



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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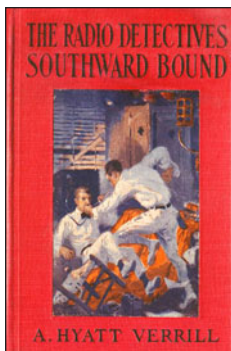
*2013 Convention preview*

## ‘Race to Indy’

- \* *Convention registration form*
- \* *Schedule of events*
- \* *Hotel registration information*
- \* *Places to visit, things to do*

-- See Page 3

The Soldiers and Sailors  
Monument in Indianapolis



## The boys' books of A. Hyatt Verrill

-- See Page 8

## President's column

Spring is right around the corner. Soon, the snow will be gone! There may be spring rains, but the "excesses" of snow will retreat for another year. I'm lucky, because I live in the foothills of Northern California. The elevation is 2,000 feet, and we get about four "decorative" snows each year. So my sympathies are definitely with those in the Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic, and the great Middle of our country!

When Spring comes, a young man's thoughts may turn to love, but an older man's thoughts (that's me) will turn to the 2013 Horatio Alger Society convention.

Where is the convention? Indianapolis, Indiana (actually, in Greenwood, just south of downtown). When is the convention? May 2-5, 2013. For details, please read what Bob Sipes, our convention host, has written for this issue of *Newsboy*. You will be impressed, startled, and amazed!

Please make your hotel reservations (directly to the hotel) and send in your convention registration form to Bob as soon as possible, to assist his and Wendy's planning purposes.

The convention registration form and schedule of events are enclosed with this issue.

### Around town

But what else besides official convention events will be happening? Bob will touch on the big stuff, but my early research tells me that on Saturday (May 4) Lynda Straus (2012 Dick Seddon Award winner) and I will probably do a museum or two. For example:

- Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site.
- Indiana Medical History Museum.
- Hook's American Drugstore Museum.

Why do I say this? First, I've written two medical books — *Medical Dosage Calculations For Dummies* and *Physician Assistant Exam For Dummies*. Second, two years ago Lynda bought everything in the National First Ladies Museum in Canton, Ohio ([www.firstladies.org](http://www.firstladies.org)). So as you can see, she and I need to get to medical museums and the Benjamin Harrison site.

Also, always look for fun food for those meals that are listed on the convention schedule as "on your own," such as Thursday evening. In Canton, Lynda and I ate at Kennedy's Barb-B-Que in a shabby neighborhood nearby. Everybody, it turns out, goes there to pick up ham/pork/beef/turkey. The bean soup was super

(Continued on Page 4)

## 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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Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to **Horatio Alger Society, 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176**.

*Newsboy* is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. You are invited to visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at [www.horatioalgersociety.net](http://www.horatioalgersociety.net).

*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, 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176.

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 advertisements 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](mailto:hasnewsboy@aol.com)



## 2013 Convention preview

# 'Race to Indy' takes green flag May 2-5

By Bob Sipes (PF-1067)

With great anticipation, we welcome our Horatio Alger Society Partic'lar Friends to historic Greenwood, Indiana on May 2-5, 2013 for the Horatio Alger "Race to Indy" Convention. Jacob Whetzel, brother of Lewis Whetzel, the famous Indian fighter who figured in many dime novels and even a few Edward Ellis books, and some friends blazed a wilderness road that became known as the "Whetzel Trace." The Whetzel Trace was the earliest east-west route through central Indiana and passed just north of Shelbyville, my hometown, and just south of Greenwood.

Completed in 1819, the trail was cut wide enough for a team of oxen, and ran across Johnson County just two miles south of what is now Greenwood's Main Street. The first settlers to move into the area now known as Greenwood were John and Isaac Smock. Their settlement became known as "Smock's Settlement" or Smockville. Its name was soon changed to Greenfield and shortly thereafter changed to Greenwood to eliminate confusion with an already existing Greenfield, Indiana, a short distance east of Indianapolis.

Today, Greenwood is a thriving suburb of Indianapolis. Historic Greenwood offers antique shops, a train store, and other variety shops. The greater Greenwood area is home to the Greenwood Park Shopping Mall and a large number of retail stores and restaurants.

We chose Greenwood due to its proximity to Indianapolis and my hometown Shelbyville. Indianapolis International Airport is close by, and downtown Indianapolis is just 10 minutes from the convention hotel and offers many attractive activities such as the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians & Western Art, the Colonel Eli Lilly

Civil War Museum located in the lower level of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument standing as the centerpiece of Indianapolis, the Indiana State Museum, the Indiana Transportation Museum, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art, among many others.

For additional information, go to [www.visitindy.com/](http://www.visitindy.com/) and [www.nps.gov/nr/travel/indianapolis/listofsites.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/indianapolis/listofsites.htm).

As the whole world knows, May is Race Month in Indiana with the running of the Indianapolis 500 on Memorial Day weekend. While the cars will not be running during the convention, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is open to the public during this time for you to tour.

The Indianapolis 500 Hall of Fame Museum is both interesting and entertaining. There is also the possibility that some cars will be running practice laps. Please check [www.indy500.com/](http://www.indy500.com/) for times and admission fees.

Of special interest is the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA). In 1966, Josiah K. Lilly and Ruth Lilly donated their parent's home to the IMA. Today, the Lilly House is maintained as it appeared in the 1930's and 90% of its furnishings are original to the Lilly family. Tours are available and include the game room and library, both of which display part of the Lilly book collection. For additional information, please visit [www.imamuseum.org/art/collections/oldfields-lilly](http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections/oldfields-lilly).

Also of interest is the IU Lilly Library located on the Indiana University Bloomington campus and home to an excellent children's book collection including The J. K. Lilly collection, which includes many of the Castlemon books Jacob Blanck referenced in writing *Harry Castlemon*

(Continued on Page 7)



**Benjamin Harrison House in Indianapolis, home of the 23rd president of the United States.**

## Editor's notebook

This is our annual convention preview issue, and on Page 3, host Bob Sipes outlines what will be in store when we visit suburban Indianapolis for "Race to Indy" the weekend of May 2-5.

