



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 — 1899

THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



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

VOLUME XLV

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007

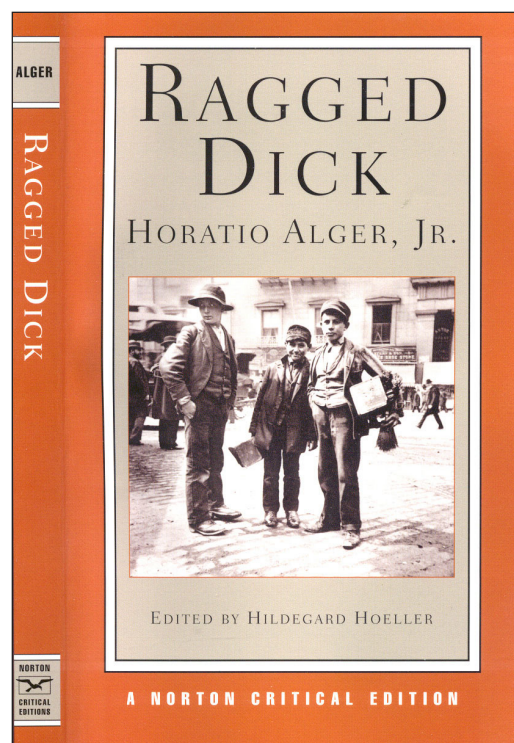
NUMBER 6

2008 convention update

-- See Pages 5-6

A new Alger publication from W.W. Norton

-- See Page 3



Endless Frontiers and the Emancipation from History: Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*

-- Second of two parts, Page 9

President's column

Stan Hartmann sent me yet another box of Carl Hartmann's legacy donation. Most of this material will be offered at the 2008 convention (browse to thehoratioalgersociety.org/auc2008_1.htm to view the current 2008 auction offerings).

One of these items was a packet (dated May 11, 1977) containing a copy of a proclamation of "Horatio Alger Week," to be celebrated during the week of May 15-21, 1977. Also included in this packet is a photograph of prominent H.A.S. members (including Ralph Gardner, Carl Hartmann, Dick Seddon and Jerry Friedland, among others), in the office of Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, witnessing Dukakis' signing of this proclamation.

I've scanned these documents and photograph and included them on the Web site archive page (userid: member ; password: newsboy). I hope you will find this slice of H.A.S. history as interesting as I did.

Another interesting document in this packet was a *Newsboy* index produced by Jack Bales covering the period July 1962 to June 1972. When I recently received an e-mail at the H.A.S. Web site from a French correspondent who wanted to know if any of Alger's books included scenes set in Europe, I consulted this index but did not find any *Newsboy* article from that period that covered this particular topic (I was able to mention "A Boy's Fortune" as one example of an Alger book with European scenes).

It seems to me that an updated on-line *Newsboy* index would capture information not readily available even to H.A.S. members. An updated *Newsboy* index would benefit all Alger researchers and would also enhance the value of our Web site. As Carl's legacy donation to the Horatio Alger Society includes a nearly complete run of *Newsboys* from the 1960s to the current date, the printed resources required to undertake this project are available.

So, I am seeking a volunteer to update the *Newsboy* index. If you would be able and willing to undertake this project, please call/write/e-mail me using the contact information at the end of this column. I'll send you the complete run of *Newsboys* and the Bales *Newsboy* index (which can be used as a template).

There are some recent 2008 convention updates. Please check Janice's two articles in this *Newsboy* issue and/or

(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.

OFFICERS

MICHAEL MORLEY	PRESIDENT
LAWRENCE R. RICE	VICE-PRESIDENT
CHRISTINE DeHAAN	TREASURER
ROBERT E. KASPER	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THOMAS KLINE	(2008) DIRECTOR
LEE SWITZER	(2008) DIRECTOR
MILTON F. EHLERT	(2008) DIRECTOR
BERNARD A. BIBERDORF	(2009) DIRECTOR
KYOKO AMANO	(2009) DIRECTOR
CAROL NACKENOFF	(2009) DIRECTOR
ROBERT PETTITO	(2010) DIRECTOR
BARRY SCHOENBORN	(2010) DIRECTOR
MARY ANN NYBERG	(2010) DIRECTOR
LEO "BOB" BENNETT (1932-2004)	EMERITUS
RALPH D. GARDNER (1923-2005)	EMERITUS

PAST PRESIDENTS

KENNETH B. BUTLER	GEORGE W. OWENS
JACK ROW	WILLIAM R. WRIGHT
DR. MAX GOLDBERG	ROBERT E. KASPER
STEVE PRESS	MARY ANN DITCH
JUDSON S. BERRY	JOHN CADICK
LEO "BOB" BENNETT	CARL T. HARTMANN
JERRY B. FRIEDLAND	ARTHUR P. YOUNG
BRADFORD S. CHASE	CAROL NACKENOFF
ROBERT E. SAWYER	ROBERT G. HUBER
EUGENE H. HAFNER	ROBERT R. ROUTHIER
D. JAMES RYBERG	

Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is \$25 (\$20 for seniors), with single issues of *Newsboy* \$4.00. Please make remittance payable to the Horatio Alger Society.

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

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. You are invited to visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.thehoratioalgersociety.org

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

A new Alger publication from W.W. Norton

By Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)

W.W. Norton, long a publisher of critical anthologies of literary texts and some political and religious thinkers, has just released (November, 2007) a critical edition of Alger's *Ragged Dick*, edited by Hildegard Hoeller of the College of Staten Island. The edition includes the text, "Friar Anselmo," "Are My Boys Real?," "Writing Stories for Boys," and Advice from Horatio Alger, Jr. that appeared in *The Writer* in 1892. There are short pieces on New York in the era, on street children, and orphan trains, as well as a lovely map of Dick's tour through the New York City of the 1860s. This material takes up the first half of the volume.

The second half includes contemporary reviews, late 19th century reports and reactions by public libraries and librarians in light of the battle over sensational fiction, parodies and responses including an essay by Gary Scharnhorst titled "Demythologizing Alger," a set of four relatively recently published critical essays on Alger, a chronology of Alger's life, and one-page selected bibliography.

Hoeller states in the preface that this second half is devoted to examining ways in which Alger has been read and re-read, and considering ways in which *Ragged Dick* has become an iconic text.

The four critical essays are, with one exception, by literary scholars. The one exception is "Selling the Self-Made Woman," an interesting piece by the late feminist psychologist Mary Roth Walsh that appeared in the *Journal of American Culture* in 1979. This piece looks at attitudes toward achievement and success for women in late 19th century America, both in fiction and in society. This essay also highlights the masculine character of Alger's version of the American dream.

