



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.

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NUMBER 1



Convention preview

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President's column

Though I'm writing this during a heavy snow storm, the first weekend in May is not so far away. Enclosed with this issue of **Newsboy** is Ralph Carlson's agenda for the convention, along with the registration form and instructions for making hotel reservations.

Please pay attention to the early deadline for booking your room: The Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel will only hold rooms at the convention rate until **March 28th**, so I urge to call the hotel *this week!* A color brochure is enclosed for your convenience.

For those of you who will have a little extra time in Salt Lake City and aren't up for late-season skiing, you might enjoy Gourmet Magazine's January coverage of down-home ice cream and pastry shops, drive-in restaurants and the downtown Lamb's Grill Café. Because of the Winter Olympics, Salt Lake City has received lots of newspaper and magazine coverage; if you caught Temple Square events on TV during the Games, you may have caught Ralph on camera, as he was an official usher.

Here's something on which I would value your input. I have appointed the nominating committee, consisting of Brad Chase (chair), Larry Rice, and Bart Nyberg. They are hard at work thinking about nominations of new officers and directors for approval at the annual meeting. This year, we elect a new president and vice-president, elect a treasurer, and three members of the board.

The outgoing board members, whose work I have greatly appreciated, are Doug Fleming, Ralph Carlson, and Marc C. Williams. Won't you please send any recommendations for potential nominees to Brad or to another member of the committee? Nominate yourself if you would like to serve! The committee expects to complete its work before the end of March, so now is the time to contact one of the members.

On February 1-2, I hosted a major conference on "Rediscovering Jane Addams" at Swarthmore. We had 20 scholars from around the country coming to town to participate, including Jean Bethke Elshtain, a Political Scientist and well-known public intellectual who has just published a new biography on Addams and a companion volume of her writings. Historians, biographers old and new, other political scientists, and bibliographers will be joining in to examine Addams's views on internationalism and peace, her progressive

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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes — lads whose struggles epitomized the great American dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

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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, with single issues of Newsboy costing \$4.00. Please make all 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 can visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.ihot.com/~has/

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space free of charge to our members for the sale only of such material. Send ads or "Letters to the Editor" to Newsboy editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047.

'Crossroads of the West' prepares to welcome Horatio Alger Society

By Ralph J. Carlson (PF-955)

Welcome to Salt Lake City — "Crossroads of the West"! Come and enjoy Utah's nature playground. Salt Lake City is the perfect base for countless adventures. Hers is your opportunity to enjoy many ways to build up great memories. There's plenty to do around town as well.

The annual Horatio Alger Society convention, May 2-5, 2002, is less than two months away! It will be a convention that you will talk about for years to come. Look over the enclosed agenda, and you can easily see that you will want to be a part of the scheduled activities, with interesting speakers, a great atmosphere and delicious food awaiting you.

But to do so, you will want to mail in your convention registration right away. Then, please call the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel toll-free at 1-800-366-3684 to make

your room reservations. I strongly urge you not to wait, because the hotel is holding our guaranteed block of rooms only until **March 28**. Web site: www.plaza-hotel.com.

If you plan to drive, you will be arriving over Salt Lake's newly built multi-million dollar freeway. If you are flying, many airlines serve Salt Lake International Airport. They include United, American, Delta, Southwest, Continental, Northwest, Frontier, Skywest and Jet Blue. There are some real low fares available right now, but again, don't wait until the last minute before making your flight reservations.

When you arrive at the airport, simply call the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza at 521-0130 for free shuttle van pickup.

Due to the limited amount of extra time you'll have the weekend of May 2-5, you may want to plan a few extra days for your trip. If you do, there are five national and state parks within 4-5 hours' drive of Salt Lake City. They include Bryce Canyon, Zion, Canyonlands, Arches and Deadhorse Point.

While in Salt Lake City, in addition to historic Temple

Square, you will really enjoy visiting Red Butte Garden, the Utah Museum of Natural History, the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, the Salt Lake Arts Center and This is the Place Monument. For those of you who want to, we'll be touring the Kennicott Open Pit Copper Mine, the world's largest.

We also have scheduled Thursday evening a free rehearsal by

the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and on Friday evening, a complimentary concert by the Utah Symphony Orchestra. Both are within a block of the hotel.

On your own, you can also schedule trips down the Green and Colorado Rivers, which can be exciting in the spring.

So, once again, welcome to this year's Salt Lake City convention on May 2-5, 2002. I hope to see you here!

For more information and photos of Salt Lake City, see Pages 5, 8 and 9.



The official H.A.S. Convention hotel is the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza, across the street from Temple Square.

Photo by Ralph J. Carlson

Editor's notebook

Over the past several weeks, we've been gathering materials for this, our annual Convention Preview issue. First, I must apologize for its lateness, but hope you will examine the materials put together by our 2002 convention host, Ralph Carlson (PF-955).

As you read in his sneak-preview article in the November-December **Newsboy**, Ralph has planned an exciting convention for us the weekend of May 2-5 in one of America's most beautiful locales, Salt Lake City.

Enclosed in this issue is the official H.A.S. Convention registration form, along with a schedule of events and information on our official convention hotel, the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel (a full-color brochure is enclosed).