Bob has chosen the Holiday Inn Express in Greenwood, Ind., for our convention hotel, and has secured a very reasonable \$93.99 per night (multiple occupancy) rate for the Horatio Alger Society. The hotel has an excellent meeting room, along with a separate breakfast bar free to hotel guests. Our annual banquet on Saturday, May 4, will be at nearby Jonathan Byrd's Cafeteria, where we will have our own private room. Longtime Partic'lar Friends will remember that Marcy and Bernie Biberdorf's 1991 convention, "Indiana Bound, Hoosier Edition," was also in Greenwood (at a different hotel) and that we held our banquet at Jonathan Byrd's.

Greenwood is on Interstate 65, about 10 minutes south of downtown Indianapolis, and it is about a 15-minute drive from Indianapolis International Airport.

Please return your convention reservation form as soon as possible so that Wendy and Bob can start to get a head count for planning purposes.

As usual, make your hotel reservation directly. The number for the front desk at the Holiday Inn Express is 1-317-881-0600. Mention that you are with the Horatio Alger Society. President Barry Schoenborn and your editor have already reserved their rooms! Don't put this off until the last minute, because the remaining rooms in our block of rooms will eventually be released to the public. Remember, May is Indy 500 month as well as a time for graduations and weddings, so don't delay!

### Another Alger short story surfaces

An ongoing project for *Newsboy* has been the reprinting of Horatio Alger short stories that have not previously appeared here — or more importantly, not been seen ANYWHERE since their original publication. Beginning in 1994, *Newsboy* began republishing a series of short stories that Alger wrote (usually under his pen name "Carl Cantab") for the Boston *American Union* in 1853 and 1854.

Peter C. Walther (PF-548) has been the H.A.S. point man for this series, and beginning with "Old Simon, the Miser" in the November-December, 1994 *Newsboy*, and concluding with "Love in Disguise" in the January-February 2003 issue, seven of those nine stories have

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## President's column

*(Continued from Page 2)*

([www.taggartsicecream.com/Kennedy\\_Barbeque.html](http://www.taggartsicecream.com/Kennedy_Barbeque.html)).

No "Treetop Adventure" for us, I suppose. Well, you never know ([goape.com/days-out/eagle-creek-park](http://goape.com/days-out/eagle-creek-park)). According to its website, Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis is one of the largest municipal parks in the U.S., with over 3,900 acres of land and almost 1,400 acres of water.

### About the auction

At the annual Friday auction at the convention, I gar-on-tee that you're going to see great books at low prices. I know. I've watched people take away Alger first editions for \$60 that I paid \$260 for just a couple of years ago. If you have donations or consignments of books (particularly Algers) for the auction, bring them with you.

I hope you can make the "Race to Indy." Lynda and I look forward to seeing you there!

Your Partic'lar Friend,  
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Clyde E. Willis (PF-119)  
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Logan, OH 43138

# Horatio Alger interviews Mike Morley (PF-934)



**Editor's note:** On the 115th anniversary of Horatio Alger's death and his 181st birth year (he was born Jan. 13, 1832), Horatio Alger returns to earth to interview H.A.S. members regarding their Alger collections. This the sixth in a series written by an anonymous author posing as Horatio Alger.

*Horatio Alger here, is this Mike Morley?*

**Mike Morley:** Yes, it is.

**H.A.:** How are you doing?

**M.M.:** I'm fine Mr. Alger. It's a pleasure and an honor to finally meet you in person. I once was President of the Society that was named after you, sir.

**H.A.:** How about that! I understand you have quite a collection of my books.

**M.M.:** Well, I do. I do. It's not the most complete private collection in the country, but I'm proud of it. I have over 2,000 books, and one of my prize possessions is a copy of *Grand'ther Baldwins's Thanksgiving* that you inscribed and gifted to Frank Munsey, your publisher.

**H.A.:** No kidding. I remember that. It's lasted that long. I'll be!

**M.M.:** Yes, It's a nice prize. Knowing that this copy had actually been handled by you and Mr. Munsey is of special significance to me. I won't be reselling this copy. My heirs will dispose of it or I'll donate it to the rare book department at Northern Illinois University, where the Horatio Alger Society has a repository library and the financial support necessary to house and catalog a near-complete collection of your titles.

**H.A.:** Oh my, Yes, I've heard about that. How did you get started collecting my books?

**M.M.:** I think I was about thirteen years old when a family friend put a copy of *Luke Walton* in my hands. It's one of your standard patterns that's been most enduring, I think. Newsboys, bootblacks ... very simplified stories of boys who, through hard work and a little luck become successful and even prosperous adults. They achieve your concept of the American dream, exemplifying the social and economic mobility that is so peculiarly American.

**H.A.:** That's correct. So you've been collecting since you were thirteen?

**M.M.:** No. I had that one book and I read it so many times it actually fell apart. It was like macaroni and cheese — a comfort food-type of book. I still have that book. I think in my late twenties I started to visit antique malls and book stores where I found other copies of your books. I figured I enjoyed *Luke Walton* so much as a kid that I wanted to get some more titles. I bought more and before I knew it, I had a whole bookcase full of Alger books — your books, Mr. Alger. Then I bought



**Mike Morley relaxes in his bookstore, Morley's Books, located in a Civil War-era building in historic Carson City, Nevada.**

the Ralph Gardner book about you. Ralph was, by the way, a fine gentleman and scholar who was instrumental in promoting your books in the second half of the 20th century. I read his book and found out there was a whole world of your books out there. Finally, I bought an Alger title from a **Yellowback Library** classified advertisement posted by Bart Nyberg, who sent me a nice note suggesting I join the Alger Society. I did and got to know many scholars and collectors, including Ralph Gardner.

**H.A.:** Great! Where do you get my books now?

**M.M.:** The collectible books are on the Internet. The reprints can be purchased at the large book stores. Not everyone wants to spend the big bucks for first editions, but many reprints are available.

**H.A.:** That's wonderful. Do you specialize in any one aspect of my books in your collection?

**M.M.:** Well, two of my most prized Alger books came from prison libraries! I also have a non-Alger book that came from your personal library. I look for offbeat and unusual Alger material, a habit I picked up from Rob Kasper. As you probably know, book collecting is a disease.

**H.A.:** You must have a lot of books.

**M.M.:** When my wife and I moved from California to Ne-

*(Continued on Page 6)*



# Horatio Alger interviews Mike Morley (PF-934)

(Continued from Page 5)

vada to open a book store, we had 11,000 books, including, as I mentioned, more than 2,000 in my personal collection.

