



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 — 1899

THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY

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

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President's column

Spring is in the air and I look forward to warmer weather, cycling, blooming flowers, and "Work and Win in Ohio," the 2011 H.A.S. Convention hosted by Bob Huber in Canton, Ohio, on April 28-May 1. Bob has put together an agenda that provides much opportunity for friends, old and new, to catch up, buy and sell books, and experience the Northern Ohio region. The Alger collection of the late Paul Cripe (PF-633) has been consigned to the annual auction and I am currently cataloguing the items. Upon completion, a spreadsheet will be posted to the H.A.S. website.

However, bring your Alger duplicates or related items you are ready to sell as there will be ample time for many other items to be sold at auction. We will also be holding our annual book sale Saturday morning providing additional opportunity to ensure you take home more books than you brought.

Jeff Looney has written an excellent article on the future of the Society published in the this issue of **Newsboy** that is worthy of everyone's review. Many of these ideas will take time and effort, but they are worthy of consideration. I am drafting a strategic plan for implementing these ideas and others that present the requirements, dependencies, costs, and timing involved in some of these initiatives. This plan will be reviewed for comment and input by the subcommittee and Board of Directors prior to and during the H.A.S. 2011 Convention. I and the sub-committee and Board of Directors welcome your feedback.

On a related note and as a follow-up to some comments I made a few issues ago, I solicit your feedback regarding which authors of books for boys had the most impact on the youth of the time and contributed to the continued existence of the genre. The most recognizable authors of the late 19th century are Horatio Alger Jr., Harry Castlemon, Edward Ellis, and Oliver Optic if you discount dime novels and story papers. However, other authors made considerable contributions to the genre and in many cases delivered history and knowledge to the readers.

I do not have the space to deep-dive into this issue here (I will speak on this topic at the convention), but I would suggest that the content of many of the books written by Edward Ellis, James Otis, William O. Stoddard, Everett Tomlinson, and the early books

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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive & Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes. Our members conduct research and provide scholarship on the life of Horatio Alger, Jr., his works and influence on the culture of America. The Horatio Alger Society embraces collectors and enthusiasts of all juvenile literature, including boys' and girls' series, pulps and dime novels.

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

The Hurst book project

A synopsis, status ... and an excerpt

By Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)

Since many of you have been part of this project for a few years now, I thought you might be interested in finding out where it currently stands. As you may recall, three of us started out at the Carson City Convention in 2007 to write a book that sorted and ordered what seemed to be an unending number of Hurst/Alger formats.

For good reasons, a couple of years ago I found myself researching, writing and producing this book alone, supplemented with help, as needed, from many of you. You may recall my presentation at last year's convention that showed the Hurst formats found to that point. Writing all that down, plus putting together the story about Thomas Hurst, his company and its production of Hurst/Alger books has occupied much of my time this past year.

I had originally intended to have the book published in time to make it available at the upcoming Canton Convention. However, that was optimistic even though today (February 2011) the book is about 80% finished. Final editing and preparation of the text and graphics in a computer-ready mode have slowed the process given my level of proficiency and my desire to do the printing preparation work myself. I expect the book will be born sometime in the next six months and will hold it for introduction at the 2012 Convention.

A key decision made last summer was to divide the book into two volumes. Volume I covers the life of Thomas Hurst and his publishing firm and describes in detail each of the thirty, 12mo, or full-size, Hurst/Alger formats found to date.

Volume II will order and describe the many 16 mo., or Miniature Hurst/Alger books. This had to be done for two reasons: because so many different formats of each book size were found to exist it made sense to separate them; and I felt the richness of the material discovered about Thomas Hurst should be preserved



Alger's *Young Acrobat* in the Vertical Leaves format (Format No. 1), which appeared in 1899 in Hurst's *New Argyle Series*. This is the first appearance of an Alger title in a Hurst & Co. series.

Image courtesy of Brad Chase; from the collection of Ken Broadie

to fill an existing gap in our knowledge as collectors about him and his firm.

In order to keep you informed, I have included three items below:

1. A synopsis of the book's basic content.
2. The current status of Volumes I and II.
3. The Chapter 1 Prologue, which essentially introduces the reader to Mr. Hurst.

Synopsis of Volume I

Part I Chapter 1 is a Prologue introducing Thomas Hurst and his company; Chapter 2 presents background on innovations and national events affecting Hurst in his book publishing activities during the latter part of the Nineteenth Century; Chapter 3 describes the early years, 1865-1885: a time of increasing business activity and significant family growth; Chapter 4 is called "Sam's Point, 1885-1904:" that features a time of further business expansion plus increasing family activities with significant triumphs and tragedies; and Chapter 5 recounts The Later Years, 1905-1924: the time of Hurst's

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Editor's notebook

With this issue's report of Brad Chase's update on his upcoming book on the publication of Alger reprints by Hurst & Co., an interesting theme came to light. It concerns Hurst and all the other so-called "inexpensive" Alger publishers found in Chase's series of bibliographies dating back to the 1980s (A.L. Burt, M.A. Donohue, Whitman, New York Book, Goldsmith, etc.) and the parallel that exists between book publishing houses and Hollywood movie studios.

I found this out quite by accident while researching my sidebar to Alan Pickrell's article on Page 15 concerning "feral" characters in boys series books, i.e., the Bomba and Sorak Series. My little story (see Page 19) concerns the 12 films featuring the Stratemeyer Syndicate's Bomba, the Jungle Boy character, released between 1949 and 1955. Those films were shot by Monogram Pictures, a lesser light among Hollywood studios. Films were made by Monogram on the cheap in order to get them before the public quickly to fill out Saturday double features, or at the burgeoning number of drive-in movie theaters (thanks to the great increase in car sales in the boom years following World War II).

In effect, Monogram Pictures, and fellow "poverty row" studios Republic, Eagle Lion and Producers Releasing Corp. (PRC), were the New York Books, Donohues and Hursts of the film world. Cheap Alger reprints ... cheap Bomba movies. They were both aimed at certain audiences, in comparison to the Doubledays and Ran-

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President's column

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by Edward Stratemeyer provided historical knowledge that was lacking in most of the books written by Alger, Castlemon, and Optic. I also believe that in the early 20th century Edward Stratemeyer and his Stratemeyer Syndicate writers greatly influenced the continued existence and success of the boys' series juvenile genre. There were many other authors, but in most cases they were attempting to follow the design made popular by Stratemeyer.

Today, only the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew and Tom Swift series continue to add new books, which is a testament to the staying power of the characters and themes of these series. Series books for boys were very popular between 1860 and 1960 and they influenced both the boys and the men they became. I believe my own childhood desire to be an engineer was in part influenced by Tom Swift and Rick Brant.

For many years, articles pertaining to juvenile authors other than Alger have been published in **Newsboy**. A couple of years ago the H.A.S. mission statement was modified to formally acknowledge that many of our members collect a wide variety of juvenile literature in addition to the works of Horatio Alger, Jr.

The future existence of the Horatio Alger Society will require us to broaden the scope of our organization and the content of our web presence and annual conventions as suggested by Jeff Looney in his article on Page 5. As we begin providing our collective knowledge to the public, which authors, in addition to Alger, should be part of our initial focus? Should our focus be driven by relationship and proximity to Alger?

These questions and many other related questions are important, because an organization's web presence drives how its viewers perceive the organization. We have for 50 years been rightly perceived as an organization dedicated primarily to promoting the works of Horatio Alger. How we change that perception should be done with care and much thought. I welcome your feedback and look forward to seeing each of you in Ohio on April 28.

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Doing and Daring at the Horatio Alger Society: First Thoughts on a Strategic Plan

Members of the Horatio Alger Society have become increasingly aware that demographic trends have been against us for a long time.

- Membership has steadily declined.
- The number of attendees at our annual conventions has decreased.

The underlying problem is that older members are dying or losing interest, and new members are not coming forward to replace them. Even in our best years, we only get a few new members to replace the ones we have lost.

To some extent this is the inevitable result of an era ending, an era in which a large pool of folks who read Alger in their childhood was still out there.

Now, only a few people born after midcentury read Alger and his contemporaries growing up or came to them later in life. They tend to be oddball types like me who seek out and read old and out-of-print juvenile fiction. As things currently stand, it's unlikely that there are enough of these enthusiasts to save the Horatio Alger Society from eventual extinction.

Unpleasant truths, but it doesn't follow that all is lost. At its most recent meeting, the society's Board of Directors appointed a committee to consider this problem. In this digital age, we might well be able to use the website and other digital tools to make the society more attractive and viable.

I believe that we can find ways to broaden the society's focus, expand its outreach, revive its energies, and appeal to new generations of readers, scholars, and collectors.

