



*Horatio Alger, Jr.*

1832 — 1899

THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

# NEWSBOY

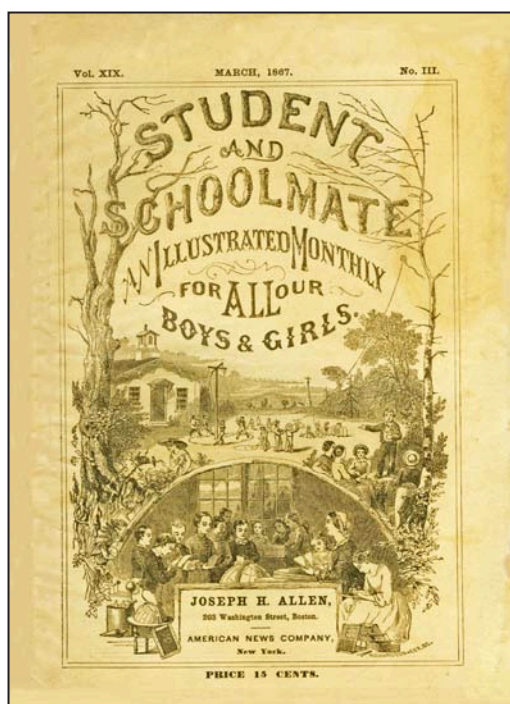


A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,  
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

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## William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.:

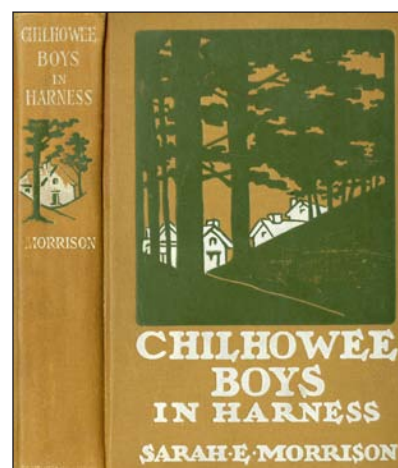
*Some cautionary evidence  
of their working relationship*

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A series about pioneer life  
by Sarah Elizabeth Morrison

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## President's column

We are in a brave new world of electronic databases, and this has implications for the researcher of boys' book authors. Ralph Henry Barbour is one of my primary collecting interests, and access to the online American Periodical Series has opened up many new opportunities for me. This database provides searchable egress to hundreds of American magazines and serials from the 18th century almost down to the present. It enabled me to track down the bulk of the known short works by Barbour under his early pen name of Richard Stillman Powell. Under his actual name, it has also enabled me to find many more short stories; original serializations of his novels, juvenile and adult; reviews of his work; and advertisements.

When I plug in the words "Horatio Alger" and narrow the search to titles and document text for the period between 1850 and 1900 I get 392 hits, including interesting commentary by reviewers that says a lot about how some of his works were received. We are just seeing the tip of the scholarly iceberg on what we will be able to do with these tools.

Newspapers are also becoming accessible online. I recently stumbled onto something exciting using a database of Virginia newspapers freely available (unlike the American Periodical Series, which requires a licensing fee, although you can often get in at university libraries which have site licenses) at the website of the Library of Virginia. The value of the keyword searches in these databases depends on the quality of the OCR (optical character recognition) used to create them. In the Virginia newspaper site, the OCR is pretty bad: I would say that the text is well under 90 percent accurate, which means that a lot of pertinent material is going to be missed by the search. One interesting feature of the site is that it permits users to make corrections to the transcriptions. This is called "crowd sourcing," and I am dubious about the likelihood of volunteer labor making a serious dent in the huge bodies of material with poor transcriptions.

Despite its weaknesses, this database enabled me to locate a very interesting book review that I would probably never have come across any other way (and for which I will be gladly supplying a corrected transcription to the Library of Virginia website!). On 31 May 1903, the **Richmond Times-Dispatch**, a daily newspaper

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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 books, 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 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)

# William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.:

## *Some cautionary evidence of their working relationship*

By Peter C. Walther (PF-548)

(First of two parts)

Two veteran authors: Horatio Alger, Jr. and William T. Adams (better known as "Oliver Optic"), or so *Munsey's Magazine* touted them in October 1892. Their names often appear indissolubly linked together, a snug fit, seemingly but not quite joined at the hip, as in Smith and Wesson or Lewis and Clark. Did they know each other? It has been assumed for years that they did if many of the standard sources can be believed. They enjoyed a professional association; did they similarly enjoy a social one? Did they indeed even ever meet? It is likely that they did, perhaps if it were only on one or two occasions, yet there is very little to substantiate any possible encounters. And what of the plots of their books and the way they portrayed their heroes? Any similarities there as well?

I have often been intrigued and somewhat puzzled by the term "Alger hero," one that we have all heard many times. Why should an Alger hero, for example, be any more distinctive than, say, an "Optic hero" or a "Castlemont hero" or a "Henty hero," categories in themselves that are rarely applied?

The Optic hero, for example, often had different sets of obstacles to overcome. Bertha Grant in the *Woodville Stories* saves her father and his fortune from ruin. Richard Grant in the same sequence of books has to overcome the criminal element in his character. Clipper Graves in *Making a Man of Himself* has to bear the stain on his family escutcheon, while Deck Lyon and Christy Passford in Optic's later Civil War novels soldiered on to assist President Lincoln and the Union forces to win the war by overcoming Southern foes: military insurgents and guerrillas alike. These are stray examples, of course.

The Alger hero, on the other hand, whether it be Ragged Dick, or Mark the Match Boy, Jed the Poorhouse Boy or Robert Rushton, fought the sting of poverty as well as struggled against straightened family circumstances: saving the mortgage on the family farm, fighting to save a widowed mother from penury, and so on. I think we are all agreed that the term "Alger" in and of itself was



Photos of William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr. as they appeared on vintage *cartes de visite* (CDVs).

conceived as a marketing ploy by his various publishers solely to promote their Alger-type books. We may never know who was directly responsible for this, yet it turned out to be a brilliant stroke and one that adequately portrayed the themes and situations of many a typical Alger novel while also embracing similar stories by other writers.

One need only look at the varied titles and authors represented in Street and Smith's *Alger Series*, for example, to understand the nature of this strategic application. An "Alger book" did not necessarily have to be by Horatio Alger. It could just as well have treated the themes recurrent in his novels as well as the character types generally: the impecunious young man, the spoiled young brat of a rich scion of society, a struggling relative, a sympathetic adult as well as the grasping moneyed squire or banker, all refracted in the works of many another author. For the most part, though, the Optic hero was not the Alger hero. While Alger's heroes often overcame external challenges (class identity, destitution and the like), the moneyed Optic hero often had to deal with internal struggles (character building and a conflicted moral conscience). Yet all of this is another issue entirely. Let us move ahead.

Since Horatio Alger and Oliver Optic were the literary giants of their time, catering to the male juvenile market and often residing in the same state, what can we advance on a personal level regarding them? They were certainly aware of each other's reputation, yet did they ever meet? Did they ever seek each other out socially or did they befriend each other in any way? Unfortunately, we have no direct documentation to prove aye or nay,

(Continued on Page 6)

*This article was presented as the keynote address at the Horatio Alger Society convention in Annapolis, Maryland on May 3, 2014. It will conclude in the November-December issue.*



## Editor's notebook

As we head into fall, it's never too early to start thinking about the next convention, set for Columbus, Ohio, for April 30-May 3, 2015. Host Bob Huber (PF-841) has already selected our hotel, which he will reveal in his initial convention article set to appear in the November-December **Newsboy**. As usual, our main convention preview will appear in the January-February issue, along with the registration form and schedule of events.

