of interest such as Horatio Alger, "Oliver Optic" (William T. Adams), Edward Ellis and "Harry Castlemon" (Charles A. Fosdick).

Quite some time ago, I acquired a few issues of *The Little Corporal*, along with some desired issues of *Young Folk's*. I decided after reading through my issues of *The Little Corporal* that I'd pursue collecting this publication.

The Little Corporal was marketed as "An Original Magazine for Boys and Girls, and for Older People Who Have Young Hearts." This magazine was started in July 1865 by Alfred L. Sewell and John E. Miller and continued as such through February 1871. Alfred L. Sewell, the editor of record, divested himself of his interest in *The Little Corporal* to his partner, John E. Miller, in order to acquire John's partial interest in another periodical, *The School Festival*. The periodical continued under Miller's ownership, through a complete loss in the Chicago fire of October 1871, to May 1875, when it was acquired (as was *Young Folk's*) in January 1874, and incorporated into *St. Nicholas*¹.

Harry Castlemon, the Boys' Own Author, authored 60 published books between 1864 and 1902. His books, written for boys and young adults, typically placed a young boy into circumstances and locales such as the War Between The States, the wild, western mountains and prairies, the New England woods, the Louisiana bayous,

and foreign lands such as Africa. Sporting activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping are enjoyed by the protagonists of nearly all of his books. His typical protagonist was from a middle-class home, was at least high school educated, was honest, ethical, and moral, and was adventurous, fun-loving, and highly patriotic.

In 1941, Jacob Blanck compiled a Harry Castlemon bibliography, *Harry Castlemon Boy's Own Author*, that is the definitive resource for the Castlemon collector. This bibliography, published by R.R. Bowker Co. in a limited edition of 750 copies, lists 60 Castlemon-published books, 20 serials which were later published as books, and three short stories. The bibliography was dedicated to J.K. Lilly, Jr. as he provided the primary funding and many Castlemon volumes for research. J.K. Lilly, Jr. was a great collector of boy's books who included Castlemon's books among his favorites.

One of my copies of this bibliography has the following inscription on the front free endpaper: *To J. K. Lilly 3rd Whose "Pa" only partly succeeded in "bringing him up" on the books of the "Boys' Own Author."* The inscription is signed "*The Dedicatee.*" He obviously enjoyed Castlemon's books and tried to instill some of the same enthusiasm in his son.

Imagine my excitement when I found a previously undocumented Harry Castlemon short story in the August, 1871, issue of *The Little Corporal*. It is typical Castlemon prose involving young hunters. It was published early in his writing career and it does not appear that this brief episode appeared in one of Castlemon's full-length works.

As Castlemon was not known for short stories, this piece is one of his very few published short stories and it provides a brief example of this prolific 19th century author's prose. The complete short story appears below.

Bob's Wildcat

By Harry Castlemon

"I just know it's a wildcat," said Bob Corwin, so excited that he could scarcely speak plainly. "Mark my words, girls; he'll wish he had let your chickens alone, before we are done with him. We'll not come back without him, if we have to follow him clear up to Lake Superior."

"Now, do be careful, boys," said Mrs. Corwin. "If it should really prove to be a wildcat, he may make you wish you had let him alone."

There was a great flurry and fuss in the kitchen of Mr.

Corwin's farm house. Two impatient, young sportsmen, with their trousers tucked in their boots, and their double-barrels on their shoulders, ran frantically about, calling for missing powder horns and shot pouches; two eager and excited young ladies, about thirteen years of age, shouted words of advice and warning to the hunters, who were too deeply interested in their own affairs to pay the least attention to them; and two large fox hounds, Bugle and Louder, bounded restlessly about the floor, knocking over chairs, and barking and whining furiously. Something unusual had been going on; and what it was can be told in a few words.

Bob and Luke Corwin, and their two sisters, Bertha and

(Continued on Page 6)

Bob's Wildcat

(Continued from Page 5)

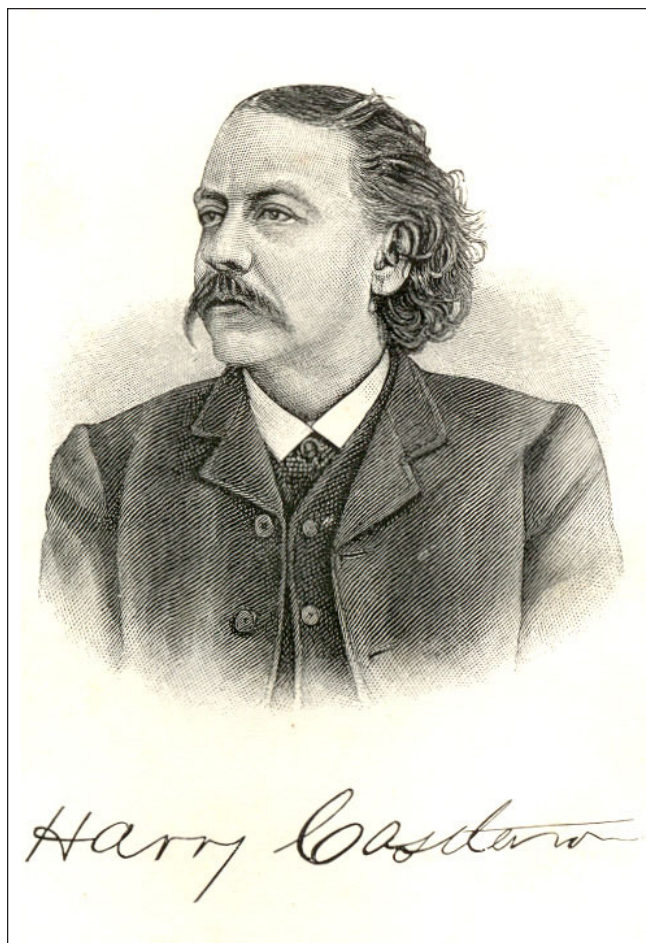
Bettie, were the children of an Arkansas stock raiser. Their parents, who believed in making home as pleasant as possible for them, encouraged them to take an interest in the affairs of the farm, and now and then presented them with a horse, or cow, or a brood of chickens. At the time of which I write, Bob and Luke pointed with pride to a drove of ten splendid horses, their own property, to be used as they pleased; and the girls owned several cows, a respectable flock of sheep, and all the hens and chickens.

These chickens were a source of constant trouble to Bertha and Bettie. They watched over them with the tenderest care, and when any of them were missing, (and that happened very frequently, for the woods about the plantation were filled with foxes, minks and raccoons,) they made a terrible ado about it. Of late, the chickens had been disappearing very rapidly. A portion of them persisted in roosting in an apple tree near the barn, and every night something thinned out their numbers. Finally, Bertha could stand it no longer, and one day she said to her brothers, "It is really too bad. Here are our chickens being stolen and devoured every night, and you two boys don't do a thing to prevent it. There is no excuse for you. You are both good marksmen; own a couple of hounds that you say can't be beaten at any thing; and are always boasting of your skill as hunters. Here is an opportunity for you to make an exhibition of it."

"It's the owls," said Luke, thrusting his hands into his pockets and looking very wise. "If it were a fox or 'coon, the hounds would scent him when he comes about, and make a fuss. You wouldn't expect a fellow to sit up all night to shoot an owl, would you?"

The boys, however, were quite as anxious as their sisters that the robber should be captured or killed, for it was a reflection on their reputation as hunters, that such things should be allowed to go on. That night they set two of their fox traps under the tree, attaching a clog to each, and covering them over with leaves, so that they could not be seen, and went to bed satisfied that in the morning one point, at least, would be settled. If the robber was an owl, the traps, of course, would do no good; but if it was a fox or 'coon, he would certainly get caught; and if he dragged the traps off, they would put their hounds on the trail and follow him up and shoot him.

The family was stirring bright and early. The girls counted their chickens, and the boys went out to examine their traps. The chickens were all there, but the traps were not. Something had got into them during the night and dragged them off, clogs and all. Bob and Luke, of course, became highly excited at once; and while they were looking about to find some sign that would enable them to tell what the animal was, Bob discovered something that made him open his eyes. It was nothing more than the print of claws upon the bark of the tree; but that told



This engraved portrait of Harry Castlemon (Charles A. Fosdick) was published as the frontispiece for *Don Gordon's Shooting Box* (Porter & Coates, 1883) and was republished in Jacob Blanck's bibliography, *Harry Castlemon Boys' Own Author*, in 1941.

him all he wanted to know.

"Luke," he exclaimed, almost breathlessly, "no coon's claws ever made those marks. It's a wildcat."