Newsboy republished Michael Moon's "The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes" last year; he is now at Emery University. We looked at the other two addi-

tional critical essays that appear in this volume this past summer as *Newsboy* considered what to seek permission to reprint next. These are the essay by Fordham University's Glenn Hendler, "Pandering in the Public Sphere: Masculinity and the Market in Horatio Alger," which appeared in the *American Quarterly* in 1996, and Hildegard Hoeller's "Freaks and the American Dream: Horatio Alger, P.T. Barnum, and the Art of Humbug," which appeared in *Studies in American Fiction* in 2006. Both are very good pieces. Together, these three later

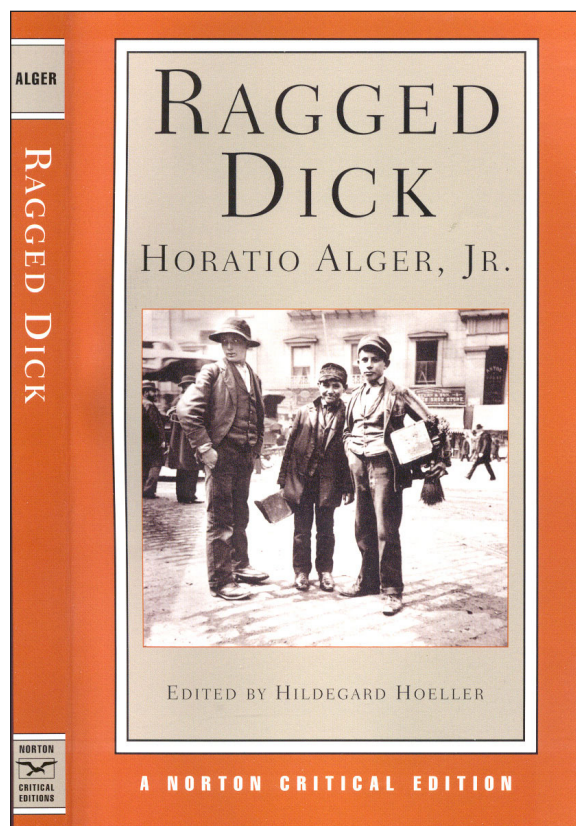
essays consider such issues as gender, masculinity, homosocial strains in emerging market culture, delineation of public and private spheres, reading practices, and a comparison of Alger's narrative techniques to P.T. Barnum's exhibition strategies. Thus, Alger is reread in light of a variety of current themes and literary approaches in academe.

It is exciting to see that fine historical and recent commentary on *Ragged Dick* will accompany the novel into college classrooms, where these critical editions are designed to be used. I hope that the publication of this volume will encourage more faculty who teach American literature or American popular culture to consider incorporating Alger. I suspect that social scientists who might include *Ragged Dick* in the curriculum as they talk about political ideology or

the American dream will not be as likely to embrace this particular edition, but social science students were not as directly targeted by the editors of this volume.

The W.W. Norton Critical Edition of *Ragged Dick*, issued in paperback (shown above), can be ordered online from www.amazon.com for \$8.25 plus shipping. The ISBN number is 978-0-393-92589-0. I recommend reading it, not just putting it on your shelf as yet another Alger publication.

Carol Nackenoff is the Richter Professor of Political Science at Swarthmore College.



Editor's notebook

Our ramblings this issue cover a wide variety of topics. Of primary interest, of course, is the upcoming Horatio Alger Society convention in Carson City, Nevada. Host Janice Morley has written a pair of articles for this issue, on the following two pages.

Janice and Mike have chosen what appears to be a wonderful hotel for the convention, located in downtown Carson City and within walking distance of numerous historic sites. Janice urges us to make our hotel reservations early because after March when the weather warms up, the area golf resorts begin to attract a big influx of out-of-towners.

Also, as we have experienced from past conventions, May is a busy month for wedding receptions, graduation parties, etc. So it's better to reserve your room now — you can always cancel later if something at the last minute prevents you from attending. You also will notice we have a special H.A.S. double-occupancy room rate of \$69 per night, but that you can upgrade your room for a discounted higher rate if you desire.

In the January-February *Newsboy*, Mike and Janice will present our big preview package, with more photos, along with inserts for the convention registration and schedule of events.

Janice's second article (Page 6) is truly something different. Beginning in the 1940s, the major movie studios began to film "on location" rather than stay bound to their studios in Hollywood and Burbank, Calif. The Sierra range is one of the most scenic backdrops one could hope for, and scenes from many films were shot in the area. In fact, portions of John Wayne's "The Shootist" were filmed in the immediate Carson City area.

You may ask why the hit TV show "Bonanza," set in the Lake Tahoe area, is not on the list. Truth be told, this show was mostly shot in the studio (even the outdoor scenes) except for a handful of stock "second-unit" shots, such as the opening-title sequence. Obviously, budget had a lot to do with it, and NBC made a fortune with one of the first big series of the color television era.

All of the movies on Janice's list are readily available for rental or purchase. The finest of the bunch is "The Godfather, Part II," winner of numerous Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

More on A.L. Burt: Last issue, Brad Chase revealed the discovery of a second title in Burt's "Treasure Chest" cover design, used for the first edition of *In Search of*

(Continued on Page 8)

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

browse thehoratioalgersociety.org/convention.html for more details.

There is some exciting news from Indiana. I cannot do better than quote Bob Sipes directly:

"On Friday, 26 Oct. 2007, Wendy, Sofia, and I brought home our new adopted son, Channing. He is 3a months old and is quite a large boy. He currently has blond hair, blue eyes, and weighs 16+ pounds. Sofia, by the way, is now 13a months old and weighs a petite 17+ pounds (she was 5a weeks premature and is petite). Side by side they look to be the same size." Congratulations Bob and Wendy! I trust both Bob and Wendy are learning to function with minimal sleep.

Gardnerville experienced its first snowfall of the current rain year recently (about 3 or 4 inches). The Carson Valley rarely gets more than six inches of snow at a time, and it usually melts fairly quickly, so we get to enjoy snow without having to deal with a lot of shoveling or other unpleasantness. Works for me. Janice and I are hoping for our first-ever white Christmas.

Janice and I wish you all a safe and joyous Christmas, Chanukah, or whatever you call your winter solstice celebration. We also hope you will have a Happy New Year full of good health, family, friends, and books.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
Michael Morley
1891 Colt Lane
Gardnerville, NV 89410
Phone: (775) 265-3063
E-mail: mmorley@carsonvalleybooks.com

MEMBERSHIP

Reinstated member

Frank Krieger (PF-1070)
P.O. Box 82
Fairhaven, MA 02719
E-mail: seriesbooks@hotmail.com

Reminder: Send all address, e-mail and phone number changes to **Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.**

Convention '08 update

Make your hotel reservations soon!

Greetings from Gardnerville, Nevada, during this 2007 holiday season.

Fluffy snow is on the ground, and I'm trying to convince Mike to go out to make "snow angels" in the front yard. Holly, our dog, is a natural at this — all we have to do is tell her to sit, and she starts wagging her tail to make the snow angel's "skirt." It's pretty cute!

We've got the Carson City Plaza Hotel scheduled in nearby Carson City for our May 15-18, 2008 convention. I suggest you call the hotel ASAP to book our special room rates, as May is the start of the golf season in our area, and rooms fill up very quickly. Therefore, we suggest you book your room no later than March 15 — we can't foresee the availability of accommodations made after that time. The telephone number is 1-888-227-1499 and the hotel Web site is www.carsoncityplaza.com.

Be sure to mention that you're with the Horatio Alger Society so you get the discounted rates. Room rates will vary, depending on which level you prefer. The basic room rate starts at \$69 (plus tax) per night, based on double occupancy. There are other rooms available at discounted rates. Check the hotel's Web site to see which best fits your taste and needs.

Carson City Plaza Hotel offers a shuttle service to and from the Reno/Tahoe International Airport. If you want this service, PLEASE call the hotel to find out their current rates. You must make these arrangements and let them know your schedule no later than three weeks before your arrival, so the hotel staff can plan accordingly. Mike and I will do our best to shuttle guests as well, but we'll be pretty busy with the convention details

and may not be available at specific times.