Be alert to the fact that the hotel is holding our block of rooms **until March 28**, after which they will be made available to the general public. So, if you are planning to attend, please don't put off your hotel reservation — in fact, do it this week, or even better, today! The toll-free number is 1-800-366-3684.

The Salt Lake Plaza also has an Internet site at www.plaza-hotel.com and you can e-mail your room reservation to this address: rooms@plaza-hotel.com.

Whether you make your reservation by phone or e-mail, be certain you mention that you are with the Horatio Alger Society in order to qualify for our special rates of

\$79 (plus tax) for a single or double room, or \$86 for a triple or quad occupancy. These rates are exceedingly reasonable for the hotel's location, which is adjacent to historic Temple Square.

One of the best things about this convention is the fact that nearly everything we'll be doing in Salt Lake City proper will be within one or two blocks' walking distance. Places like the Mormon Tabernacle, Maurice Abravanel Hall (home of the Utah Symphony Orchestra), along with museums, shopping malls and restaurants, are all nearby.

If you are planning to fly (and Ralph lists in his article on Page 3 the numerous major airlines that serve Salt Lake City International Airport), you won't have to rent a car — the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel offers a free shuttle service for the 15-minute ride from the airport. Simply call the hotel using its local number of 521-0130 (or dial the above 800 number) for van pickup.

Ralph has scheduled an optional tour of the Kennecott Copper Company's open-pit mine, located south of Salt Lake City, and hopes to set up car pools for that, as well as for the annual H.A.S. banquet on Saturday night, which will be on the south side of the city a short drive from the hotel. That is why if you are driving instead of traveling by air, please indicate as such on your registration form so that Ralph can line up cars for possible pooling purposes.

I hope you all enjoyed watching the 2002 Winter Olympics that concluded Feb. 24, and noticed in particular the efficient way that Salt Lake City and its surrounding communities hosted the Games. If you remember the traffic jams and other logistical problems

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The Olympic flame and a gigantic fireworks display dominate the night sky over the stadium during closing ceremonies February 24, for the 2002 Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City. The games, which drew record television ratings in the United States and overseas, were declared by the International Olympic Committee the most successful in history.



The Mormon Tabernacle Choir is one of the world's best-known choral ensembles.

Some facts about Utah

- Utah has the youngest population of any state in the nation, with a median age of 27.1 compared with a national median age of 35.3. That's due in part to the size of Utah families. The average household age is just over 3 persons, compared with 2.6 for the United States as a whole, but many Utah families are much larger. The average household size in Hildale, a polygamous community on the Arizona state line, is 8.17, and Rocky Ridge, another town in southern Utah, averages 6.6 persons per household.

- With 89 percent of its population white, Utah remains one of the least ethnically diverse states in the nation. That is changing, however. Utah's Hispanic population more than doubled in the last decade to 201,559, or 9 percent of the population. Asian-Americans make up Utah's second-largest minority group with 36,483 residents. There are also nearly 30,000 Native Americans living in Utah, most of them affiliated with one of the state's major tribes.

- Although Utah is best-known as home of the Mormon Church (the Church of Latter-Day Saints), Gov. Mike Leavitt is out to create a new image for