Luke whistled long and loud. A wildcat was a thing that was not met with every day, even in that wild, thinly-settled part of Arkansas; and here was an opportunity that might not occur again for years. If they succeeded in shooting the wildcat, couldn't they hold their heads high, and look down upon the other boys in the settlement, who confined themselves to such small game as foxes, 'coons and turkeys? Luke gave just one glance at the tree, and then started for the house at the top of his speed.

You can imagine what a bustle there was in that kitchen, and how impatient the boys were at those little delays, that are certain to occur when one is in a great hurry. But they were ready for the hunt in a few minutes, and too excited to hear the words of caution which Mr. Corwin shouted after them, they dashed out of the house and ran toward the stable. In less time

than it takes to tell it, two fleet, little ponies had been saddled and bridled, and the boys were galloping post haste toward the apple tree. The hounds reached it before them, and Bugle, scenting the trail of the wildcat, lifted his head and howled dismally.

"Hunt him up!" yelled the boys in concert. "Hunt him up! Be off, sir!"

The hounds did not wait for a second command. With heads down and tails up, they bounded off on the trail, making the plantation ring with their deep-toned baying. The young hunters were in their element now. Putting their ponies into a gallop, they followed close after the hounds, swinging their hats around their heads, and shouting and whooping like a brace of young Indians. Across the pasture they went with reckless speed, through fields of wheat and corn, and over fences, which the staunch, little horses cleared as easily as birds on the wing, and finally they entered the woods, where the hounds disappeared from their view. For an hour the chase continued, and then the music of the dogs changed to a quick, impatient yelp, telling the young hunters that the game had been overtaken, and brought to bay. The ponies were urged forward with increased speed, and in a few minutes the boys came within sight of a huge tree, that had been thrown down by the wind. In falling, the tree had pulled up a portion of its roots, thus forming a deep cavity in the earth, one side of which was concealed by thick bushes and briars. The hounds stood on the edge of this cavity, barking fiercely at the bushes, every hair on their backs sticking straight up, and their whole appearance indicating great rage and excitement. The game was near at hand, and now the hunt began in earnest.

The boys had never hunted wildcats, but they had lived among them all their lives, and had heard enough about them to know that they sometimes proved very unpleasant fellows to have around; and it is no wonder that their hands trembled as they drew up their ponies and cocked their guns, or that Luke's voice was a little unsteady as he said,

"Now, Bob, it's time for us to exercise caution."

"I'm not afraid," replied Bob, who was like four-cent sugar — all grit. "I've got a good horse under me, and twelve buckshot in each barrel of my gun."

"So have I; but if the wildcat jumps out on us before we have a chance to use our guns, what good will the buckshot do us? Keep close behind me, and be ready to crack away the moment he shows himself."

Luke began riding slowly around the hole, keeping his eyes fastened on the bushes, and holding his gun in his hand, cocked and ready for instant use; but the wildcat did not come out, and although they carefully examined every part of the thicket, they could not discover him. Again and again they made the

circuit of his hiding place, approaching a little nearer each time as their courage increased, and presently Luke stopped his horse, and, after regarding the bushes intently for a moment, swung himself from his saddle. Dropping on his hands and knees, he crept cautiously to the edge of the hole, and, after another short examination of the thicket, said, in an excited whisper, "I see him!"

Bob also discovered something at the same moment—a portion of the body of a large, tawny animal crouching at the foot of the log; but before he could raise his gun, there was a crashing in the bushes, and the game sprang out in full view of the astonished, young hunters. Then they found that it was not a wildcat, but something much more to be feared. It was a full-grown panther. The fox traps were fast to both his fore feet,

and the chains and clogs were still attached to them; but he did not seem to mind their weight in the least. There he was, crouching low on his belly, like a cat about to spring upon a mouse, his ears laid back close to his head, and his glaring eyes fastened upon Luke, who lay within five feet of him, so completely overcome with terror that he could not move hand or foot. Bob saw and realized his brother's danger, and for an instant he was deprived of all power of action. But it was only for an instant. When he saw the panther lashing his sides with his

tail, and drawing his feet under him preparatory to springing upon his victim, Bob's gun rose quickly to his shoulder, his eye flashed along the clean, brown tube, and just as the savage beast arose in the air, he received the contents of the double barrel in his side, and fell quivering to the ground. The buckshot had saved Luke's life.

It was fully a quarter of an hour before the young hunters recovered from the effects of the fright they had sustained. They sat on the ground looking at one another and at their prize, and their voices trembled as they talked over the incidents of the hunt, and Luke's hand shook as he lifted the panther's paws, and examined the claws and teeth, from which he had so narrowly escaped. In two hours from that time the panther was lying on Mr. Corwin's porch; an excited family was gathered about it, and Bob was leaning on his double barrel, smiling modestly as he listened to Luke's glowing description of their morning's adventure.

The panther is now stuffed and mounted on a pedestal in Mr. Corwin's library. He looks quite as savage as he did on the morning when the boys first discovered him, and always goes by the name of "Bob's Wildcat."

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Web site: <http://www.brescia.edu/bulibrary/ns.htm>

RALPH GARDNER IN HIS OWN WORDS

How I found *The \$500 Check*

Editor's note: Our "Ralph in his Own Words" tribute to Ralph D. Gardner (PF-053) concludes with this issue. The previous articles in this series included the story of Ralph's boyhood Saturday-afternoon meetings with Albert Einstein (and his introduction to the game of chess from the great physicist); "Ralph the Newsboy," a reminiscence from his student days at New York's DeWitt Clinton High School, telling how he earned money for college by becoming a *New York World-Telegram* sales agent for teachers at New York-area high schools; and, of course, his enthusiastic 125th birthday tribute to Edward Stratemeyer, published in 1987.

In the fourth article reprinted in the last issue of *Newsboy*, titled "The Big Alger Question," Ralph closes with: "Then there's my adventure of finding a copy of *The \$500 Check* with Porter & Coates imprinted on the spine. But that's another story, and we'll leave it for another time."

As promised, Ralph offered his story about finding *The \$500 Check* as a letter to editor Jack Bales for publication in the July-August 1989 *Newsboy* as part of the regular "Random Reports from Algerland" feature, as follows:

Dear Jack:

This is about the "black band" cover on *The \$500 Check*, for the column you indicated you'd write from time to time on interesting ways we come into possession of some of our Alger books.

This book was not the most difficult for me to acquire, but there's an intriguing little story that goes with it. Actually, I have three copies of this one; I'll go into that in a minute.

It was back in 1962, when I used to go to Los Angeles to call on clients of my advertising agency. I took a day off to visit Frank Gruber at his Beverly Hills home. Later, I told him, I hoped to visit some of the bookshops I'd listed in hopes of finding an Alger or two. (After I'd worked hard on a business trip, I enjoyed treating myself to a needed Alger book, if I could find one).

Frank said: "Let me see your list. I can tell you at which shops you'll be wasting your time."

One that he crossed off was Zeitlin and VerBrugge on La Cienega Blvd. Frank told me they specialized mostly in science and art; an any rate, NOT juveniles. I didn't give it much more thought until the next day when, riding in a taxi, I noticed we were on La Cienega. I remembered there was some shop on that street that

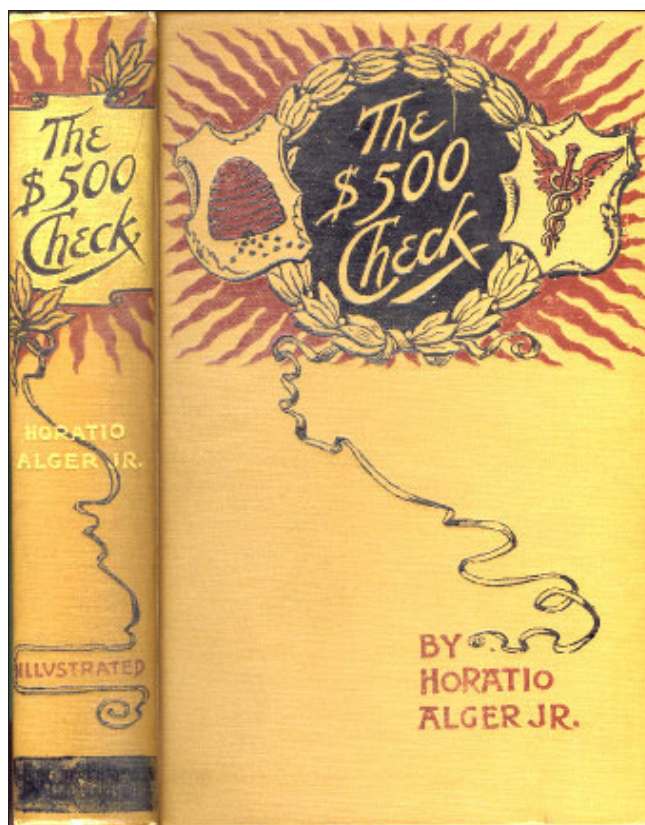


Photo courtesy of Robert E. Kasper (PF-327)

The first hard-cover edition of Alger's *The \$500 Check*, published by U.S. Book Co., in 1891, with the Porter & Coates inscription at the base of the spine covered by a black band. Shortly after, this transitional edition was reissued with *LOVELL* in gold at the base of the spine.

was on my list, so — impulsively — I asked the driver to stop and let me out. He probably thought I was crazy, but ardent book collectors get accustomed to that. A "radar" was buzzing in my head.