Carson City has a lot to offer to anyone interested in Wild West America. I've written up six tours to take when you visit this area. You'll get these writeups about these trips when you arrive for the convention.

If you've never seen the Lake Tahoe area, you should plan to stay a few days before or after the convention. You'll be able to stay at the convention hotel at the discounted rates, and you'll get a chance to enjoy the beauty of one of North America's natural gems. If you decide to extend your visit to the San Francisco Bay

Area, let us know and we can tell you some truly unique sights to see. Here's one hint: Go to Fisherman's Wharf, but avoid the tourist traps and take the ferry to Alcatraz Island and "The Rock" prison for an awesome tour of this one-of-a-kind national park. You have to get the audio tour to really appreciate the experience — the audio commen-



This is the main entrance of the Carson City Plaza Hotel, which will be the location of the 2008 Horatio Alger Society convention. Photo by Janice Morley

taries of former prisoners and guards make this an award-winning presentation. As S.F. natives, Mike and I are used to doing all the usual activities, but Alcatraz never fails to educate and fascinate us.

I'll provide much more on the convention in the next issue of *Newsboy*, including additional Carson, City photos, official registration form and our tentative schedule of events.

Mike and I are looking forward to seeing you in May. We'll have lots of fun, as always!

Best holiday wishes,
Your Partic'lar Friend,
Janice Morley, PF 957

Convention '08 update

Hollywood at home in the High Sierra!

By Janice Morley (PF-957)

With daylight hours short and outside temperatures cool, you might be thinking of settling in to watch a movie or two on a winter evening. Mike and I came up with a short list of films that have a tie-in the Carson City and the eastern Sierra area. We hope you'll enjoy these films, and that the background scenery will inspire you to take a few trips in this lovely area during the Horatio Alger Society's 2008 convention.

The Shootist (1976): This was John Wayne's last film. Wayne plays an aging gunslinger who is told by the town doctor (James Stewart) he's dying of cancer. He moves into a boarding house (run by Lauren Bacall and her son, Ron Howard) and spends his last days reconciling his conscience with his reputation. This film was made very close to our convention hotel location, and you'll recognize some of the old Victorian homes as you travel around west Carson City.

The Godfather, Part II (1974): The Corleone home (at Lake Tahoe) shown in the film is the former Henry Kaiser "Fleur du Lac" estate. Sadly, this mansion didn't survive the period when heirs gave their estates to historical trusts. However, some of the outside scenes were filmed at the Ehrman mansion (near the Kaiser estate). You can tour the Ehrman mansion during its open season, since it is a part of the California State Park system. We can't guarantee if it will be open during our convention, but check with us to find out if the Ehrman mansion might be open for tours.

The Misfits (1961): This famous Clark Gable-Marilyn Monroe film features an all-star cast and production crew. Most of the actual Reno and Dayton sites used in the film are long gone. The famous mustang riding scene was filmed in Black Rock Desert, about 135 miles north of Reno, today the site of the annual Burning Man festival at the end of August. I can introduce you to a person who was an "extra" in the Dayton rodeo scenes — me! I'm in the part in which Rosalyn (Marilyn) bolts down the rodeo grandstand after Perce (Montgomery Clift) is thrown from a Brahma bull. By the way, you'll still see wild mustangs in the Carson Valley area. The wild mustangs are one of Nevada's natural treasures.

Charlie Varrick (1973): Walter Matthau plays a small-time bank robber who unintentionally gets involved with



A lobby card poster for John Wayne's final movie, "The Shootist," filmed in Carson City locations.

major Mafia money. Some of this movie is filmed in Genoa, Nevada (about 10 miles south of our convention hotel), right here in Carson Valley. I remember when this was filmed. My mother, father, and I drove by the set, but we didn't know anything about the filming. My mother was so upset, thinking there was a major car accident in a town that didn't even have a stop sign in those days.

If you're thinking about traveling beyond the Carson City/Tahoe/Reno area, you might want to view the following movies, filmed in the eastern Sierra.

The locations for these films are along U.S. Highway 395 between Carson City, Nevada, and Los Angeles. These are especially convenient if you plan to attend the convention by driving from Los Angeles.

Out of the Past (1947): A tough-guy film noir, this one featuring Kirk Douglas and Robert Mitchum as gangsters, with Jane Greer as the ultimate *femme fatale*. Filmed in and near Bridgeport, California, about one hour south of Carson City.

The Charge of the Light Brigade (1936): The eastern Sierra is the backdrop for Balaklava. This film features the Alabama Hills, west of Lone Pine, California. You'll recognize many scenes if you take the tour recommended by the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce. See the Web site at lonepinechamber.org for more information on famous film locations.

High Sierra (1941): A classic Humphrey Bogart tough-guy film with a great finale at Mount Whitney. This is another film that utilizes the spectacular eastern Sierra. Mike's favorite actress, Ida Lupino, plays a great role!

High Plains Drifter (1973): If you're planning to visit Bodie, the California State Park, you'll want to check out this Clint Eastwood film. The background scenery features a lot of the eastern Sierra beauty.

Strive and Succeed Award

The Horatio Alger Society appreciates the generosity of its members in donating to the H.A.S. **Strive and Succeed Award** fund. The **Strive and Succeed Award** is presented each spring at the annual convention to a deserving high school senior to help defray his or her college expenses. The following Partic'lar Friends made contributions during calendar year 2007:

Bernard A. Biberdorf (PF-524)

Ken Broadie (PF-1053)

Lyle Buchwitz (PF-1065)

Ralph J. Carlson (PF-955)

Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)

Rolfe B. Chase (PF-602)

Donald Choate (PF-608)

Salvatore Cipolla (PF-1095)

Matthew Dodd (PF-1101)

Stephen G. Downie (PF-1082)

Milton F. Ehlert (PF-702)

Edward Evans (PF-1000)

John T. Fogarty (PF-1022)

Robert L. George (PF-498)

John M. Glasgow (PF-1012)

William R. Gowen (PF-706)

R. J. Hatfield (PF-615)

Gordon W. Huber (PF-843)

John R. Juvinall (PF-537)



Robert L. Kersch (PF-946)

Jeff Looney (PF-903)

Ivan McClymont (PF-722)

Ruth W. Miller (PF-894)

Martin Mueller (PF-1020)

Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)

Robert M. Petitto (PF-1086)

Gordon Rasmussen (PF-1010)

Lawrence R. Rice (PF-757)

Robert R. Routhier (PF-889)

William D. Russell (PF-549)

Peter A. Scollo (PF-222)

Arthur W. Smitter (PF-952)

Linda J. Sohl (PF-1081)

Dean C. Steele (PF-661)

Steven N. Sutton (PF-998)

Lee Switzer (PF-882)

David K. Vaughan (PF-831)

Marc C. Williams (PF-958)

Clyde E. Willis (PF-119)