This will be our second convention in Columbus, the first hosted in 1983 by the late Bob Sawyer, who was H.A.S. president at the time. That was also the first convention attended by your editor. It remains one of our best-attended conventions ever, and I hope we'll have another fine turnout next spring.

In the months following our 2014 meeting in Annapolis, we have been busy adding to our archive of past issues of **Newsboy** made available in PDF form on the Society's website at [www.horatioalgersociety.net](http://www.horatioalgersociety.net). In recent months, I have digitally re-processed the vintage issues from 2004 and 2003, including many additional full-color images, and those issues are now available for your viewing pleasure.

The reconstructed 2002 issues (upgraded with color) should be posted soon. Included will be Rob Kasper's July-August 2002 article on the Leather-Clad and Munsey Alger paperbacks, with book images now reproduced in color. Also, color photos are included in the 2002 convention coverage from Salt Lake City.

As soon as the upcoming November-December issue goes into the mail, we will upload the six issues from 2012, which include updated color photos from "Dash to DeKalb III" at Northern Illinois University.

Almost all **Newsboy** issues back to 1970 are now online, thanks primarily to Bob Eastlack (PF-557), who scanned the bulk of the older back issues. We now hope to work our way back into the 1960s.

## MEMBERSHIP

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## President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

that still exists, carried as the lead item in its "An Hour With New Books" column a review of Barbour's novel, *The Land of Joy*. This was Barbour's first adult romance novel, although it also has elements of the college stories that were to become a major component of his juvenile fiction.

The book review (printed on Page 5, at right) contains facts about both the book and the author that were entirely new to me. I had read *The Land of Joy* but had no idea that

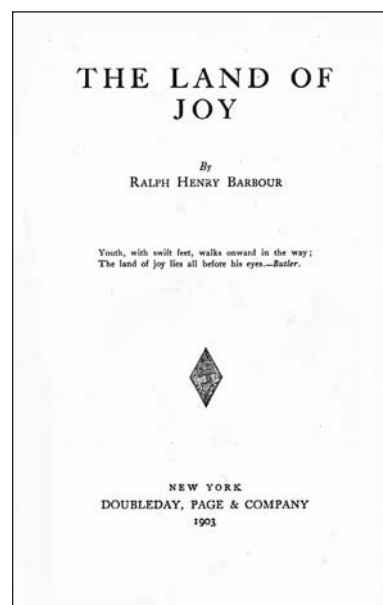
the Virginia setting of the second half was based on a specific town (Leesburg) and a specific mansion (Morven Park). A bit of web-surfing revealed that Morven Park still stands; that it has been the home of a governor of Maryland and a governor of Virginia; that it is open for tours (which I will certainly be doing at the earliest opportunity); that it has a museum devoted to hounds and hunting;

and that it is currently the place at which pardoned presidential Thanksgiving turkeys live out their days! All in all, a very nice real-life but hitherto unknown tie-in to a Barbour book I've owned for many years.

Some of the biographical information on Barbour in the review is also new. I did not know that he had been fired from his first newspaper job after getting scooped on a building collapse in Boston, nor that he had worked as a chef on a western farming project, nor that he had briefly worked as an admittedly inept cartoonist. These details must have been supplied at first- or second-hand by Barbour himself.

Enjoy the full review, and remember that these digital tools can probably also help you learn more about the authors and books that most interest you. And enjoy the autumn weather!

Your Partic'lar Friend,  
Jeff Looney (PF-903)  
1712 Concord Drive  
Charlottesville, VA 22901



**THE LAND OF JOY. By Ralph Henry Barbour****Doubleday, Page and Company, publishers, New York. \$1.50**

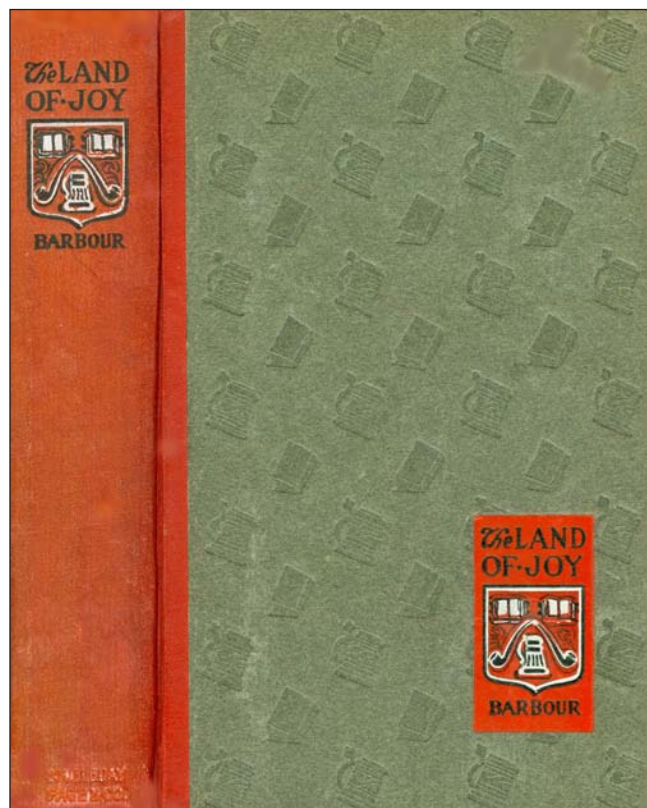
There is something refreshingly attractive about this charming romance of youth and love and hopefulness. Mr. Barbour has written several successful college stories, and has for years contributed to the magazines under the pseudonym of "Richard Stillman Powell." This first full-fledged novel of his is really a delightful affair. It is just ending its serial run in the Ladies' Home Journal. It chronicles the intertwining stories of two couples, and it will be hard to find in contemporary fiction a more fascinating picture of young love than that of Philip and Betty.

"The Land of Joy" is largely a college story, without the limitations that usually mark that sort of fiction; the background and university interest are there, but with a distinct forward look to the great world beyond and the more mature problems of men and women.

Virginia readers of "The Land of Joy" have identified the town of Melville Courthouse, near which much of the story takes place, as Leesburg. And, by the way, the fact has generally been lost sight of that this quiet, old-fashioned village, some thirty-five miles from Washington, was at one time the seat of the United States Government. During the occupation of Washington by the British forces the archives were secretly removed to Leesburg and there stored in the only vault in that part of the country. They remained there but forty-eight hours, but during that time a meeting of the Cabinet was held, and Leesburg won the proud distinction of having been, for a time at least, the seat of government. In "The Land of Joy" a large portion of the action occurs on an old and picturesque estate just outside of that town.

To those acquainted with the notable Virginia homes, the estate, "Elaine," is readily recognized as Morven Park, one of the show-places of the South, and admittedly the handsomest estate in its section of the country. Morven Park was the property during the war of Governor Swan, of Maryland, and had, perhaps, as many narrow escapes from destruction as any place in the South. Northern Virginia was always more or less debatable territory, and Morven Park was alternately occupied by Northern and Southern troops, its broad acres no sooner through paying tribute to the Confederacy than they were levied upon by the Yankees. It is said that the politics of its overseer changed as often as the surrounding country changed hands. Be that as it may, Morven Park emerged from the war practically unscathed, even though on one occasion the big hall was piled from floor to ceiling with bundles of fodder and the torch was held ready to apply.