I looked at my list, saw it was one that Frank had crossed out, but when I saw the shop — a big red wooden barn-like structure — right across the street, I decided to go in anyhow. I was happy to meet Jake Zeitlin, a charming, helpful, wonderful man who died in 1987. "Yes," he answered my query. "I recently got an Alger in a batch of other books I bought."

He soon found it and handed me the first hard-cover edition of *The \$500 Check*, with the Porter & Coates imprint at the base of the spine obliterated by a 1/2-inch black ink strip. The price was \$5.00, which I happily and quickly paid. I told Jake that was an unusually low price, especially as I had never before seen a copy in more than 20 years (at that time) of Alger collecting.

"I know that," he said, "but it's not in my line and I'm happy to let it go at that price."

Although I recall this adventure well, I don't depend

upon memory and have slipped little notes into many of my books to remind myself of how I got them. I now have three copies of this binding. One of the others, with the identical black band at the base of the spine, is autographed by Alger to Jennie Carlson: "Miss Jennie Carlson / With a Merry Christmas / from her friend / Horatio Alger, Jr. / 1891." Jennie Carlson was at that time engaged to John M. Downie (one of the boys Alger had earlier adopted), but they never married. (She later married a man named Muller).

My third copy of *The \$500 Check* differs from the others in two points: It has "LOVELL" printed in gold at the base of the spine and had robin's egg blue-colored endpapers. The other two copies have the

brown endpapers typical of Porter & Coates.

Incidentally, *The \$500 Check* (the earliest book printing, of course, was the paperback, *Leather-Clad #23*, titled *\$500; or Jacob Marlowe's Secret*) is one of a few Alger titles I've tried to collect in virtually every edition. This is partially because it came out under about five different titles, and also because they came out in a number of attractive bindings. I'm quite sure I have an edition with Porter & Coates printed on the copyright notice, but (as I have books shelved in seven rooms), I can't find it at the moment.

Two of the other titles I've collected in various editions and bindings are my two most favorite Algers, *Frank Fowler, the Cash Boy* and *The Erie Train Boy*.

Here are the rarest of the fabulous Algers

This article appeared in the June 1968 issue of Antiques Journal, and was kindly provided by Dave Yarrington (PF-1050). Please note that Ralph wrote this piece for a general audience, not just his fellow Alger collectors, and that the seemingly low values and availability of the books described herein reflect the year this article was published.

By Ralph D. Gardner

"I just got some Algers," book scouts write, occasionally adding "They are valuable first editions!"

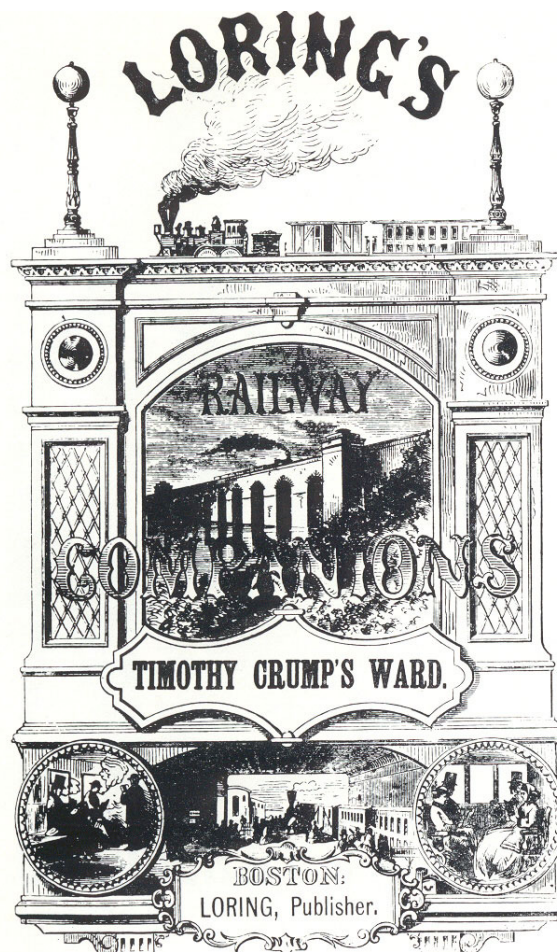
Regrettably, too often they are *not* first editions, but reprints issued in multi-millions by 60 publishers who produced Horatio Alger's tales of success during generations between the Civil War and the 1920s.

True, most of these books have vanished. But enough still show up in attics, rummage sales, dealers' shelves and catalogs to keep collectors enthusiastic and book-sellers content with certain profits. Especially since — among tattered volumes — a genuine treasure is sometimes discovered.

Alger, a prolific author of books for young people, was born in 1832 and died in 1899. He turned out 107 full-length novels plus countless poems and short stories. Most of his novels originally were serialized in story-papers that were then popular. Eleven more, printed after his death, list him as the author although actually written by Edward Stratemeyer. Oddly enough, these — because they carry Alger's magic name — are also prized and more difficult to find than a number of Alger's own works.

All this adds up to a confused situation for anyone wishing to know whether an item at hand is a bona fide first edition, a reprint or reissue to which a varied or new

(Continued on Page 10)



From Horatio Alger, or *The American Hero Era*, by Ralph D. Gardner

The first edition of the extremely rare *Timothy Crump's Ward*, which was issued concurrently by A.K. Loring in paperback (above) and hard-cover editions in 1866.

Here are the rarest of the fabulous Algers

(Continued from Page 9)

title has been given. Also, how much should the seller ask and the buyer pay? Answers to questions regarding editions and values of every Alger item would fill a book of 500 pages — precisely the size of the biography-bibliography titled *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*, published by The Wayside Press, that I wrote several years ago. Although now out of print, there are copies in public libraries across the country to provide the facts.

While reprints range in price from one to ten dollars, it is rare, these days, to get an Alger first edition for less than \$25. Prices are often higher. I refer, of course, to books purchased from knowledgeable dealers who may go to the expense of advertising customers' wants or undertake long trips to bring back located items. Every collector boasts of lucky finds at a junk shop or country auction, but these are significantly less than they were a few years ago.

To Americans of middle age and beyond, a number of favorite Alger titles comes to mind: *Luck and Pluck*, *Sink and Swim*, *Strong and Steady*, *Brave and Bold*, *Strive and Succeed*, *Fame and Fortune*, *Risen from the Ranks*. There were *Ragged Dick* and *Tattered Tom*; *Mark the Match Boy* and *Ben the Luggage Boy*. The list seems endless. They recall a time when most boys — and many girls — read, re-read, swapped and borrowed Algers until they were torn to shreds.

Hence the scarcity and increasing value of relics now sought not only by thousands of Alger buffs, but also by vastly greater numbers of general and specialist collectors to whom specific titles are integral. Indeed, Alger's works are acquired for collections of Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, railroadiana, circusiana, Western U.S., American Indians, hero fiction and other categories.

Whereas most Alger first editions are hard to come by (prices of some doubled in recent years). There is a select group which, on the infrequent occasions they are offered, command uncommonly high prices. Therefore, all who search among old books are advised to keep the following in mind:

• *Timothy Crump's Ward; or, The New Years Loan and*

What Came of It. A.K. Loring, 1866.

There are but three known copies of *Timothy*, although it was simultaneously issued in hard-cover and paperback editions. On every Alger collector's want list, the author's name does not appear in any place in the volume, so it could be easily overlooked. Its value, estimated by collectors and Van Allen Bradley, literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and author of *Gold in Your Attic*: \$1,000.

• *Seeking His Fortune, and Other Dialogues*. Publisher: A.K. Loring, 1875

Its scarcity is curious as this was issued in good numbers, even given as a promotional item by a popular magazine of the period. This is a collaboration between Alger and his sister, Olive Augusta Cheney. Alger acknowledges that only the first dialogue — "Seeking His Fortune" — was written by him. All others were by Mrs. Cheney with Horatio serving as editor. Probably not more than 10 copies are accounted for. Value: \$350.