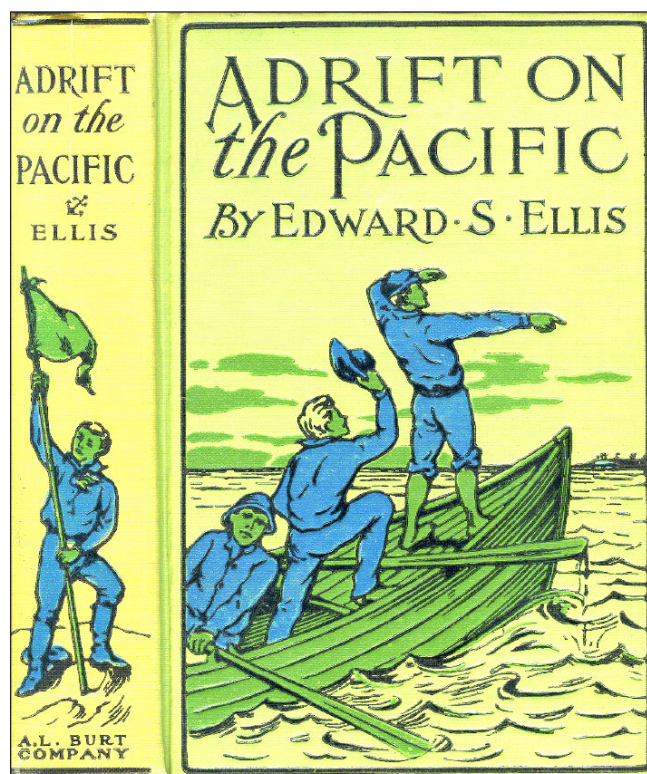
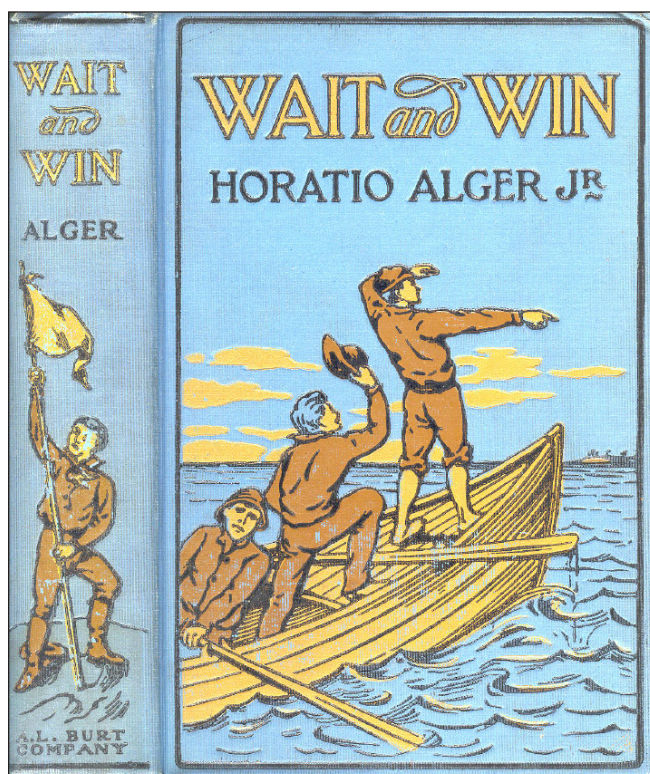
Nell Wright (PF-639)

Carl E. Wulff (PF-900)

Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

A note on matching gifts: Members planning to make a donation for 2008 may want to check with their employers to see whether they sponsor programs through which contributions to not-for-profit organizations are matched in kind.

*If you have recently made a **Strive and Succeed Award** donation and your name does not appear on this list, we will publish your donation as being made in calendar year 2008.*



The A.L. Burt first edition of *Wait and Win* shares its cover design with Edward S. Ellis' *Adrift on the Pacific*.

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

Treasure. This summer, Chase found a reprint of *Tom Thatcher's Fortune*, produced in the same 1909-11 period by the New York publisher. He mentioned that the existence of a book by Edward S. Ellis, *Work and Win*, was known to exist in that format, thanks to research by the late Ellis scholar Denis Rogers as published in *Dime Novel Round-Up* in April 1977.

However, in my companion article last issue on various illustrated Burt covers of the same time period, I failed to mention that the scarce Alger first edition of *Wait and Win* (1908), also had a "companion" Ellis book, *Adrift on the Pacific*, which Rogers describes in the same DNRU article in April 1977, as "an unusual tale for Ellis of a shipwreck, pearl seeking and piracy in the Pacific, with a six-year-old girl as the central character." The book, published in 1911, originally appeared as a *Golden Days* serial from December 1881 to March 1882.

While Rogers notes the Ellis-Alger cover duplication for *In Search of Treasure*, Alger's *Wait and Win* is not mentioned in relation to *Adrift on the Pacific*, which is understandable because Rogers may not have observed a copy of the scarce Alger book. So, reproduced here are both titles for side-by-side comparison, the images pro-

vided by Executive Director Rob Kasper.

Traditional auctioneers take on eBay: It seems a week doesn't pass when eBay doesn't come under fire for one reason or another. For example, the Tiffany Company is seeking redress for what it describes as fake reproductions of Tiffany jewelry being sold over the site. The response from eBay is the usual "we only provide a place for a buyer and seller to conduct business." Although it has a staff of experts whose job is to ferret out fakes and fraud, it's impossible to monitor the vast number of items being traded at any one time.

But that's an old story. The newest challenge to eBay is coming from traditional auction houses, who are not pleased with the rather recent trend of storefront eBay sellers, so-called "drop-off-stores," which act as facilitators for sellers who do not have the means or desire to post the items themselves. Many older Americans are not computer-savvy, and these businesses fill a need if the seller has an attic full of "treasures."

Anyway, traditional auctioneers have a problem with drop-off stores. They want Grandma Smith to consign her goodies to Acme Auction Service or some such traditional "live auction" operation. As a result, bills have been introduced in the Pennsylvania state legislature which could force storefront operators to obtain a real auctioneering license, which is expensive

(Continued on Page 16)

Endless Frontiers and the Emancipation from History: Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*

Conclusion

By Aaron Shaheen

Just as surely as some Gilded Age writers lamented the differences between the city and the frontier, others such as Children's Aid Society founder Charles Loring Brace found certain similarities. During this time the frontier helped supply the city with a vocabulary for urban scenes. In Brace's 1872 *The Dangerous Classes of New York*, for example, the homeless "street Arab" looked as if he had come from the wild:

There seemed to be a very considerable class of lads in New York who bore to the busy, wealthy world about them something of the same relation which Indians bear to the civilized Western settlers. They had no settled home, and lived on the outskirts of society, their hand against every man's pocket, and every man looking on them as natural enemies; their wits sharpened like those of a savage. . . . Christianity reared its temples over them, and Civilization was carrying them on its great work, while they—a happy race of little heathens and barbarians—plundered, or frolicked, or led their roving life, far beneath. (97)

Brace, who alongside Jacob Riis advocated "placing out" city orphans to the labor-hungry frontier, describes these children using analogies that fueled an eastern urban reader's thirst for knowledge about the settling of the western lands.⁵ Riis likewise described the street Arabs as animals from a more familiar wilderness: "[H]e is as bright as the weasel, which, among all the predatory beasts, he most resembles" (153). Realist and naturalist fictions of the time would reinforce this predatory theme, of course. As Stephen Crane's *Maggie* and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* show, Darwin's theory of natural selection is as germane to the lives of humans in the city as it is to turtles on the Galapagos Islands or bison on the Great Plains.

Hitting print five years before Brace's book, *Ragged Dick* helps initiate this blurring of frontier and urban

Shaheen, Aaron. Endless Frontiers and the Emancipation from History: Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*. *Children's Literature* 33 (2005), 20-40. © The Hollins University Corporation. Reprinted with permission of the Johns Hopkins University Press.