The author has had quite a career of ups and downs in preparation for later work. He was born in Cambridge, Mass., November 13th, 1870, and was educated at the Waltham New Church School and at the Highland Military Academy, of Worcester. He went to work when nineteen as reporter on a



**The first edition of Ralph Henry Barbour's *The Land of Joy*, published by Doubleday, Page and Co. in 1903.**

Boston paper, but was ignominiously "let go" six months later, having been "beaten" on the collapse of a tenement house in course of construction. Emigrating to Denver, he went to work on the Republican. A year later he stood by at the launching of the Colorado Sun and was court reporter on that journal; but when the paper was absorbed by the Denver Times he moved Westward and tried ranching in Grand Valley. As chef for an irrigation outfit, he learned to make "baking powder biscuits," "cowboys' delight" and "sour dough bread," and to toss buckwheats with some degree of skill and elegance.

His next venture was a two-year course in irrigation, but the crops were long in coming, so he returned to Denver and newspaperdom, becoming literary editor on the Times, combining with the duties of that position those of cartoonist. The pictures turned out, he declares himself, were probably the worst ever printed.

After his marriage, in 1895, he collaborated with L.H. Bickford on a novelette, "Phyllis in Bohemia," published in Chicago in 1897. In 1899, he joined the Chicago Inter-Ocean as copy editor, and that year published his first "juvenile," "The Half-Back." In 1900, he transferred to the Philadelphia Times as copy editor, and a year later became night city editor, holding this position until the paper changed hands. In 1901, he returned to Cambridge, thirty-two years from the time he was born there.

# William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Continued from Page 3)

yet various primary and secondary sources exist to offer some suggestive scenarios.

First off, we have some cautionary evidence in Alger's own words, transcribed by an editor for the Leslie firm in New York and published in the March 1896 number of **Frank Leslie's Pleasant Hours for Boys and Girls**. Frank Lee Farnell interviewed a fair amount of the popular boys' authors of the day for this monthly, Edward S. Ellis and Oliver Optic among others. Although Farnell erred in stating that *Ragged Dick* was "his first book for young people," he did indicate that "the events and circumstances leading to the bringing out of this famous book, as told to me recently by the author, are full of interest." He noted in this interview that Alger admitted writing short sketches and stories for the **Student and Schoolmate**. Furthermore, they were received with such favor "that when, in 1866, he moved to New York, the editor requested him to continue writing for the periodical."

The editor remains unnamed, yet in 1866 he would have been William T. Adams. In this context an alternate version might be suggested in that Alger was somewhat mistaken and that he meant "the publisher" rather than "the editor." The publisher of this magazine was Joseph H. Allen, and that topic will be enlarged upon presently. We have all heard of the three B's of music: Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. Why not the "three A's" here: Adams, Alger and Allen?

Shortly after his move to New York, Alger made the acquaintance of a street urchin and became so interested in his plight that he began to make a study of the life and habits of these homeless boys. The following is an extrapolation of Farnell's article: "This study naturally suggested to his mind a series of articles or stories on the subject. He soon decided to put the idea in the shape of a story of about seven chapters and offered to write it for the **Student and Schoolmate**. The offer was promptly accepted, and the story begun. When two or three chapters had been published, the author saw that he could not do justice to the subject in the space he had allotted himself, and he asked the editor if he might enlarge it a little. At once came back the reply: 'Yes; go ahead; make it as long as you like.' The story was attracting attention, and the editor was glad to have more of it."

The subject under discussion in this article is not *Ragged Dick*, nor a detailed look into its genesis and popularity. What we limn here is the relation between Alger and the **Schoolmate's** editor, William T. Adams, if indeed we can

predicate that one ever existed. What needs to be pointed out is that the editor of the magazine in 1866 was not the editor of the magazine in 1867. Adams, in his final year in the editorial chair, would have assumed responsibility for accepting Alger's novel for publication. After January of the following year, however, he had no further contact with the magazine as he had just launched one of his own, **Our Boys and Girls**, commencing January 5, 1867. What Alger conveyed to Farnell in all of the preceding he frequently used the term (in Farnell's own words) "editor." Could Alger in fact have meant "publisher"? There is a vast difference and one that needs to be noted. Allen, as we know, was the publisher of the **Schoolmate** for both 1866 and 1867. Did he also serve as its editor after Adams had vacated the chair editorial?

We do know an inch more about Alger's relation with Allen. It is the Dedication of *Ragged Dick* itself that affords us our first clue: "To Joseph H. Allen, At Whose Suggestion This Story Was Undertaken, It Is Inscribed With Friendly Regard." If indeed it was Allen who suggested to Alger the plot of his tale, then that would have had to occur sometime during 1866, of course, before the story reached serialization. William T. Adams was then still the **Schoolmate's** editor and Alger's admission to Farnell that it was the editor who prompted Alger to proceed with the novel at that time is somewhat confusing. Who gave Alger the green light to go ahead? Was it Adams the editor who might have encouraged Alger to submit the story sometime in 1866 or, according to the Dedication, Allen the publisher, to supply more chapters with his "Yes; go ahead; make it as long as you like" once the novel had commenced its run in 1867?

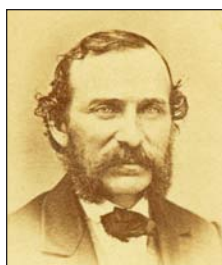
Joseph H. Allen was also friendly with Adams, and of course why wouldn't he be? Some years before, Allen had been editor of the **Sunday School Gazette** but resigned his post to commandeer the management of the **Schoolmate**. As he indicated in his Editor's Farewell for December 15, 1863: "Nor will he cease his editorial labors. It may not be generally understood that he has been associated for some months with his long known and intimate friend 'Oliver Optic,' in the editorial care of the 'Student And Schoolmate,' a monthly magazine for youth, of which he became the proprietor about six months ago. He but leaves a limited sphere to embrace more fully a work which covers every loyal State in the Union, and those even where our forces are yet contesting the ground they occupy."

Allen admits to being both editor and proprietor here; likely enough he wore in part both hats and there may be a grain of truth yet in Alger's seemingly contrary remarks to Farnell. Yet it should be remembered that it was Adams' name that appeared on the cover of every one of these issues under discussion as "The Editor." His contributions canvassed a wide range of topics in every single issue under which his largesse was noted. Allen may have served as an editor of sorts, yet it was under the magical



# CDVs: Windows to history

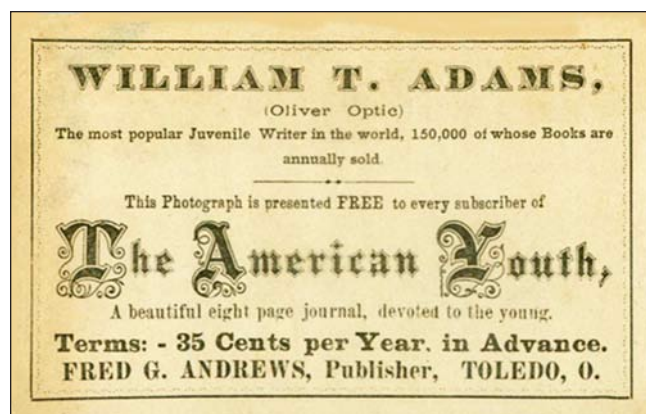
William T. Adams (Oliver Optic) CDVs, unlike signature cards, are scarce. One of the most common is the well-known image with the graying full beard as shown on Page 3. That photograph dates between 1875 and 1884 based on the address of the photographer, George K. Warren. In 1875 Warren's Portraits moved from 289 Washington St. to 465 Washington St., Boston, Mass., the address on the CDV. In 1884, upon the death of Warren, Warren's Portraits became Conly's Portraits.



