

Distribution 100

Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed by Forrest Campbell, 5868 Pilgrim; Kalamazoo, Michigan

Greetings Everyone! Many of us are now acquainted; Your response to the first edition has been very encouraging and gratifying. It becomes my duty now to relay to you, the messages and experiences of your Fellow-Collector with whom you are now associated. First, let me say that I am not an authority on Alger; However, I have my opinions and will defend our Hero against all-comers. We all know that our Hero had prepared for the ministry and was ordained and actually held a Pastorate for a short term. Through the medium of the pulpit, he reached only a small number of people and perhaps the same group each and every Sunday. We know that he abandoned the pulpit and perhaps for this very reason. Yes, he had a message for the people and the power of the pen was beckoning to him and by this method, he reached more people than any other person in his time. How many juvenile books did he write? that is a good question. Some day we may have it figured out. A popular guess at the present time is 120 books; However, this is not my guess! Someone in the past, has made this statement, "Alger had but one story and he rewrote it 119 times. We know this was not true; However strange things were happening; Many stories were reprinted after having been given a different title; It is my belief that Alger had little or no control over this practice. Available records imply that he was a very poor business man. Except in rare cases, it is generally agreed that a person with creative ability is a poor business man and has no sense of financial values. The Revere Journal Office Staff did send me several copies of the edition which carried the story of our search for Alger's birthplace (my wife was with me, behind the camera, most of the time). I have one or two copies left which I will gladly mail to first requests. The Library in Revere, I understood was interested in stocking some of our Hero's books and I volunteered our services; Nothing definite yet, however! Is there one among us who has not heard someone say; "I gave all my books away when I left home." (this is the natural and normal thing to do) Well, recently I heard a new angle where they were donated to the public library of his home town. I decided to check this one out, since it was only 50 miles away. This Library has a storeroom filled with out-of-circulation books which included some 30 Alger's; Four of which I was eager to own and now I do! This source is worth checking out in your home-town too! I know of sources yet unexplored and untouched by collector's hands and no chance of doing so, during the lifetime of the present owner! Do you have this experience? Isn't it maddening? If any of you have the secret, the magic touch, the know-how to an Owner's heart! Please reveal your methods which have proven successful in your search.

From your many responses, I am unable to select one and say, "This one, I prize the most!" I do enjoy making new friends as well as to keep the old ones. I have tried to answer all of your letters personally and it has been a terrific job! I must acknowledge the loyal support of our friend Kenneth B. Butler of Mendota, Illinois who is designing a masthead for our newsletter. I must acknowledge the praise and encouragement of our No. 1 Collector, Ralph Gardner of New York and I was pleasantly surprised to learn that our friend John Sullivan, 2202 Burlington St., Ottawa, Ill. was born in Malden, only three miles from Revere; John says he will have some interesting things to tell us soon. Mrs. Lorne (Shirley) Condon, 6491 Glenroy St., San Diego, Calif. is torn between two loves (Alger and Stratemeyer). Shirley says; "Go to your Public Library and read the 'BOYS BOOKS' section of the April 1934 edition of Fortune Magazine." At her recommendation, I did just this and enjoyed every word of it. It primarily pertains to the life of Stratemeyer (1862-1930). It relates of his many pseudonyms and of his finishing post-humously many of Alger's unfinished stories. Mrs. Irene Gurman, 23498 Parklawn, Oakpark 37, Michigan has a 10x12 picture of our Hero originating from an Argosy Supplement! Irene is advising us to read "Fiction Factory" by Quentin Reynolds; I have and I now recommend it to you! It tells about Street & Smith's Paper-back editions including Alger's. The July 6-13, 1959 edition of Antiquarian Bookman has an authentic and accepted list of Alger's books! From our friend in Berkeley Springs, West Va. comes this message: "I am a very recent collector of Alger; As a child, I read practically all of his books as did most of my friends in my little home town of Marshfield, Mass., near the Cape. I had about ten different Alger's in my possession when I half-heartedly agreed to become a collector. Then, at a Public Sale, I bought four large boxes of books; At the bottom of one of the boxes, I found a copy of HELEN FORD, I had never heard of that one; But after an authority informed me that I had a rare book, though of little value because of its poor condition, I got the collector's fever! Now its "What can I find next?" The search is really exciting! My husband also read Alger during his youth. He went into the Army in 1930 as a Private with half an adequate education and retired in 1954 as a Major; and admits that Alger helped to show him the way! Alger was more than a name. He was a maker of men!..... Jean Steiner, R2; Jean has recently informed me that she now has 43 books! Nice going! Jean. Al Vogt of Monterey Park, Calif. sent me a clipping from his Telephone trade Journal which tells of his large library of juvenile books. The picture shows Al and his books with dust-covers and look just like new! Al tells of a recent visit to the Huntington Library in Pasadena (only 7 miles away) where he had the pleasure of seeing in person, first editions of almost every book Alger ever wrote and in mint condition too!