In this presentation I will throw out some ideas. I hope they'll provoke discussion and help us to figure out which of my suggestions might be worth pursuing, and in what order.

Summary of Points

If you read nothing else here, please read this list. My agenda can be summed up as follows. I think we should:

- (1) Identify our core strength, and use it.
- (2) Put a large and growing body of excellent, reliable material about Alger on the web.
- (3) Increase our range by expanding our focus to other juvenile authors.
- (4) Put a large body of reliable material about other juvenile authors on the web.
- (5) Provide for the permanence and increasing reliability of this digital material.
- (6) Make all or most of this digital material available free to the user.
- (7) Form useful and mutually advantageous alliances, while preserving our brand.

1. Identify our core strength and use it

Our core strength is specialized knowledge about the publications of Horatio Alger (and his peers and successors) in juvenile fiction.

The membership of the Society includes people who know more than anyone else about Alger first editions, formats, publishers, short stories, poetry — and about his life, his relatives, and his imitators.

We are almost equally knowledgeable about authors who were contemporaries of Alger in writing boy books and about the Stratemeyer Syndicate and its peers in series book publication in the first decades of the twentieth century. We have the largest collections of these materials in private hands and in many cases we own items that are not to be found anywhere else.

Individually, and collectively through **Newsboy**, our members have published extensively in our field. The challenge is not to develop expertise. We already have it. The challenge is to package this expertise in such a way that people know we've got it and come to us to get it.

If you have a question about a specific book now, you can try lots of different places on the Internet: World Cat, or the different book listings in BookFinder, or Amazon, or Google Books, or various specialized websites by interested amateurs. H.A.S. member Ken Broadie has put an elaborate collection of information on his site, and this is commendable. Still, there is no place you can turn for reliable data that has been vetted by the recognized scholars in the field, namely us.

What we should aspire to do is to stake our claim as the authority that puts out material that answers these bibliographical questions such that anyone interested can turn to it and get answers from us — a reputable, validating authority.

2. Put excellent, reliable Alger information on the web

Put a large and growing body of reliable material about Alger on the web. Our website now has a few tidbits for someone who comes to it wanting to know who Alger was or what he did, but its main focus is information on society activities for members.

As such, it's not a rich source of info for people. And what must they think if the premier Alger organization doesn't have abundant content? We should turn the website into a content-rich resource with one-stop shopping for anyone with a question about Alger's publications. Even in its current form, our website is now our primary recruiting tool for new members, but the numbers joining are small. If we

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First thoughts on a strategic plan

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improve the site dramatically, the increase in membership may also be significant.

For the beginning collector, we can add a “Fun Ways to Collect Horatio Alger” page on the website that describes some of the many different ways someone can collect Alger books (with photos of examples); by book publisher, by publication, by title, by format within a publisher, etc. We can make this lively by including some great war stories about collectors’ finds, past and present, and encourage our readers to add more.

For the seasoned collector or researcher, the obvious place to start in enhancing the website is the Alger bibliography. We can take this a long, long way, BUT we can proceed in easy steps. And have usable results. Patience is required; even the *Oxford English Dictionary* took a long time to complete.

The eventual goal should be putting up a bibliography of all of Alger’s books and shorter works, indicating for each title:

- **who published it**
- **when**
- **in what formats**
- **full descriptions of the distinguishing characteristics (points) of first editions**
- **important notes, such as first appearances in periodicals**

The books are in the public domain, and so our long-term ambition can and should be to put scans of the first edition of each title online, along with fully searchable transcriptions that would be checked for accuracy.

We can more easily publish scans of the covers/spines of formats and of dust jackets.

For rare titles, we could show which public institutions own copies and, where the owner is willing to divulge the information, which private collections own it as well.

We can prepare and put online an equally rich listing of all known Alger short stories, poems, and essays, indicating where they were published and republished, providing scans and transcriptions of the first versions, etc. That would be something that doesn’t appear to exist anywhere right now, although more than one member has created spreadsheets with very significant starts in this direction, and they might very well be willing to contribute this work to such an effort.

We can create a union list of known Alger manuscript letters and autograph book inscriptions, with scans and current locations or last known sighting. Some institutions may be unwilling to provide scans of documents that would go online, but I know from my own experience that others definitely will, provided that we pay for the digitizing work and provide an appropriate citation, which we would of course take care to do. For documents and inscriptions in private hands, our memberships probably owns a majority of such material currently known to exist, and one member with a particularly large

collection has already offered to provide scans of his material for this purpose within 24 hours of being asked.

All of these bibliographies should be stored in a database with access through a search engine that would enable the user to ask complex research questions, e.g.:

- **“How many Alger titles first published by Loring were subsequently reissued by Burt?”**
- **“Which Alger books contain references to divorce?”**
- **“How many Alger poems were written during the Civil War?”**
- **“Which Alger short stories were reprinted more than six times before 1920?”**

If we make creation of such a resource one of our principal missions, and maintain and continuously improve it, then all sorts of users will come to us. Some will discover Alger and become fans. Some will stay and become members.

And our scholarly importance and continuing relevance will be assured.

3. Expand our focus to other juvenile authors

We have strong connections and affinities with collectors of other authors, both Alger’s contemporaries (Castlemon, Ellis, Optic, Otis, Tomlinson, etc.) and the later series published by the Stratemeyer Syndicate and its competitors.

We have little to lose and everything to gain by broadening our scope as a society. My own dirty little secret is that I have never collected Alger and did not even read a book by him until I had been a member of the Society for more than a decade and was about to host a convention.

I joined because **Newsboy** under Bill Gowen had begun to publish on subjects other than Alger, and I began attending conventions because it gave me the chance to learn from and make friends with people who have forgotten more about the authors I like than I will ever know.

I think that we can do much more to encourage this sort of progression. Some of our most knowledgeable members are avid collectors of authors besides Alger.

This expansion begins on the website. It may produce more members, and that could produce more convention attendees.

It’s fine to keep our name and a strong Alger emphasis, but we’ll get more members if we emphasize our links to a wider world of juvenile literature.

For an example, one that would admittedly be a work of time, it would be great if we could develop the annual auction as something more than a way to dispose of individual collections of almost exclusively Alger material. What if we started to turn it into an annual opportunity to sell “almost unique” series book rarities, a place to which people would send that fabled copy of *The White Ribbon Boys of Chester* in a dust jacket or *Nothing to Do* with a long autograph inscription by Alger or a pristine first edition of *The Tower Treasure*?

If we could begin making the auction THE place where you go for the rarest of the rare, then we’d get collectors and dealers turning up en masse, and possibly some serious

media attention to boot. Right now there is no regular venue for Stratemeyer or Barbour or Fitzhugh collectors to meet and trade stories and sell. Some of these people are already Alger Society members, and many more could be.

I would guess that some collectors with these interests are a generation younger than us, that they are already beginning to face the same demographic realities we are, and that a sort of coalescence would make a lot of sense.

4. Place great info about other juvenile authors on the Web

Put large and growing bodies of reliable material about work by other juvenile authors on the web. Again, within the Alger society we already have a huge body of expert knowledge we can tap. So here also, we can aspire to be regarded as the definitive, reliable source.

We should follow up Alger bibliographies with other juvenile listings. If we could work out permissions with Cary Sternick and with Ed Mattson and Tom Davis, the dream project would be putting their bibliographies of 19th and 20th century boys' books online.

Here again we could aspire to putting them up with a search engine that would let us ask the questions quickly and easily that can be done only with difficulty or not at all using the published versions.

- **How many new titles on western adventure themes were published by decade?**

- **How many series lasted for more than 5 titles?**

- **Which publishers produced the most new titles in the 1930s?**

- **Etc., etc., etc.**

Putting this material online would include excellent sort/select capabilities, so the user could specify whether she or he wanted the bibliography to list alphabetically by series, or by author, or by illustrator, or by publisher, or by the title of each volume, or chronologically by date of first volume of series or by the date of each individual volume.

We could also update the bibliographies as new series, titles, and formats are discovered and as new discoveries and new finds enable us to make corrections and additions to existing listings. Many folks would share my delight at being able to make such contributions to scholarship in a format that would be immediately useful to our peers.

Similarly, it would be great to work with James Keeline to incorporate his findings from the Stratemeyer archive (or link in mutually acceptable and reinforcing ways to his website) to give the actual authors of Stratemeyer Syndicate titles, and so on.

In addition to being a boon for scholarly research, such an online database would be a boon to dealers and collectors. One could consult one's laptop on the road to determine whether a book was a first format. Ideally, one could tailor the database to indicate which books one owned and thus avoid the inadvertent purchase of a duplicate.