W.T. Adams (Oliver Optic), ca. late 1860s

A similar, but slightly younger image of Adams, with darker hair, was the basis for the stamped image of Adams on **The Boat Builder Series** binding which began in 1881. I have found a printing of that image from 1873 in **Our Boys and Girls Album**.

Of greater interest is the CDV image of a younger Adams (above). Photographs of a young Adams are very scarce. This CDV (reverse side, above right) was presented to every subscriber of **The American Youth**, a story paper published by Fred G. Andrews in Toledo, Ohio. Andrews started **The American Youth** in May 1871 and only published 2 numbers before selling out to F. DeMarest of New York. (I have been unable



to locate any additional information regarding **The American Youth**). Thus, this CDV can be dated to early 1871. However, a similar image, probably from the same portrait-sitting, is the frontispiece of a bound copy of **Student and Schoolmate** that includes all issues from 1865, 1866 and the first issue of 1867, thus dating the actual portrait to January 1867 at the latest. The statement on the back of the CDV referring to 150,000 Optic books being sold dates to 1869. Copies of **Oliver Optic's Magazine** from 1868 list 100,000 copies of Adams' books sold. In 1869, the number was increased to 150,000 copies.

Collecting and researching author CDVs and portraits is fun and can lead to new and interesting directions for our collections.  
— Bob Sipes (PF-1067)

name of "Oliver Optic" that the readership understood the editorial work of the **Schoolmate** to be managed.

This 1866-1867 period of the **Student and Schoolmate's** history has been largely mismanaged by most of the scholarly works we have consulted. Alger's work may be found in two issues in 1864, three in 1865 and in every issue for 1866 excepting August, with two items in the March number. Adams as editor must have had his hand in promoting Alger's early fiction in his magazine. No question. It should be documented here that perhaps Alger made his *entrée* into this periodical at the suggestion of his sister Olive. A singleton entry by O. Augusta Alger appeared in the September 1859 issue: a poem titled "To Little Grace." At some point did Augusta recommend her older brother to those who managed the **Schoolmate's** affairs?

What now of the post-1866 period? Many scholars misrepresent the facts, as is even the case with Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales in their quite excellent *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* They err when they state, quoting the **Christian Enquirer**, that "W.T. Adams was no longer editor of **The Schoolmate** in November 1866" (p. 174). Not true: indeed he was, as the front wrappers of the individual issues for November and December 1866 clearly indicate. They claim "In the summer of 1865, he began to contribute stories to the **Student and**

**Schoolmate**, a monthly juvenile magazine edited by his old friend William T. Adams and published in Boston by family friend Joseph H. Allen" (p. 65).

The **Schoolmate** reference is spot on, certainly, although we know that Alger's contributions predating 1865, two poems appearing in October and November of 1864, shouldn't be discounted. Furthermore, although Allen may have been "a family friend," there is no proof to offer at this time that William T. Adams was Alger's "old friend." Similar scholars like Edwin Hoyt, Ralph Gardner, and John Tebbel follow generally a congruent path. Even a doctoral dissertation by Lorinda Beth Cohoon (courtesy of Dr. Arthur Young), submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Southern Mississippi in 2001, mistakenly attributes Oliver Optic as editor during the serialization of *Ragged Dick* in 1867.

This is just simply not the case, as anyone who takes the time to check their sources will avow. The inferences put forth on page 81 in Scharnhorst/Bales relating to Adams, **Student and Schoolmate** and Lee and Shepard lack proof. We can certainly suggest that Adams was responsible for the planning and ultimate appearance of Alger's serial in the **Schoolmate**; as editor during the closing months of 1866 it would certainly have encompassed part of his editorial

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# William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.

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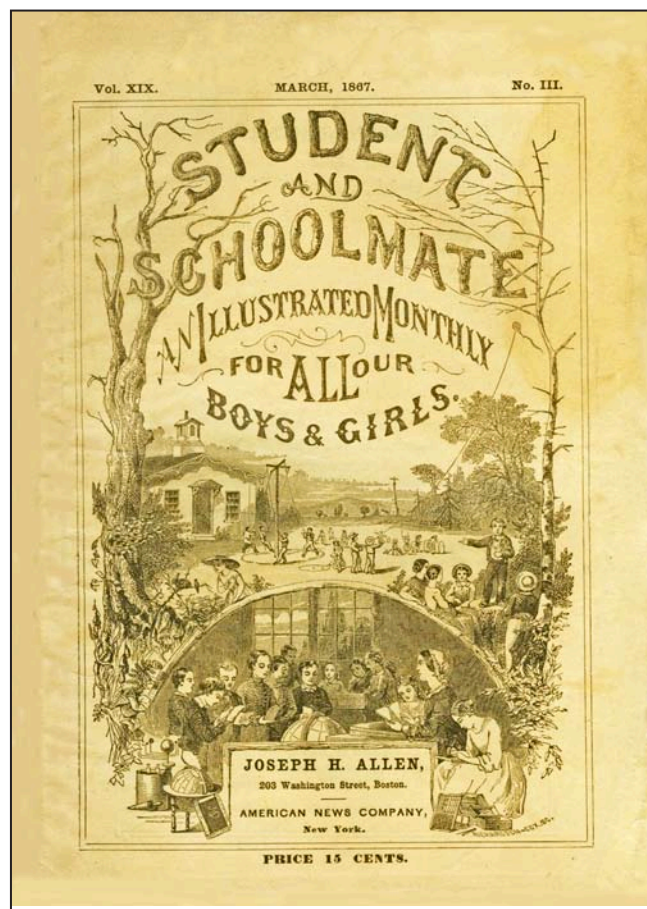
duties. What followed in January 1867, however, was between Alger and Allen and did not involve Oliver Optic who by that time was running his own magazine.

Further Alger sources offer tantalizing Optic references. In *Mark, The Match Boy*, published by Loring in 1869, Roswell Crawford tells his employer "I have sold a slate, a quire of notepaper, and one of Oliver Optic's books" (p. 191). In the Lee and Shepard papers located at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, there exists a letter by Horatio Alger dated May 21, 1872, recommending the work of Harry Castlemon to the publishing firm. One must be cautious in addressing this. As Lee and Shepard's prominent in-house editor, Adams almost certainly read Alger's letter; indeed, it may well have been directed toward him personally for his professional scrutiny. However, at this juncture only inferences may be drawn, nothing more.

All of this is after the fact. What we can document is Horatio Alger's appearance in **Student and Schoolmate** during the years 1864, 1865 and 1866, doubtless with the support and encouragement of William T. Adams as editor of the magazine and Joseph H. Allen as its publisher. The serialization of *Ragged Dick* ran through the twelve months of 1867 after Adams' withdrawal. In light of these statistics, and in order to provide another suggestive element into the tentative yet unproven working relationship between Alger and Adams, we must now highlight, however briefly, the unsavory activities at the Brewster, Massachusetts, church. This scenario has been recounted multiple times, yet I will keep the details to a minimum in my endeavor to present merely salient points relating to the individuals in question.

The most incisive and insightful accounts of the Brewster affair may be found in the Scharnhorst/Bales volume already cited and the essay "Brewster Revisited" by Bill and Mary Roach, published in the April 2002 issue of the **Dime Novel Round-Up**. The following material is shamelessly lifted from these sources with my thanks to the authors of both. Richard M. Huber's *The American Idea of Success*, also a respected source, I have not seen and consequently have not used.