**H.A.:** Wow!

**M.M.:** I don't have all your books in first editions, but I probably have all the first editions I'm ever going to get, but I have reprints of all your books. Nowadays, I am more interested in your concept of social and economic mobility, one example of which is *Luke Walton* — back where I started! Moreover, your rags-to-riches philosophy is still fresh and relevant today as it was back in the 1870s and 1880s when you wrote most of your books. Only now, the immigrants are Eastern Europeans, Asians and Hispanics rather than the Irish, Italian and German immigrants of your day. But the hopes and aspirations remain the same.

**H.A.:** How do you keep my books separate from your book store?

**M.M.:** I live in a two-story civil war-era building (the period when you wrote *Frank's Campaign*) in Carson City, Nevada. The store is downstairs and I live upstairs. It's the old Mom-and-Pop concept. That was the way America did business in your day. I keep my Alger collection upstairs. I named my store Morley's Books. If you put your name on it, it had better be good.

**H.A.:** I see.

**M.M.:** One of the ironies of being a collector or book store owner is that rare books have become objects. If you handle them, you diminish their value. They are locked in glass cases and are not valued for their content. It's a shame, really. I have reading copies of my valuable Algers, so I don't have to handle them.

**H.A.:** My my. It's hard to believe my books have become valuable and popular. I'm almost 181 years old.

**M.M.:** I still find your books quite engaging, yet very innocent. The social mobility ethic, "rags to riches," if you will,

still resonates in our society — a formal place in the American consciousness. Other writers who followed you had the same idea, but, through your books, you became the leading promoter of American social mobility—even if that wasn't your original intention! A concept and symbol takes on a life of its own and given the optimistic and predictable nature of your books, I think that your "rags to riches" philosophy will continue to inspire future generations of Americans.

**H.A.:** That makes me feel very humble, very humble.

**M.M.:** The idea of social mobility is part of American culture. My late wife, Janice, and I hosted a convention here in Carson City when I was president of H.A.S. She loved Alger. She had her own copies of your books, being particularly fond of the miniature editions.

**H.A.:** What a loss to the Society when she died! What a loss.

**M.M.:** She became a convert to Alger, a real trouper. She involved herself wholly in Alger. The 2008 convention was one of the last major events we shared together. Janice did not live to see our dream become a reality, but her spirit is present in the store.

**H.A.:** What a wonderful memory.

**M.M.:** I have to admit that for a couple of years, I didn't have any energy or resolve to be involved in Alger activities, but I'm coming back; it's been a tough climb out of the trough.

**H.A.:** I understand. I've been around for almost 181 years now.

**M.M.:** Yes, January 13 is your birthday, but we're not superstitious. You'll be remembered and long treasured not only for the books, but for the ideas as well. I believe that you defined social mobility very finely and very cleanly and clearly.

**H.A.:** What wonderful thoughts you have. I appreciate it greatly and I'm humbled. Thank you, Mike, for talking with me.

**M.M.:** My pleasure; thank you.

## Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

appeared. Three of them, "Aunt Dorothy's Visit," "The Blue Sash!" and "Mrs. Brown Stout!" actually were first reprinted in *Newsboy* in the 1980s and run again in the mid-1990s as part of the current series, which also has included four previously unseen stories.

So, for the last decade, two of the nine *American Union* stories remained missing. Although they had never been seen, they were assumed to be published because ads for

them appeared promoting their upcoming publication. Unfortunately, those particular *American Union* issues had not been seen — not by Peter Walther, nor by fellow researchers Deidre Johnson, Gary Scharnhorst, Victor Berch and Eddie LeBlanc. Now, Peter has informed me that one of the two missing stories has come to light, and he is preparing it (along with an introduction written by himself) for the March-April *Newsboy*. We won't reveal details (except that the new discovery involves a title change). We'll let Peter explain everything.

Again, please send in your convention registration form and make your hotel reservation early!

# 'Race to Indy'

(Continued from Page 3)

*Boys' Own Author*; a fabulous Henty collection, the Elizabeth Ball children's book collection, and many others. For those in academia, this library is only an hour away from Greenwood and poses an excellent opportunity to schedule some research prior to or following the H.A.S. Convention.

The "House that Ben Built" is also an entertaining and interesting destination for an afternoon or evening of fun. This is the home of the 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison. This home on Delaware Street in Indianapolis was built in 1874 and cost nearly \$25,000. Except for his time in Washington, this was home to Benjamin Harrison and his family. Today, you can tour the home, participate in special events featuring actors and reenactments, and view a variety of exhibits related not only to Benjamin Harrison, but to the periods and events during which he lived. Visit [www.presidentbenjaminharrison.org/](http://www.presidentbenjaminharrison.org/) for additional information.

The largest antique mall in Indiana and the Midwest is 20 miles south of the hotel on I-65, and Books Unlimited, the oldest bookstore in Indianapolis still open for business, is 10 minutes north on I-65 just across from Garfield Park, the oldest city park in Indianapolis. There are quite a few nice antique stores in the Greenwood area and many in the greater Indianapolis area. A list of Indiana bookstores and antique malls will be provided for all attendees along with additional Indiana tourism information.

Included in this issue of *Newsboy* is the tentative schedule detailing what will be an entertaining, interest-

ing, and successful convention. Bill Gowen and at least two other speakers will be presenting Friday morning. Bill's presentations are always informative and President Barry Schoenborn and I are working on some potentially entertaining presentations. We will be holding the annual book auction Friday afternoon and the book sale Saturday morning.

The Saturday evening banquet will be held at Jonathan Byrd's Cafeteria in Greenwood. Jonathan Byrd's will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year and is well known for its home-cooked style. Long-time members might recall that the 1991 H.A.S. Convention banquet hosted by Bernie Biberdorf was also held there. The guest speaker for our

Saturday evening banquet is John Luther, a personal friend of mine who is an Edgar Allen Poe aficionado. He brings Poe's works to life through dramatic recitation and readings of Poe's works while describing his life and motivations. You will never read Poe the same after one of John's performances.

A registration form is also enclosed, and you may also register via the Horatio Alger Society website. Hotel reservations should be made as soon as



**The library in the Josiah K. Lilly House. Maintained since 1966 by the Indianapolis Museum of Art and furnished as it appeared in the 1930s, the house is open to the public for tours.**

possible to the Holiday Inn Express in Greenwood. The hotel's direct phone number is **1-317-881-0600**. Please inform the hotel that you are with the Horatio Alger Society to ensure that you receive the special convention rate of \$93.99. This rate includes free wireless, newspaper, and an excellent breakfast bar. These amenities will apply for your entire stay, including preceding and following dates. Please note that the block of rooms held for our use will expire on the 5th of April, so make your reservations early!