If it turns out that we can't put the big bibliographies online,

or at least not at first, then we can think incrementally. Bill Gowen's **Newsboy** articles on individual authors provide a fine starting point. With his permission, we could use each one to create a page within the Alger website devoted to a specific author: Ralph Henry Barbour, Walter Prichard Eaton (once Bill publishes it), James Otis, William Heyliger, Earl Reed Silvers, W.O. Stoddard, etc..

In each case we could have a bibliography of the author's writings, images of a lot of the covers and dust jackets, and, of course, Bill's biography. We could give each of them a common look and feel, so that a user going from one to another would know what to expect and how to find things.

Once we get some of these up, we might expect that (with some encouragement and technical assistance), members (or soon-to-be members) will step forward to add similar sections for other favorite authors or series, or to take responsibility for the accuracy and addition of future content for an author already on the site.

I, for example, have often toyed with the idea of creating a website of my own devoted to Barbour. I might never get around to it. But if there was an existing Barbour section of the Alger Society website, with Bill's material as a starting point, I would be very much interested in taking over as "sub-web-master," and in that capacity field questions, add new content (such as my own two articles on Barbour, more scans, and possibly begin to create a full bibliography of his short stories and poems).

The beauty of this approach would be that it isn't static, that it could take advantage of current interests and grow progressively more complete and more valuable to all kinds of users.

5. Make the material permanent

Provide for the permanence and increasing reliability of this digital material. The idea of putting this material online is compelling only if it stays there. No one is going to want to invest time and labor in making the database and other digital material reliable and complete unless it has a strong chance of enduring in the long haul.

This means that we should plan to create our data in widely used formats (for example, all of the bibliographic and textual material of the Jefferson Papers is tagged in XML and delivered using a variety of stylesheets and search engines that tailor it to the specific needs of the user) rather than idiosyncratic, proprietary ones full of hidden codes, since such systems are more likely to go out of use rapidly and become difficult to convert when they become obsolete.

The current H.A.S. Internet Service Provider (ISP) no doubt has reliable servers with established backup protocols. Further, it's the user's obligation (us) to maintain backup/archive copies. Not difficult and very necessary.

In the long run we might want to affiliate with a research institution that can fold our data into its much larger collection and take on responsibility for the "care and feeding" of the

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material as it migrates to new hardware and software over the coming decades. This point is discussed at greater length in the final section below.

6. Make material free to the user

Make all or most of this digital material available free to the user. This is the way the Internet works now.

We need to resist the temptation to restrict the website to dues-paying members, or require a subscription fee, or otherwise insist that people pay up front for the service we provide. The rising generations of internet users expect everything to be free, and they will simply ignore us if it isn't. Instead of worrying about people "stealing" our data, we should be thrilled that they are using it.

Folks like Bennett and Gardner and Hudson and Sternick and Mattson/Davis have not spent untold hours creating bibliographies with the expectation that they would make big bucks off of them (or if they did, they were soon disabused of the notion). They have done it because they love these books and want to share their hard-won knowledge. Naturally, their role as authors/compiler would be suitably acknowledged on the website.

The more people use this material, the happier we all should be. Putting it out there for free will increase the use by orders of magnitude. And it's actually likely that sales of books like Mattson/Davis will increase! (After all, there are limits to working with a glowing screen). We could certainly consider selling these books ourselves or providing links so that they could be purchased easily from their authors or publishers.

I would argue that some of those users will be people like me, who have pursued their hobby for many years before discovering that other people are also collecting similarly, are thrilled to find them, and want to meet them and talk shop. In a word, the website will become a much greater Society recruiting tool once we expand the content and make it possible for users from anywhere to engage with it directly by asking questions, reporting errors or new findings, supplying scans or writing new content, and engaging in discussions. More and more, this is the way the web works. Biggest example: Wikipedia.

Of course, in making the site "free" we are only making it free to the user. There will still be costs, some of which we will absorb the way we always do, by supplying our own time gratis because we love doing this kind of thing for our hobby. Other development costs can legitimately be paid from Society funds because this is part of our mission, because we should see increased membership dues as a result, and because we need to do it or die.

Also, it's possible that once we show that we are putting up material with serious scholarly value, we might be able to

attract a bit of grant money to expand the site.

7. Form alliances while preserving our brand

Form useful and mutually advantageous alliances, while preserving our brand. We should consider forming alliances that would be mutually beneficial.

First, once we make a good start on building a viable and expanding web presence along the lines sketched above, we could invite organizations with comparable goals but somewhat different emphases to add their material to our site.

- I am thinking especially of **Dime Novel Round-Up**, where we could see if its editor and board are interested in working with us to put all or selections of their back issues online and/or some of the extensive listings of dime-novel titles that it has published during its long and distinguished history.

- Another good fit would be the bibliographies and synopses of girls' series books that have come out under the auspices of the Phantom Friends.

- The **Whispered Watchword** and **Yellowback Library** could each be mined for articles of enduring value and interest and, with permission of the interested parties, possibly put online.

A second kind of alliance to consider would be with a university or other established research institution, which could manage the data and its successive migration to new technologies as old ones become obsolete, provide credibility and advice if we seek funding from outside sources, and help us think through ways that our work could be most useful to a community of researchers that we may not always know or understand how to approach.

Northern Illinois University is an obvious starting point, but others could be considered. Minnesota, Syracuse, and South Florida each have a claim of sorts. The key thing in all cases would be to avoid getting submerged into a culture that does not understand and may not care about what we do. We must not lose our ability to function as an independent organization, nor make a one-sided alliance, nor form a union that depends on the good will of specific individuals who will not be at the other institution indefinitely. Developing this website ourselves and then opening such a negotiation would enable us to talk from a position of strength.

The right sort of cooperative agreement would, however, be very beneficial to both parties. The trouble is that everybody, including the universities, is hurting these days.

In sum, I offer this commentary only as a starting point for discussion, and if it contributes in any way to getting us thinking and moving forward, I will be very well pleased.

Remember, the Alger title is "Strive and Succeed," not "Do Nothing and Fail."

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Looney (PF-903)

Strategic Planning Subcommittee

8 March 2011

The Hurst book project

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greatest production of Alger books, plus the demise of his firm in 1917, and his own death in 1924.

Part II provides a Chapter on understanding the way Hurst/Alger books are classified, the different qualities, sizes, covers, dust jackets and appliqués used for the full



Thomas D. Hurst (1844-1924)

(From the Hurst family files)

size Alger books Hurst published; and a chapter detailing the fourteen Hurst Series and Libraries in which at least one Alger title appeared between 1899 and 1918.

Part III presents a detailed description and visual image of each of the 30 full-size Hurst/Alger formats found to date. These are broken down into three groups: those formats with appliqués on the cover, those with

only imprinted covers and those with both appliqué and imprinted covers.

Status of the work to date

Most of Volume I has been written to final draft form; more than 100 images have been photographed and are currently being scanned and made computer-ready for inclusion in the text. Volume I is developing well, and I intend to plug along and finish it as soon as I can. I have been working with my friend, fellow collector and neighbor here in Connecticut, Jim Towey. The current plan is to publish both volumes in hard cover and hopefully use the same printing firm that has produced the many really nice children's book reprints Jim has published these past couple of years.

After Volume I is completed, I will work on Volume II, the miniature Hurst/Alger books which will probably take the following year to complete. I have already accumulated a lot of information about them and have scanned images of more than 40 different imprinted and appliqué covers so far. With the completion of Volume II, my effort to document Hurst/Alger books published

by Hurst & Co. will be completed. The following is an excerpt taken from Volume I, titled:

Thomas D. Hurst, Hurst & Co. And The Firm's

Publication of Books By Horatio Alger, Jr.

Volume I — Full Size Books

PART I

THOMAS D. HURST

And The Hurst & Company Firm¹

Chapter I: Prologue

The long trip was slowly ending for the travelers who had spent many weeks on the Cornelius Grinnell passenger ship of the New York American Line as it slowly edged its way into New York harbor heading for the tip of Manhattan Island. The month was May and the year was 1863². The ship's destination was Castle Garden, New York, the first official American immigration center. Castle Garden, located in the Battery Section on the tip of Manhattan Island, received and processed over 10 million immigrants from 1830 to 1892, welcoming all to America where they could pursue their individual dreams for a new life. (Castle Garden is known today as Castle Clinton and is an immigration museum.³) Hope and feelings of anticipation of the passengers were likely at their highest at that point of their trip. This would be a new beginning for all on board; some would succeed and some would fail, but as they all looked out toward their new surroundings, their feelings of excitement must have been at their peak.