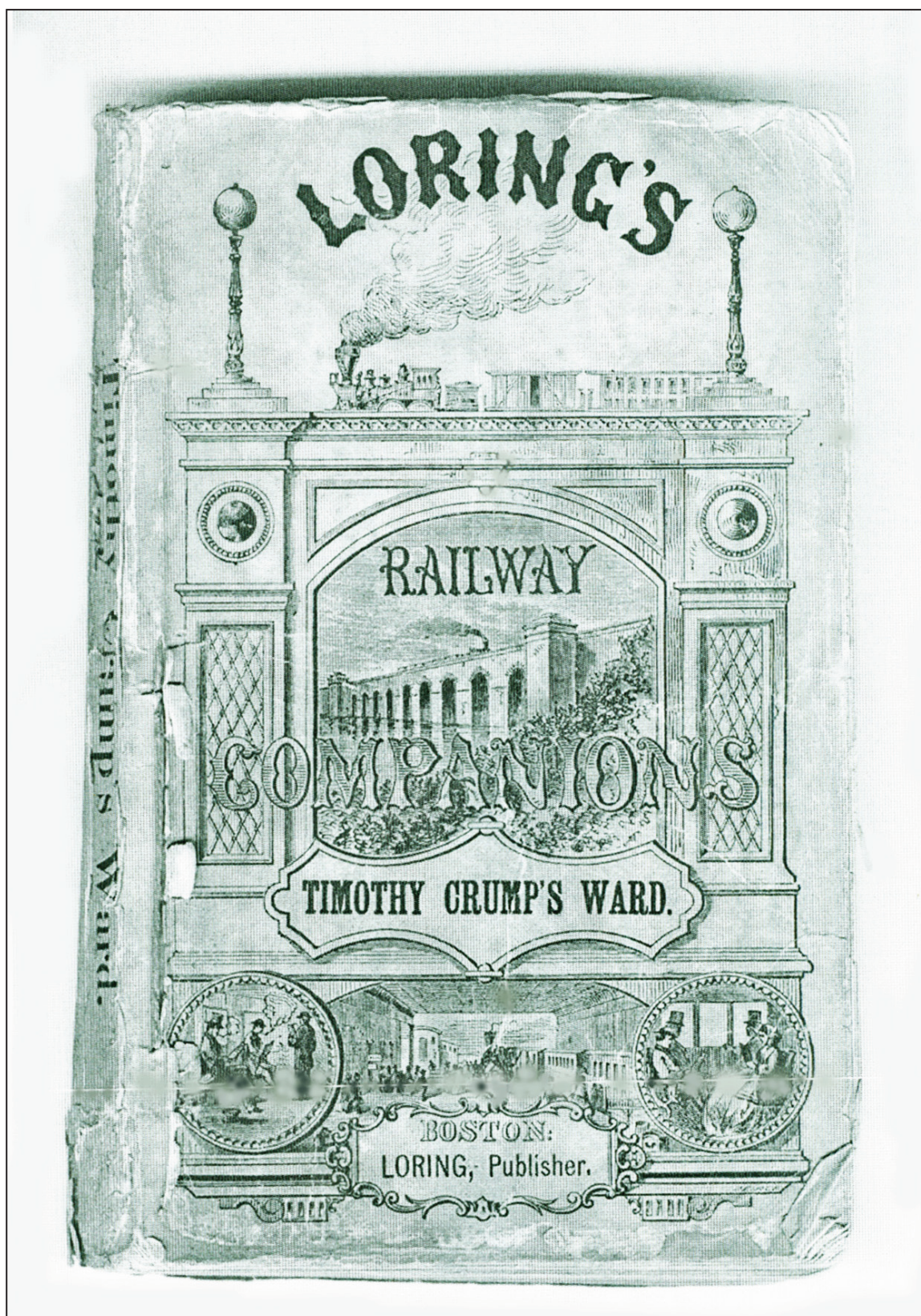
the state as a high-tech haven. Tech-related jobs are projected to produce the state's largest job growth over the next few years. Leavitt heavily courted corporate investors during the just-completed Winter Olympics.

- The "joining of the East and West" took place on May 10, 1869, with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad by the meeting of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads. This historic event took place at Promontory Point, northwest of Salt Lake City. The Golden Spike National Historic Site is open year-round and a re-enactment of the driving of the Golden Spike is held annually.

- The Great Salt Lake, about 17 miles west of downtown Salt Lake City, is the world's second-saltiest body of water after the Dead Sea and is the largest lake west of the Mississippi, covering 2,100 square miles.

- While Utah has some of the United States' most lenient firearms laws — the public can carry guns inside the legislative chamber — not everyone carries a weapon. Some 40,000 of the state's 2.5 million residents have concealed-weapons permits, but those attending the Olympics were forbidden to bring them into any of the venues.

— *Compiled by William Gowen (PF-706)*



Timothy Crump's Ward, in Loring's extremely scarce *Railway Companions* series paperback edition, has been acquired by the Horatio Alger repository at Northern Illinois University.

H.A.S. Repository — Northern Illinois University: update

by Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

I am delighted to report on two major acquisitions for the Repository. We have acquired, from Ralph D. Gardner, a two-page handwritten draft will of Horatio Alger, Jr. This specimen is the only known handwritten copy other than the actual probated will. The document is in good condition, and it has been sent for comprehensive preservation treatment, to include a display folder and accompanying case. It will be photographed upon return and appear in a subsequent issue of *Newsboy*.

Drum roll, please! The repository has just acquired one of the rarest Alger titles. *Timothy Crump's Ward*, one of two anonymously published Alger books, appeared in 1866 in two formats, one hard cover and the other a paperback. The Library has acquired the exceedingly scarce paperback edition, part of A. K. Loring's *Railway Companions* series. According to Bob Bennett's bibliography, there is one copy in the New York Public Library. We know of another in private hands, and the NIU copy is now the third one known to the collector community (the cover of this rare book is reproduced on Page 6).

The primacy of the hardcover edition is asserted by Bennett, but perhaps deserves further study. *Timothy Crump's Ward* is a rewritten version of an original serialization which appeared under the title "The Cooper's Ward; or, The Waif of the New Year," in the *New York Sun*, nos. 8246-8263, December 8, 1858-January 9, 1859. I am sure that we all rejoice that one of the legendary Alger rarities now resides in a special collection area

where it will be available for study and display.

* * *

The Horatio Alger Society Endowment fund level now exceeds \$30,000, with 4 percent of the annual distribution available for purchasing materials. This means that the endowment now generates better than \$1,200 per year to purchase Alger-related items to augment our significant Horatio Alger collection. The endowment was launched by a major initial donation from Bob Huber, and then followed by a matching period with still more contributions from Bob Huber.

Although the matching period is now over, I would like to extend the opportunity for additional members to contribute to the endowment. Those giving at the \$500 level will have their name prominently engraved on the

donor plaque at the entrance of the Horatio Alger room in the NIU Special Collections as charter members, and those contributing \$75 or more will also be recognized on the plaque as well. Endowments are wonderful instruments because they are statutorily protected and



the interest distribution from endowments must be spent for the original purpose, namely the acquisition of Alger items and other materials relating to juvenile literature.

Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the HAS endowment should make your check payable to Northern Illinois University, with a notation that it is intended for the Horatio Alger Society Repository Endowment. The check should be mailed to:

**University Libraries, FO463
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115-2868.**

Thanks again for everybody's wonderful support over the years. There is already significant activity about further acquisitions and these will be reported in a future issue. Good hunting to everyone, and keep the Repository in mind.



The Conference Center, 60 W. North Temple Sreet, is the new home for the semi-annual general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Open daily to free tours, the center's main auditorium seats 21,000.

Photo by Ralph J. Carlson

The Mornon Tabernacle is home of the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, which presents rehearsals every Thursday night, and a Sunday morning network broadcast concert, both free to the public. Free organ recitals are also offered daily at noon and 2 p.m.

Photo by Ralph J. Carlson



The Kennicott Copper Company's Bingham Canyon Mine, located south of Salt Lake City in Copperton, Utah, is open daily with admission fees donated to charity. A visitors center offers exhibits and a video presntation on the history and geology of this, the largest and most productive open-pit copper mine in the world.

Salt Lake City at a glance

The six-spired Salt Lake Temple is one of the most prominent buildings on the Salt Lake City skyline and the centerpiece of historic Temple Square.

Photo by Ralph J. Carlson



Salt Lake City's transit system, UTA, offers light rail service. This UTA/TRAX station is conveniently located in front of the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel.

Photo by Ralph J. Carlson

Salt Lake City International Airport is located just minutes via free shuttle from the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel and the rest of downtown Salt Lake City.



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 below Partic'lar Friends made contributions during 2001:

Lee T. Allen (PF-977)	Robert C. Lawless (PF-924)	Peter A. Scollo (PF-222)
John D. Arnold (PF-1042)	Robert J. Linguitti (PF-589)	Ann Sharrard (PF-325)
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Samuel T. Huang (PF-963)	Daniel M. Petersen (PF-200)	Clyde E. Willis (PF-119)
Deidre A. Johnson (PF-596)	Lawrence R. Rice (PF-757)	Nell Wright (PF-639)
Robert E. Kasper (PF-327)	Bill Roach (PF-978)	Carl E. Wulff (PF-900)
Joyce B. Keeler (PF-987)	Robert R. Routhier (PF-889)	Arthur P. Young (PF-941)
Robert L. Kersch (PF-946)	Bill Russell (PF-549)	

MEMBERSHIP

New members

Rory Coker (PF-1064)
3611 Bridle Path, Tarrytown
Austin, TX 78703-2646 (512) 478-5167
E-mail: coker@physics.utexas.edu

Rory, a physicist, has 94 Algers in his collection and wants to obtain all the titles. He learned about the Society through **Dime Novel Round-Up**.

Lyle F. Buchwitz (PF-1065)
1432 S. Rama Drive
West Covina, CA 91790-3210
E-mail: Lfbuchwitz@aol.com

Lyle describes his other collecting interest as "boys and girls series books, particularly those involving aviation, radio and other science."

Donald Buttermann (PF-1066)
301 East 75th St.
New York, NY 10021 (212) 734-6949

Donald, who is retired, currently owns 20 Algers and is interested in collecting first editions. His other collecting interest is antiques. He learned about H.A.S. through the Internet.

Dennis Blanchet (PF-1001)
P.O. Box 60
Waldoboro, ME 04572
Dennis is reinstating his membership.

Robert A. Wagner (PF-1003)
6206 Callen Glen
San Antonio, TX 78233-5340 (210) 590-7026
Robert is reinstating his membership.

Change of address

Kyoko Amano (PF-1049)
41 1/2 Williams St.
Bradford, PA 16701 (814) 362-0374
E-mail: amano@pitt.edu

Eugene H. Hafner (PF-175)
12261 Roundwood Road
Apt. 1401
Timonium, MD 21093

Arthur T. Seybert (PF-850)
2100 Draper St.
Baraboo, WI 53913

Bibliographic rambles No. 12:

Mershoniana: William L. Mershon and The Mershon Company

By Peter C. Walther (PF-548)

Smith and Wesson ...

Abbott and Costello ...

Standard and Poor's ...

Arm and Hammer ...

Mershon and Stratemeyer ...?

Some names have been learned through association. In literature we have processed Beadle with Adams, Grosset with Dunlap, and so on. But my inclinations also take me a step further, to Edward Stratemeyer. Many individuals were associated with him in his long and fruitful business ventures, yet he stands oddly alone. He cast a long shadow, which engulfed (and overwhelmed) many. Much has come to light in recent years on Stratemeyer's activities, both as editor, author, literary agent and businessman due to the ongoing research of many individuals.

What, however, do we know concerning some of those who were Stratemeyer's business associates? What, for instance, do we know about Mr. William L. Mershon, who published many of Stratemeyer's juvenile novels between 1899 and 1907 from his publishing house in Rahway, N.J.? I have posed many questions over the years to Jack Dizer, Edward LeBlanc, Bill Gowen and others ("Who really was this man and what do we know about him?"), but all admitted there was no information readily at hand on the individual we all regarded simply as "Mershon."