We will post updates to the Horatio Alger Society website and Facebook page. Wendy and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at the 2013 H.A.S. "Race to Indy" Convention on May 2-5!

# The boys' books of A. Hyatt Verrill

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

Over the years, my research and study of the life of various authors' lives and contribution to the genre of juvenile series literature has been rewarding and challenging. But at no time in the past two decades has a subject arisen quite like Alpheus Hyatt Verrill, who wrote three boys' series totaling 11 books and highly prized among collectors and scholars today. Those three series, The Radio Detectives, The Deep Sea Hunters and The Boy Adventurers, would be the proud accomplishments of any author.

But Verrill, who was born in 1871 and died in 1954, was not just ANY author. Those 11 series books were but a small fraction of his literary output, which included 106 books (by most recent research) and hundreds and hundreds of magazine articles, many of the latter in the field of science fiction.

Verrill's pieces for **Amazing Stories**, a quarterly publication, were legendary in their time, and now, in the 21st Century, they are finally getting the recognition they deserve. In this Winter 1931 issue of **Amazing Stories Quarterly**, for example, appeared the Verrill story "When the Moon Ran Wild," which thanks to the digital revolution now available in e-book form.



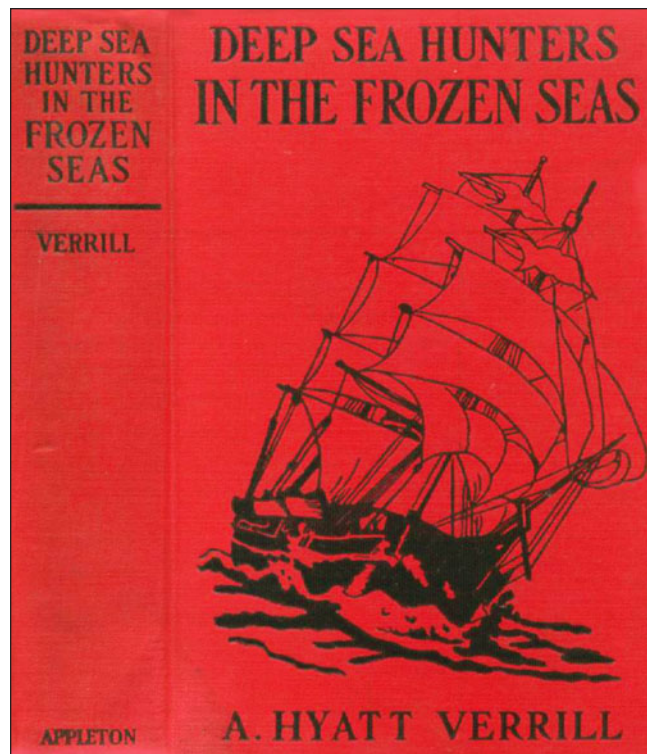
**Alpheus Hyatt Verrill  
(1871-1954)**

Fellow researcher Doug Frizzle, a retired engineer living in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has made the study of Verrill a major part of his life, and

through his website, [www.stillwoods.blogspot.com](http://www.stillwoods.blogspot.com), has brought much of the Verrill literary output, long out of copyright, back to life.

By studying the list of 106 books on Pages 12-15, you can see that Verrill was not just another author cranking out one similar book after another. The old cliché that Horatio Alger wrote the same book a hundred times is certainly not true when it comes to Verrill. It is unlikely that any author covered so many topics during his literary career, which spanned more than 40 years. The variety

*This article was presented on April 11, 2012 as a paper at the 42nd annual Popular Culture Association conference in Boston, Massachusetts, and at the 2012 Horatio Alger Society convention at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois.*



**The three-volume Deep Sea Hunters Series, published by D. Appleton & Co., is one of three prominent boys' series written by Alpheus Hyatt Verrill in the 1920s.**

is amazing: instructional books on subjects ranging from automobiles, sailboats and sailing, radios and wireless, gardening, carpentry and camping; a whole range of books dealing with travel, archeology, anthropology and other "ologies" too numerous to mention, including the studies of animals, fish and plant life. Foremost among these are his series of "Strange" books, studying all forms of bird, insect, sea and plant life.

Verrill traveled extensively through the Caribbean area, including island cultures and natives of Central and South America. He did not ignore the United States (he grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, son of Yale University's first zoology professor). At one point, he was inducted as a member of the Oglala Sioux tribe, and at one time is joined the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, becoming an expert marksman and a consultant for the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.

Verrill became an actual blood brother of the Carib chief of the country of Guyana. He traveled the paths of conquistadors and the pirates, collecting artifacts for leading museums and recording the life and mores of the native culture of those regions.



In addition to his writing skills, Verrill was a gifted artist. An example is his book *Strange Customs, Manners and Beliefs*, shown below, which uses his own illustrations of native dress and customs on the dust jacket as well as the frontispiece and in numerous interior plates. This was commonplace in the majority of his books, including the boys' series books, which we'll discuss later. A prominent example is his book *The American Indian: North, South and Central America*, with his original artwork on full display on the dust jacket and in the book itself.

Many of Verrill's illustrations of natural history subjects were used in Webster's International Dictionary, and his paintings of native cultures have been displayed at exhibitions in New York, London and various Central and South American capitals.

Verrill was also an avid and accomplished photographer, and many of his books credit "Illustrations and Photographs by the Author." Back at the turn of the 20th century, the emerging science of photography was limited to black-and-white, using photosensitive silver halide

on glass plates or then-new photographic film. Verrill was frustrated, because he wanted to photograph the flora and fauna found in his travels in full color. In 1902, he came up with a pioneering three-color photography system, which he called the Autochromatic Process. This was a photo-chemical process, in many ways similar to the system developed at Eastman Kodak years later. In theory, Verrill had the right idea, but in 1902, technology was so primitive that the three chemical emulsions were hard to stabilize, and thus the system was not a commercial success. Verrill decided the time involved was too valuable because of his extensive travel throughout the New World, so he decided to leave the science of color photography to others. And as an aside, color photography wasn't Verrill's only invention. He also patented a process for the refining of sulfur.