• *Robert Coverdale's Struggle; or, On the Wave of Success*. Publisher: Street & Smith, 1910. Although first serialized in 1880, this was the last of Alger's works to appear in book form, with the first edition printed in paper wrappers as New Medal Library No. 555. It is valued at \$300-\$350. Hard-cover reprints are of little value.

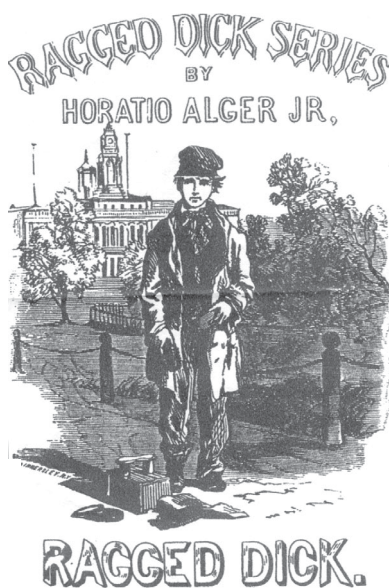
• *Dan, the Detective*. Publisher: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1883.

Some time after publication, the title was changed to *Dan, the Newsboy*. First editions of *Dan, the Detective* rarely appear (I know of only two being offered for sale during the past 10 years)

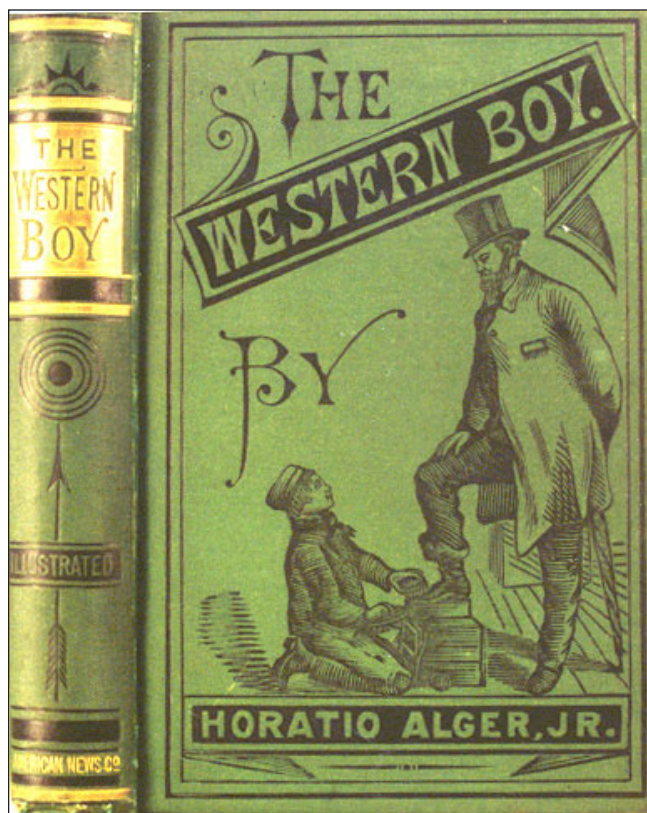
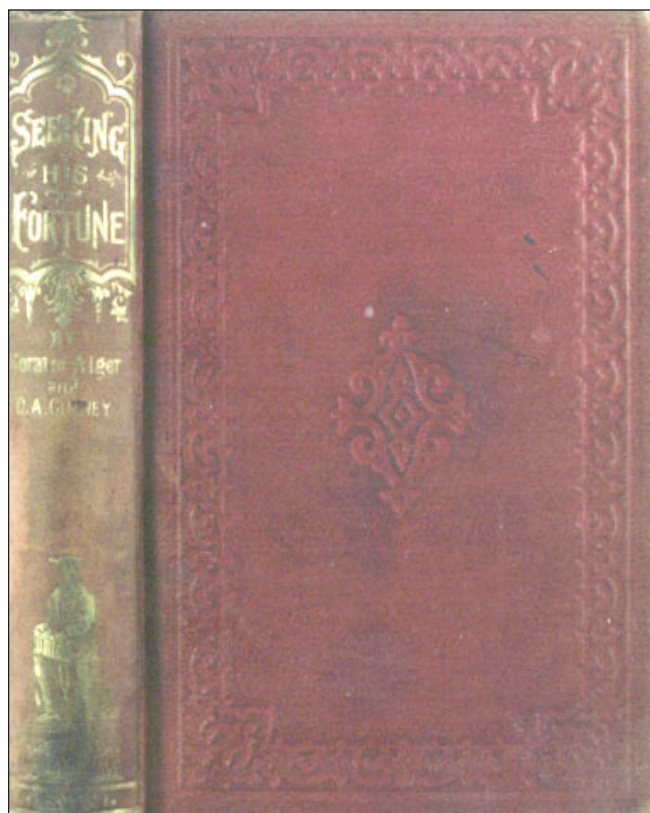
and are now worth \$100.

• *Ragged Dick; or, Street Life in New York*. Publisher: A.K. Loring, 1868.

The story that launched Alger as a best-selling author, and the first to follow his rage-to-riches pattern. Note these first-edition points: Publisher's address on title page must be 319 Washington St. Ads at front of book show — under *Ragged Dick Series* — that present title (Volume I) is only one in print. Volume II is listed thus: "*Fame and Fortune; or, the Progress of Richard Hunter*. (in December). Others in preparation." The decorative title page for the first edition shows Dick, with his shoe-blackening box, standing alone near New York's City Hall, with later editions showing four boys. Three first editions of *Ragged Dick* came to light since, in 1964, I wrote in my bibliography "there



The decorative title page for the first edition of *Ragged Dick* shows the title character standing alone in front of New York's City Hall.



probably are fewer than a dozen copies accounted for." A first-class bookseller recently sold his clean copy for \$150, a fair current price. All editions are sought. Even reprints bring relatively high prices.

- *The Western Boy; or, The Road to Success*. Publisher: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1878.

After a short run, this story was reissued as *Tom, the Bootblack*, by which it became one of Alger's most popular books. A few years ago, *The Western Boy* was offered for \$50. Last year, a prominent rare book dealer's catalog listed a good copy for \$125. It was immediately sold — to another bookseller.

- *Nothing to Do: A Tilt at our Best Society*. Publisher: James French & Co., 1857.

One of five volumes of poetry hastily written as sequels to William Allen Butler's *Nothing to Wear*, a book that enjoyed great popularity. Hard to recognize as Alger because it was anonymous. To further complicate matters, a similar-appearing book with identical title was issued about the same time by Whitney & Halsted. I've seen a copy of Alger's *Nothing to Do* offered for \$95. Both figures seem high. Proper value today is \$60-\$75.

- *Bertha's Christmas Vision; An Autumn Sheaf*. Publisher: Brown, Bazin & Co., 1856.

Alger's first book. A collection of twenty short stories. Rarely offered. Value has doubled during recent years from about \$50 to about \$100.

- *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving; With Other Ballads and Poems*. Publisher: A.K. Loring, 1875.

A collection of pieces previously published in periodicals. Although issued during Alger's reign as top-selling author of juveniles, this book apparently was not fervently received. Consequently, either relatively few were printed or they just weren't kept as were his other works. Occasionally offered at \$60-\$70. A number of copies noted are autographed by Alger, thus adding to their value.

- *The Disagreeable Woman; A Social Mystery*. Publisher: G.W. Dillingham, 1895.

An extreme rarity, only recently certified as written by Alger. The only known copy is in the Library of Congress. This small book is the only one to carry the virtually unknown (even by many Alger fans) pseudonym "Julian Starr." An adult story, the Dillingham catalog lists this title for the first time in 1896 and continues listing it at least until 1905. After Alger's death, his real name appears in the catalog as author. However, there is no known copy of the book showing the Alger byline, though it may have appeared as such. Value is difficult to estimate as this item has never been publicly offered for sale. In today's market, however, a figure between \$200 and \$300 would find eager buyers.

"*The Disagreeable Woman?*" you ask yourself. "Why, I'm sure I saw that someplace *just last week*."

A boy's life

Tom, Huck, Jerry and Poppy

By Alan Pickrell (PF-965)

During the 1940's, my brother and I were the occasional recipients of boxes of hand-me-downs from two older cousins in Chicago. Since one of the cousins was female, her major contribution to the box of goodies was castoff books. Her tastes must have been far ranging, since the books were composed of what I now recognize as a mixture of girls' and boys' series.

One box contained a book, featuring a hero I did not know, but which proved to be one of the funniest and most entertaining books I had ever read. In fact, I wanted to read more of those books, but though I looked for them at libraries and bookstores, I could not find any more titles by the author or volumes in that series.