STREET ARABS.

From Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years Among Them*. New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1872; reprinted, n.d., by the National Association of Social Workers, Washington, D.C., *NASW Classic Series*, facing Page 176.

geographies, but to very different ends. In many respects, Dick first appears to the reader as an Indian dressed in war paint: he "had no particular dislike to dirt, and did not think it necessary to remove several dark streaks on his face and hands" (4). Yet his ostensible savagery yields to an inherent nobility, for "in spite of his dirt and rags there was something about Dick that was attractive. It was easy to see that if he had been clean and well

(Continued on Page 10)

Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*

(Continued from Page 9)

dressed he would have been decidedly good-looking" (4). As Dick moves forward in his tale, he will shed his coarseness, and the natural attractiveness will soon translate into bourgeois respectability.

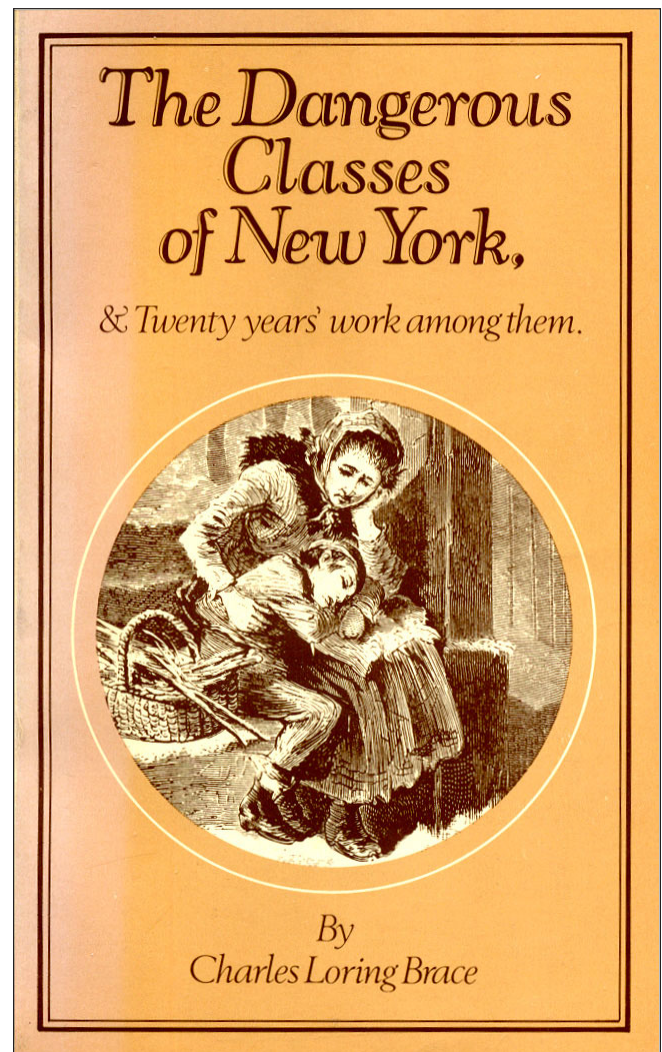
Even when Dick is dressed in his new clothes, he can still show his wildness, but only in ways befitting a "natural aristocrat" (Scharnhorst and Bales 81). Micky Maguire, for one, tests Dick's inherent gentility. A street ruffian noted for his "boldness and recklessness" (91), Micky is a member of the "race of little heathens and barbarians" that Brace's *Dangerous Classes* has in mind.

Looking upon Dick's new clothes with disdain, Mickey tries to provoke Dick into a fight. After first declaring that he "'ain't fond of fightin'" (95), Dick is forced to retaliate, beating Mickey soundly. In his own analysis of this scene, Alan Trachtenberg argues that Dick resembles the Western dime-novel hero, unleashing violence in a way that belies his calm and collected manner (106). The urban frontiersman is therefore one who can use violence as a means of keeping bourgeois effete-ness at bay while still knowing the difference between civility and savagery.

More and more, Alger's narrative of the urban frontier makes itself apparent. Indeed, Dick is in many ways a variation on a James Fenimore Cooper theme. For example, he serves as a scout and a guide in much the same way Natty Bumppo does in the Leatherstocking cycle. No doubt Dick's offer to show Frank Whitney around serves as a harbinger of the nascent bourgeois tourism industry, but the tour also contains a certain element of perilous adventure. In fact, the New York streets offer many of the dangers a frontiersman might encounter in the Wild West. Even crossing Broadway can be a perilous event, for it requires "dodging in and out of the horses and wagons with perfect self-possession" (27).

When Dick and Frank finally come upon lower Manhattan, Dick even suggests that Wall Street is a type of frontier—both literally and financially. He jokingly asks Frank if he is afraid of bulls and bears. Fearing an attack should he venture any further, the naive Frank asks his guide for further explanation. Dick cleverly responds: "'The bulls is what tries to make the stocks go up, and the bears is what try to growl 'em down'" (68). For a moment Frank experiences a type of geographical disorientation, wondering if he is still in New York, or if he has somehow ventured onto a Texas cattle ranch or into the wilds of Montana.

Finally realizing the joke, Frank consents to go on. Yet



Frank's disorientation is more than geographical: if the city is a land of promise for two young aspirants to wealth or respectability, it will need to become a type of financial frontier.

Should the two young men want to be successful in the stock market, they would need to develop the proper skills of speculation that would keep the bear market at bay. The narrative then remarks that "[t]he reader would be astonished if he knew the amount of money involved in the transactions which take place in a single day in this street" (68), suggesting that young men who read this book must also understand that the city can always be a land of economically virile bulls as long as they invest wisely with a keen eye for the future.

Upon Mr. Whitney's request, in fact, Dick's first order of business as guide and scout is to show Frank a certain type of urban wilderness: Central Park. After reaching the park, however, the two boys are disappointed to find that it is still under construction:

Central Park was now before them, but it was far from presenting the appearance which it now exhibits. It had not been long since work had been commenced upon it, and it was still very rough and unfinished. A rough tract of land, two miles and a half from north to south, and a half mile broad, very rocky in parts, was the material from which the Park Commissioners have made the present beautiful enclosure. There were no houses of good appearance near it, buildings being limited mainly to rude temporary huts used by the workmen who were employed in improving it.