In addition to the study of native peoples and their cultures, Verrill is credited with the discovery of more than 30 new species of birds, insects, reptiles and shellfish. His interest in sea shells was such that he collected

and sold them, and wrote a book in 1936 titled *Strange Sea Shells and their Stories*, and in 1950 he followed with *The Shell Collector's Handbook*. They are joined by his first known hard-cover book (dating to 1912), *Knots, Splices and Rope Work*, in being nearly as popular today as when they first came out.

According to his autobiography, *Never a Dull Moment* (issued in 2007 from Verrill's 1950s unpublished manuscript), the author made 99 visits to the West Indies and Latin America and he crossed the Atlantic Ocean 11 times in his never-ending scientific and cultural quests.

Now, let's take a tour through the books Verrill wrote for young people.

One of his best-known non-series books is *The Boys' Book of Whalers*, published by Dodd, Mead in 1922. Interestingly, this is a work of fiction that still offers an insight to a "business" today that is under heavy fire by nature and animal-rights groups. If Verrill were alive today, it would be interesting to see his reaction to the thinning of the whale population to the extent that several species of whales



**Verrill was an accomplished artist and photographer, and these detailed drawings for the frontispiece of *Strange Customs, Manners and Beliefs*, are typical examples found in his nonfiction books.**

now appear on various endangered lists.

In his early days of writing, Verrill was a contributor to the **Harpers Practical Books for Boys** series. These include *Harper's Book for Young Naturalists*, published in 1913, and in that same general period *Harper's Aircraft Book*, *Harper's Wireless Book*, *Harper's Book for Young Gardeners* and *Harper's Gasoline Engine Book*. No matter the topic, Verrill had made himself a respected expert in that field.

Among Verrill's single-title fiction for young people are *Uncle Abner's Legacy* (Henry Holt, 1915) and *Jungle Chums* (Henry Holt, 1916). *Uncle Abner's Legacy* is set on Ridgelea Farm, which the author states "...has not been located in any definite spot, and its resources have been confined to such that are common to a very wide area of our country." Verrill goes on to say "The story is not intended as a complete handbook of gardening, farming of agriculture, but is written with the idea of pointing out the possibilities of rural life, in arousing a greater interest

(Continued on Page 10)

# The boys' books of A. Hyatt Verrill

(Continued from Page 9)

in modern farm methods and to illustrate the advantages which the scientific, up-to-date farmer possesses over the old-fashioned, conservative tiller of the soil."

In *Jungle Chums*, Verrill takes the reader to territory very familiar in his travels, British Guyana (spelled Guiana at the time), in which he introduces his fictional characters to "its people, customs, fauna and flora, resources and industries." Verrill wrote this book while actually visiting Guyana, at the actual locations depicted in the story. The lives of the native inhabitants are shown in detail, within the framework of a fictional narrative. Guyana is a small country tucked between Venezuela, Brazil and Dutch Guyana.

One of the more interesting of Verrill's stand-alone juvenile titles is *The Treasure of Bloody Gut* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937) set on the West Indies island of Bloody Gut Cay. It is the story of an archeologist, Dr. Hewlett, who travels to that exotic uninhabited locale with his niece, along with a Carib Indian servant, and a black native guide. The book, as is common with Verrill's fiction, gives the reader a realistic look at the native birds, plants, reptiles and marine life of the Caribbean area, wrapped within a tale of adventure aimed at young male and female reader.

*The Treasure of Bloody Gut* was published in Great Britain and Australia by William Collins & Sons in 1939 under the title *Carib Gold*. A reason for the title change is that in the United Kingdom the word "bloody" was at that time considered a profanity. As a result, all use of the word was deleted from the British edition. For example, in addition to the book's title, the first chapter is changed from "Bloody Gut Cay" to "Buccaneers Cay" for *Carib Gold*.

And now, we move to Verrill's boys' series books.

**The Radio Detectives Series** (D. Appleton & Co, four volumes, all 1922) has become a classic among collectors, drawing the interests of boys' series collectors and collectors of radio-themed books. Again, Verrill calls

upon his expertise in radio and short wave, to frame his fictional stories. The hero is young Tom Pauling of the New York City area, and his pride is his first crystal receiving set, which leads to thrilling adventures in the best boys' book tradition.

The second volume takes Tom and his father to the Bahamas, familiar territory to Verrill, and the story includes a submarine used by pirates and fight with an octopus in true Jules Verne tradition.

The third and fourth volumes take the heroes to St. Thomas to battle more pirates, and the fourth book moves into the jungles of South America.

In **The Deep Sea Hunters Series** (D. Appleton & Co., three volumes, 1922-24), Verrill introduces us to the chums Jim Lathrop and Tom Chester, who go on a thrilling voyage to the South Shetland Islands aboard the old whaling ship *Hector*, far from their Massachusetts home of Fairhaven, near the whaling port of New Bedford.

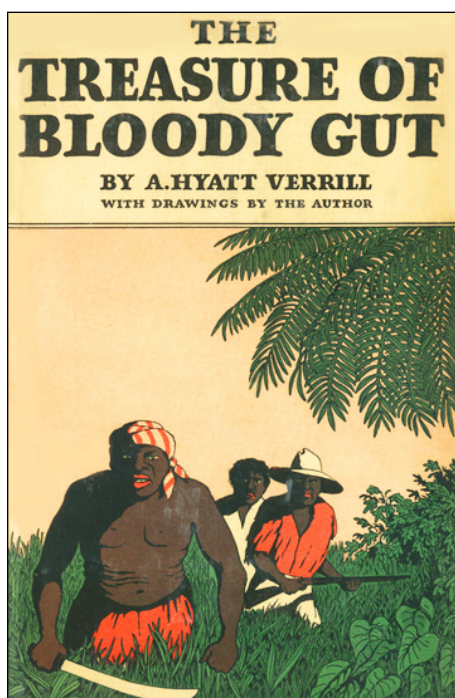
Verrill takes young Lathrop and Chester, and his readers, to the Arctic in the next volume, with his two young heroes visiting to Baffin Bay and the Grand Banks, the heroes involved with the hunting of polar bears, whales and sea lions, plus a glimpse of Eskimo culture.

In the third volume, the boys take a different sailing ship, the *Josephine*, to old Verrill stomping ground, the Caribbean and Panama, and a whaling voyage turns into the successful search for buried Spanish treasure.