What we knew about Mershon was practically nil; well, let's be honest: we knew absolutely nothing. The best work known to this writer was written by the late Denis L. Rogers in *Dime Novel Round-Up* as part of his exhaustive study on the works of Edward S. Ellis ("The Edward S. Ellis Stories Published by the Mershon Complex," Nos. 490-492, July-September 1973), yet biographical material was lacking on the man himself.

Until now. I have felt that Mershon's time had come and that some personal statistics were long overdue. I realized that with some little research and a few judicious telephone calls I might be able to offer this readership something about Mr. Mershon and his personal life.

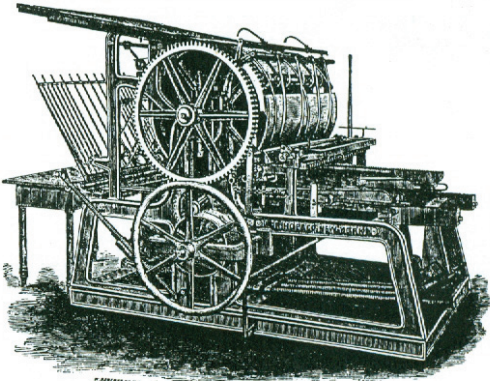
He was certainly no author at all (at least no information leads us to that conviction) but as he was only one of many within "The Stratemeyer Circle," I felt this article would prove a worthwhile fill-up to the canon we all love so dearly. Well, then, here we go.

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A trade publication advertisement for W. L. Mershon & Co., whose plant was located in Rahway, N.J., with a business office in New York.

As it turned out, he lived to be an old man and survived Stratemeyer by some 12 years. Here then, for the first time for our own public record, is his obituary in full, as it appeared in the *Rahway News Record* of May 7, 1942:

William Livingston Mershon, aged 85, of the Ward Homestead, Maplewood, formerly of 1500 St. George Avenue, died yesterday afternoon after being in failing health for the past year. He was a native of Jersey City and had made his home here for many years until 1937 when he became a resident of Maplewood.

Mr. Mershon was president of Mershon & Company,

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Mershoniana: William L. Mershon and The Mershon Co.

Continued from Page 11

book publishers, until the business was purchased by Quinn & Boden Company, Inc. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church.

Surviving Mr. Mershon are: a daughter, Miss Mary Hester Mershon, of 1500 St. George Avenue; three sons, William L. Mershon, Jr., of Waterville, N.Y.; Arthur H. Mershon of the St. George Avenue address, and Alfred V. Mershon, of Scotia, N.Y. There are five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services will be at the Pettit Funeral Home at 2 o'clock Saturday afternoon with Rev. Van Ness Chappell, pastor of the First Methodist Church, officiating. Interment will be in the Rahway Cemetery.

As obituaries often are, this notice offers us just the bare bones, and of course very little of a professional nature is included, certainly not the Stratemeyer association. However, it does give us something on which to hang our hats and provides some valuable workable data.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to receive any pertinent information from the Rahway Cemetery; I contacted them on numerous occasions, received one call in return but the promised follow-up response did not occur. I had hoped for a more complete record by the time this reached

your hands. I have not contacted the Pettit Funeral Home (if indeed it is still a functioning operation) nor any of the two churches cited above. Certainly no survivors, either. What a trump for somebody if one of them could be induced to attend one of our Horatio Alger Society conventions, as guest of honor, naturally!

In addition to the Stratemeyer records at the New York Public Library, access of which has now been

made available to researchers, two valuable sources have helped to clarify the business aspects of Mershon's life. A. Van Doren Honeyman's *History of Union County, New Jersey 1664-1923* (New York and Chicago: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1923) provides the following:

"The printing and publishing house of W. L. Mershon & Company, comprising William L. and Samuel D. Mershon, was established in 1875. The firm at one time published a semi-weekly paper under the title of **The Rahway Advocate**, also a literary magazine, **Leisure Hours**. The plant was equipped for printing, electrotyping and binding, and later became known to the business world as the Mershon Press. A printing establishment was built near Scott Avenue station on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and which is conducted at the present time the Quinn & Boden Company, of which Michael F. Quinn is president and manager. Employment is given in the busy season to about 150 of both sexes." (Volume 1, pp. 407-408).

Similarly, F. Alexander's *Rediscovery of Rahway* (privately printed, 1976) supplies some further information. We extrapolate:

"In 1874 in a third-floor room at the rear of the building at 172 Milton Avenue, a leading book manufacturing concern got its start. William Mershon, owner of the building, had three sons who were interested in printing as a hobby. He decided that a room on the third floor would be suitable for a small amateur printing shop.

However, in a rather short time, the hobby turned into a prosperous venture. To reward his enthusiastic young sons, the elder Mershon purchased a Fordham

Printing Press, invented and manufactured in Rahway by George P. Gordon in his Seminary Avenue plant [Note: a photo of the press is included in the article, possibly the very one used to print the Rover Boys Series!] He also purchased a large building on Clinton Street where more room was available.

"By good fortune and hard work, the business continued to grow, and in 1882 were forced to more to



William L. Mershon's home at 1500 St. George Ave., Rahway, N.J., as it looked the 1940s.