On December 8, 1864, Horatio Alger, Jr. was installed as pastor of the First Unitarian Church and Society of Brewster, Massachusetts. Things proceeded splendidly for a time, both parties being satisfied and apparently comfortable with the *status quo*.



Early in 1866 disquieting rumors began to circulate relative to Horatio Alger. By mid-March a committee was formed to "investigate certain reports in relation to Mr. Alger." His name had been linked to thirteen-year-old Thomas S. Crocker and fifteen-year-old John Clark. It was reported in an open meeting on March 19 that Alger had been molesting them. When addressed, Alger was mute, neither confirming nor denying the charges. Admitting he was "imprudent," he hastily left town, seeking the home of his parents in South Natick, Massachusetts. Shortly thereafter he left for New York City, to commence his professional career as an author.

While tempers were yet flaring, the Brewster church fathers felt it behooved them to alert Alger's misconduct to the offices of the American Unitarian Association in Boston. Letters flew back and forth. Especially virulent was one Solomon Freeman, who wanted to see Alger chastised, and indeed one of the parents of the boys involved, either Mr. Crocker or Mr. Clark, wanted to bring Alger up on charges.

Courtesy of Fran O'Donnell at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I have copies of some of the correspondence exchanged between Freeman and the general secretary, Charles Lowe. These





letters are not always easy to decipher and some exist in a fragmented form. Even a few seem lost or at least presently unavailable. Yet friendly hands, and I cite especially our very own Carol Nackenoff, assisted in this endeavor and shared her findings with me some years ago.

As Carol wrote in part in her article "Rediscovering Alger" (*Newsboy*, September-October 1994): "Freeman wrote William Allen [sic], publisher of **Student and Schoolmate**, protesting Alger's appearance as an author who purported to seek to exert a positive influence on the young; Freeman tried unsuccessfully to have the Unitarian Society contact Allen to put a stop to Alger's appearance in **Student and Schoolmate** (p. 6), although, if we are indeed both referring to the same letter, Charles Lowe used the term "editor" (who would have been Adams) and not "publisher."

Events were still simmering six months after the fact. A letter from Freeman to Lowe dated September 1, 1866, was answered by Lowe seven days later. He stated to Freeman in part "We also made known to the editors of our papers, Register and Inquirer [*Christian Register* and *Christian Enquirer*, no doubt] the facts of the case, that they might, without public notice of them, be guided in future references to him. Further than this we cannot go. If I should

attempt to say to any publisher, 'you ought not to print books or articles written by him,' of course he would pay no more attention to it than if you or anyone else did it. And you say that the representation to the editor of the 'Student and Schoolmate' produced no effect. We have no more control over any paper or other periodical except the Monthly Journal than you have." What this tells us in part is that Freeman according to Lowe had contacted the front brass of the **Schoolmate**, specifically the Editor. As a result, both W.T. Adams and J.H. Allen must have known at some point what Alger had been accused of. What steps were taken? What were their reactions?

It would appear that much like Alger's silence in facing as he did the inquisition of the Brewster committee the previous March, Adams, too, subsequently remained silent. We have no proof to suggest otherwise. Was it an embarrassment to him if not to Allen? Was Oliver Optic fretful that certain Unitarians in Brewster or elsewhere would make waves in the editorial milieu of Boston should the **Schoolmate** continue to publish Alger's fiction, thereby endangering the integrity of the magazine? The Roaches quote Scharnhorst and Bales here: "Solomon Freeman wrote the American Unitarian Association, expressing his concern that Alger would use his skills as a writer of boys' fiction in **Student and Schoolmate**, as a basis for further seductions. The Unitarians declined to publish any further Alger articles in their journals, but they despaired of having influence on the commercial publications that were making money by publishing Alger's stories" (p. 47). Some confusion still seems rampant: did the Lowe/Freeman correspondence refer to the **Schoolmate's** editor or publisher? It is probably a moot point as either Allen or Adams would doubtlessly have informed the other on such a potentially damaging allegation.

In fact, the official publication of the Horatio Alger Society (our bimonthly magazine **Newsboy**) published what was promised as all of this correspondence in its December 1979 and December 1980 issues. Gary Scharnhorst in the latter issue transcribed these letters himself. As he quoted there in part, Freeman to Lowe, September 1, 1866: "In June last a lady, whose son was one of his victims of criminality and a subscriber to the 'Student and Schoolmate,' called my attention to an article published over his name, and wished me to call attention to it. I anxiously wrote the publisher, referring him to record in your office, and stating the pernicious influence it would have, as perhaps nearly all the boys in this, and neighboring town, knew of his criminality and would naturally thereby be led to suppose that such criminality was at most trifling, if he was still permitted to contribute to respectable periodicals particularly those intended for boys to read. And still the next issue

(Continued on Page 10)

# William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Continued from Page 9)

contained another article from his pen, and for aught I know every number since, ..."

Granted, this does not make comfortable reading nor should it. Although Lowe references the term "editor" in his rebuttal to Freeman, the latter advises Lowe that he did write to the publisher of the **Schoolmate**, advising him in the strongest terms of the "pernicious influence" Alger's contributions might have on the magazine's male readers. It is difficult for me to accept Freeman's sweeping generalizations and wild posturings, but the point of fact is that both the publisher and the editor were ultimately aware of the recent events in Brewster. Horatio Alger's "The Rivals" (May and June 1866) and the first part of "Harry Lynch's Trip to Boston" (July 1866) were probably the articles to which Freeman referred.

Adams would shortly leave his editorial post, but not because of Alger's indiscretion. Might he have reflected that abiding whatever decision was mandated by the Boston Board of Unitarians, it would cast no discredit upon himself? Although Alger's misdemeanors apparently did not faze Trowbridge (if indeed he was even aware of them) who published his "How Johnny Bought a Sewing-Machine" in the August 1866 issue of **Our Young Folks**, it can be definitively stated that nothing by Horatio Alger was published in Oliver Optic's magazine **Our Boys and Girls**. I can suggest no accounting whatsoever for these contrary policies on the part of editors Adams and Trowbridge. We can only postulate Adams' position on all of this.

Allen's, on the other hand, is more clear-cut. It would appear that Alger's activities in Brewster and the outrageous reactions in certain circles did not matter in the least to Allen, who welcomed Alger's fiction month after month, year after year. We have only to recall how, according to Farnell in his interview with Alger many years later, Allen supported and encouraged the young author. It is significant to note that some months after the Brewster Affair, when *Ragged Dick* was first published throughout 1867, it appeared in the pages of the **Schoolmate** anonymously. In light of the foregoing, it seems to me that this could be interpreted on the part of the publisher as more intentional than otherwise. It wouldn't surprise me.

What we have hoped to achieve with this digression is to clarify what might have been an acquaintance between Alger and Adams based on their mutual association with the **Student and Schoolmate** during this unfortunate

period. Alger's activities at Brewster were highlighted solely to make sense of the quotations referring to the **Schoolmate** in the correspondence exchanged between the Unitarian Association and the Brewster committee, relating to publisher Allen and editor Adams. All of this was distilled in an effort to prove some kindred association, however tenuous, among the two authors. Unfortunately we can offer merely a hypothesis or two, with some slight suggestions of what "might" have existed.

Based on this data, anyone who postulates either a strong friendship between Adams and Alger or who claims that Adams was responsible for Alger's sudden popularity with the serialization of *Ragged Dick* in 1867 must be discounted completely as speculation, an argument unsupportable on all counts. In all likelihood Alger's *Ragged Dick* and Oliver Optic's contemporary novel *The Starry Flag* were both planned and executed during a similar time frame, during the latter months of 1866, with publication in January 1867 in two different magazines.