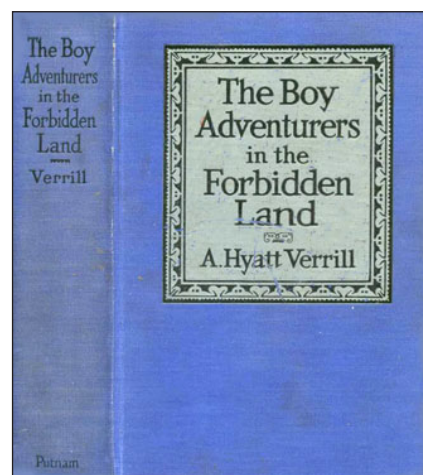
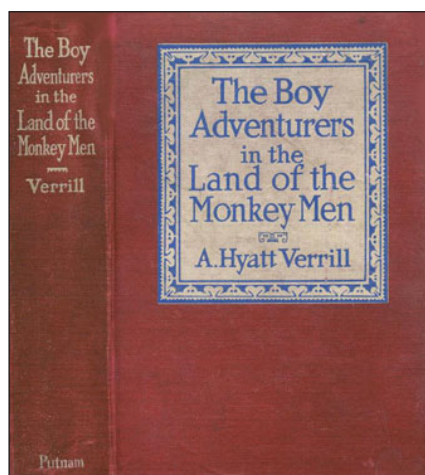
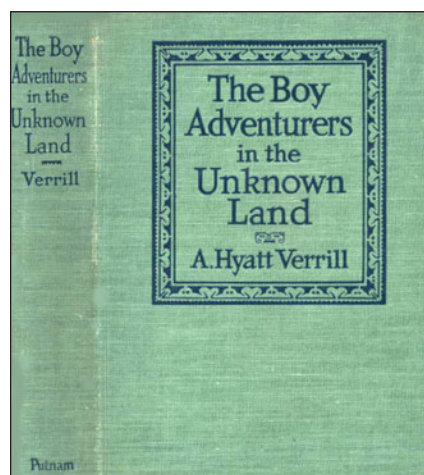
Finally, there is **The Boy Adventurers**, and this series, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in four volumes, is the most highly prized among collectors of Verrill. The locations are exotic, including Panama (*The Boy Adventurers in the Forbidden Land*), where the young New York heroes, Harry Woodward and his cousin Fred, find the remains of a prehistoric city. They next go to the Land of El Dorado, supposed home of the legendary Fountain of Youth in South America; then, they travel to British Guyana (*The Boy Adventurers in the Land of the Monkey Men*), and while there they discover a primitive race

of small-sized natives, which they call the "monkey men;" and finally, in *The Boy Adventurers in the Unknown Land*, Harry and Fred travel to the jungle near the borders of Brazil, Dutch and British Guyana.

This series, published between 1922 and 1924, is extremely rare, and as with many of Verrill's instructional and other nonfiction books, they are "Illustrated with







Three of the four titles in Verrill's very scarce Boy Adventurers Series, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Drawings and Photographs by the Author." Putnam published only a handful of boys' series, and perhaps the books were not marketed properly. Thankfully, high-quality reprint editions of the **Boy Adventurers**, along with the **Deep Sea Hunters** and **Radio Detectives** series, are now available (see Jim Towey's advertisement on Page 16).

In summation, Verrill's small output of 11 boys series books among his total output of more than 100 seems small, but the stories were written with care, and the exotic locales were more authentic thanks to Verrill's extensive travels to those locales over four decades.

Verrill's final days were not happy ones. In 1953 he suffered a pair of strokes, which he blamed on a fractured skull caused by a falling mast while on a sailing voyage, which severely limited his physical and mental activity. Under constant care from his wife, he died barely a year later, on November 14, 1954.

But by then, his legacy was secure — explorer, archaeologist, anthropologist, inventor; a survivor of hurricanes, earthquakes and a shipwreck. But most of all, today we honor Verrill as an author of more than 100 books on an unbelievably wide range of topics, including the 11 boys series books that rank near the top of that list.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article would not have been possible without the assistance and guidance of Doug Frizzle, a retired engineer living in Halifax, Nova Scotia, who has made the study on A. Hyatt Verrill a major part of his life.

Based on his autobiographical note, posted at [www.stillwoods.blogspot.com](http://www.stillwoods.blogspot.com), Doug was born



A. Hyatt Verrill is photographed in 1943 after joining the traveling Buffalo Bill Wild West Show.

on Groundhog Day in 1949. Being an armed forces brat, the family moved every five years, residing in Edmonton, and Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. His father retired to St. Margarets Bay, near Halifax, where Doug attended both high school and St Mary's University, graduating with a diploma in Engineering and B.Sc.

He worked in construction for about five years, finally becoming a Hydrographer at Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Nova Scotia. Doug participated in surveys from the Arctic, Beaufort seas, in Labrador, Newfoundland, Quebec and the Maritime provinces. He became skilled in hydrography and cartography at an international level. With the advent of electronic charting, Doug supervised the revolution to digital charting and

appeared in **Canadian Geographic** magazine.

Doug retired in 2004, to pursue gardening, investments and catch up on some reading and research. He has traveled extensively, in many cases following the footsteps of A. Hyatt Verrill in the West Indies, Central America and South America.

He has edited and republished several of Verrill's works, including reprints of the complete Radio Detectives Series, collections of his science fiction stories and previously unpublished autobiography, *Never a Dull Moment*. They are available for purchase at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) in both print the e-book versions, or by going through Doug's website at [www.stillwoods.blogspot.com](http://www.stillwoods.blogspot.com).

(Continued on Page 12)



