

Monthly publication of the HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY,
a magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

Newsboy



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899



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Bowie resident Bob Williman points out an appropriate passage from the "official" Alger biography to wife, Kathleen. The sage himself,

Horatio Alger, Jr., looks on from photograph in back of the couple.

HAS member Bob Williman is interviewed in a lengthy article that appears on pages 3 to 5 of this issue of Newsboy. It originally appeared in the June 28, 1979 issue of the Bowie, Maryland Blade. Thanks go to Bob for his continuing interest in Alger.

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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Please make all remittances payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, changes of address, claims for missing issues, and orders for single copies of current or back numbers of Newsboy should be sent to the Society's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, at 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

A subject index to the first ten years of Newsboy (July, 1962 — June, 1972) is available for \$1.50 from Carl Hartmann at the above address.

Manuscripts relating to Horatio Alger's life and works are solicited, but the editor reserves the right to reject submitted material.

* * *

REMEMBER: The HAS Convention — the "Connecticut Conclave" will soon be here!! Hosted by HAS Vice-President Brad Chase, the May meeting will surely be a noteworthy event.

* * *

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-584 Hank Gravbelle
205 Great Road B9
Acton, Mass. 01720

Hank learned of the Society through HAS Director Dick Seddon. Besides Algers, he collects antiques and books, and is also interested in Duplicate Bridge.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

PF-024 Gilbert K. Westgard II
9226 W. Golf Road
Des Plaines, Ill. 60016
* * *
ITALIAN CHILD SLAVERY
AND THE PADRONE SYSTEM
(Part III)

by
Douglas Tarr

(Editor's note: Parts I and II of this paper were presented in the April and May, 1979 issues of Newsboy).

In the case of The New York Times its coverage focused on a twelve year old named Joseph whose adventures were chronicled over a three month period in the summer of 1873. Joseph was born in the province of Basilicata, Italy. One night three years before a man named Vincenzo Motto kidnapped him and took him to New York. Motto wasted no time initiating Joseph into his work. On his second day in the city Motto gave Joseph a triangle and told him not to come back until he had collected forty cents. Presently the required amount increased to sixty cents and then one dollar. After a time and following some training, Motto promoted Joseph from triangle to violin.

As in other cases, punishment was swift if Joseph failed to produce the required amount. Several times Motto beat him with a heavy cane. On one occasion the enraged Motto bit Joseph's left ear. Another time Joseph was bound hand and foot and left alone
(continued on page 8)

Diligent, Honest Hard Work Equals Success

Local Man Is Noted Horatio Alger Buff

By VICKI DUNCAN
Blade News Editor

Horatio Alger's name is known to just about everybody, claims Bowie resident Bob Williman, but most people don't really know much more about the man and his philosophy than the familiar name.

Williman is out to change that.

"I think it's just a matter of time before Alger gets his due," Williman told The Blade.

"Did you know that Alger is America's all-time best selling author?" he asks, noting that Horatio Alger authored 202 books, plus a host of essays, poems, and short stories during his lifetime.

All revolve around the same narrow theme, the central creed for which Horatio Alger won his reputation: diligent, honest hard work equals success. "It's Americanism at its best," boasts Williman, "as American as apple pie."

Williman admits he believes the Alger philosophy just as much now as he did as a youth. The 39-year-old Kenilworth resident credits Alger with giving him the oomph needed to strive for success and the realization of the American dream.

"Alger says if you're willing to work hard you'll have success. I think America needs this now more than ever," Williman says. "There's so much social welfare. People lean too much on government. A long time ago when Alger was writing, if you didn't work you didn't eat. A lot of self-stimulus is missing in our society today."

Because he believes so deeply in what Alger sought to convey in his many books, and because he is concerned about the relative difficulty of locating those 202 books today, Williman, a member of the exclusive Horatio Alger Society, decided some months ago to share his accumulated Alger wealth with local residents.