I was rather surprised to note, in a recent issue of **Newsboy**, a reprinting of Alger's story "The Christmas Watch" (November-December 2013). This by itself is not unusual, as one of the benefits of our Alger Society membership is to read the many ephemeral tales Alger wrote for the literary weeklies during the 1850s and 1860s. I am gratified that our editor sees fit to reprint them on a regular basis, as I personally enjoy these stories quite as much in their own way as I do the Alger juveniles. Shortly after the Brewster incident, Alger's father also wrote to Charles Lowe in Boston in which he affirmed that "you have already received from my son Horatio a note announcing that he has resigned his parish and all intention of ever again entering a pulpit" (quoted in Scharnhorst/Bales, p. 2).

He also states to Lowe that, relative to any further ministerial occupation, it is a career "I will guarantee that he will neither seek nor desire." Alger, Jr. eschewed his former professional attainments in lieu of authorship and never again served as pastor. Yet some months after the correspondence quoted above, "The Christmas Watch" first appeared in **Gleason's Literary Companion** on December 29, 1866, as by "Rev. Horatio Alger, Jr."

There was some risk here, it seems to me, if Alger indeed abrogated all his connections with the ministry. Did he sanction this himself? Was it rather an editorial decision? Certainly, the use of the term "Reverend" might only have exacerbated an already uneasy and tense situation not only within the *purlieu* of Boston but in its environs as well. Maybe this designation was not particularly remarked upon by anyone. Let us hope that Solomon Freeman did not notice it. It seems to me that Alger would have felt as uncomfortable seeing it in print as some members of the Brewster congregation would have. I cannot account for it.

(End of Part 1)



# *The Chilhowee Boys*

## A series about pioneer life by Sarah Elizabeth Morrison

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

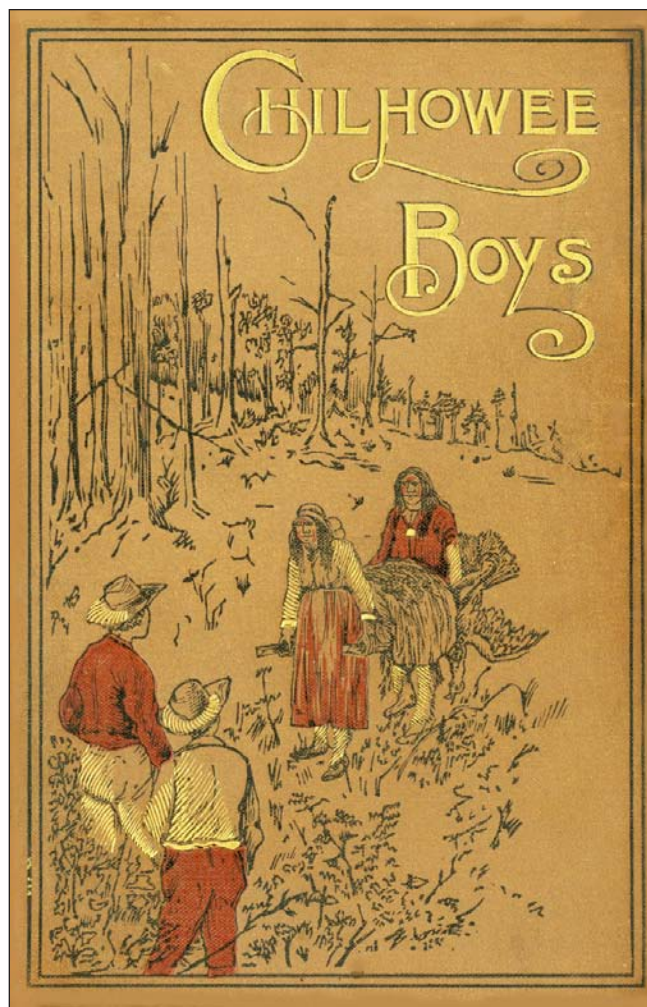
**T**he *Chilhowee Boys Series* is one of the more obscure juvenile series published in the late 19th century. Even the author is rather obscure. To put it gently, Sarah Elizabeth Morrison is not spoken in the same breath with such contemporaries as William T. Adams, Horatio Alger, Jr., James Otis or Edward S. Ellis. Of course, those famous authors were responsible for more than 100 books each, many of them best-sellers. Sarah Elizabeth Morrison authored only four books, according to such bibliographic sources as *Who's Who in America*, *Who Was Who in America* (Vol. 5) and *Indiana Authors and their Books 1816-1916*.

In each of those sources, Morrison is credited with the following four books: *Chilhowee Boys*, *Chilhowee Boys in War Time*, *Chilhowee Boys at College* and *Chilhowee Boys in Harness*, all published by Thomas Y. Crowell of Boston between 1893 and 1898. These books sold for \$1.50 retail at the time, so it is little wonder they are difficult to locate today. Initial sales were likely quite low, due to that \$1.50 price and the popularity of the above-mentioned authors writing in the same genre. Also, Morrison's *Chilhowee Boys Series* novels are lengthy, averaging more than 400 pages and up to 90,000 words.

### Who was Sarah Elizabeth Morrison?

According to the above references, along with census and death records, here is what we know about Ms. Morrison. She was born in Indiana in 1839, near the Ohio River town of Madison in Jefferson County, to Dr. Hill (or Hiel, in some listings) and Anna Sophia (Martin) Morrison. Her mother was a native of Philadelphia and her father was born in Tennessee. Sarah died while living at 4541 Chestnut Street, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 19, 1915, at age 76, never having married. She was buried April 22, 1915, in Philadelphia's Mt. Moriah Cemetery. No profession is noted on the 1870 Philadelphia 7th Ward census report (she is listed as "at home"),

*This article was presented as a paper on March 28, 2013 at the 49th annual conference of the Popular Culture Association in Washington, D.C., and at the 2013 Horatio Alger Society convention in Greenwood, Indiana.*



while three siblings are listed as teachers and a fourth as a bookstore clerk. The 1910 census lists Sarah's profession as "author."

### Where and what is Chilhowee?

Chilhowee is a region about 25-30 miles south of Knoxville in eastern Tennessee, an area in its early days home to various native American nations, most notably the Creeks and Cherokees, who followed the much earlier Mississippian native American inhabitants. According to anthropologist Charles Hudson, the site saw its first outside visitor when the Spanish explorer Juan Pardo made an expedition to the region in 1567, reaching the Little Tennessee Valley on October 15 of that year. Hudson believes "Chilhowee" is the Cherokee pronunciation of the earlier Muskogean tribal name "Chalahume."

The Chilhowee site lies in Tennessee's Blount and Monroe Counties, and today it is covered by Chilhowee Lake, a reservoir created on the Little Tennessee River by the construction of the Chilhowee Dam in 1957. The

(Continued on Page 12)



# The Chilhowee Boys

(Continued from Page 11)

Little Tennessee River enters the state of Tennessee from the south, and flows northwestward for about 54 miles through Blount, Monroe and Loudon Counties before joining the Tennessee River near Lenoir City.

Chilhowee Dam was a privately funded project, by the Tapoco Division of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), about 34 miles from the confluence of the

Little Tennessee and Tennessee Rivers. On the map reproduced at right, the dam's site is just southeast of the junction of U.S. Highway 129 and Foothills Parkway, just west of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and north of Cherokee National Forest. The dam created Chilhowee Lake, a 10-mile-long reservoir between Chilhowee Dam and Calderwood Dam to the south, near the Tennessee-North Carolina border. Chilhowee Lake forms part of the boundary between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and lies north of Cherokee National Forest.