## A chronological listing of the books of A. Hyatt Verrill (1871-1954)

1. *Knots, Splices and Rope Work : A Practical Treatise Giving Complete and Simple Directions for Making All the Most Useful and Ornamental Knots in Common Use*, with Chapters on Splicing, Pointing, Seizing, Serving, etc.; Adapted for the Use of Travellers, Campers, Yachtsmen, Boy Scouts, and All Others Having to Use or Handle Ropes for Any Purpose; il. with 156 Original Cuts Showing how Each Knot, Tie or Splice is Formed and its Appearance when Complete. Norman W. Henley 1912 (revised edition Henley 1917)
2. *Gasolene Engines, Their Operation, Use and Care: A Comprehensive, Simple and Practical Work*. Norman W. Henley, 1912
3. *Harper's Aircraft Book; Why Aeroplanes Fly, How to Make Models, and All About Aircraft, Little and Big*. (Harper's Practical Books for Boys) Harper & Brothers, 1913
4. *Harper's Book for Young Naturalists; A Guide to Collecting and Preparing Specimens, with Description of the Life, Habits and Haunts of Birds, Insects, Plants, etc.* (Harper's Practical Books for Boys). Harper & Brothers 1913
5. *Harper's Wireless Book; How to Use Electricity in Telegraphing, Telephoning, and the Transmission of Power*. (Harper's Practical Books for Boys) Harper & Brothers 1913
6. *An American Crusoe: A Record of Remarkable Adventures on a Desert Island with only a Jackknife*. Dodd, Mead 1914
7. *Cuba Past and Present*. Dodd, Mead 1914 revised edition Dodd, Mead 1920
8. *Harper's Book for Young Gardeners; How to Make the Best Use of a Little Land*. (Harper's Practical Books for Boys) Harper & Brothers 1914
9. *Harper's Gasoline Engine Book; How the Engine is Made, How to Use it at Home, in Boats and Vehicles, and Elsewhere, and to Keep it in Order*. (Harper's Practical Books for Boys) Harper & Brothers 1914
10. *Porto Rico Past and Present and San Domingo of Today*. Dodd, Mead 1914.
11. *South and Central American Trade Conditions of To-day; Including Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, and Dominican Republic*. Dodd, Mead 1914, new edition Dodd, Mead 1919.
12. *Pets for Pleasure and Profit*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915
13. *The Boys Outdoor Vacation Book; a Complete Handbook for Every Boy Fond Of Life and Recreation in the Open*. Dodd, Mead 1915
14. *The Cruise of the Cormorant*. Henry Holt 1915
15. *Uncle Abner's Legacy*. Henry Holt 1915
16. *In Morgan's Wake*. Henry Holt 1915
17. *The Amateur Carpenter; with over 200 Diagrams by the Author*. Dodd, Mead 1915 (reissued as *The Boys Book of Carpentry*, Dodd, Mead 1922)
18. *The Boy Collector's Handbook*. Robert M. McBride 1915
19. *Isles of Spice and Rum*. D. Appleton & Co. 1915
20. *The Ocean and its Mysteries*. Duffield 1916
21. *The Golden City: A Tale of Adventure in Unknown Guiana*. Duffield & Co., 1916.
22. *The Real Story of the Whaler; Whaling, Past and Present*. D. Appleton & Co. 1916

23. *The Book of the Sailboat: How to Rig, Sail and Handle Small Boats.* D. Appleton & Co. 1916
24. *A-B-C of Automobile Driving.* Harper & Brothers 1916
25. *Marooned in the Forest : The Story of a Primitive Fight for Life.* Harper & Brothers 1916
26. *The Book of the Motor-Boat; How to Operate and Care for Motor Boats and Motors.* D. Appleton & Co. 1916
27. *Jungle Chums : A Story of a Boy's Adventures in British Guiana.* Henry Holt 1916
28. *The Book of West Indies.* E. P. Dutton 1917
29. *The Book of Camping.* Alfred A. Knopf 1917
30. *How to Operate a Motor Car, with Alphabetically Arranged Chapters Devoted to Car Troubles, Their Causes and Remedies.* David McKay 1918; also Street & Smith New 20th Century Handbook #4 (wraps) 1918
31. *The Trail of the Cloven Foot.* E. P. Dutton 1918
32. *Getting Together with Latin America.* E. P. Dutton 1918
33. *The Trail of the White Indians.* E. P. Dutton 1920
34. *Islands and Their Mysteries.* Duffield 1920
35. *Panama Past and Present.* Dodd, Mead 1921
36. *The Boys' Book of Whalers.* Dodd, Mead 1922 (reissued 1927)
37. *Home Radio: How to Make and Use It.* Harper & Brothers 1922 (revised 1924)
38. *Radio for Amateurs; How to Use, Make and Install Wireless Telephone and Telegraph Instruments.* Dodd, Mead 1922
39. *The Deep Sea Hunters: Adventures on a Whaler.* D. Appleton & Co. 1922
40. *The Radio Detectives.* D. Appleton & Co. 1922
41. *The Radio Detectives Under the Sea.* D. Appleton & Co. 1922
42. *The Radio Detectives in the Jungle.* D. Appleton & Co. 1922
43. *The Radio Detectives Southward Bound.* D. Appleton & Co. 1922
44. *Rivers and Their Mysteries.* Duffield 1922
45. *The Boy Adventurers in the Forbidden Land.* G.P. Putnam's Sons 1922
46. *The Boy Adventurers in the Land of El Dorado.* G.P. Putnam's Sons 1923
47. *The Boy Adventurers in the Land of the Monkey Men.* G.P. Putnam's Sons 1923.
48. *The Boys' Book of Buccaneers.* Dodd, Mead 1923 (reissued 1927)
49. *The Deep Sea Hunters in the Frozen Seas.* D. Appleton & Co. 1923
50. *The Real Story of the Pirate.* D. Appleton & Co. 1923
51. *In the Wake of the Buccaneers.* Century 1923
52. *The Deep Sea Hunters in the South Seas.* D. Appleton & Co. 1924
53. *The Boy Adventurers in the Unknown Land.* G. P. Putnam's Sons 1924
54. *Smugglers and Smuggling.* Duffield 1924
55. *Love Stories of Some Famous Pirates.* Collins 1924 (no U.S. edition)
56. *The American Indian: North, South and Central America.* D. Appleton 1927
57. *Panama of Today.* Dodd, Mead 1927

(Continued on Page 14)