Photo courtesy of the Mershon family



At left, the three Mershon brothers: James Brooks, William L. (seated) and Samuel Davies. Posed at right are four generations of Mershons: William L., Arthur Hartland, Sr., Clara Buroff and Arthur N. Buroff. These photographs were taken just weeks prior to William L. Mershon's death in 1942. Photos courtesy of the Mershon family

a new three-story brick building on Campbell Street. Here, the brothers, William, Samuel and James, became partners in the W. L. Mershon Company. Success followed, and they were again forced to relocate. They sold the Campbell Street factory to Henry Soule, who converted it into the Regina Company, and erected a plant opposite Jackson Avenue between Elizabeth Avenue and the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad. For a time, this building was the largest printing plant in the United States. The three-story brick structure was a complete publishing house with departments for printing, electrotyping and binding.

"With these resources, the W.L. Mershon Company reached the production capacity of four thousand cloth-bound books and ten thousand paper-covered books per day and also published Rahway's semi-weekly paper, **The Advocate**, and a literary magazine called **Leisure Hours**. [Note: I have attempted to locate repositories for this latter serial title with absolutely no luck. They may be somewhere but all the standard search engines I have tried, both on-line and reference volumes as well as telephone and personal inquiries, have been completely unavailing.]

"By 1906, just as the company was growing too large for the brothers to handle, they were approached by Michael F. Quinn of New York. Quinn was visiting Rahway in

the summer of that year and decided that this would be a fine place to establish his printing business. He must have presented the Mershons with a very generous offer, for the brothers sold the entire business. After making the transaction, Quinn boarded a train back to Manhattan where he met with his old friend Benjamin Boden. The meeting led to the formation of the Quinn and Boden Company." [n.p. cited].

It would appear then that the Mershon publishing concern, from the standpoint of the proprietors, got started to fulfill a hobby.

William L.'s father, also William (1826-1907) lived in Rahway as well. William L. (the eldest), Samuel D. and James B. were owners of the printing firm "The Merson [sic] Co." which printed "My Folks" [see *infra*]. Arthur Hartland Mershon, one of the sons included in the obituary above, was born Nov. 9, 1890, married Grace Terrill Mansfield on Oct. 1, 1915, and died at Rahway on May 23, 1971 (Loraine B. Sawyer, "History of the Henry Marchand II Family in America With the Descendants of Timothy Mershon Sr., of Ohio" (1981; pp. 15-16).

"My folks," *The Story of the Forefathers of Oliver Francis Mershon, MD, as Told by Himself*, was privately printed in 1946 by the self-same Quinn & Boden Company of Rahway, "Successors to The Mershon Company," as the

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Mershoniana: William L. Mershon and The Mershon Co.

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record reads. The data supplied in this volume on W. L. Mershon is scanty indeed, yet there is enough to indicate that he was active in The Mershon Association, a genealogical organization, from its inception in 1923 (p. 200) and was elected chairman at its 1923 meeting (p. 203).

The foregoing helps to explain a lot of which up to the present time we did not know. At least, the mark which William L. Mershon made in the business world is somewhat more clarified than heretofore and certain personal *vitae* have now been made available.

But the record has not been totally cleared nor are the issues entirely expunged. How, in fact, did Mershon first meet Stratemeier? We are starting to find out more about their business relationship through the Stratemeier records held at NYPL. For example, the text of a Dec. 22, 1898 contract between Edward Stratemeier and William L. Mershon for the printing and publication of the first three volumes each of the Rover Boys Series and Flag of Freedom Series, can be found on Page 15 of this issue of *Newsboy*.

As many of us know, between 1899 and 1907, the Mershon Company and its related firms, the Stitt Publishing Company and Chatterton-Peck, were involved with much (but not all) of Stratemeier's books written under the pseudonyms "Arthur M. Winfield" and "Capt. Ralph Bonehill," as well as the first nine of the 11 so-called "Alger completions." A Dec. 30, 1903, contract agreement for Mershon's publication of two of the Stratemeier-Algers, containing the signatures of Stratemeier, Mershon and William Stitt, Jr. (the latter as witness), is reproduced at right.

But many questions remain unanswered. For example, how did Stitt become involved with Mershon as early as late 1903 (as shown by this contract), and why did he remain active in the company only until 1906? Who, in fact, was William Stitt, and was he in any way connected with Quinn and Boden? Might Mershon's three sons (William, Jr., Arthur and Alfred) have served as models for the three Rover Boys themselves? And where are the records of the Mershon publishing firm?

"Hope springs eternal in the Human Breast" — If these records still exist they would answer many of the questions which have hounded Stratemeier devotees for many, many years. For all we know, they may be in an attic or closet of the Mershon descendants awaiting

An agreement made this 30th. day of December, 1903, between Edward Stratemeier, of Newark, N.J., and The Mershon Company of Rahway, N.J.

Said Edward Stratemeier agrees to furnish the said Mershon Company with two stories by the late Horatio Alger, Jr., one story being entitled "Lost at Sea" and the other "Jerry, the Farm Boy; Or the Parkhurst Treasure." Both stories are now sole property of Edward Stratemeier. One manuscript is to be delivered with the signing of this agreement and the other on or before April 1st., 1904.