So, as time went by, and my imagination was captured by other series, I forgot about that author and hero. Perhaps I should mention that the book was *Poppy Ott and the Stuttering Parrot* by Leo Edwards, the pen name of Edward Edson Lee. Much later on, when I was in MY forties, I learned that Edwards also authored several other series when I ran across a copy of *Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy* at a flea market. With that, I began collecting Edwards' books.

What I didn't realize at that time, but what has become more and more clear with the passage of years, is that two of Edwards' most popular and successful series (the Jerry Todd and the Poppy Ott series), are the direct literary descendants of Mark Twain's (Samuel Clemens) *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*; although, as Jack Dizer pointed out in an article in *Yellowback Library*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is not actually a children's book (5), despite critical efforts to make it so.

The mere mention of Tom and Huck immediately provokes an idyllic image of carefree, sunlit, summer days, boyish pranks, let's-pretend games of Robin Hood, pirates and highwaymen, playing hooky, evading adult authority, and lazily poling a raft down the mighty Mississippi to fish its shores.

In fact, e-mailing back and forth, Randy Cox and I conjectured about the veracity of that particular young



boys' rafting image. It would seem that the juvenile male population would have been severely depleted by drowning if that rafting myth were true, and yet, that image is so pervasive in literature and films depicting that period of time (pre-1861), that it must have been a part of the boys' lives. If, in fact, it were not a true picture of the times, it might as well be, since it is so widely depicted and accepted.

Besides, there is something about water that draws boys to it, and it would have been difficult to keep them away from that big river. While Mark Twain depicts Tom and Huck poling the Mississippi, the Jerry Todd series also utilizes the attraction of water for boys who play in the canal and lake system around Utica, Illinois. In Lee's books about Oak Island, there is no doubt that boys, rafts, and various kinds of watercraft attract one another like magnets.

The Edwards series attempted to reproduce the idyllic, small town, pre-technological atmosphere that Twain produced in his books. Just as Twain utilized his home town of Hannibal, Missouri, as Tom and Huck's St.

This article was presented as a paper at the 32nd annual conference of the Popular Culture Association at Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on March 14, 2002.

Petersburg, Edwards used Utica, Illinois, as a model for Tutter, where Jerry and Poppy lived (Johnson 5). Also, like Tom and Huck's adventures, narrated by Tom and Huck, Edwards' books are narrated by Jerry Todd, except for the final two books in the Poppy Ott Series, where Poppy, himself, takes over the narration. In fact, Poppy "Hits the Trail" and leaves Tutter and his old friends behind. This was probably an attempt to make Poppy Ott separate from the Jerry Todd Series and build a larger reading audience, since it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two series, because Jerry's voice predominated both of them.

As well, both of the series utilized some of the same characters and locations. Edwards was trying to save the Poppy Ott Series from being discontinued by the publisher when he took Poppy away from Tutter and his old friends.

Edwards frequently incorporated an element of mystery within his books, starting with the first Todd book when Jerry becomes a "Juvenile Jupiter Detective." The mysteries, which often utilize superstitions and the eerie, are usually easily explained once the facts are revealed.

Mark Twain also utilized the lure of superstitions and the eerie within his books, as well. Tom and Huck frequent graveyards and haunted houses and recount numerous stories about how to remove warts, the uses of a dead cat, and of course, ghost stories. Like most boys, they tell them to scare themselves and for the thrill of being scared. Jerry and his buddies are no exception to this rule.

They also love a good mystery and the thrill of being frightened vicariously. They, like Tom and Huck, have been known to sneak out at night for a visit to a graveyard or a haunted house.

However, Jerry and Poppy's band usually don't find themselves in the midst of murder trials or facing villains as formidable as Injun Joe, or the Count and the Dauphine, who prove too much for the resources of Tom and Huck.

Consequently, some deeper issues help to drive the plot of Twain's books: parental abuse, slavery, social injustice and frontier justice serve to provide a more

serious and somber note to the stories of Tom and Huck. Jerry and Poppy's stories are much lighter and much less concerned with issues, and yet there are some obvious similarities between the Twain and Edwards' books.

Jerry and Poppy, unlike Tom and Huck, never witness a real murder or come across a recent corpse. Still, on a surface level, it would be fair to say that Jerry and Poppy are the Tom and Huck of the 20th century.

First of all, Poppy, like Huck, has only one parent, a father, but while Huck's father is actively abusive, Poppy's is passively abusive. The excuse given for Poppy's father is not alcoholism, like Huck's, but rather his absorption in deeper problems, such as impractical inventions to improve the quality of human life.

Still, like Huck, when we first meet Poppy, he is clothed in rags. Both Poppy and Huck have a native intelligence, but Poppy has a drive to succeed in life that Huck lacks. Jerry, unlike Tom, has two living parents, but Mrs. Todd, like Aunt Polly, has no understanding of boys and their ways. Both Mrs. Todd and Aunt Polly are largely ineffectual at controlling the boys and their activities. They haven't a clue as to boys and their ways and surrender to a blind faith that the boys will survive childhood, although that frequently seems doubtful.

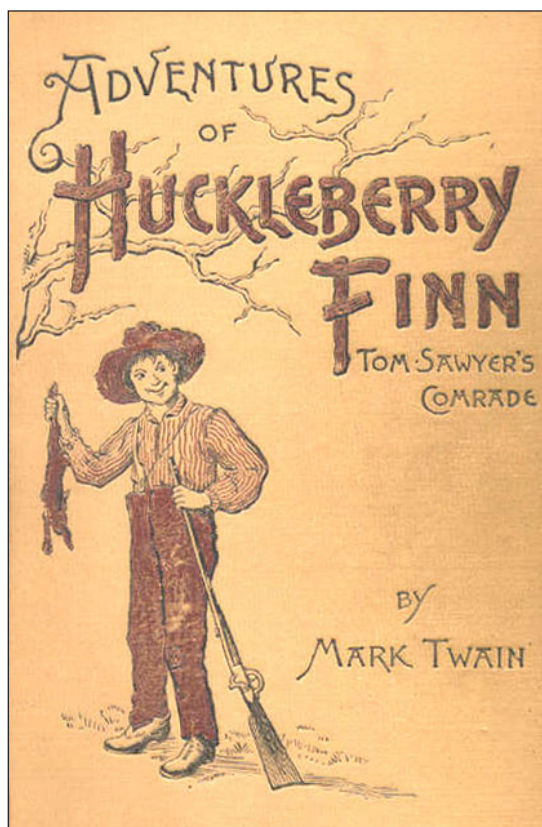
Jerry's dad, while a loving and concerned father, allows Jerry to have almost total freedom and control of his own life. Jerry sometimes goes to his father for advice, but it usually turns out to be of the "fol-

low your own heart and instincts to tell the difference between right and wrong" variety. In the truth of the matter, Jerry is as much an agent of free will as Tom is.

Another similarity among the four boys is their ages—or lack of them. How old is Tom Sawyer? Well, he has a loose tooth, which indicates of possibility of ages 7 through 9, and we aren't told which tooth it is, which could possibly shed some light on age. Still, some of his actions and his reading habits (even though he frequently misunderstands what he has read) seem to indicate an older age.

In film, it is customary to portray Huck as older than Tom, and yet, Tom frequently takes the lead in their

(Continued on Page 14)



A boy's life

(Continued from Page 13)

adventures, and Huck defers to him. Jerry is much like Tom. He seems to be the leader of his gang of friends, but Poppy is the leader in the adventures that the two share together. However, these two are age non-specific as well (until the final volumes of Poppy's series when, out of the blue, we learn he is 16). To make the heroes non-age specific is a device that saves the author a good bit of trouble. The heroes become more readily identifiable to a more broad audience base, and they can be kept in their age limbo indefinitely without creating problems. Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys remained the same ages forever, all of their adventures being crammed into summer vacations or school breaks — except for Nancy, who never seemed to go to school.

According to Clara Clemens, in a preface to a 1960 special one-volume edition of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, her father developed his characters from his fertile imagination (15). However, Tom and Huck are so well drawn and created, it seems as though there must have been an inspiration for them somewhere, and surely Twain was drawing on some of his own experiences in creating his plots for the books. According to Jack Dizer (6) and R. L. Johnson (6), Edwards based his characters on real people and the real adventures and experience's of Leo's son, Eugene, along with friends of Eugene's, and friends of Leo's.

Both Twain and Edwards utilized the device of humor within their books. Twain, of course, was a noted humorist and often used the devices of sarcasm and cynicism to create his humorous effects. Edwards, on the other hand, utilized a kind of open, sometimes, exaggerated effect to create humor. At other times, he was master of the understated.