The Cherokee National Forest, established by Congress in 1911, now protects the western shoreline of the river above Chilhowee Lake, while the Great Smoky Mountains, named a national park in 1932, guards the eastern shoreline.

Why is this geography lesson important? Sarah Elizabeth Morrison's **Chilhowee Boys Series** was set in this locale in the early 19th century, well before European-American settlers and frontiersmen populated the site in the post-Civil War period, thus destroying much of the 18th century Cherokee settlement and natural habitat. Then, with the building of the dam in 1957, the actual locale of Morrison's stories was inundated by the Chilhowee Lake reservoir.

The heritage of the name "Chilhowee" remains today, with Chilhowee Mountain and Chilhowee Lake important landmarks, along with the Chilhowee name found

on area schools, churches and businesses. There is even a park and residential neighborhood named Chilhowee within the City of Knoxville, 30 miles to the north.

## The Chilhowee Boys Series

It appears likely that Sarah Elizabeth Morrison created the stories from tales passed down from her father (who was born in Tennessee) and other family members. The four books follow the growth of the so-called "Chilhowee boys" from boyhood to manhood through the four volumes.

The saga begins in 1811, when the families of Parson Craig and the neighboring Baird family decide to

make the 400-mile trek westward from North Carolina to the Chilhowee Valley area of Tennessee, a caravan of between 15 and 20 people (ranging from adults to infants), along with two Conestoga-style wagons full of belongings and tools, plus a small gig (carriage) for the women. The entourage also includes several horses, several cows to provide milk and a small herd of sheep.

At the start of the tale, the boys of the title, Kenneth and

Hugh Craig, are ages 14 and 12, respectively. They are joined by their younger son, Don, along with the neighbor's son, Alan Baird, 14, who like his close friend Kenneth, is described as "tall and manly, fond of out-door life and eager for adventure."

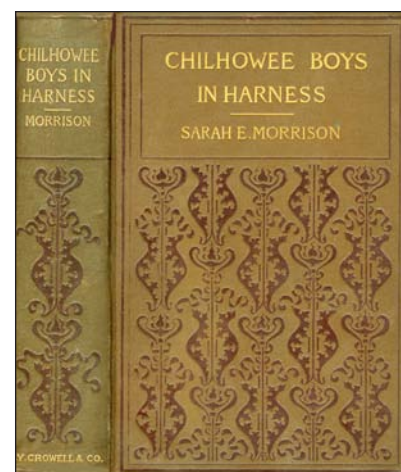
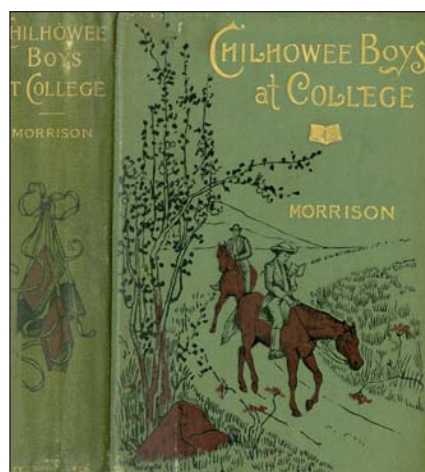
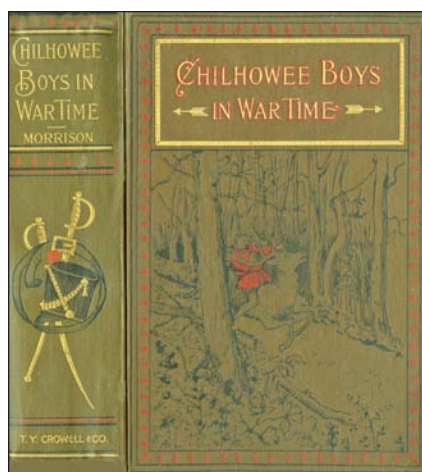
Hugh Craig, though two years younger, is described thus: "... nearly as tall as his brother, but much more slender. He looked as eager and pleased as the others."

The sheep belonged to Hugh, and there was concern by his older brother that they would slow down the long journey, primarily because of their aversion to water, what with many rivers of varying depths expected to be forded along the way.

Two non-family members are important members of the entourage: Puk-Puggee, a Cherokee native who served as a guide; and Thad, an African American who speaks in broken English (well before the word "ebonics" entered the lexicon to describe this particular cultural dialect).



**The Chilhowee region of Tennessee is just west of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, near the junction of the Tennessee and Little Tennessee Rivers, about 30 miles south of Knoxville.**



Remember, this book was written in 1893, less than 30 years after the ratification of the 13th Amendment, so African Americans were often held in very low regard by their white counterparts, particularly in the South. Thus, readers will find liberal use of the “N” word, both spoken by Chad himself and by his white friends. Within the Chilhowee caravan, however, there was no negativity toward Chad, and his philosophy of life was respected by the adults and children alike, even though such dialect as written in the book is obviously considered racist today.

The books also present an overall Christian theme, not surprising in that the main family is headed by a minister (Parson Craig), who is headed west to establish the Chilhowee Valley Church. Whenever seeming disasters occur, such as a mountain hurricane (described as such but really, a tornado), floods, imminent threats from wild animals or other emergencies), the lord is often cited in leading the families to safety.

Because these four books contain more than 350,000 words in total, and this article can’t go into THAT much detail, emphasis will be placed on only a handful of events that are of particular interest.

For example, in the opening volume, *Chilhowee Boys*, black bears are considered a threat because the mountains and streams along the 400-mile trek to Tennessee are their natural habitat. Don Craig, the youngest of the parson’s sons (who happened at the time to be suffering from a sprained ankle), happens across a bear while tracking one of the family’s wandering sheep along a creek:

Suddenly he saw a sight that filled him with alarm. A bear came stealing out from among the bushes on the other side of the creek and walked straight to the water’s edge. How Don wished he could run! It was the worst time in the world to be lame, and to have a lame sheep in charge too! He held his breath and watched. The creek

“Parents in search of the best reading for their children will not hesitate to select these.”—*Boston Times*.

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THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY,  
NEW YORK AND BOSTON.

was narrow; the bear had but to cross it, and a few steps more would bring him to Don’s side. Don thought he must run and leave the sheep to its fate.

But now he saw something very curious. Bruin did not attempt to cross, but quietly seated himself on the

(Continued on Page 14)



# The Chilhowee Boys

(Continued from Page 13)

edge of the stream, and put open of his paws into the water. Almost before Don could realize it, he had caught a fish and eaten it, and was stretching his paw out for another.

The bear was very dexterous and seemed to have no eyes for his finny prey. Fish after fish was hooked out of the stream with his nimble paw and devoured rapidly.

"It looks as if he was used to fishing for his supper," thought Don. "I'm glad he likes fish. Maybe he will not be hungry enough to care to eat me or the sheep – not yet awhile anyhow."

Don was momentarily lost, and called out, and Alan Baird finally heard him and led his friend and the lame sheep back to camp.

"This is a pretty fix," said Alan, pleased to find himself in the midst of an adventure. "You came after the sheep, and I came after you, and there's a great bears ready to come after all three of us; and now I'd like to know how I'm going to get back to camp with two lame-legged creatures."