Said Mershon Company agrees to bring both stories out in cloth book form, and to pay to said Edward Stratemeier for the stories the sum of five hundred dollars outright and also a royalty of five cents per copy on all copies sold of said books. The five hundred dollars outright shall be paid in two notes for two hundred and fifty dollars each, one payable April 1st. and the other June 1st. 1904.

Royalties shall become due and payable every six months, starting February 1st., 1905. At such times a detailed statement shall be rendered by the Mershon Company to Edward Stratemeier, showing number of books sold, given away, printed, and still on hand.

Should the Mershon Company fail to make payments as agreed then this agreement shall terminate and Edward Stratemeier shall have the right to take the stories elsewhere for publication and shall have the right to buy the plates at the price of mere plates.

The Mershon Company shall take out copyrights on both stories as publishers.

In witness whereof said parties have set their hands to this agreement the day and date above mentioned.

THE MERSHON COMPANY

W. L. Mershon *Pres.*

Witness to
signatures:

W. M. Stitt, Jr.

Edward Stratemeier

This agreement between William L. Mershon and Edward Stratemeier is for the hard-cover publication of two of the Stratemeier-Alger "completions." Note that the originally proposed title of *Jerry, the Backwoods Boy* was *Jerry, the Farm Boy*. The complete text of Stratemeier's contract with Mershon for the first three titles in the Flag of Freedom Series and Rover Boys Series is reproduced on Page 15.

discovery even today. This is certainly worth pondering upon, as many of the Stratemeier questions would be put to rest once and for all.

Be that as it may, William Livingston Mershon reposes quietly in Rahway Cemetery and his legacy remains a valuable and viable part of our hobby and individual disciplines. God rest his soul.

Author's note: Acknowledgement and gratitude is due to Dr. Arthur P. Young (PF-941) for checking certain sources, and especially to Ms. Carol Marlowe of the Rahway Public Library, who provided me with photocopies of Mershon's obituary and other scarce source material. It is due to her that this article could be put together at all, and I am very much in her debt, as all of you should be, too.

AGREEMENT made the twenty-second day of December, 1898, between THE MERSHON COMPANY, of Rahway, N.J., and Edward Stratemeyer, of Newark, N.J.

In consideration of the premises, Edward Stratemeyer grants to the Mershon Company the sole right to publish in book form the following stories written by himself, the Mershon Company to protect themselves by a copyright on each of the six stories, taking each copyright out as publisher of the following:

Flag of Freedom Series.

Three volumes. By "Captain Ralph Bonehill."

"When Santiago Fell; Or, The War Adventures of Two Chums."

"A Sailor Boy With Dewey; Or, Afloat in the Philippines."

"Off for Hawaii; Or, The Mystery of a Great Volcano."

The Rover Boys Series.

Three volumes. By "Arthur M. Winfield."

"The Rover Boys at School; Or, The Cadets of Putnam Hall."

"The Rover Boys on the Ocean; Or, A Chase for a Fortune."

"The Rover Boys in the Jungle; Or, Stirring Adventures in Africa."

Said Edward Stratemeyer guarantees that the above six stories are new and original with him, and contain nothing of a libelous nature.

The Mershon Company agrees to bring out the six books at its own expense, in cloth, with appropriate cover designs and illustrations. The books are to be sold at a retail catalogue price of not more than one dollar per volume, and at a whole-sale price of not more than thirty-five cents per volume. The six books are to be issued under the nom-de-plumes of "Captain Ralph Bonehill" and "Arthur M. Winfield," nom-de-plumes owned by Edward Stratemeyer, and the books are to be advertised under those nom-de-plumes and in no other way.

As each book is issued six author's copies of the first edition shall be sent to Edward Stratemeyer by the publishers free.

The Mershon Company agrees to send out at least ten copies of each book to papers and magazines for review, the list of papers and magazines to be made up by the Mershon Company and Edward Stratemeyer. The books sent out are to be furnished by the Mershon Company free and Edward Stratemeyer is to pay the cost of mailing the same.

The first story on the list is to be furnished to the Mershon Company by January 15th, 1899. The remaining books are to be furnished at the rate of one per month or sooner, so that the whole six will be in the Mershon Company's hands by June 15th, 1899. The second book furnished shall be "The Rover Boys at School," to be furnished by a volume in each series alternatively.

The Mershon Company agrees to bring out the first two books by April, 1899, and the whole six by September, 1899.

The Mershon Company agrees to pay to Edward Stratemeyer a royalty of three cents on each and every copy of the books sold. The said royalties shall become due and payable on the

first day of February and August of each year, first payment to be made August 1st, 1899.

On the first day of February and August of each year the Mershon Company shall furnish Edward Stratemeyer with a complete account of books printed and bound, number of each sold and number still on hand, this statement to accompany the payment for that date.

The Mershon Company agrees to pay to Edward Stratemeyer the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.) on each story, said sum to constitute a payment of royalty in advance on that story. The One Hundred Dollars shall become immediately payable as soon as the proof sheets of the story have been corrected by Edward Stratemeyer. This royalty in advance shall be deducted from the first royalties becoming due on the said book, until the whole One Hundred Dollars has been deducted, when the Mershon Company shall start to pay Edward Stratemeyer the regular three cents per copy.