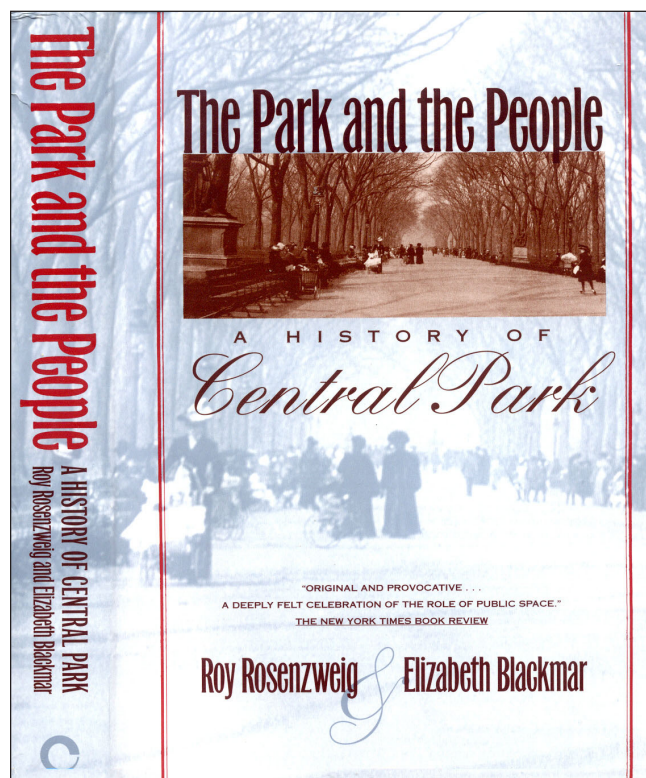
The time will undoubtedly come when the Park will be surrounded by elegant residences, and compare favorably in this respect with the most attractive parts of any city in the world. But at the time when Frank and Dick visited it, not much could be said in favor either of the Park or its neighborhood. (67)

Through his description of the park, Alger presents New York as a place both historically and ahistorically conceived. History tells us that work commenced upon Central Park in 1857. Yet the closest the narrative will ever come to providing a date is in revealing that “[i]t had not been long since work had been commenced upon [the park].”

In alluding to but never revealing historical precision, Alger’s description suggests that New York will preserve an element of the fall line. The “rough tract of land” and “rude” huts suggest the city’s perpetual reinvention, for even when the park is complete, it will look as if it is still unfinished in comparison to the “elegant residences” that will eventually develop around its perimeter. Just as Dick’s acquisition of commodities negotiates between the specifically historical and the ahistorical in earlier parts of the novel, Central Park negotiates between the nowhere and the everywhere that has often characterized both the New World in general and the western frontier in particular.

Yet the larger political project of this space is evident in the way it implicitly recasts itself as a larger site of economic renewal, a place with the potential to avoid financial and moral inertia. Critic Glenn Hendler contends that Central Park serves as one of the chief images in *Ragged Dick*. He sees Dick’s rise to respectability as embodying the tension between the public and private male citizen in Gilded Age America: “Public spaces were to be neither domestic nor commercial; rather they were to be differentiated from the parlor and especially the marketplace” (415).

In also mediating between the urban marketplace and the domestic, the park resembles a frontier-like space. By the time of Alger’s novel, the frontier had already begun to ingrain itself in the national imagination as an alternative to the domestic realm. Furthermore, Central Park was established as a safe haven from the



stressful and corrupt urban marketplace. The park’s chief architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, declared that Central Park should display “the greatest possible contrast with the streets and shops” (qtd. in Levine 202). I would argue that Olmsted’s intention in declaring the park a commercial-free zone is not anticapitalist, but rather a move to unite people of different castes through some other venue than commerce. Therefore the park, like the ideal Jacksonian frontier, is theoretically democratic, a space where people of all castes can come together to forget (at least temporarily) their differences. As Olmsted envisioned it, people would convene at the park “with an evident glee in coming together, all classes largely represented, with a common purpose” (qtd. in Trachtenberg 110).

In this sense, the park is once again analogous to the frontier in that they both ostensibly provide for the “most rapid and effective Americanization” (Turner 3-4); lower classes learn to be more civil, and the upper classes learn to be more humble. Considering Alger’s emphasis on respectability and democracy throughout the novel, it is no surprise that Dick and Frank Whitney—two young men of vastly different classes—should want to visit Central Park first and foremost among New York’s attractions.

Still, the novel’s description of Central Park does not seem to reveal any of Olmsted’s documented anxiety

(Continued on Page 12)

Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*

(Continued from Page 11)

about the urban marketplace.⁶

To the contrary, Alger's narrative anticipates with great alacrity the day when those elegant residences would surround the park, thus showing a serene cohabitation between the frontier-like park and urban wealth. In fact, Alger even hints at a symbiotic relationship between the park and the rest of the city. Signifying a perpetual state of becoming, the park makes it altogether possible to envision a progress toward wealth that seemingly has no end.

Furthermore, Alger's novel mentions historical figures who were instrumental in the settling of the American West, namely Horace Greeley. In fact, Dick jokes on at least two separate occasions that he is Greeley's friend. At one point he tells Frank that he and the famous New York Tribune editor shop at the same fine stores: "'Me and Horace Greeley always go there for clothes. When Horace gets a new suit, I always have one made just like it'" (31).

Several chapters later, Dick tells Henry Fosdick, "'My friend Horace Greeley told me the other day that he'd get me to take his place now and then when he was off makin' speeches if my edication hadn't been neglected'" (109). There are obvious links to be made between Greeley and the little boot-black. Dick started out, after all, as a newsboy—a vocation Greeley invented in 1833 when first publishing his ill-fated *New York Morning Post*. But perhaps more intriguing is Greeley's reputation as a staunch advocate of the West. Though the quote "Go West, young man" is falsely attributed to him, Greeley nonetheless felt that the American frontier was a place of economic and spiritual renewal. Living in New York for almost all of his adult life, he saw the misery that economic blight and overcrowding brought to the city. Well before the Homestead Act was signed into law by the Lincoln administration in 1862, the *New York Tribune* had been advocating its passage through Congress. This act, according to the paper, would not only provide additional income for the federal government; public land would also act as "the great regulator of the relations between Labor and Capital, the safety valve of our industrial and social engine" (qtd. in Cross 56).⁷

In twice joking that he and Greeley are old friends, Dick suggests that perhaps they see eye to eye on more than just fashion. But of course there is a certain disconnect between a wealthy newspaper editor who sees the West as a way to alleviate poverty in the eastern

cities and a ragged boot-black who embodies the very poverty of eastern cities.

Yet Alger is able to reconcile this apparent paradox. Dick, in his enthusiasm for respectability and financial self-sufficiency, is able to direct Greeley's frontier sentiment back onto the city and reap the financial rewards. In this sense, the "frontier" truly is a state of mind, and even the lowliest boot-black can see vast economic possibilities that will allow him one day to shop in the same places where famous New York personalities shop.

When Dick finally does come into a job that gives him his future ticket "to fame and fortune" (185), he comes upon it in a way that lends greater credence to New York's frontier potential. As if to remind the reader of capitalism's potential for stagnancy, the narrative states that "business was very dull [in the city], and merchants, instead of hiring new assistants, were disposed to part with those already in their employ" (176).

Having a little free time, then, Dick decides to go with Fosdick, who has some errands to run in Brooklyn. In order to get there, they take a ferry across the East River, a geographical feature that serves as a frontier-like liminal space between two massive urban centers.⁸ While "watching the great city . . . receding from view" (177), the two friends spot a child who has fallen overboard. In rescuing the child, Dick battles not with urban rabble, but with powerful elements of nature. For his bravery he is rewarded by the child's father, Mr. Rockwell, with a job in a warehouse countingroom for a salary of ten dollars per week.

Along with the American frontier came another notable distinction: a dearth, if not absence, of women. As Nina Baym observes in her famous essay "Melodramas of Beset Manhood," the West often functioned in the American imagination as the escape hatch for men who felt they were being suffocated by feminine domestication. As industrial capitalism intensified in the postbellum era, women often became synonymous with the city. Rita Felski explains that urban commerce, epitomized during the mid-nineteenth century by the birth of the department store, secured the notion that the city was the site of consumption, and that consumption was clearly the job of the bourgeois woman (64-8). Yet whenever *Ragged Dick* does detail episodes of material consumption, women are either marginalized or erased from the scene.⁹

The few women Dick does encounter cause him serious tension. Though one may attribute such anxiety to the author's latent homosexuality, as Nancy Koppelman has argued,¹⁰ one might also understand this fear in other terms. These few women in Alger's text embody much of what Felski touches upon in her explanation of

the modern industrial city; therefore I would propose that Alger also sees women as a force of anticapitalist inertia.