Most Owners would have us wait until the books we want can be served to us upon a silver platter. We know that this time will never, never come. I would rather grope my way among the cobwebs and find nothing than to be told. "Just some trash! I threw it out!" My most cherished books are not from gifts, but from results of my own efforts and search! I am not a First Edition addict; I am perfectly satisfied with a good Winston and I must admit, this desire is not original; I have adopted it from the policy of Irene Gurman who can tell you the best way to preserve your Alger books; She will be pleased to tell you all about it. So far as I know, she and I are the only Alger Collectors in the State to be reckoned with. To further my own interests here locally, I am placing my collection of 80 books on display in one of the downtown bank windows for an entire week. I am hopeful of creating some new interest, young enough to carry on for another generation. So far, I have personally met Butler, Steiner and Gurman. Soon I shall meet with Harold Poore, 5116 Jaysue St., Indiana (Anderson). I want to meet you too! I keep my camera loaded and my wife handy to record on film for posterity, my Alger friends and I bickering over the exchange value of an Alger book! Such films will be available to you! If you don't have a projector! Borrow one! We need a Sponsor to defray the expense of this Newsletter. A Motel or Restaurant Chain; A Transportation Co. Insurance; anyone who would profit Nationally by an advertisement on the back of this Newsletter. Do you know of anyone!

What Al treasures most about this collection is that several books are personally autographed by our Hero and one in particular was inscribed "TO James Montgomery Flagg! Interest in Alger is not restricted to men alone! To my utter amazement, there are as many interested women as there are men. The Alger stories were designed for boys but just about everyone now is interested except the 1962 boys! Alger stories perhaps attracted more adults than boys. I have a cousin who is now an octogenarian; She has revived her dormant interest and is now reading Alger again! Mrs. Eleanore Wiese says, "I practically cut my teeth on Alger books!" If you want to hear more of this story from a dyed in the wool Alger Fan, write to her at R1 Bonduel, Visc. Max Goldberg, who runs the SPINNING WHEEL in Natick, Mass. has coined a new name for new Alger Fans "Alger-philis" he calls them. Max will keep me posted on any news of the heirs of our Hero in and around South Natick. He also informs me of a friend who has done considerable research and has written on historic Boston. Paul Rothenburger of Lisbon, N.H. says his business, The Old Trading Post and Abner's Book Service are one and the same. Paul has the largest stock of used books on record. If Paul hasn't got it, it just isn't! Right! Paul? There are many of us who have two or more interests; I have old Newspapers; Mrs. Peg Smeltzer, 290 Bickley Rd. Glenside Pa., collects open salt cellars. With Mrs. Francie M. Narauska, Alger is a sideline! She can be reached at R2, Hampden Highlands, Maine. Sorry I can't mention all of you this month; I'll try again next month! In the meantime, keep those letters coming! I love 'em!

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