Later, after the traveling party's arrival on the banks of the Chilhowee to establish their new homes, Kenneth Craig has his own encounter with a bear. A thief was believed to be stealing skim milk and buttermilk from a storage barrel outside their house, and Kenneth accidentally spied the thief when he was locking the sheep-pen gate. A bear was on its haunches, drinking from the barrel, and Kenneth snuck up from behind, grabbed the bear's hind legs and tilted him head-first into the barrel, drowning him following a vicious fight in the bear's attempt to escape:

"Why, Ken, you've done something wonderful!" exclaimed his uncle, as he helped to tumble the huge creature out upon the grass, overturning the barrel.

"Have I?" gasped Kenneth, quite out of breath. "Is he dead?"

"Yes, as much so as if he had a bullet in him."

Needless to say, bear-steaks were soon to be enjoyed by all.

Not all the events of *Chilhowee Boys* ended in such a positive manner. Later in the story, as a practical joke, Alan and Kenneth fake an Indian attack on the Craig home, creating all kinds of furtive noises and war-whoops and scaring the residents. Hugh was almost literally scared to death, climbing into the unheated



**Don and Hugh kept the pine knots blazing.**

*Chilhowee Boys* — Page 222

attic and hiding among some sheared wool. As a result, the younger boy contracted "inflamed lungs" (likely, pneumonia) and nearly died. Only deep prayer pulled him through.

Later, Kenneth was roundly criticized by his father for the cruel prank:

"You are my eldest son, my first-born. You have acted like a child, a cruel, thoughtless child, instead of the responsible being you really are. The conduct of a boy your age, with younger brothers looking to him as their example and protector, should be far different. It is time you waked up to the duties of your position. The dangers of this new life are not to be laughed at and turned into a joke, as you seem to think. Hugh's terror, and his frantic efforts to save little John and Alec when he thought Indians were breaking into the house, were not unreasonable. I shall be glad if all my boys try as hard to shield each of other from danger as it comes."

"Oh father, I would!" protested Kenneth. "If real danger came I know I would."





**In the pleasant fall weather, they liked to study on horseback.**

*Chilhowee Boys at College* — Page 202

“Well, I hope so; but the fact is, that the one time I have ventured to leave you as protector of your brothers, you betrayed your trust; you turned into their enemy as truly as if you had been one of the savages that we all fear.”

So, Kenneth learned an important life’s lesson.

Then, late in the book, Alan Baird learned HIS life’s lesson.

Alan had picked up the smoking habit, and one day, attempting to hide his corn-cob pipe from his younger sister Phoebe when she entered his room, he hid his still-lit pipe under his straw mattress. Soon, the entire house, along with the attached barn and corn-crib, were ablaze, and despite a heavy rainstorm, burned to the ground.

The Baird family decided not to rebuild, but return over the mountains to North Carolina in the company of a party of traders who were soon to arrive in Chilhowee. But then, near-tragedy intervened. Kenneth and Alan decided to have an impromptu horse race, and on a turn on the trail, a fallen tree caused Alan’s horse to trip, breaking its

leg and throwing Alan into a nearby tree, unconscious, with several broken ribs and a head injury.

For a while, it looked like Alan was doomed. Finally it was learned he would survive, but that it would take weeks to recover.

With the traders already heading east, the Baird family decided to remain in Chilhowee and rebuild, rather than sell their land. The book ends with a Sunday of rejoicing in Chilhowee Valley, with the winds of the War of 1812 on the horizon.

In brief summary, here is how Morrison continues the *Chilhowee Boys* series:

***Chilhowee Boys in War Time:*** In the second volume, the families continue to live in the Chilhowee Valley, with the boys — Alan and Kenneth both now age 15 and Hugh 13, respectively, with Don even younger, too young to bear arms.

But that doesn’t mean the Craigs and Bairds are insulated from the War. The Cherokee and Creek tribes are siding with the United States and British, respectively, bringing much instability to the area, which greatly inhibits the boys in their formal schooling. Adults were drafted into the army, although Parson Craig, as a minister, was exempt and was able to remain in Chilhowee as the moral and spiritual leader of the community. The war ends in the spring of 1815, and peace returns to Chilhowee Valley as it does to the rest of the United States.

***Chilhowee Boys at College:*** In the third volume, Alan Baird and Kenneth Craig head into higher education, with Hugh soon to follow. Another friend, Leigh Gordon, joins the group of friends. It soon becomes evident that Alan and Kenneth are to become doctors, while Hugh decides to follow his father’s footsteps into the ministry, the profession also chosen later by young Don. In 1815, obtaining a college education was difficult, particularly in the wilderness of Tennessee, but the boys overcame all obstacles to reach their goals.

***Chilhowee Boys in Harness:*** The final book of the series follows the chums as they enter their professions. All is not easy, particularly for Alan, who begins medical practice as a resident in the office of a Dr. Thompson. A young patient arrives with a terrible toothache (many doctors practiced dentistry in the early 1800s), and Alan prescribed laudanum, a powerful anti-pain potion, which can be dangerous if applied excessively. An overdose, along with inattentiveness by Alan, rendered the boy unconscious.

Upon his return, Dr. Thompson spoke in the driest tone:

“You’ve doubled and trebled your task by going off pleasure-seeking. Why, Baird, if I hadn’t got here just

*(Continued on Page 16)*

# *The Chilhowee Boys*

(Continued from Page 15)

when I did, the boy would have been a corpse. Then you would have had something to cure you of your thoughtlessness.”

Thankfully, Alan overcame that mistake and eventually received his certificate from Dr. Thompson to practice medicine.

Later, Alan betrayed his envy of Kenneth’s already successful medical practice when he at first refused to ask his friend for help when his own infant son was accidentally dropped by his father while the two were on horseback.

The grandparents pleaded with Alan to call for medical help from Kenneth, who was practicing medicine in a neighboring town:

He turned fiercely to his father and mother and said, “No, I won’t send for him! Ken Craig shan’t come near my baby!”

The baby’s condition worsened, and finally, Alan relented and called in Kenneth. In the meantime, with a remedy devised by his faithful servant Thad, Alan used a lamp to heat the room to a fiery temperature, hoping the break the baby’s fever. Finally, the baby breathed more easily and beads of moisture appeared on his forehead. An hour later, Kenneth, having been involved with a case of surgery at his practice, arrived. “He is in his natural sleep,” he said, looking at the baby. “You may begin to hope.”

And the baby’s father became a changed man:

Alan had thought of Kenneth as a rival since they had both begun to practice medicine in Chilhowee, though he knew his jealousy had no foundation. Now he saw how true was Kenneth’s friendship and sympathy. It was a relief to him in his present mood to tell all the details of the baby’s accident and illness, though the story showed how much he himself was at fault.

This final book in the series introduces weddings and grandchildren, along with a widening group of friends. Although some of them moved away from their adopted Tennessee home, many returned, according to Morrison:

Though it was the fate of some of them to live far distant from their early home, it was their delight to



**Alan had the eye and hand of a surgeon.**

*Chilhowee Boys in Harness* — Frontispiece

visit Chilhowee — “the old stamping-ground,” that they called it — and there together to recount the exploits and perils of their boyhood, and to view again the bright, beautiful scenes of which nature is so lavish in that favored region.

\* \* \*

Despite the four books’ long length of just under 90,000 words each and their often semi-archaic style, the **Chilhowee Boys Series** presents a very interesting study of early Tennessee frontier life. Christian beliefs and morality are evidenced in nearly every chapter, helping to make Sarah Elizabeth Morrison’s stories a notable contribution to late-19th century juvenile literature. The stories are also enhanced greatly by the illustrations of noted Boston artist Frank T. Merrill.

*The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of James D. Keeline (PF-898), who provided U.S. census and other personal information on Sarah E. Morrison.*