Some on board the ship that day perhaps were fleeing religious persecution, political strife or unemployment in their homelands; some were just adventurous. Many had family connections in America, but they all were optimistic about their chances for a new and rewarding life. Their common lure was the anticipation of new adventure. Now success would be up to the newcomers themselves and they must have known it. Were they really willing to work hard, noses to the grindstone, and spend the time and effort needed to become successful? Time would certainly tell.

Incidentally, the immigration center at Castle Garden was a pioneering effort of the State of New York and New York City which for decades processed and welcomed immigrants to this part of the New World — the land of opportunity for all. It wasn't until the early 1890s that immigration became a federal responsibility; in 1892 Ellis Island became an official federal immigration station and Castle Garden, where these passengers were arriving that May day, ceased operation.⁴

Among the passengers on board the Grinnell as it aimed for Castle's dock, was a 20-year-old young man who is of primary interest.⁵ It was the end of his voyage. Like all on board his hopes must have been high and he was

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The Hurst book project

(Continued from Page 9)

surely nervous as he knew this trip, this adventure, this dream of a new life, was about to take the next dramatic step: actually setting foot in the new land for the first time. Indeed he had left family and friends back in England and made the long trip to America from London.

Here, so far away from home, he at least had the friends he had made on the trip and perhaps also he may have been accompanied by one of his several brothers, although there is no documentation of this in family genealogy records. Yet young Thomas must have been so understandably alone that arrival day. He carried everything he owned with him in his travel bags that lay on the ship's deck waiting to be lugged down the exit ramp to new adventure. Yes, Thomas Daniel Hurst had indeed arrived in New York City ready to start a new life.⁶

Researching Thomas D. Hurst initially proved to be a difficult task. All the usual biographical sources seemed to contain only the same one or two paragraphs about the man himself and a few facts about his business.

For example, they state that Thomas was born in Folkestone, Kent, England, in 1844, established his publishing business in New York City in 1871 and died there at age 81 after almost five decades of pioneering the publication and sale of cheap editions of standard works.⁷

That's about it. Mr. Hurst was not a high profile person, either socially or in his business life. Public references about him are seldom found in either newspapers or book trade publications. We found a brief notice about his selling land he once owned in eastern New York, a few newspaper recollections about him when he died, his obituary and occasional personal newspaper notations citing a family trip here or there. This lack of notoriety is likely the reason biographical references found today are so very thin; it made finding out more about him a challenge.

We wondered why there weren't more references relating to him. Was he a shy person? Was he just a backseat type of individual wanting to have a low, public profile by nature? Was he someone who thrust others into the public limelight? Well, perhaps he was a little of all of these things. But, after researching his life, findings show that he had other things — more serious and basic things — that likely occupied a majority of his time. Let's look at these, because it is important to understand the nature of the man who published many of the Horatio Alger books that we enjoy today.

First, we've found that Thomas was very family-



Entrance to the Manhattan office building at 395 Broadway, which housed the Hurst & Co. publishing firm from 1900-1913.

Photo by Brad Chase, July

occupied as a father of eleven children, some of whom suffered serious disabilities and/or illnesses, and others who died near birth for apparently unknown reasons. Only four of the eleven offspring lived beyond their early twenties. Such serious family events must have been of deep personal concern to Thomas and his wife, Kate, likely occupying much of their attention over the years.

Secondly, Thomas and his brother Richard Charles (known primarily as Charles) were not close, even though they had several things in common. For example, they were about the same age, they both had emigrated from the same location, they spent much of their lives in the New York City area and they both worked in the same business. However, there is no evidence they ever did anything together. According to family recollections, the two men apparently led very different lives. This alone must have been a distinct family distraction for Thomas all his life.

Thirdly, as Thomas accumulated wealth he found himself the titular head of the extended Hurst family of immigrants located in New York, California, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa, who sometimes needed his financial support and attention. In addition, he was the sole owner of a busy and expanding rough-and-tumble publishing business that required his constant attention. He succeeded well in business for many years but sometimes was challenged in court about questions relating to his use of copyrights. And lastly, as an immigrant who spent his early years in another country and was raised by a laborer father and illiterate mother, he likely had feelings of some societal inadequacy.⁸ We've concluded that all these circumstances must have kept Thomas busily focused on family and business matters at hand and he just didn't have the time to become a high profile, public person.

For over five decades, Thomas Hurst purposefully provided quality, reading material to the common man at a price he could easily afford. What drove him to do it? Was it only for profit or were there other circumstances?

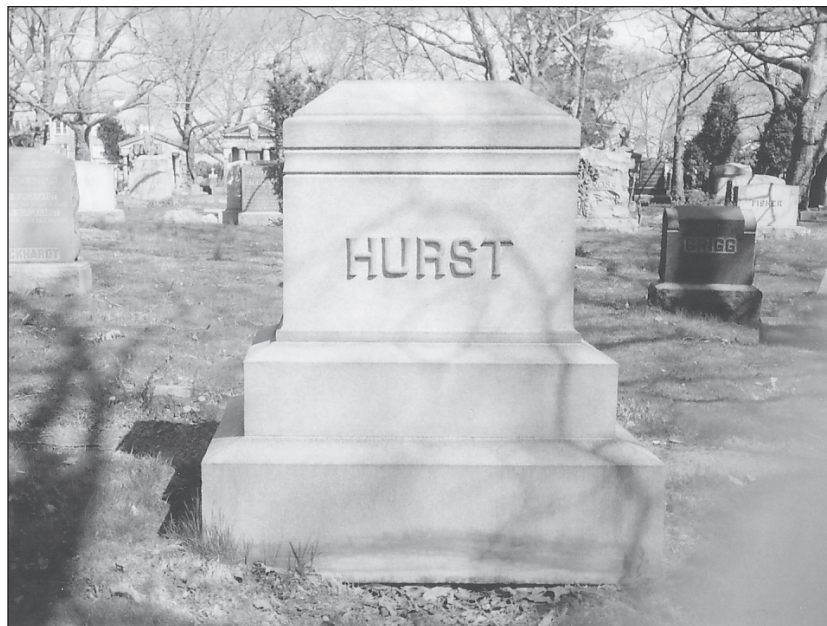
As mentioned, conventional biographical resources were largely silent about these types of questions. So, a genealogical study was undertaken hoping to uncover more meaningful detail about this man's life. During that process we struck gold! Our search discovered living family members who themselves have been active in researching Hurst family history. Even better, they were willing to share what they had found with us.⁹

Fortunately for all of us, what has emerged is a more complete picture of Mr. Hurst and his private and business lives. We are immensely indebted to, and thank, the Hurst family for their willingness to share the information they have accumulated. What has been found will be particularly meaningful to not only our small group of collectors of Horatio Alger books, but potentially to other early children's series book enthusiasts as well. Together we are all interested in books published by Hurst

& Company and now we will be able to learn more about Thomas D. Hurst, its founder and driving force.

Researching the life of Thomas Hurst and the Hurst family has been an exciting, fascinating and rewarding experience. What started out as a routine profile study of an Alger publisher's life grew into almost a full-fledged biography. The research has often raised intriguing questions, many of which still remain unanswered due to research blanks, either ours or in official records. Many of these questions, such as the mysterious and tragic death of his son Richard as an older adult, will likely never be answered. However, the main questions have been answered to our satisfaction as to who this man really was. We found he may have had private, compelling reasons to bring good books within the easy purchase reach of the youth of that day. Did he produce Alger titles by the thousands just because Alger was popular at the time and his firm could profit? Maybe, but it's not the whole story. Our research shows that the primary reason he published all types of books inexpensively during his publishing career was his life-

ally was. We found he may have had private, compelling reasons to bring good books within the easy purchase reach of the youth of that day. Did he produce Alger titles by the thousands just because Alger was popular at the time and his firm could profit? Maybe, but it's not the whole story. Our research shows that the primary reason he published all types of books inexpensively during his publishing career was his life-



Thomas D. Hurst is interred in the Hurst family plot, Bayview-New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, N.J.

Photo by Brad Chase, July 2010

long dedication to the principle that the written word should be made widely available to everyone.

Of particular note to Alger collectors, is that Thomas Hurst did not publish any 12mo. (*duodecimo*) works written by Horatio Alger, Jr., until 1899, even though Alger had been writing stories, and Hurst had been publishing books, each for over 30 years by that time. But once the Hurst presses started reprinting Alger books at the turn of the 20th Century, they poured forth for the next two decades, much to the apparent delight of the youngsters of that day and to us as Alger collectors today. Alger stories became immensely popular at that time, primarily because parents liked the overall message about hard work and good character being rewarded with success.