Williman found that the Bowie library carried virtually nothing on Alger, and the accumulated information available in encyclopedias ran but three pages' worth.

"So I started cross referencing to make my own bibliography," he explained.

Williman's preoccupation with Alger as a hobby dates back some 15 years. It was but two years ago, however, that he learned of the existence of the Horatio Alger Society. Its 200 members span the

continent, and are living examples of the validity of the Alger philosophy. "We mostly sit around comparing notes," Williman said.

The little-known society was started in the early 60's by two Alger book collectors. Today, there's a newsletter issued monthly appropriately named "The Newsboy," and the group meets annually for a "fun" convention.

For Williman, spreading the word about Alger is a prime goal. His method has taken the form of a month-long exhibit slated for the Bowie library in July, to open July 2. There, Williman will for the first time be displaying his collected works and other memorabilia about Alger, his work and philosophy, and the history of what has occurred since his death in 1899.

In his own personal collection, Williman has more than 300 books, plus assorted other memorabilia, including a signed copy by Alger biographer/bibliographer Ralph D. Gardner. Gardner's definitive work on Alger and his life, dating from 1964, was recently updated and re-released.

"Alger had a tremendous influence on my life," admits Williman. "I read him, and I believed him. If you work hard," he said, "no matter what the odds or how impoverished, eventually you will have success. I still believe it's true today. You have to want success, and be willing to work hard. It was right then, and it's right now. His belief is applicable today."

Williman's introduction to Horatio Alger came at age eight, after his mother came home from a second-hand shop with a copy of one of the Alger novels. "I liked the theme that poor boys can make good," he admits.

That theme — that by striving poor boys can succeed — pervades all the Alger novels, which were written in the late 19th century for boys, at about the same time as the better-remembered Louisa Mae Alcott was writing for girls.

Alger wasn't an overnight success. In fact, it wasn't until he published his eighth book that his success was assured and he became widely known. That key book was *Ragged Dick*, published in 1868.

Ragged Dick was about a New York street boy, the most common Alger character who made good. Typical Alger characters who succeed despite overwhelming odds are newsboys, boot-blacks, orphans, and the like. The prototypes came mainly from a favorite hangout of Alger's — the newsboys' boarding house.

One Alger book in particular, *Phil the Fiddler*, probably exercised the greatest influence by far of the collection. Much of the material came from real life, based on fact. The book is credited more than any one thing with leading to the first child protection laws in New York State.

When it was published, there was a huge public outcry against the "padrone" system, where Italian boys who spoke no English were brought to the land of opportunity and, once arrived, were given menial jobs on the street. If they didn't meet established quotas they were beaten or given no food.

The founder of the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) became interested in the plight of these young boys, founding a New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. His action, along with the public outcry over *Phil*, prompted the New York State legislature to do away with the cruel "padrone" system.

Alger's relative obscurity today, in light of his popularity during his lifetime and his great influence on the youths of the day, is directly traceable, Williams maintains, to a fluke.

"Alger really got a raw deal in 1928," Williman points out. It was then that a popular newspaper editor, Herbert R.



Bob Williman and his wife Kathleen at the last Horatio Alger Society convention.

Mayes, published the first Alger biography. "It was total spoof, tongue-in-cheek," Williman explained, "but unfortunately it was taken for the truth."

That kind of spoof writing of biography was a fad of the time, he continues, but in Alger's case something went wrong, and librarians began to pull his works off their shelves. "He comes off as a terrible man, chasing prostitutes all over Europe," Williman said. "The librarians just purged their shelves."

Even today, he explained, the deliberate fabrication is still taken as truth by many. A diary on which the biography was supposedly based was invented out of whole cloth, the author

admits. "But many encyclopedias even still refer to it as truth," Williman lamented.

Much later there was an attempt to correct the error, but it came too late. Mayes, still living, sought to do his part to correct history just last year when his 1928 biography was re-released with a new introduction half a century later in an attempt to unmask the spoof.