With the onslaught of consumer culture, Felski argues, modernity is "no longer associated with a progressive development toward a more rational society." Instead, it has come to exemplify "the growth of irrationalism [sic], the return of repressed nature in the form of inchoate desire" (62). The problem with women, it would seem, is that they are consumed by consumption without regard for the future. Women's spending, it is feared, will outpace men's ability to earn.

The irrationality that Felski mentions certainly describes the woman Dick and Frank encounter on the streetcar in the ninth chapter. Embodying the archconsumer, she takes up two seats. When she cannot find her pocketbook she breaks into a fury, accusing Dick and Frank (who by now are both well dressed) of stealing it. The fracas becomes so noticeable that the conductor has to stop the car and search the two boys at the woman's insistence. All the while, businessmen passengers are expressing their dissatisfaction with the delay. Finally, when it turns out that the lady had simply misplaced her pocketbook, one passenger remarks rather crossly, "'Then you have been keeping me here all this time for nothing. . . . I wish you'd take care to be sure next time before you make such a disturbance for nothing. I've lost five minutes, and shall not be on time'" (64). In a capitalist system in which "time is money," the worst thing imaginable is either to arrest time or to make up for lost time.

Revealing their anxiety about women and marriage, the two boys reflect upon the trolley car incident a chapter later as they are nearing Central Park. Frank remarks, "'I hope . . . our agreeable lady friend won't be there. I don't care about being accused of stealing again.'" Dick then replies, "'She was a tough one. . . . Wouldn't she make a nice wife for a man that likes to live in hot water, and didn't mind bein' scalded two or three times a day?'" (67). Much has already been made of Dick's aversion to marriage. Michael Moon, for one, argues

that this aversion may be evidence of Dick's homosexuality.¹¹ Regardless of Dick's sexuality, I do find it telling that Frank and Dick discuss the merits of marriage while entering Central Park. As I have argued previously, the unfinished park serves as a type of urban fall line. If this is what growing up and getting married is all about, the boys suggest, they would rather light out for the territory, even if the territory is only farther up Manhattan Island.

The streetcar scene, which carries with it a decidedly negative attitude toward marriage, greatly influences the later episode in which Dick meets Mr. Greyson's daughter Ida. In many ways, the "modern," money-

obsessed lady on the streetcar exemplifies what Ida could grow up to be. The potential for this unattractive fate gives Alger all the more reason to make Ida too young for Dick to regard as a future love object. In his progression toward financial security, Dick does not have time to cultivate a love interest, especially if she, like her adult counterpart, threatens to stall time (and money). While it is true that Dick will marry Ida in the following novel titled *Fame and*



DICK SAVING JOHNNY.

From *Ragged Dick*, facing Page 284. Boston: A.K. Loring, 1868.

Fortune, as far as *Ragged Dick* is concerned, the little boot-black seems more impressed with Ida's civility than with her good looks. And without much hesitation, Dick and Fosdick are ready to get back to their snug little bachelor home after dinner with the Greysons.

As Moon argues, this homosocial/-sexual domestic scene of Dick and Fosdick's creates a state of economic "equilibrium": "at the end of the narrative, there lies ahead for Alger's heroes a static future of endlessly pursuing the two 'saving' projects (i.e., of money and other boys)" (100).

True enough: Dick is more comfortable "baching it" with Fosdick, with whom he shares not only his greatest economic aspirations, but also his bed. Here it is also worth noting the similarity in these youths' names, for not only does Fosdick take on a somewhat meek and feminized role in comparison to his more self-assured and resourceful roommate, but his name, enveloping

(Continued on Page 14)

Horatio Alger's Reconstruction of Place and Time in *Ragged Dick*

(Continued from Page 13)

"dick" as it does, is certainly sexually suggestive.

Throughout the 1850s and '60s, biographers Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales tell us, the dime novel's favorite subject was the American Revolution. By the 1870s, however, this interest turned to the western frontier (111). The biographers are quick to point out that Alger, too, was interested in this new setting. His novels *Julius*, *Digging for Gold*, and *Strive and Succeed* all rely on western exoticism and danger to move the story forward.

Yet I would argue that this distinction between the East and the West is one that Alger had already questioned several years earlier in his best-known novel, *Ragged Dick*. Since its publication, the novel has generated an impressive amount of criticism, most of which revolves around the quintessential capitalist question of whether Dick embodies "rags to riches" or "rags to respectability." But perhaps it is time to reposition this debate in ways that also recognize capitalism's spatial and temporal dimensions. Throughout this paper I have made the argument that *Ragged Dick* uses the motif of the American frontier to channel notions of time and space toward a larger, albeit spurious, understanding of capitalist accumulation. It is certainly revealing that, generally speaking, "the Frontier" is synonymous with "America." One might wonder exactly what role capitalism has played in that curious configuration. *Ragged Dick*, with its seemingly mystical ability to transform urban blight into frontier prosperity, sheds light on such a query.

NOTES

5. The term "Arab of the City," a derivative of "street Arab," goes at least as far back as the late 1840s with the publication of Thomas Guthrie's *Plea for Ragged Schools*, a book advocating the education of homeless children in London and other British cities. (See Harold Silver's *Education as History* for further information on the Ragged School movement.) By the 1870s Brace had taken this term and applied it in an American context, thus "naturalizing" it for an American readership that would better understand Native American references and images. I am indebted to an anonymous reader at *Children's Literature* for this insight.

6. For greater explanation of Olmsted's conflicts with political and commercial interests, consult Frederick Law Olmsted's *New York* by Elizabeth Barlow. For more analysis of those conflicts, see Glenn Hendler's

"Pandering in the Public Sphere."

7. According to Historybuff.com, the *New York Morning Post* was a joint venture between Greeley and physician David Sheppard. Noting how young boys had terrific success selling small cakes on the street, the two editors attempted to try their luck with newspapers. Unfortunately their idea was thwarted by a late snowstorm, which hit New York on the same day the newsboys attempted to sell their first editions. Because the *Morning Post* did not stay in publication long, Ben Day's *New York Sun* is often credited as the original source of the newsboy vocation. Apparently the directive "Go West, Young Man" is from John Soule, a newspaper editor from Indiana (Lunde 19).

8. Brooklyn grew by such leaps and bounds in the mid- and late nineteenth century that it was the third largest city in the United States by the time the Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883. Manhattan—which at that time comprised all of New York City proper—was the largest (Painter 36).

9. Certainly women did go west, though still with much less frequency than did men. The party of Mormons who journeyed to the Great Salt Lake valley was roughly one-half female. Also see Susan Butruille and Kathleen Peterson's *Women's Voices from the Oregon Trail*, which explains that between 1840 and 1870, over fifty thousand women made the trek west. First published in a 1981 issue of *American Quarterly*, Nina Baym's essay is now a bona fide staple of American criticism. She goes on to state that in these melodramas, "the encroaching, constricting, destroying society is represented with particular urgency in the figure of one or more women" (133).