In addition, the youth of the day liked to read about

(Continued on Page 12)

The Hurst book project

(Continued from Page 11)

actions of real boys doing real things. Since Mr. Alger died in 1899, he never saw the plethora of different Alger covers and spines that Thomas Hurst's firm produced, many of which today are considered "typical" Alger books. This volume is aimed primarily at the Alger collector and has two basic goals: to describe and interrelate the business and personal lives of Thomas D. Hurst and to identify and detail the many Alger book formats his firm produced.

Chapter II: Background (Not included here)

NOTES (Chapter I Prologue)

1. Hurst Family Records. For several years Thomas Hurst's great granddaughter and her third cousin have researched and developed detailed genealogical information about the Thomas Hurst family dating from 1813 to the present day. Fortunately, they have willingly shared their findings with us; they have also provided us with several pictures of Hurst family members and residences for use in this book. We sincerely thank them for all their efforts in working with us and hope the story that we have been able to tell accurately reflects Mr. Hurst's life. By mutual agreement their names have been exempted for privacy reasons.

2. *Ibid.*, Hurst Family Records: Family Chronological Timeline; Ship and date information from an 1891 passport application.

3. Castle Garden.Org website. *America's First Immigration Center*, Page 1.

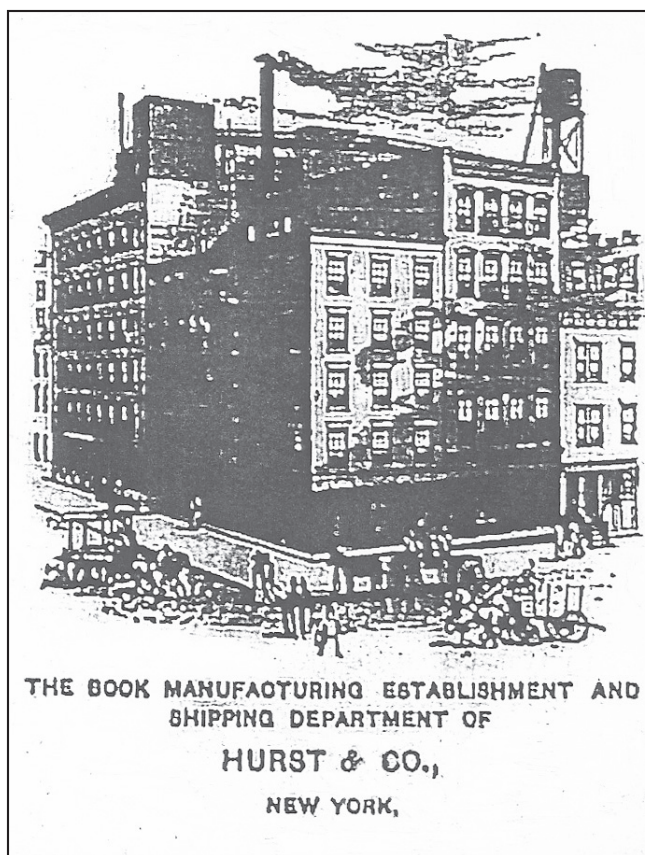
4. *Ibid.*, Castle Garden.Org website.

5. Some confusion arises about Thomas's actual date of birth. According to the family timeline and his Birth Certificate, Thomas was born on April 2, 1843 in Folkstone, Kent (2nd Qtr.1843 Elham Registration District, Birth Certificate Application No. Y548037). His New York City death certificate (Registration No. 2473) gives a birth date one year later. His brother Charles was born on February 9, 1845 in Whitstable, Kent, (1851 Blean Reg. Dist. Census). We chose to use the English Registration Office dates for both men.

6. *Ibid.*, Hurst Family Records. Chronological Timeline.

7. Sid Huttner, The Lucile Project. Home Page, Page 1. An example of such information about Thomas Hurst and his company; see also Endnote 34.

8. *Ibid.*, Hurst Family Records. Chronological Timelines, An X at the bottom of Thomas's Birth



The Hurst & Co. factory building, ca. 1903, located at 265 Cherry St., in Manhattan. It housed Hurst's book manufacturing and shipping departments.

Image from the Hurst Catalogue in the 1903 Publishers' Trade List Annual

Certificate (Application No. 548037, Elham, Folkstone Regis. Dist.) that family indicates was placed there by Hannah Hurst, Thomas's mother, is evidence that Hannah was illiterate. Also a January 24, 2011 e-mail comments about Thomas's Mother's illiteracy as follows: ... "we can only surmise that this (Hannah's illiteracy) was one of the reasons Thomas set out to make books and reading affordable to the masses".

9. *Ibid.*, Hurst Family Records. See Endnote 1.

Acknowledgements: This new Hurst/Alger book is truly a collaborative effort, as many people have helped me who will be formally recognized. However, I would be remiss if I did not recognize here several of those who have made major contributions: Ken Broadie for sharing with me his magnificent Alger library; Scott Chase for his genealogy and publisher research efforts; Cary Sternick for freely sharing his rare Hurst material and for his initial encouragements; Jim Towey for his computer and publishing wizardry and the Hurst family, which so willingly met my information needs. I sincerely thank them all.

Editor's notebook

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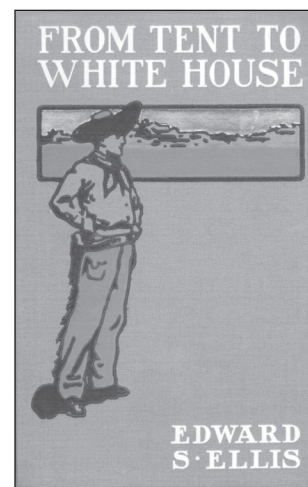
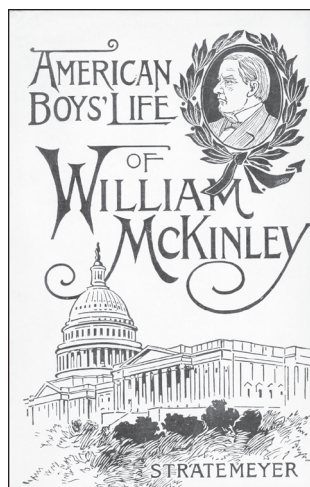
dom Houses of the publishing world, and the MGMs and Paramounts among the elite film studios that aimed higher. In both cases, the books were read and the movies watched. Thus, the same financial success was true for the cheap Alger reprint publishers of the turn of the century. Selling at well under a dollar, the books got wide circulation, Alger stories reached a new generation and everybody made a buck or two!

Speaking of books, one of the major attractions in Canton, Ohio, site of this year's Horatio Alger Society convention, is the William McKinley Memorial museum and library. The 25th president, born in Niles, Ohio, eventually moved to Canton, and it was there that the funeral train headed following his 1901 assassination in Buffalo, N.Y., and funeral services in Washington, D.C.

Two of the most prolific authors of books for young people, Edward Stratemeyer and Edward S. Ellis, wrote biographies of McKinley. For Stratemeyer, his book, *American Boys' Life of William McKinley*, was published shortly after the president's death by Lee & Shepard in 1901. At just over 300 pages, it contains 30 chapters encompassing McKinley's youth, military career and public service. An appendix contains the full text of McKinley's final public speech on Sept. 5, 1901, at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. That day, McKinley was shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz while greeting well-wishers at a reception at the Temple of Music on the exhibition grounds. Czolgosz fired two shots from a pistol concealed by a handkerchief wrapped around his arm. For a while, it appeared McKinley might survive, but gangrene set in and he died on Sept. 14, 1901.

The demise of the president is written succinctly by Stratemeyer in the book's final two chapters, which indicates the author may have already written most of the biography before the assassination. *American Boys' Life of William McKinley* contains illustrations on McKinley's early life, drawn by A. Burnham Shute, with numerous historic photographs added to illustrate his presidency (inaugural address photos, the Buffalo Temple of Music and a photo-collage of his Canton home and burial site).

The Ellis book, *From Tent to White House*, had its start in 1898 as a serial in Street & Smith's weekly nickel novel **The Half-Holiday**, running for 11 issues. By the time S&S decided in 1899 to reissue the collected story in its 10-cent, thick-paperback **Medal Library** (No. 11), the



Edward Stratemeyer and Edward S. Ellis each wrote popular biographies of president William McKinley.

president was in his second term, but soon thereafter he was assassinated, Ellis wrote additional chapters, with a new Street & Smith copyright of 1901.

By the time *From Tent to White House* appeared circa 1902 in hard covers in the S&S and David McKay **Boys' Own Library**, this update was the version now available to the public. Ellis wrote a new Preface, which also outlined the previous presidential assassinations of Abraham Lincoln and James A. Garfield. A full six chapters were added to the text, describing the assassination and its aftermath in detail.