More useful in setting the record straight has been the recent biography/bibliography by Gardner, who is credited with bringing together a lot of original research never before printed. Like Williman, Gardner, a former New York Times editor and 19th century literature specialist, believes Alger got a "raw deal" from history.

Many famous people have credited Alger with influencing them to achieve success, points out Williman, who noted the American Schools and Colleges Assn. annually awards Horatio Alger awards for "the American tradition of overcoming obstacles through diligence, perseverance, and industry."

Alger, contends Williman, had a great sociological impact in his era, helping hundreds of orphan boys to find purpose and success. It is important to make him more known, he adds, to erase his virtual anonymity.

Why is Williman so intent on spreading the word?

"This is a blessed country," he smiled. "If you can see it, you have a responsibility to perpetuate it."



Bill Russell, Brad Alexander, and Neil McCormick at the "Cleveland Connection"

Gilbert Kapelman, Brad Alexander, and Alex Shaner at the convention's book sale







Broadway in 1850. At left Barnum's Museum. On opposite side Brady's Daguerrotype Gallery, St. Paul's and the Astor House. The bookshop of this famed Hotel was a gathering place for many of New York's literati.

-from Our Literary Heritage, contributed by Gilbert K. Westgard II

in a cellar all night. (38)

Joseph endured two years and then, summoning his courage, he threatened to run away. Motto told Joseph the King of Italy, the Pope, and the President of the United States had granted him authority to treat Joseph in any way he chose. Should Joseph even try to run away, he would be tortured or even killed. Apparently believing threats were insufficient, Motto began tying Joseph each night. (39)

In spite of Motto's threats Joseph ran away one day in June, 1873. After a few days wandering the streets, Joseph ran into a Children's Cottage in Central Park operated by a Mrs. McMonegal. Motto made efforts to recapture him. One day three padroni including Motto staked out the cottage. A few days later another padrone, Luigi Careli, offered ten dollars reward for his capture. In July a card was circulated among workers in the park offering thirty dollars in exchange for Joseph. (40)

There was as yet no applicable law which could be used against Motto. However in August the anti-padrone forces decided that Joseph's testimony should be submitted as an affidavit before a United States Commissioner. Accordingly a complaint was filed under the 1866 Civil Rights Bill. (41) Orders were issued to bring Motto in. The police found Motto at No. 45 Crosby Street. (No. 45 was actually two separate buildings, standing back to back, each five stories high). Motto did not live alone. He was found in an eight by six one window room in company with six other men and two boys. Joseph, brought along to identify his former master, did so, and Motto was brought in

(38) New York Times, June 17, 1873, p. 1; August 21, 1873, p. 8.

(39) Ibid., June 17, 1873, p. 1.

(40) Ibid., June 25, 1873, p. 2; June 28, 1873, p. 1; July 22, 1873, p. 5; August 22, 1873, p. 5.

(41) Ibid., August 20, 1873, p. 5.

for questioning. (42)

The examination before the United States Commissioner was disappointing. The Commissioner did not doubt Italian child slavery existed, but under the law he had no choice but to discharge Motto. Essentially it was Joseph's word, uncorroborated, against that of Motto, whose lawyer produced several witnesses in his defense. However, Joseph remained free and the two boys found with Motto were turned over to the Commissioners of Charities and Corrections. (43)

The disposition of the Motto case illustrated the crucial problem: There was no United States law specifically directed against padrone contracts. One New Haven, Connecticut prosecuting attorney tried to circumvent this defect through a pre-Civil War Connecticut slave law. In July, 1873, a New York padrone, Joseph Glione, was arrested in New Haven for holding four boys and living off their earnings as bootblacks and street musicians. Glione was charged under the Connecticut Personal Liberty Bill of 1854, an act originally passed to counteract the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act.