One example which comes to mind is from *Trigger Berg and the Treasure Tree*. Trigger intends to rise early for a fishing trip. However, he doesn't want to wake his father, who is irritable if wakened before his normal

time. Trigger, however, despite his care, does arouse his sleeping parent. In a masterful piece of understatement, Trigger explains, "He must have waked up when I turned over my dresser." The reader just bets he did.

Edwards adds no further comments or explanations. It is left to the reader to wonder what on earth Trigger was doing to turn over a large heavy piece of furniture. This serves as an excellent example of Edwards' approach to humor.

From 1923 until 1940, Jerry, Poppy, and their friends lived the boy's life: playing games, pretending to be pirates and cavemen, putting on shows, sailing an old brick scow, fighting off the Stricker gang, launching one

hare-brained scheme after another, and helping out friends and neighbors in their good, open hearted way.

Yet, in 1940, two years after the demise of the Poppy Ott Series, Grosset and Dunlap pulled the plug on Jerry Todd, the last survivor of five series written by Edwards. Despite the discontinuation of the series, some of the earlier titles still must have been in stock through the early 1940s, since some fans of the books report buying them and ordering copies (Fish, 9).

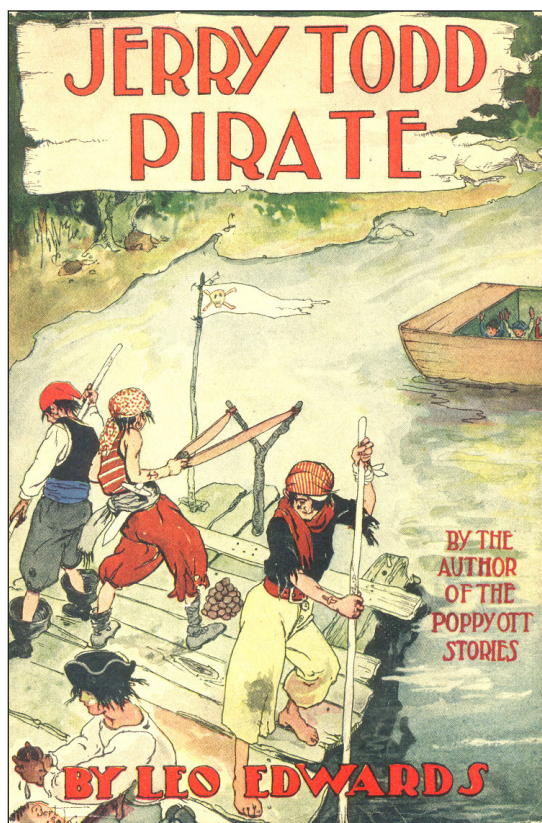
Eugene Lee described his father's books as having a limited appeal (92). He felt that the youngsters would rather read books like Tom Swift and the Submarine Boys.

In fact, Edwards attempted to bring Poppy Ott in line with the Hardy Boys' series by turning Poppy into a detective in the last two books of that series,

which was probably one reason to have made him age 16. Poppy, as a rural detective, couldn't compete with the two glamorous, urban brothers with their arsenals composed of motorcycles, trim speed launches, automobiles and aircraft, however.

Even Twain followed up *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* with a sequel called *Tom Sawyer, Detective* which never achieved the popularity of the original. (And there was another sequel called *Tom Sawyer Abroad*.)

Perhaps Edwards should have heeded the lesson of his historic model. However, his books were remembered fondly enough that Random House, publisher of the Alfred Hitchcock & the Three Investigators Series (1964-87) used a slight variation of the titles of the first



Jerry Todd book and the first Poppy Ott book for books No. 2 and No. 3 of that series: *Mystery of the Stuttering Parrot* and *Mystery of the Whispering Mummy* in 1964 and 1965, respectively.

From the beginning of the 20th century, authors of boys' books had realized the thrill and appeal of a rapidly evolving technology. Consequently, Edward Stratemeyer developed the Tom Swift Series for his syndicate beginning in 1910, with more than three dozen adventures involving the young hero's many amazing inventions. Authors both writing for Stratemeyer and independently concentrated on inventions such as radio, motor boats, motorcycles, automobiles, aircraft and, in some cases, spacecraft.

Parallel series for girls developed as well. Interestingly enough, 1940, the year of the final Jerry Todd volume, marked the threshold of radical changes of life and lifestyle in the United States. World War II ushered in a time of unimaginable technology that would become the atomic age; Rosie the Riveter made war materials instead of brownies; urban sprawl lurked around the corner as Levitt Towns and strip malls would chew up parks, forests, meadows and farm lands; and organized sports would take the place of pick-up games in vacant lots and gain immense popularity. Paradise and innocence were lost.

Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott were the products of a slower, less sophisticated, less complicated world. They were the hallmarks of a more innocent, more gentle time, and there was no way to bring them into the modern world without changing them radically — and Tutter never changed. Today, we read *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* for the author's style and for insights into their historical era.

Jerry and Poppy are, also, the main characters in a period piece: they represent a way of life which we might, perhaps, envy, but which will never be our way again. And yet, reading their stories, takes us all back to the days when technology and urbanism were the products of science fiction rather than facts of life.

Like Tom and Huck, Jerry and Poppy are our past and our history.

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Editor's note: The cover for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* shown on Page 13 is from the 1891 edition published by Charles I. Webster. The image was kindly provided by Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879).

BOOK REVIEW

Cary Sternick: *The Henry Altemus Company. A History and Pictorial Bibliography*. ISBN: 00615129579. Self-published, 2005; approx. 400 pages, with glossy color reproductions of more than 1,200 Altemus book covers. Softbound; \$64.95, postpaid. For additional information, or to order, visit www.henryaltemus.com, or write: Cary Sternick, 990 Village Square, Suite K, Tomball, TX 77375; e-mail, cssternick@houston.rr.com. Payment by personal/cashier's checks, money orders or major credit cards.

Reviewed by William R. Gowen (PF-706)

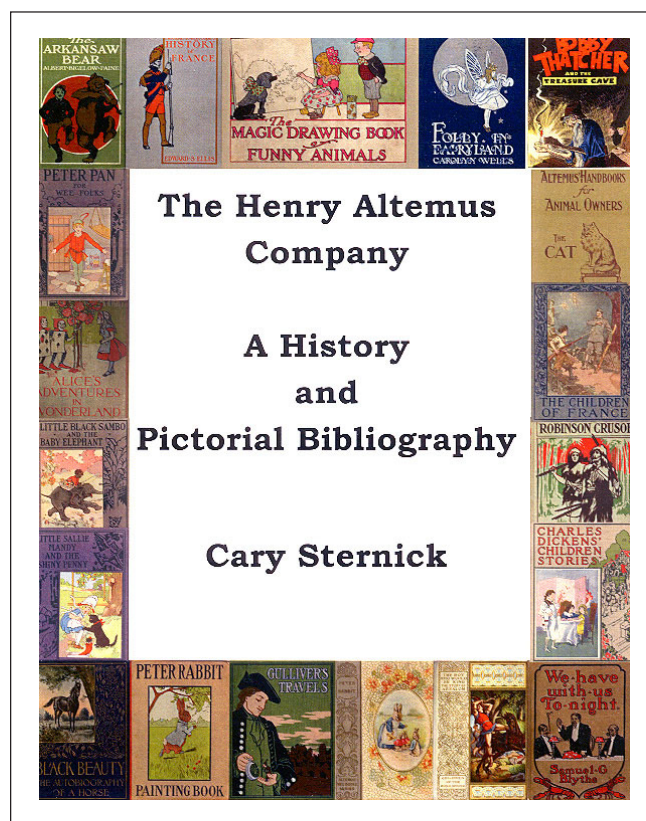
Cary Sternick has done it again! As a follow-up to his wonderful *A Bibliography of 19th Century Children's Series Books*, published in 2003, he's come up with an equally impressive volume — as comprehensive a look at the work of a single publisher as you're likely to encounter.

This mammoth volume, in an 8½ x 11 perfect-bound soft-cover format similar to his preceding book, gathers together a 50-plus-page history of Philadelphia's Henry Altemus Company (including color photos), then offers more than 1,200 full-color reproductions of book covers (more than 100 pages' worth), followed by a comprehensive bibliography of everything Altemus published, series and non-series books alike.

What struck this reviewer first was the vast scope of Altemus's output. Most of us who collect series books know Altemus mainly through the so-called "Dick & Co. Saga," a catch-phrase Harry Hudson and other pioneering collectors used for the group of series written by Harrie Irving Hancock covering the adventures of Dick Prescott, Dave Darrin and their chums through grammar school, high school, West Point, Annapolis, a German invasion of the United States in World War I, plus careers in civil engineering — a total of more than 40 books. Other highly collected boys' series include Hancock's Square Dollar Boys and Motor Boat Club; the Iron Boys (James R. Mears) and Submarine Boys (Victor Durham).