So, if you want to learn more about William McKinley before visiting Canton, these books by Edward Stratemeyer and Edward S. Ellis are highly recommended.

* * *

The McKinley Memorial: The William McKinley Presidential Library and Museum is located at 800 McKinley Monument Drive NW, in Canton, Ohio. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

The McKinley Monument, a landmark in the City of Canton, is the final resting place for the 25th President of the United States. Construction of the memorial began on June 6, 1905. The interior dome measures 50 feet in diameter and is 77 feet from the floor to the highest point. By September 1907 the Monument and the 26 acres surrounding it were finished. Nine states had contributed material for the memorial. Ohio supplied the concrete, all of the brick, and much of the labor. Massachusetts provided the exterior granite and Tennessee the marble walls and pedestal and part of the marble floor. New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin, Illinois and Rhode Island also contributed material for the project.

2011 Convention preview: 'Work and Win in Ohio'

Hall of Fame a Canton centerpiece

Since opening on Sept. 7, 1963, the Pro Football Hall of Fame has grown in both size and stature. The complex was expanded in 1971, 1978 and 1995; and completed major exhibit gallery renovations in 2003 and 2008. Together, these improvements have transformed the original 19,000 square-foot Hall of Fame museum to 83,000 square feet.

Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Pro Football Hall of Fame is located in Canton, Ohio, just off Interstate 77 and close to the Canton Holiday Inn, site of the 2011 H.A.S. convention.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame is in Canton for three primary reasons — (1) The American Professional Football Association, later renamed the National Football League, was founded in Canton on Sept. 17, 1920. (2) The Canton Bulldogs were an early-day pro football power, even before the days of the NFL. They were also the first two-time champion of the NFL in 1922

and 1923. The great Jim Thorpe, the first big-name athlete to play pro football, played his first pro football with the Bulldogs, starting in 1915. (3) Canton citizens early in the 1960's launched a determined and well-organized campaign to earn the site designation for their city.

In the summer of 1962, city leaders had won site designation from the National Football League and had launched a fund-raising campaign that would net \$378,026. On August 11, ground-breaking ceremonies took place. On Sept. 7, 1963, the modern 19,000-square-foot, two-building Pro Football Hall of Fame was officially opened. Inducted that day was the Hall's charter class of 17 enshrinees.

Over the next four decades, several multi-million-

dollar expansion projects took place, culminating in 2009 with the Lamar Hunt Super Bowl Gallery. Then, on Dec. 10, 2010, the largest expansion/renovation project in the Hall of Fame's history was announced, this \$23.6 million "Future 50 Project" scheduled to be completed in time for the Pro Football Hall of Fame's 50th Anniversary in 2013.

The Hall of Fame represents its sport in a great many colorful and entertaining ways. Visitors entering the mu-

seum are greeted by a seven-foot bronze statue of Jim Thorpe, considered a legend of pro football dating back to his days with the Canton Bulldogs in the early 1900s.

Perhaps the most emotional stop during a tour of the museum is the Hall of Fame Gallery, which houses the bronze bust of each of the game's legends. Completion of the renovated gallery occurred in 2003 and now offers visitors the opportunity to learn about each member of the Hall



The Hall of Fame Gallery displays the bronze bust of each legendary pro football player enshrined at Canton, Ohio.

through touch-screen kiosks that include biographies, photos and video clips.

The Lamar Hunt Super Bowl Gallery recaps all 45 Super Bowls through interactive kiosks and rare artifacts. This newest gallery in the Hall of Fame is also home to the Super Bowl Theater, a high-def presentation of an NFL Films feature production.

The Hall of Fame's museum store offers a wide variety of merchandise that includes special Hall of Fame products in addition to branded merchandise for all 32 NFL teams. This year's Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on August 6.

The above information was extracted from the Pro Football Hall of Fame's official website at www.profootballhof.com

Where the wild things are

A consideration of the feral and the near feral in juvenile series books

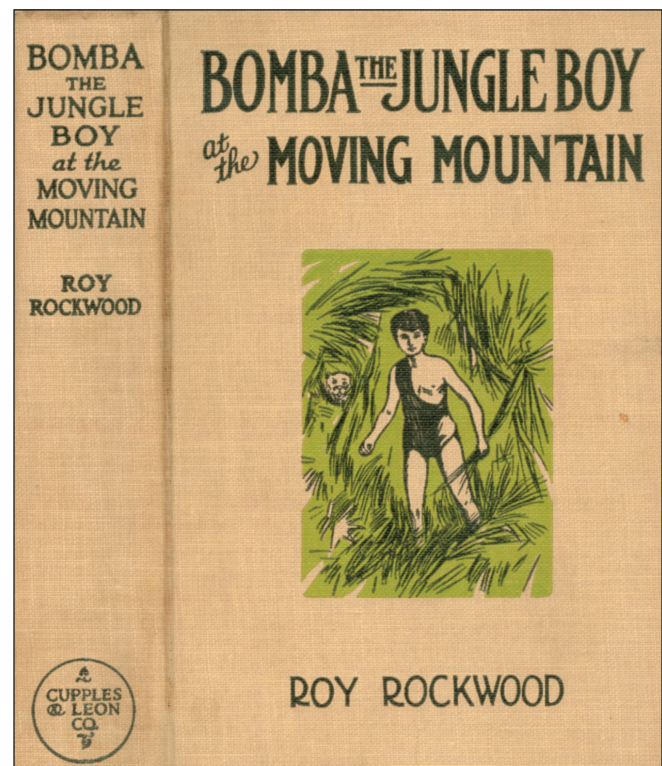
By H. Alan Pickrell (PF-965)

French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau theorized that natural human beings possessed a simple morality and innate goodness that was lost when those human beings were exposed to what we call "society." While Rousseau never used the term "noble savage," that term was widely used and attributed to him for many years. Interestingly enough, Rousseau was in vogue during the worst excesses of the French Revolution and his philosophy was used as a kind of excuse for those excesses. In Rousseau's ideal world, if no one owns land or property, there can be no greed, contentions or wars based on the ownership of that property.

If feral humans are and can be considered natural beings because of their freedom from society and convention (i.e. ownerships), then they are, indeed, the ideal beings that Rousseau and his followers admired. Certainly, there is much about the feral, as presented in juvenile literature, that is admirable and also much that appeals to the imagination of readers.

Most evident of all is the freedom that accrues to such individuals. They are freed from the constraints of society, table manners, hygiene, dress codes, and most of all, fear. They live by their reactions and reflexes rather than thought and consequently never have time to think of fear or of consequences. They are super heroes, gifted with strength, agility and nearly super human powers, substituting swinging through the branches of trees for flying. They are handsome, muscular, and capable of overcoming the fiercest and strongest of wild beasts by their own strength and physical prowess. Yet, if necessary, all of the lore and knowledge of the jungle is stored in their minds and they are capable of using it rationally.

Tales of feral children, lost or abandoned in the woods, forests, or jungles and adopted by wild animals or the discovery of animal-like children in such settings abound

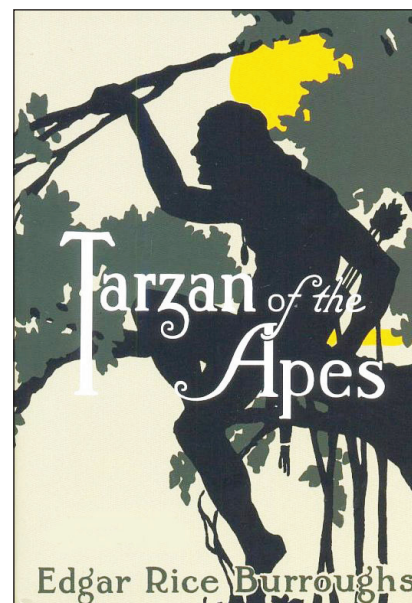
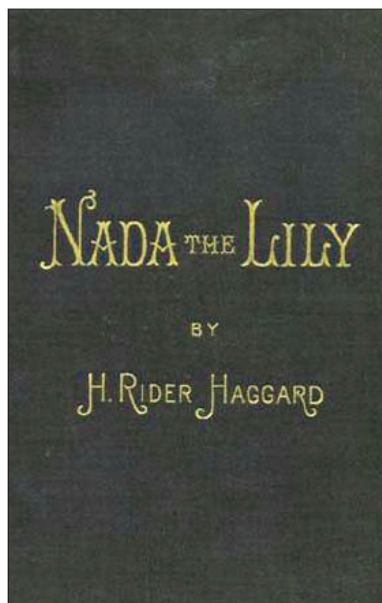
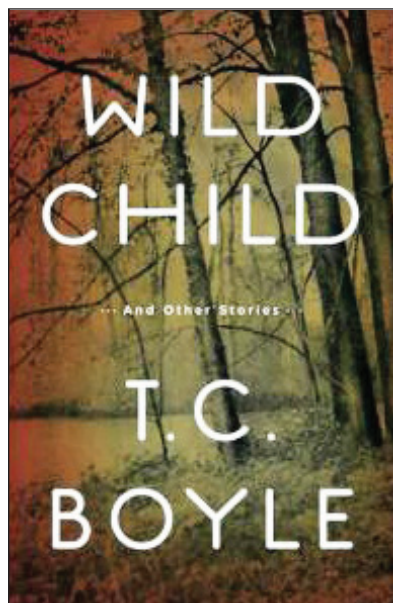


in literature from the earliest of times to the present. Myths, legends, and stories such as the tales of Romulus and Remus, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, or for that matter, Jacob and Esau, credit these special people with special characteristics. Semiramis, the founder of Babylon, was fed by doves; whereas, Elijah, the prophet of the Hebrews, was fed by ravens. The twins, Romulus and Remus, were cared for by wolves, while Pecos Bill, a folk hero of our own Wild West, was adopted by a coyote.