The court found Glione guilty of keeping free persons in servitude against their will. Glione, unable to raise the \$4,000 bond, was jailed pending a jury trial in October. (44) Commenting on this case The New York Times reported the Italian community's critical attitude toward the alleged apathy of New York officials in dealing with the padroni. (45)

New Haven was not alone in tracking down padroni. Following the lead of the New York press, Buffalo, Washington, D. C., and Indianapolis papers investigated padrone operations in their

(42) Ibid.

(43) Ibid., August 27, 1873, p. 5.

(44) Ibid., July 22, 1873, p. 5; July 24, 1873, p. 4.

(45) Ibid., July 22, 1873, p. 5.

own cities. (46) Other investigations were later launched in Cincinnati, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. (47)

Small towns and villages were caught up in the agitation. In Spring Valley, New York, a prominent member of the local G.A.R. spotted two runaway boys. Summoning the constable, he had them arrested and then telegraphed Joseph Macino of No. 45 Crosby Street who had offered fifty dollars reward for their capture and return. Meanwhile, the villagers learned the boys' story, sympathized with them, and demanded their release before the local magistrate, Squire Brown. Brown immediately agreed and the boys left the village. Macino and a friend arrived on the scene a little later. The two were confronted by the villagers who suggested their continued good health required their immediate departure. Macino and his companion thereupon "skulked out" of the village. The G.A.R. made plans to expel its erstwhile prominent member. (48)

The citizenry was aroused, yet there was still no law outlawing the padroni. In Italy this situation ended on December 11, 1873, when the Italian Senate finally approved the act passed in the Chamber of Deputies the previous May. (49) Specifically this act provided stiff penalties for parents who released and padroni who accepted children under eighteen for employment in the "wandering professions" either in Italy or abroad. (50) Consul-General de Luca at once announced his intention to implement the new act to the letter and called upon local authorities in the United States to assist him to the fullest extent possible. His action helped restore his standing in the Italian

(46) Ibid., July 28, 1873, p. 4; August 30, 1873, p. 4; November 15, 1873, p. 2.

(47) Ibid., August 10, 1874, p. 5; August 6, 1874, p. 4; January 20, 1875, p. 5.

(48) Ibid., August 18, 1873, p. 2.

(49) Ibid., January 6, 1874, p. 2.

(50) Bremner, p. 281.

community. (51) [TO BE CONTINUED]

(51) Editorial, The New York Times, January 11, 1874, p. 4; The New York Times, January 17, 1874, p. 9; Ibid., April 29, 1874, p. 2.

* * *

HAS HOLDS MINI CONVENTION

by Jack Bales

Last August I made an Alger research trip to New York City where I located much Alger material at the New York Public Library and in the archives of the Children's Aid Society. I particularly enjoyed my many hours of work at the C.A.S. The people there were extremely friendly, and we spent much time in pleasant conversation. (By the way, a large portrait of Charles Loring Brace - founder of the Society and of the Newsboys' Lodging House - hangs in the entrance way).

I also spent an enjoyable evening with Alger biographer Herbert R. Mayes. Herb took me to dinner at "21" in New York and we spent a few hours talking over Alger's life and the effects on Alger scholarship brought about by Herb's 1928 Alger book.

While in New York I visited with HAS President Jerry Friedland, and he arranged a "mini convention" of the Society. One afternoon he drove his son and me to Waltham, Massachusetts (scene of the 1977 Convention) where we met Dick Seddon and Brad Alexander. A great evening of dinner and drinks, hosted by Brad, followed.

The next day we all drove out to see Morris Olsen, where we also found Brad Chase waiting. Morris' home is practically a book haven. Virtually all Alger books that collectors find relocate in Morris' house. We all pored through his collection for hours, then Morris took us all out to his favorite sea food place for dinner. A couple stops at local book shops were also made.

At the end of the day I remained with



Bill McCord, Brad Alexander, Eddie LeBlanc (editor of the Dime Novel Round-Up) and Bob Bennett converse at the "Cleveland Connection."

Dick Seddon, and among other places, we toured Rockport, Massachusetts, a typical New England town that I fell in love with. With Dick's wife Mary we visited their daughter Judy and son-in-law David Barton in Lowell, Massachusetts. (David is also an HAS member).