58. *Home Radio Up to Date : How to Make and Use It* (with Eric E. Verrill)  
Harper & Brothers 1927
59. *Old Civilizations in the New World*. Bobbs-Merrill 1929 (reissued as *American Indian Civilizations*. Tudor 1938)
60. *Thirty Years in the Jungle*. John Lane 1929
61. *Great Conquerors of South and Central America*. D. Appleton & Co. 1930
62. *Lost Treasure: True Tales of Hidden Hoards* D. Appleton & Co. 1930
63. *Gasolene-Engine Book for Boys* (Harper's Practical Books for Boys Series).  
Harper & Brothers 1930
64. *Under Peruvian Skies*. Hurst & Blackett 1930 (no U.S. edition)
65. *Jamaica of Today*. Dodd, Mead 1931
66. *West Indies of Today*. Dodd, Mead 1931
67. *Cuba of Today*. Dodd, Mead 1931
68. *The Inquisition*. D. Appleton & Co. 1931
69. *Secret Treasure: Hidden Riches of the British Isles*. D. Appleton & Co., 1931
70. *Barton's Mills : A Saga of the Maine Pioneers*. D. Appleton & Co. 1932
71. *Inca's Treasure House*. Doubleday, Page 1932
72. *Romantic and Historic Maine (Maine Folk Tales)*. Dodd, Mead 1933
73. *Romantic and Historic Florida*. Dodd, Mead 1935
74. *Romantic and Historic Virginia*. Dodd, Mead 1935
75. *Our Indians: The Story of the Indians of the United States*. G. P. Putnam's Sons 1935
76. *Before the Conquerors : A Modern Adventure in the Land of the Incas*. Dodd, Mead 1935
77. *Along New England Shores*. G. P. Putnam's Sons 1936
78. *The Heart of Old New England*. Dodd, Mead 1936
79. *Strange Sea Shells and Their Stories: How They are Made and Grow; How They are Colored and the Patterns Produced; Rare Shells; Shells that Build a Raft; Shells that Bore in Rocks; Giant Shells; the Shell that Sinks Ships; etc.; etc.* Doubleday, Page 1936 (also Harrop 1936)
80. *They Found Gold; the Story of Successful Treasure Hunts*. G. P. Putnam's Sons 1936
81. *My Jungle Trails : A Narrative of Adventures in the Jungles of Central and South America, and the West Indies; of Strange Indian Tribes, and Their Curious Customs, the Flora and Fauna of the Countries, and Incidents both Exciting and Humorous*. Doubleday, Page 1937
82. *Strange Insects and Their Stories*. Doubleday, Page 1937
83. *Strange Reptiles and Their Stories*. Doubleday, Page 1937
84. *Foods America Gave the World*. L.C. Page & Co., 1937
85. *The Treasure of Bloody Gut*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937
86. *Strange Birds and Their Stories: Mysteries of Bird Life; Migrations; Nesting Habits; Birds of Beaches and Deserts; Winged Jewels; Clowns of Birddom; Valuable Birds; Bird Law Courts; Bird Communists; Flightless Birds*. Doubleday, Page 1938
87. *Strange Fish and Their Stories: Mysteries of the Fish World; Ogres of the Deep; Living Nightmares of the Deep; Visiting the Ocean Butterflies; How Fish Sleep; the Fish*



- Menagerie; Fish that Never Existed*. Doubleday, Page 1938
88. *Minerals, Metals and Gems; also, All Rocks and Stones, as Well as Ores, Crystals, Sands, Clays and Earths; Something of Their Peculiarities; How They are Formed, Where They are Found, How Mined and What Uses are Made of Them*. Doubleday, Page 1939
  89. *Strange Animals and Their Stories: Animals in Armor; the Land of Marsupials; Topsy-turvy Creatures; Behemoths of Scripture; Giants Who Took to the Sea; Camels of the Andes; the Strangest Animal of All*. Doubleday, Page 1939
  90. *Carib Gold*. Wm. Collins 1939 (*The Treasure of Bloody Gut* was published under this title in Great Britain and Australia, and it was also reissued in Britain by The Children's Press)
  91. *Wonder Plants and Plant Wonders*. D. Appleton-Century 1939
  92. *Perfumes and Spices: Including an Account of Soaps and Cosmetics*. Doubleday, Page 1940
  93. *Wonder Creatures of the Sea*. D. Appleton-Century 1940
  94. *Strange Customs, Manners and Beliefs: A Remarkable Account of Curious Beliefs and Odd Superstitions, Strange Ways of Living, and Amazing Customs and Manners of Many Peoples and Tribes Around the Earth*. Doubleday, Page 1946
  95. *Strange Prehistoric Animals and Their Stories*. Doubleday, Page 1948
  96. *The Young Collector's Handbook: What to Collect — Where to Find It. How to Have fun with the Exciting Hobby of Collecting*. Robert M. McBride 1948
  97. *The Shell Collector's Handbook*. G. P. Putnam's Sons 1950
  98. *The Bridge of Light*. Fantasy Press 1950
  99. *The Strange Story of Our Earth: A Panorama of the Growth of our Planet as Revealed by the Sciences of Geology and Paleontology*. Doubleday, Page 1952
  100. *America's Ancient Civilizations* (with Ruth Shaw Verrill) G. P. Putnam's Sons 1953
  101. *The Real Americans*. G. P. Putnam's Sons 1954
  102. *Strange Creatures of the Sea*. Doubleday, Page 1955
  103. *The Savage Land*. Panther (n.d.) no U.S. edition
  104. *When the Moon Ran Wild*. (as by "Ray Ainsbury") Consul (wraps) 1962 (no U.S. print edition). However, an e-book version under Verrill's own name is available through [www. amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (Kindle edition) and [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com) (Nook edition). This story was originally published in the Winter 1931 edition of **Amazing Stories Quarterly**.
  105. *The Alcyonaria of the "Blake" Expeditions*. Smithsonian Institution National Museum 2004.
  106. *Never a Dull Moment: The Autobiography of A. Hyatt Verrill*. Researched and edited by Doug Frizzle, 2007. Visit his website at <http://stillwoods.blogspot.com>. Print and e-book versions of this book, along with selected other Verrill books and collections of his stories, are available at [www. lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).

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**NOTES:** For additional information on A. Hyatt Verrill's magazine stories visit: [http://stillwoods.blogspot.com/2012\\_02\\_01archive.html](http://stillwoods.blogspot.com/2012_02_01archive.html)

Several of Verrill's books were published in Spanish and other foreign-language editions.

Verrill's father, Yale zoology professor A.E. Verrill, published many scientific treatises, among them *Bermuda Islands*, self-published in 1902 & 1907; and *Zoology of the Bermudas*, published by the author (1908 reprint listed in the **Cumulative Book Index**; the original was probably issued prior to 1900).

# THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES ...

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- #2 *The Boy Adventurers in the Land of El Dorado*
- #3 *The Boy Adventurers in the Land of the Monkey Men*
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THE WHITE RIBBON BOYS OF CHESTER, \$30

CLIF STIRLING, SOPHOMORE AT STORMBRIDGE, by Gilbert Patten, \$25

POPPY OTT SERIES by Leo Edwards, \$20 each:

- #10 *The Monkey's Paw*; #11 *The Hidden Dwarf*

SAM & BERYL EPSTEIN & pseudonyms, \$20 each:

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Tim Penny Series — #1 *Jackknife for a Penny*; #2 *Change for a Penny*