While the concept of making a feral character the hero of a novel is more than likely based in Rousseau's concept of the ideal of the natural man, there are those times when natural behavior is anything but noble. In fact, William Goldman's novel, *Lord of the Flies*, is one of those instances as his group of marooned schoolboys evolutionarily regresses from civilization to savagery in a relatively short period of time. Heathcliff, the anti-hero of *Wuthering Heights* may be the epitome of the brooding romantic hero, but having been treated like an animal, he certainly behaves like one. Within the pages of the Old Testament comes a Hebrew story of twins warring like Romulus and Remus. However, these warring twins, Jacob and Esau, end their tale with

This article was first presented as a paper at the 2010 Popular Culture Association conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

(Continued on Page 16)



Where the wild things are

(Continued from Page 15)

an eventual reconciliation as opposed to a fratricide. At birth, Esau was covered with hair, like an animal. Could he have been a Cro-Magnon throwback or evolutionary regression? His disposition suited his appearance: surly, disrespectful, and aggressive; whereas, his twin, Jacob, was the more subtle twin, and having taken advantage of Esau's carelessness, eventually was forced to flee from his twin's wrath.

More recently, within the annals of popular culture, is the advent of the lovely Elly May Clampett, a character on the perennially popular TV show, "The Beverly Hillbillies." Shy and retiring, but lovely to look at, this tomboy daughter of Jed Clampett prefers to spend her time charming and communicating with whatever "critter" that might accept her hospitality. Like Dr. Doolittle, she, too, prefers to "talk to the animals."

The list of feral characters in myth, legend, and literature goes on ad infinitum and is not limited only to fiction. Within the range of anthropological studies, various individuals have been labeled as "feral" and studied: sometimes, they have even been exhibited. For example, T. Coraghessan Boyle, in his new book, *Wild Child*, retells the story of Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron, in a fictionalized version. Victor, seemingly already feral by age five, was led into the forest by his step-mother where the woman slit his throat and left him for dead. Somehow surviving his wound, Victor startled villagers for the next five years or so when they glimpsed him

raiding their gardens. Eventually captured, Victor was restrained as a wild man for the rest of his life. Victor, however, was never nursed by either a wild or a domestic animal and his behavior had been what was termed "feral" even when he was a part of a family.

Still, total ferality, complete with an animal nurse, has never been a proven fact, and the probability that the unfortunate individuals identified as ferals were actually victims of some form of autism looms large. Within the animal kingdom, there are instances of cross species mothering. However, these instances run their course as animal infants quickly grow into self sufficient organisms. The notion of an animal caring for a human being until that being is capable of sustaining him/herself is nearly impossible.

H. Rider Haggard who was the most popular novelist in the world in the late 19th and early 20th century added fuel to the flame of the notion of the feral. Three of the romances that he wrote featured a feral character and probably sparked the imagination of a number of authors. One of the best known feral characters in literature is Mowgli, the wolf-boy found in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books*. Kipling admitted that he took his inspiration from Rider Haggard, who probably took his from the original tale of the founding of Rome.

In *Nada the Lily* (1889-90), Haggard told the story of Umslopogass, brother to the wolves, a character that he first introduced in *King Solomon's Mines*. Umslopogass and the pack of wolves with which he somewhat psychically communicates hunt and fight together. In spite of the fact that Haggard lived in Africa for some years and that is where he sets his story, he seems to have failed to

notice that, even though there are canine species on that continent, there are no wolves in Africa. A year earlier, in *Allan's Wife*, Haggard had introduced the character of a nurse/maid servant who had been reared by baboons and exhibited many of their characteristics. Finally, in *Allan and the Ice Gods*, Haggard returned to wolves as nurturers. A dwarf character in this story was adopted by a she wolf and the bond between them was so strong and complete that she betrays her pack for her adopted son, even though it means they will never meet again. So, between Haggard and Kipling, the feral was never far from the minds of the reading public, and by the time J.M. Barrie wrote *Peter Pan*, the feral had a firm presence in juvenile literature.

A few years ago, Frank Quillen presented a paper to the Dime Novel, Pulps, and Series Book division of the Popular Culture Association titled "Lords of the Jungle." Frank discussed Tarzan and his creator Edgar Rice Burroughs. And it is probably no secret or exaggeration to say that Tarzan is the prime example of the feral in the minds of contemporary popular culturists.

In fact, Burroughs founded a publishing and merchandising empire upon that character and new Tarzan material, in the form of various pastiches, appears almost daily. That the character and plots for the adventures were derivative of both Kipling and Haggard is undeniable. Tarzan, however, for the sake of the novels, is able to go for long periods of time suppressing the feral side of his nature and the ferociousness that accompanies it. Still, there is much about Tarzan that, even in his civilized persona of Lord Greystoke, can never completely adapt to the world of men. He is, for example, devoid of a sense of humor: his smiles are threats and his laughter is a death rattle for some opponent. Most of Tarzan's adventures are set on the dark continent as are many of Haggard's romances. Consequently, they share themes of discoveries of lost races, and Cro-Magnon peoples as well as fabulous cities and treasures.

Frank's paper also pointed out the large number of Tarzan clones, which sprang up to meet the popularity of the Tarzan character. Certainly this helped to set the stage for some juvenile series books based on feral characters. Tarzan's popularity crossed boundaries, and his adventures were read by young and old alike, but there were two characters that were reared in the jungle and depended upon animal friends for companions. Those two were — as Frank pointed out — Bomba and Sorak.

Written ostensibly by "Roy Rockwood," one of the Stratemeyer Syndicate's "house names," Bomba first appeared in print in 1926, fourteen years after Tarzan first captured the public's imagination, and was published by Cupples and Leon. Edward Stratemeyer kept his fingers on the pulses of the reading public of the day, and must



BOMBA DROPPED FLAT ON THE GROUND.

Bomba, The Jungle Boy on Jaguar Island.

Frontispiece (Page 144).

have realized that a series based on a juvenile jungle hero was a potential gold mine. Since Tarzan seemed to attract all ages, Stratemeyer's angle was to present a youngster who was on his own in a savage setting. In the course of telling the Tarzan story, Burroughs allowed Tarzan to mature (although, after reaching adulthood, he never seemed to age); Bomba, on the other hand, remained a teenager through the series of 20 books in which he was the star. Unlike the settings for Tarzan, Bomba's adventures for the first 10 books of his series were set in the exotic locale of South America.

Yet, like Tarzan, Bomba sees himself as innately superior to the natives with whom he comes in contact. In both cases, this is probably both a reflection of the racial prejudice of the time as well as developing the superhero persona. Unlike Tarzan, however, Bomba refers to himself in the third person. This literary device may be intended to convey a kind of naiveté in Bomba's mental

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and social development due to a lack of parental influence during his formative years or it may be intended to demonstrate Bomba's primitive elemental nature, or perhaps both. For whatever the reason, this characteristic is one of the most annoying and irritating conceits within these volumes.

Probably because of the importance that family held for him, Stratemeyer outlined Bomba's major goal as finding his family. In terms of a feral character, is the emphasis on uniting with a family when one has never known a family unit in any way realistic? Probably not, but Stratemeyer reasoned that since orphans always seems to want to know their origins, this must be Bomba's *raison d'etat*. Also unrealistic is the emphasis on rational thought process and reasoning, which both Bomba and Tarzan display. While highly tuned reflexes save both of them from time to time, it is reasoning that wins the day in the long run. Rousseau's natural man theorem is evident in these boy scouts of the jungle: brave, loyal, trustworthy, truthful, clean, honest, helpful, etc. And finally, both Tarzan and Bomba can talk to the animals.