It was a great way to spend a vacation. Thanks go to all the aforementioned Alger Society members who made it all possible.

* * *
MORE ON THE ALGER STAMP

When I saw Brad Chase this summer we talked briefly about the Alger commemorative stamp that he has been working on. We decided that HAS members might wish to contact their own senators or representatives concerning this project. Following is a sample letter that Brad sent me. (You can contact your local library to find out the name and address of your senator or representative. The information can be found in the Congressional Directory).

Dear _____:

This letter is a request for whatever assistance you might be able to provide me in promoting a project in

which I am very interested. As a member of the Horatio Alger Society, a national society of book enthusiasts, I am interested in promoting a commemorative postage stamp honoring Mr. Horatio Alger, Jr. We are proposing such a stamp be issued on January 13, 1982 - 150 years after his birth.

The Horatio Alger Society, supported by the Horatio Alger Awards Committee, (a national organization), has submitted a formal request to the Postmaster General for such a stamp. The request consisted of a package of information which not only meets the specific criteria established by the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee but documents the many and varied accomplishments of Mr. Alger as well.

Mr. Alger's talent as a writer is evidenced by his ability to inspire a whole generation of young Americans at the turn of the twentieth century to recognize that success is achieved through industry, enterprise, honesty, and hard work. That generation of youth produced men and women who played leadership roles in creating twentieth century America. Mr. Alger's influence on those leaders was so significant that his name has become a part of the American ethic of Strive and Succeed.

I would sincerely appreciate any assistance you may be able to provide in promoting a commemorative Alger stamp. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee meets regularly to make decisions about stamp issues. Mr. Jack Williams in Room 5700 of the U.S. Postal Service Building (245-4962) in Washington, D.C. is a key member of that Committee's staff.

On behalf of those in both the Horatio Alger Society and the Horatio Alger Awards Committee who are working so hard to promote this overdue honor for Mr. Alger, I sincerely thank you for your interest and for any actions that you may take concerning this matter.

Very truly yours,
[Your name]

September



FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAP BOOK



Milton Salls frequently sends me items about Alger that he runs across. He writes that in Ralph DeToledano's One Man Alone: Richard Nixon (Funk and Wagnalls, 1969, p. 2) the author says that "to many, considering the rise of Dick Nixon from penury in Yorba Linda to grandeur in the White House, the Horatio Alger analogy comes to mind - and it has been thoroughly plumbed by feature writers and Sunday Supplement editors."

Milton sent me an article from the Little Falls, N.Y., Evening Times, February 3, 1979. The article was in the sports pages, and it was titled, "The Braves' Bob Horner and the Death of Horatio Alger." In part it reads:

"Alger specialized in writing about young men who served long, tough apprenticeships, worked hard and eventually rose from rags to riches. . . . Now you seldom hear the phrase anymore. . . . Nobody wants to bother being an apprentice and perhaps learn something. Everybody wants to start off at the top, which brings us to the case of third baseman Bob Horner, the Atlanta Braves, and agent Bucky Woy."

HAS member George May sent me an article put out by the Associated Press on other Alger Society member Dick Bowerman of Piqua, Ohio. I will print this interesting piece in the next Newsboy.

Jack Schorr sent me a copy of the handout that his local bank uses. On the cover is a picture of a Burt edition Alger (too bad the title on it, Plan and Prosper, never existed). On the inside it reads: "On the cover you see one of the 135 novels written in the last century by Horatio Alger, Jr., about people Getting

Ahead in the World. He made his 'Horatio Alger stories' synonymous with success... and so secured a lasting place for himself in American legend and folklore. In this modern day and age, should people still believe in Horatio? Yes! We do - that's why he's the hero of our advertising. Can you be the real-life hero (or heroine) of your own modern success story? Absolutely! All you need is a little luck, a little pluck - and our inventive help. So take full advantage of us...use all our services to help manage your money, protect it, and make it grow. Horatio's bound-to-succeed heroes would have used us...you should, too!"