If after February 1st, 1900, Edward Stratemeyer is not satisfied with the way in which the six books are handled by the Mershon Company, then Edward Stratemeyer shall have the right to make the Mershon Company buy the six stories outright from him, the Mershon Company paying Edward Stratemeyer the sum of Three Hundred Dollars each for the stories, less whatever they have paid the said Edward Stratemeyer up to that date, when the transfer is made.

No insurance for both parties to this agreement shall be effected, but each may insure as the Mershon Company or Edward Stratemeyer shall see fit.

If the plates of the books are destroyed by fire and the Mershon Company do not re-produce inside of one year, then the copyrights of the stories shall revert to Edward Stratemeyer and he shall have the right to take them to any publisher he pleases. This clause to hold good only if Edward Stratemeyer still holds his interest on a royalty basis at the time the plates are destroyed or rendered unfit for use.

Should the Mershon Company fail to make statements and payments as agreed above, then Edward Stratemeyer shall have the right to buy the plates of the books from the Mershon Company at a fair valuation as mere book plates, and shall have the right to take plates, copyrights and all other rights in the books elsewhere for use, and the Mershon Company shall remain liable for royalties due and becoming due on books still in their hands.

In witness whereof the parties hereto have set their hands the day and date mentioned at the beginning of this agreement.

THE MERSHON COMPANY

[signed] **W.L. Mershon, Pres.**

[signed] **Edward Stratemeyer**

Witness to the signature of The Mershon Company.

[signed] **E. A. Lawson**

Witness to the signature of Edward Stratemeyer.

[signed] **F. W. Noble**

President's column

Continued from Page 2

ideas about social policy, and more. Addams, whose life spans the period roughly from the Civil War to the New Deal, was most closely identified as a founder of Hull House in Chicago, and with the settlement movement. She was a prolific writer and a firm believer in the dignity of the immigrant and of the worker. She believed that citizens had an obligation to forge connections with each other and tend to the well-being of others, and she argued that women had, as potential voters, unique skills to contribute to the polity. I have long been interested in Addams and am very much looking forward to this event.

I think members of the Society will be interested in the following piece of news. The Anti-Defamation League is inaugurating its own Horatio Alger Awards to honor the achievements of outstanding immigrants to the United States. They held an awards dinner in Chicago on Jan. 30th at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Art and Patricia Young attended as representatives of the Horatio Alger Society, at the invitation of the Anti-Defamation League. Three individuals received awards this year. Dr. Tariq Butt, born and educated in Pakistan, is Regional Medical Director of Access Community Health Network, a practice that provides medical services to Chicago West Siders regardless of ability to pay. He helps with the Chicago Public Schools' immunization programs, has chaired Mayor Daley's Asian-American Advisory Council and the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees, and has served on many other advisory commissions. He is a founding member of the Asian-American Institute.

The second recipient was Miguel Noyala, a partner in the Chicago office of the global law firm of Baker & McKenzie. He was born and raised in Mexico City, received his Mexican law degree, and then moved to Dallas where he received his J.D. from Southern Methodist University. He works in the areas of international joint ventures and mergers and acquisitions, particularly with respect to Mexico. He donates his time to a variety of Hispanic cultural institutions and organizations, and does pro bono work to benefit Hispanic women who are trying to resolve family and immigration law issues.

Michael Smolyansky also received a Horatio Alger Award on January 30th. He left Russia for the U.S. in 1976 and built a career as an engineer at E.J. Littell Machine Company. He began making kefir, a dairy product similar to yogurt and known to him from his youth, and his Lifeway kefir became a huge success and is now marketed nationally and internationally. Lifeway is the only U.S. company ever taken public (trading on the NASDAQ) by a Russian immigrant. Mr. Smolyansky has served on the Board of Directors for the American Israel Chamber of Commerce and for Jewish Vocational Services. I hope we will get a report of this evening of recognition and celebration in a subsequent **Newsboy**.

Until Salt Lake City! I hope we will be seeing some members from the West Coast that we haven't seen for a while, along with members from the Southwest and Mountain States.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)
302 S. Chester Road
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Editor's notebook

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that plagued the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics, you undoubtedly noticed that Salt Lake City had few, if any, similar problems.

Also, in light of the tragic events of last Sept. 11, security was tight during the Olympics, but that did not prevent the Games from going on as scheduled and being declared the most successful Winter Olympics in history. Hopefully, this will help allay any fears our members have flying to the convention. Yes, you will have to arrive at your local airport much earlier than you used to in order that the proper security checks are made. Also, note the latest regulations

on baggage; one carry-on item is apparently now the limit, which means you will most likely have to check a bag or two.

Of course, I understand there has been some hesitancy on the part of many Americans to fly in recent months. However, the truth of the matter is that flying is now safer than it has ever been, thanks to the increased vigilance by the FBI and other government agencies. I only hope we don't have any of our longtime convention regulars staying home because of flying, because there should be no fear on your part. This should be a fun and enjoyable convention, and I hope as many of you as possible will take part.

Remember to send Ralph your registration form today, and please, don't delay calling the hotel.

We hope to see you all in Salt Lake City!