Those collecting girls' books know the similarly inter-related series involving Grace Harlowe (by "Jessie Graham Flower"). The four-volume Grace Harlowe Series was authored by Josephine Chase, along with the follow-up seven-volume Grace Harlowe College Series. Frank Gee Patchin authored the six-volume Grace Harlowe Overseas Series and 10-volume Grace Harlowe Overland Riders Series.

But that's stuff many of us know about. It is the 10,000 or so other books that Altemus published that makes this bibliography such a valuable reference tool. In all, about 500 authors are covered, including familiar names



such as Jacob Abbott, Louisa May Alcott, Hans Christian Andersen (his Fairy Tales), Francis Bacon, Henry Ward Beecher, William Cullen Bryant, John Bunyan and Lewis Carroll (every "Alice" story), along with other notables including Dickens, Emerson, Hawthorne, Irving, Longfellow, Kipling, Sir Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Tennyson — and on and on.

And, of course, there are the hundreds of authors who most of us have never heard of. It seems that Altemus wasn't afraid to publish anything by anybody, including nonfiction and a great number of tots' books.

For the various series (the main body of the bibliography), complete information is provided, including dates, total volumes, formats and a location reference by plate number to the color cover illustrations. Cross-references to authors and book titles are also provided.

Although this book is as comprehensive as one could wish, Sternick advises that new information is continuously being posted to the special Web site he created for this project: www.henryaltemus.com. It's a wonderful site, and it provides a convenient way to order your printed copy of the bibliography. If you don't have access to a computer, you can order the book by the other means described in the above header.

To summarize, this is a marvelous achievement, one that took untold hours to produce. To Cary Sternick we offer our congratulations — and thanks!

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

majority shareholder, was quoted in *Antique Week*, a widely-read trade publication with offices in nearby Knightstown, Ind. "On a cheap day, we could buy 25 or 30 pieces for \$50 and double our money by auctioning the pieces individually on-line."

Scherz added that CatBecca's field buyers noticed a major change during the past year. Previously, many farm or country auctions that would attract 20 or 30 on-site bidders were now drawing 100-plus. Why? The Internet. Many of these new buyers (individuals as well as other dealers) were paying up to book value to buy individual pieces, then selling them for a decent profit over eBay.

And, of course, there's the new "eBay Live" component. Today, if you drive 50-some miles to an auction, there is a good chance that it is advertised as an "eBay Live" event, which means off-site bidders are in the mix. This is a high-tech version of telephone absentee bidding that major auction houses have used for decades.

This is a perfectly legal way of doing business, even though John Doe, sitting in the local auction room, may become confused by the fact that live on-line bids are indicated as floor bids. Many in-person bidders complained to Scherz and CatBecca management that during the auctioning of an item, the price would often leap dramatically, even though he could not see another person in the room holding up his number paddle. As a result, CatBecca (and other legitimate auction houses) have been accused of "shilling," even though these absentee on-line bids are totally legitimate and legal.

CatBecca had another problem. It started to auction large art consignments, and in one particular case involving Chinese antiquities from a prominent Philadelphia dealer's estate last March, many bidders (most of them from overseas) failed to pay for what they bought.

"Very simply, we got stiffed to the tune of a quarter-million (dollars) by the Asian bidders and a California bidder, who it turns out is *persona non grata* with many other auction houses, including Sotheby's," Scherz told *Antique Week*. That bidder failed to pay for \$200,000 in purchases.

CatBecca was founded by Indiana auctioneer Phil Wolfe in 2002 and Internet specialist Michael Whelchel, who held their first auction through "eBay Live" that February. Scherz joined the company in 2003.

In addition to the above situations, the company was burdened by the debt service involved with its purchase of the aforementioned 13,000-square-foot building in Columbia City, which will be sold in a sealed-bid real estate auction ending Jan. 30.

All of this proves that the business world is in con-

stant change. The day of showing up at a country auction some Saturday morning and grabbing a bargain for 10 or 20 bucks is over forever.

Donohue and Stratemeyer, Part 2

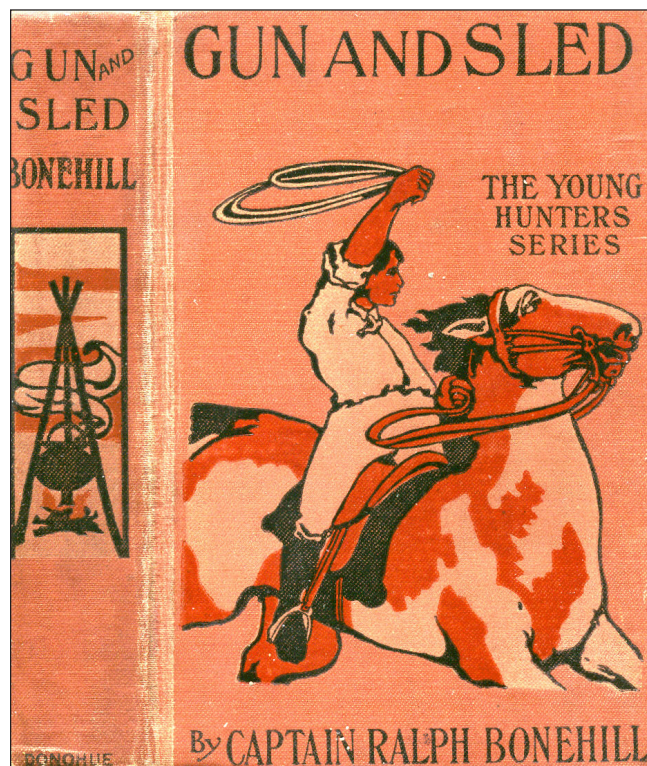
Last issue, we discussed how Chicago publisher M.A. Donohue was involved in the reprinting of several of Edward Stratemeyer's early stories, those originally appearing in hard cover in W.L. Allison's *Bound to Win Series* in 1897. This series contained 12 books, four written under Stratemeyer's own name and four each under his personal pseudonyms "Arthur M. Winfield" and "Capt. Ralph Bonehill."

Donohue Brothers took over the struggling Allison's plates and publishing rights for the books in April 1900, and it soon added a 13th title, *Young Hunters in Porto Rico* (by Bonehill), which had been advertised by Allison.

Soon, Stratemeyer took the four titles under his own name (*Shorthand Tom*, *Bound to be an Electrician*, *The Young Auctioneers* and *Fighting for his Own*) to his new publisher, Lee & Shepard of Boston. M.A. Donohue, which had succeeded Donohue Brothers, worked out a deal with Stratemeyer to keep publishing the "Winfield" and "Bonehill" titles.

Last issue, we discussed the various reprint formats used by M.A. Donohue for the four "Winfield" books, which had been grouped as the *Bright and Bold Series*:

(Continued on Page 18)



Gun and Sled in M.A. Donohue's Cowboy Format.

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 17)

Poor but Plucky, *School Days of Fred Harley*, *By Pluck*, *Not Luck* and *The Missing Tin Box*.

Now, we'll look at the five "Bonehill" books: *Rival Bicyclists*, *Young Oarsmen of Lake View* and *Leo the Circus Boy*, grouped as the Young Sportsmen's Series; and *Gun and Sled* and *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*, grouped as the Young Hunters Series.

In all matters Donohue, I refer you to Brad Chase's groundbreaking *Horatio Alger Books Published by M.A. Donohue & Co.* (1994, Enfield Conn.: Sandpiper Publishing). One thing you find out is that Donohue was a lot better organized (and that's not saying much) with its Alger reprints than with these Stratemeyers.

Actually, the Winfield formats described last issue were fairly straightforward. However, such is not the case for the Bonehill titles.

First, although several of the earlier Donohue bindings (1902-05) are actually quite solid (comparable to the Winfield reprints), things begin to go downhill rapidly as far as the Bonehills are concerned.

The one familiar "carryover" element from the Winfields is the spine design showing a camp kettle suspended from a tripod over a fire. This spine is found on the "Applique/Cooker" Alger cover format No. 17, in Chase's book.

Three basic cover designs for the Bonehill books have shown up, and the publisher appears to have done a lot of mixing-and-matching between them.

For *Leo the Circus Boy*, the publisher uses a cowboy on horseback, twirling a lasso, this "Cowboy Format" likely the closest thing the publisher had in stock that could be related to a circus. The dominant spine design observed is the tripod-and-kettle.

The early reprints of *Rival Bicyclists* use the "Sailor Format." It depicts a lad in a horizontally striped shirt at the wheel of a yacht (smaller sailboats use tillers). The spine illustration, once again, depicts the tripod-and-kettle, or (unique to the Bonehill books), a silhouetted illustration of a sailboat.