Jack also enclosed a couple pages from The Philosophy of Elbert Hubbard, published in 1930 by the Roycrofters. (Ken Butler and myself, on the way home from the Geneseo, N.Y. Convention, stopped in East Aurora, N.Y. where Hubbard lived). In Hubbard's "Thoughts About Children" he says that "in Kansas City I know one newsboy who supports a widowed mother and several brothers and sisters younger than he. I know two newsboys, brothers, whose scanty savings are sending an elder sister to the State Normal School, that she may be fitted to become a teacher.

"Thomas Edison was a newsboy. He sold papers on the streets of Detroit, and on the Grand Trunk trains. While selling papers on the railroad platform at Mount Clemens, he saw a little youngster toddle out on the track, in front of an approaching train. At the risk of his own life, Tom Edison, the newsboy, grabbed the youngster, sprang upon the footboard of the engine and saved the life of the baby. For this deed the station-agent rewarded Edison by teaching him the telegraph-key. We know the rest."

FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAPBOOK
(continued)

Ralph Gardner writes that "my radio show has moved to a new station here in New York and it's now a one hour show (until a couple of weeks ago it was 15 minutes)." Ralph also sent along a clipping from the New York Daily News, dated June 8, 1979. The lengthy article is titled, "Fans Clubs: Not Just for Pop Stars," and is about the different organizations that promote various individuals. The first entry after the sentence, "There's a fan club for even the most obscure tastes," is "Horatio Alger Society of Lansing, Michigan." Thanks, Ralph, for sending me this.

Dave Soibelman writes Carl Hartmann: "I am happy to renew my membership in the Horatio Alger Society as I enjoy being a member and reading Jack Bales' Newsboy. I'm sorry to have missed the Cleveland convention, but next time I hope to meet my brothers who Strive and Succeed."

Maynard Faith says that "I have enjoyed the benefits of the Alger Society very much. Last year was my first year and I enclose my check for \$10.00 for another year. The Society also enabled me to acquire a few titles I didn't have before." Thanks, Maynard, I'm glad you like it all!!

Peter Walther also renewed his membership and in a letter to Carl Hartmann he writes that "I enjoy the Newsboy very much and am sorry I did not make the Cleveland Convention. Keep up the good work. . . . I spoke with Mrs. Adams last November in New Jersey and we had a delightful conversation. She spoke glowingly of Horatio Alger, and related some anecdotes of her father." (Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, an HAS member, writes the Nancy Drew books. Her father, Edward Stratemeyer, wrote many boys' books, including the famous Rover Boys Series).

David Moulton writes to Carl Hartmann that "the past year's worth of Newsboys have been anxiously awaited and eagerly

read. I've been strong and steady in my enthusiasm for what I've read through the Newsboy's column and look forward to another year of luck and pluck."

I found a rather interesting article in the May, 1979 issue of American Collector. Andrew Walker had an article called "Buying Books at Garage Sales," in which he boasted about locating rare books for nominal sums. One of the books which he mentioned was a supposedly rare Alger that he got for 25¢. The book was pictured; it was only a cheap Donohue. I wrote a "letter to the editor" stating although "many book collectors believe that each of Alger's books is worth a small fortune, this is simply not so." Unfortunately, it was not printed.

The pictures in this month's Newsboy were taken by Gilbert K. Westgard II. Thanks go to Gil for sending them to me. Other convention pictures will appear in later issues of the Newsboy.

Gene Hafner sent me an article that appeared in the June 24, 1979 issue of the Baltimore Sun. Titled "A Real-Life Nancy Drew Also Writes of Hardy Boys and Bobbsey Twins," it is a very informative piece on Harriet Stratemeyer Adams and the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Thanks, Gene!



At the Cleveland Convention there were Mr. and Mrs. Bill Leitner, Bob Sawyer, and Ralph D. Gardner.