While certain critics of the Bomba books have derided their shortcomings and called the series a failure, the series lasted through 20 volumes, moved through several publishers, endured past Bomba's finding his parents, and eventually became a popular B movie series (see related article). Consequently, naïve as it is, it would be difficult to view the series as a failure after so many signs of success. Many of the books, some of which were ghost written by John William Duffield, are truly gripping and exciting. Stratemeyer had set several other books in South and Central America and he used this general locale for Bomba since he never wasted research. Unfortunately, the Bomba books show no great knowledge of either flora or fauna of South America ...except for snakes.

Oddly enough, the Sorak books were also the property of Cupples & Leon. Exactly how many jungle boy books does one publisher need? Introduced in 1934, Sorak and Bomba would have co-existed until 1938, when the final Bomba book was written, even though that series remained in print until the 1950s. Sorak's author, "Harvey D. Richards," was actually Lt. Noel E. Sainsbury, Jr. Sainsbury authored several aviation series books and became a pilot for the U.S. Navy during the period between the World Wars.

His major successes as a juvenile author had to do with books about flight. Sainsbury, however, didn't establish an enviable track record with his series books, since none

SORAK JUNGLE SERIES

By HARVEY D. RICHARDS



The name Sorak means War Cry in the Malay country. He grows up among the most primitive of the Malay aborigines, and learns to combat all the terrors of the jungle with safety. The constant battle with nature's forces develop Sorak's abilities to such an extent that he is acknowledged the chief warrior in all his section of the jungle.

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CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers New York

of the series he wrote exceeded eight volumes and most were less than that. He wrote the Bill Bolton series and the Dorothy Dixon series using the name of his second wife, Dorothy Wayne. One device which helps to bear this out is the fact that each character is present in the other's series. Sainsbury had been something of a mystery figure before Bill Gowen's research uncovered most of the previous information in his *Newsboy* article titled "Flying High ... with Noel Sainsbury, Jr." (March-April 2009).

Sorak, Sainsbury's title character, is a teen-ager like Bomba, but a bit older. Found by a native woman on a jungle path, the baby Sorak was reared by foster parents until he moved out of their hut to live in the jungle with a great tiger who is his friend and mentor. By the time Sorak is introduced to the reading public, he speaks great cat fluently — at least as well as Siegfried and probably better than Roy. Interestingly enough, one of Sainsbury's Billy Smith books is set in and around Malaysia. Could Sainsbury have been stationed there at some time? Certainly, his early career as a civil engineer sent him all over the globe, so Malaysia could have been one of the spots where he spent some time. Or, like the Stratemeyer Syndicate,

is he one not to let research go to waste?

Sorak is remarkable. He is a language sponge and picks up language in a very short time. As a consequence his diction is all over the place — from American slang picked up from his younger American companions, who have discovered that he is white (therefore admirable and trustworthy) to bordering on the Biblical when speaking to the beasts with “thees” and “thous.” Like Bomba, Sorak acts out of reflex, but his emphasis is on analytical and rational thinking.

Unfortunately, the stories tend to be rather pedestrian and there are few if any moments of gripping excitement. In fact, when Sorak is threatened with execution on the following morning, there is a tendency for the reader to think, “Why wait? Let’s go ahead and get it over with right now.” The series stopped after the fourth adventure. And it didn’t finish: it stopped mid-plot.

Constructed in soap opera fashion, the plot and action of the stories continued from one volume to another with the two American boys trying to reunite with their father coupled to the mystery of Sorak’s identity. In the Bomba

volumes, the only constant was Bomba’s search for his parents which resulted in widely different adventures in each book.

By the end of the fourth volume of Sorak’s stories, Sorak is leading the two American boys, two American girls that they have rescued from a tribe of Amazons, a bunch of primitive tree people (see Rider Haggard’s *People of the Mist*), and Sorak’s foster father while trying to escape from the Amazons, and a bunch of dacoit pirates who are holding Sorak’s foster mother and sister, and those relatives must be rescued from the pirates before the rest of the group can make a getaway. There are just too many loose ends with which to deal and it was probably a good thing to put Sorak out of his misery. The constant bickering and one-upsmanship between the American boys was irritating, and while intending to be humorous, was simply limp and tiring for everyone concerned...including Sorak. And then, in the four volumes, Sorak had discovered three lost, primitive tribes and was responsible for half of one of them who

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Bomba on the silver screen

By Bill Gowen (PF-706)

When the Stratemeyer Syndicate made a deal with Warner Brothers in the late 1930s to have Nancy Drew appear in films, a winning formula was achieved, thanks to the hyperkinetic acting of Bonita Granville in the title role and William Clemens as director. The resulting four films, “Nancy Drew, Detective,” “Nancy Drew — Reporter,” “Nancy Drew — Troubleshooter” and “Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase,” have been issued on home video and are shown periodically on such TV outlets as Turner Classic Movies (TCM).

The “Bomba the Jungle Boy” movies are much more obscure, even though 12 of them came out between 1949 and 1955. Selected Bomba DVDs can be purchased from a few “golden age” film buff Internet sites in “public domain” (out of copyright) editions for \$15 to \$20, but picture and sound quality are variable (at best).

The reasons for the films’ obscurity today are several. First, those of us

with a foggy memory of Saturday matinees or drive-in double bills of yesteryear can remember that the Bomba movies (each running around 70 minutes) were pretty awful.

The first eight of the 12 films were made by Monogram Pictures, one of Hollywood’s so-called “poverty row” studios, which ground out movies on 10-day shooting schedules by renting another studio’s back lot. For added realism, according to film historian Leonard Maltin, the studio spliced in live-animal jungle footage from the 1930 documentary “Africa Speaks.” Of course, even the A-list Johnny Weissmuller “Tarzan” films relied heavily on stock footage. The studios did not often travel to African locations to shoot jungle adventures.

Anyway, a star for the Bomba films was found right there in Hollywood. California native Johnny Sheffield had previously appeared in a number of the Weissmuller “Tarzan” movies as “Boy,” the orphan from a jungle plane crash rescued by Tarzan and Jane (Maureen O’Sullivan). These



Johnny Sheffield was Bomba in twelve low-budget films released between 1949 and 1955.

1930s-40s movies were high-quality productions (for their day) from major studio MGM, and later at mid-major studio RKO Radio Pictures. Sheffield made three Tarzan films for MGM and five for RKO, with Brenda Joyce replacing O’Sullivan as Jane in the final three pictures. Sheffield

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had taken to traveling with him. Since he refused to kill or seriously harm anyone, settling his running feud with the leader of the pirates showed no sign of coming to an end and moving on any time soon. If Cupples and Leon had to make a decision to axe one their jungle boy series, the Sorak saga was the logical one to let go.

Still, there is a fascination with the feral that exists whether it be with Tarzan of the large and small screen, Bat-Boy of the musical stage, or inherent in Edward Stratemeyer's sense of business and what the public wanted. Who knows? In a few years, vampire stories for teens may be out of vogue and a new author in the tradition of Rider Haggard may cause the feral to once again reign supreme in popular and escapist literature. In the meantime, all fans of the feral can do is turn to the classics.

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Bomba, the Jungle Boy in Hollywood

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reportedly beat out some 300 young actors for the "Boy" role. Sheffield's first appearance as Bomba came in the appropriately titled "Bomba, the Jungle Boy" in 1949, and continued at a two movie-per-year pace until 1955. The final four films were produced by Allied Artists, which in 1953 became the new name for Monogram, yet still not a major Hollywood studio.

Johnny Sheffield was born John Matthew Sheffield Cassan in Pasadena on April 11, 1931, and he died last October 15 following a fall as his home in Chula Vista, Calif., at age 79. According to his wife, Patricia, injuries from the fall (while pruning a palm tree) seemed minor, but a fatal heart attack took place four hours later.

Following Bomba, Sheffield attempted to create and produce his own TV jungle series, filming a pilot episode titled "Bantu the Zebra Boy," but the project died for lack of a sponsor. Taped copies of "Bantu, the Zebra Boy" occasionally pop up on eBay because Sheffield reportedly gave copies to family and fans as souvenirs.

The Bomba films

- Bomba, the Jungle Boy (1949)
- Bomba on Panther Island (1949)
- The Lost Volcano (1950)
- The Hidden City, aka Bomba and the Hidden City (1950)
- The Lion Hunters (1951)
- Bomba and the Elephant Stampede, aka The Elephant Stampede (1951)
- African Treasure (1952)
- Bomba and the Jungle Girl (1952)
- Safari Drums (1953)
- The Golden Idol (1954)
- Killer Leopard (1954)
- Lord of the Jungle (1955)