Later printings of *Rival Bicyclists* switch to a cover used by Donohue in 1912 for *Boy Scouts on Motorcycles*; or, with the *Flying Squadron*, the eighth title out of 20 in G. Harvey Ralphson's *Boy Scout Series*. The big joke, of course, is that a motorcycle is not a bicycle, and the cover design grabbed by Donohue for *Rival Bicyclists* also has the rider wearing a wide-brimmed Boy Scout hat.

Keeping with the nautical theme, *Young Oarsmen of Lake View* uses the Sailor Format on the front and a choice between tripod-and-kettle and sailboat on the spine.

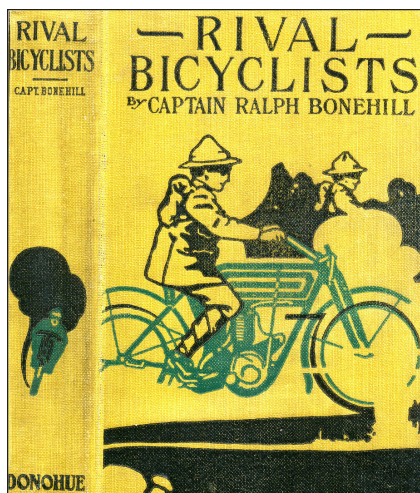
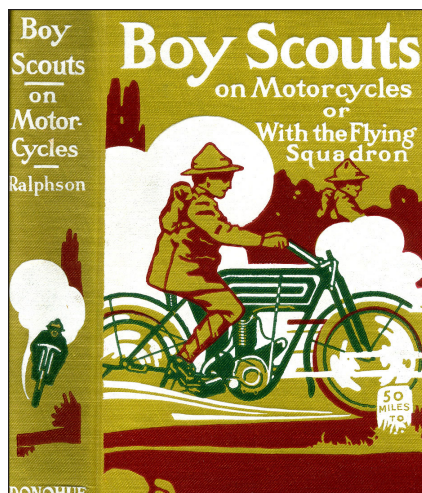
For some reason, *Gun and Sled* was not as prolifically reprinted by Donohue as the other four titles. The version observed by this writer is the Cowboy Format with tripod-and-kettle on the spine.

Numerous versions of dust jackets for these books have been seen, and several are shown on Page 19.

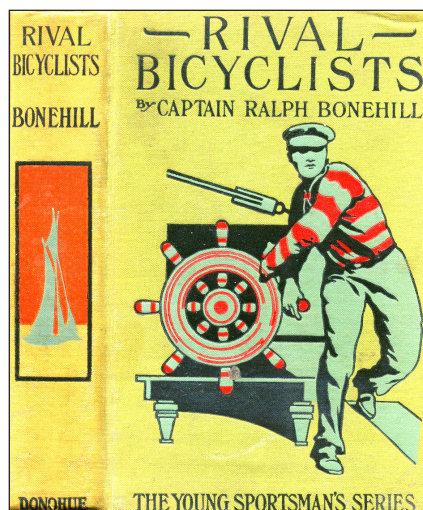
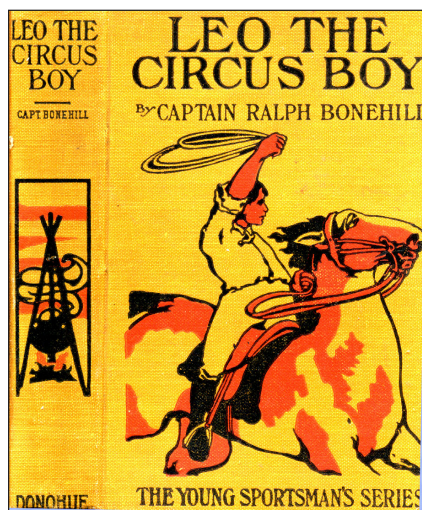
Of note is Donohue's carelessness in printing dust jackets, including *Young Hunters in Porto Rico* (middle illustration at the bottom of Page 19) as part of its Boys Prize Library, which inaccurately lists "H. Bonehill" on the spine as the author. To compound that gaffe, further down the spine it says "Whipple and Aaron," contributing authors to Donohue's *Radio Boys Series*!

As years went by, these Bonehill books, as did the Winfield titles, became lower and lower in quality. High-acid paper and plain covers were prevalent, although these plain-cover editions were outright sturdy in comparison with the thin editions with illustrated paperboard covers, published through the 1920s.

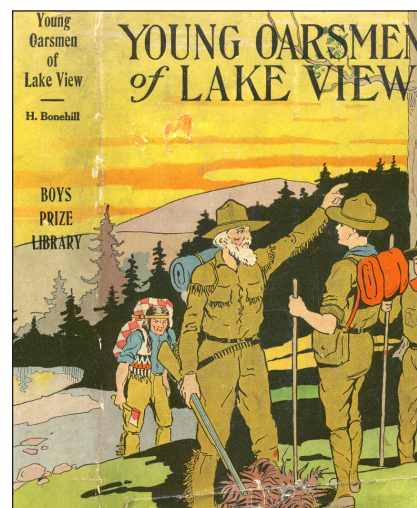
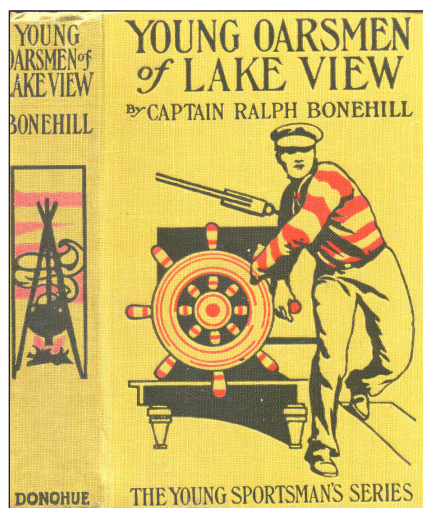
There are many different examples of these reprints available for reasonable prices. Happy collecting!



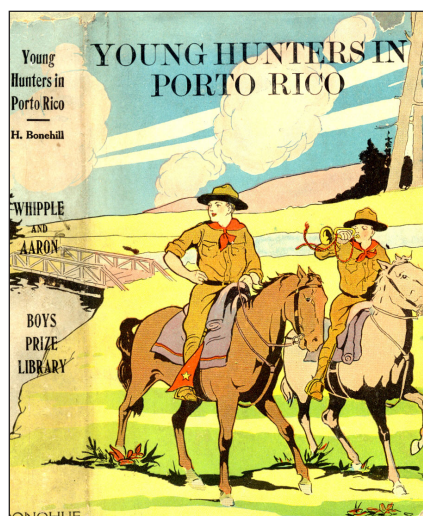
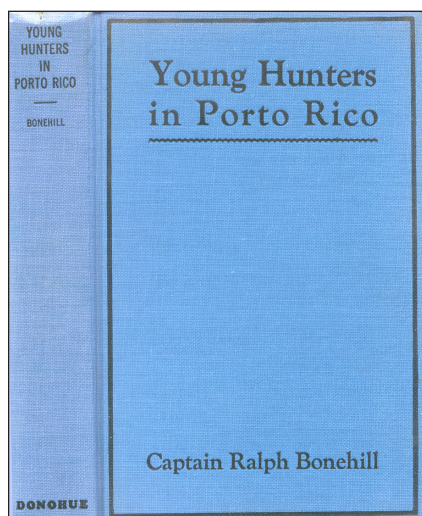
Donohue's practice of grabbing whatever bindery stock was handy is shown by its use of a common cover for several of its printings of *Rival Bicyclists*, left, and G. Harvey Ralphson's *Boy Scouts on Motorcycles*, far left. The fact that a bicycle and motorcycle are similar only in that they have two wheels seems to have eluded the Chicago publisher.



Leo the Circus Boy in Cowboy Format; *Rival Bicyclists* in Sailor Format, and a later *Rival Bicyclists* dust jacket.



Young Oarsmen of Lake View in Sailor Format with sailboat or camp kettle on spine, and a later d/j for this title.



Mid-1920s plain-cover edition of *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*, with two of its several dust jacket designs.

Horatio Alger Society
President Robert R. Routhier,
left, presents the 2005 *President's
Award* to Executive Director
Robert E. Kasper.

Photo by Bob Sipes



2005 H.A.S. AWARDS



Carl Hartmann Luck & Pluck Award
winner Arthur P. Young, host
of "Dash to DeKalb II" in 2004.

Photo courtesy of Art Young



Mary Ann Nyberg proudly displays
her 2005 *Dick Seddon Award*.

Photo by Bart Nyberg