10. In "The Construction of 'Respectability,'" Koppelman argues, "In the example of Horatio Alger, Jr., respectability hides sexuality and thereby serves nationalism through the myth of the individual [financial] success, a myth that has come to be embodied in Alger's very name" (131).

11. In "'The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes,'" Moon argues that *Ragged Dick* functions as a capitalist-homosexual romance. Moon sees capitalism as relying on a homoerotic, if not homosexual, bond between attractive but poor young men and older, wealthier patrons. He notes that Alger "is known to have seduced boys sexually during at least one period of his career as well as to have actively participated in the reform movement to 'seduce' New York street boys away from the milieu into an at least minimally genteel way of life" (88). Much of Moon's thesis derives from Alger's now-famous pederasty scandal, which forced him to give up the Unitarian pulpit in 1866. With regard to Alger's sexual offense, the official charge from the American

Unitarian Association reads: "Horatio Alger, Jr. who has officiated as our minister for about fifteen months past has recently been charged with gross immorality and a most heinous crime, a crime of no less magnitude than the abominable and revolting crime of unnatural familiarity with boys, which is too revolting to think of in the most brutal of our race" (qtd. in Scharnhorst and Bales 67).

AARON SHAHEEN is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he has been since Fall, 2005. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida.

WORKS CITED

- Alger, Horatio. *Ragged Dick: Or, Street Life in New York with the Bootblacks*. New York: Signet Classics, 1990. (Boston: A.K. Loring, 1868)
- Bailey, Thomas A., and David M. Kennedy. *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*. 8th ed. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987.
- Barlow, Elizabeth. *Frederick Law Olmsted's New York*. New York: Praeger, 1972.
- Baym, Nina. "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors." *American Quarterly* 33.2 (Summer 1981): 123-39.
- Berlant, Lauren. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Brace, Charles Loring. *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work among Them*. 1872. New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1880.
- Butruille, Susan, and Kathleen Peterson. *Women's Voices from the Oregon Trail: The Times that Tried Women's Souls and a Guide to Women's History Along the Oregon Trail*. Boise, Idaho: Tamarack Books, 1993.
- Cross, Coy F. *Go West Young Man!: Horace Greeley's Vision for America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
- Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- _____. *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Hendler, Glenn. "Pandering in the Public Sphere: Masculinity and the Market in Horatio Alger." *American Quarterly* 48.3 (1996): 415-38.
- Holt, Marilyn Irvin. *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Koppelman, Nancy. "The Construction of 'Respectability': Horatio Alger, Jr.'s *Ragged Dick* and Alger's Reputation." *Nationalism and Sexuality: Crises of Identity*. Ed. Yiorgos Kalogeras and Domna Pastourmatzi. Thessaloniki, Greece: Aristotle University Press, 1996. 125-33.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. 1955. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.
- Lunde, Erik S. *Horace Greeley*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Vol. 1*. 1867. Trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.
- Marx, Karl, and Friederich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Ed. Malia Martin. New York: Signet Books, 1998.
- Miner, Madonne M. "Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick*: Projection, Denial, and Double Dealing." *American Imago* 47.3-4 (Fall-Winter 1990): 233-48.
- Moon, Michael. "'The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes': Pederasty, Domesticity, and Capitalism in Horatio Alger." *Representations* 19 (Summer 1987): 87-110.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919*. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Paolino, Ernest N. *The Foundations of Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Perelman, Michael. *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Riis, Jacob A. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*. 1890. New York: Dover, 1971.
- Rosenzweig, Roy, and Elizabeth Blackmur. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Scharnhorst, Gary, with Jack Bales. *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Silver, Harold. *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Education*. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Spring, Joel. *Educating the Consumer-Citizen: A History of the Marriage of Schools, Advertising, and the Media*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Dover, 1996.
- Wohl, R. Richard. "The 'Country Boy' Myth and Its Place in American Urban Culture: The Nineteenth-Century Contribution." *Perspectives in American History*. Vol. 3. Ed. Moses Rischin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969. 82-156.

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 8)

and requires formal training by the applicant.

Recent Pennsylvania cases involving the owners of drop-off stores named **iSold It on eBay** and **D&J Virtual Consignments**, have faced \$1,000 fines and possible shutdown for conducting auctions without a license.

Sponsors of the various bills are working on a compromise, possibly a new category, "Electronic Auction Broker," which would require on-line traders to register with the state and pay a \$200 annual licensing fee, plus obtain a bond costing about \$70. Also, these operators will have to set up escrow accounts, publish their license number in all advertisements and make written contracts with consignors outlining all fees. This is the way traditional auction houses have operated for seemingly forever.

Some states like Maine and Tennessee have changed auctioneering laws to specifically exempt on-line sellers, with numerous other states remaining in a state of flux. In general, eBay has been able to persuade lawmakers not to interfere too much with its highly successful business model, one that has changed all our lives (and saved a lot of gasoline) while we search for books and other collectibles.

Forty-Six missing titles: In the January-February 2007 issue, Brad Chase and Bob Routhier wrote an article about gaps in the Alger collection at Northern Illinois University as pertaining to the A.L. Burt Company's Chimney Corner Series (capped head format), which came in several front-cover designs with full-color pastedown (appliqué). These are described on Pages 73-75 in Chase's book, *Horatio Alger Books Published by A.L. Burt*.

So far, Society members have found two of the missing 46 books, with the latest discovery, shown above, *Tony the Hero* in Chase's **Format 36 – Train**. The book has been forwarded to the Alger Repository.

Although two out of 46 may seem like slow progress in the 10 months the search has been underway, it remains progress nonetheless. Keep your eyes open — these inexpensive Burt editions were among the most

widely produced, so the 44 remaining books should be out there somewhere. After checking your January-February 2007 *Newsboy*, if your book fills our need, mail it to: Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

Sony Reader has a challenger: If you've been shopping at Amazon.com recently, you won't be able to ignore the heavy promotion for its new wireless reading device, called Kindle. This is the first big competitor to the Sony Reader, which I discussed in the September-October 2006 *Newsboy*. The Kindle has proven so popular as the holidays approach that it has been listed as temporarily out of stock.

"Due to heavy customer demand, Kindle is sold out," Amazon's Web site reports. "Because orders are prioritized on a first-come, first-served basis, please ORDER NOW to reserve your place in line. Your Kindle will not arrive by December 24th."

What we have is a \$399 Beanie Baby for the wireless generation. This product is hot!

Anyway, printed reviews have praised this device highly, basically saying it leaves the Sony Reader in the dust. With the hand-held device, you can order a book from Amazon's "Kindle Store" and have it downloaded in a minute or so. More than 90,000 titles are

available, including *The New York Times'* best-sellers and all newly released books, which cost \$9.99. Major daily newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* can be accessed.

Other features include:

- More than 250 leading blogs from the worlds of business, technology, sports, entertainment and politics are accessible. All available blogs are continually updated wirelessly throughout the day.

- The Kindle is lighter and thinner than a typical paperback and it weighs only 10.3 ounces.

- Its memory is capable of holding more than 200 full-length book titles.

- Thanks to *electronic paper*, a revolutionary new display technology, reading Kindle's screen is as sharp and natural as reading ink on paper and is fatigue-free.

- It never becomes hot to the touch and is designed for ambidextrous use so both lefties and righties can read comfortably at any angle for long periods of time.

